



Course Description

1. Aims.

The course aims to give participants the opportunity both to develop an in-depth skill in throwing and to acquire a sound basis of knowledge and practical confidence about clay bodies, glazes and firing.

2. Coverage.

The course will cover the throwing and trimming of both repeated and unique wheel made objects, the compounding and alteration of high temperature clay bodies, slips and glazes, soda firing and the firing of gas and wood kilns. Oxidised and reduced firings will both be undertaken.

3. Rationale.

The course is being offered because we have had many enquiries from people with a serious, committed interest who, for a variety of reasons, do not see a broad based two or three year course as appropriate (or possible) and for whom two week courses do not allow sufficient time for the sustained development which they see as necessary.

4. Outline and objectives.

Dancers do their exercises and musicians play their scales as regular and necessary exercises in the learning and sustenance of their skills, especially while they are learning. In the same way potters – throwers – learn their skill by repetition. Fluently making the same form from the same amount of clay is a skill which underpins the visual and commercial achievements of throwers, ancient and modern. Developing this skill is one of the fundamental objectives of the course and initial work will focus on this.

To ensure there is not a separation between technical skill and visual awareness exercises aimed at visual development and refinement of objects are a central part of the programme from the early stages. La Meridiana has a large collection of books, actual objects and digital images and these will be used in a series of talks at various stages of the course with the objective of opening new avenues of visual awareness and development.

There will be a series of talks on clay bodies, slips and glazes and each participant will have an individual programme of work with these so that, as well as using the standard materials at La Meridiana, they will develop the knowledge and confidence to evolve and refine materials of their own.

While a major objective of the course is individual development the sharing of information, opinion and discovery within the group can be a contributor to this and will be encouraged in regular group discussions.

5. Topics which form the basis of work and demonstrations.

Cups; bowls; plates; jugs; other pouring vessels; lidded vessels; handles and other attachments; two and multipart throwing; unique objects; clay recycling; clay body making and variation; slip and glaze making and variation; biscuit firing; cone 10 firing in oxidation and reduction; wood firing; soda firing; and (because a breadth of experience and knowledge is always useful) terra sigillata and raku firing.

6. Hours of work.

The workshops will be open 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday and will be closed on Sundays. Teaching will occur 9am to 12.30 Monday to Friday and, in the initial three weeks of the course, will continue through the afternoon till 6pm. Thereafter the afternoons are scheduled for self directed work on the current topics and assistance will normally be available.

7. Prerequisites.

To get the most out of this course will demand a high level of commitment and sustained work. The only prerequisite is that you have sufficient experience of throwing (which may only be slight) to be certain you wish to undertake the programme. Any interested people may wish to telephone to discuss their interest 00393772709500. A detailed timetable is available on request by email info@lameridiana.fi.it