

Week 1 – Making day

What happens on the day?

The workshop will start at 11am and finish at 3pm. Within this time we will have 30mins lunch break. Please bring a packed lunch. Depending on how long you take to make your pieces you may be finished before this time but if you need more time you are welcome to stay later.

What will we make?

These workshops are suitable for complete beginners as well as for people with experience. During the day you will make a decorative ornament/figurine/model using the pinch pot technique and you will also make a pot on the potter's wheel.

Pinch pot figurine –

You will be taught the stages involved to make an ornament using the pinching technique. This entails making two pots and joining them together to make a big ball. This will determine the shape of your ornament but you are able to add to it and cut away from it. It's good to have a rough idea what you want to make beforehand so have a little look at "raku pinch pot figurines" on Pinterest for inspiration. We are slightly restricted to what we can make though. To ensure we can fit all pots in the small raku kiln, figurines can't be wider than 12 cm in diameter due to the size of the kiln but can reach 25cm in height. So pieces need to be taller than wide.

Due to the intense thermal shock we need to insure the pot is structurally sound. It's best to keep your pot simple. The more protruding elements make your piece more vulnerable to breakages in the firing process. You also need to bear in mind that you will be taking your pot out of the hot kiln using tongs so you need to be able to get a good grip onto it so it's also best to keep the shape quite simple too.

Come with a few ideas and I can advise on the day which would be more suitable.



Wheel pot –

You will be taught how to make a simple pot on the potter's wheel. We won't be aiming for a particular shape but size must not exceed more than 12cm in diameter and 25cm in height.

Raku wares are not suitable for dinnerware such as mugs or bowls. Although the glazes are lead free and food safe the process of the thermal shocks causes crazing (small cracks on the surface of the glaze) which causes the pot to be partially porous which means moisture

would soak into the pottery, making it damp and leading to bacteria gathering into these cracks. This makes it unhygienic to use for drinking and eating from.



Please be aware that there is always a risk of breakages in the bisque or raku firing process. We will explain the steps to prevent breakages from happening but unfortunately this is the nature of working with clay. The clay gods truly do decide! It's very infrequent that this happens but it is always a possibility. We are not responsible for such breakages and therefore are not liable to refund or exchange if your pot sadly breaks.

Your pot will be left to air dry for 5 days and then fired in the electric kiln for 1 day to become ceramic and ready to glaze fire on week 2.

Week 2 - Raku firing day

What is raku?

Raku is a very unique type of glaze firing that involves fire, smoke and handling 1000 degree Celsius pots. Its dramatic, fast paced and hands on. Expect to leave smelling like smoke!

What happens on the day?

We will start again at 11am and finish around 4pm. The firing day is estimated to last 5 hours but this is a rough guide. Due to the possibility of being delayed by unpredicted weather or firing issues we recommend allowing extra time when planning the rest of your day.

The first part of the day will consist of glazing your first pot with our big choice of raku glazes. Before we load the first pots into the kiln we will have a practice run of using the tongs and placing the pots into the bins of combustibles. Once we have practiced you will then load your pot into the kiln and our technician will then start the firing.

The pots will be firing for 1 hour and 15 mins. Within this time take the opportunity to ask us questions, sit and watch the kiln increase heat or you are welcome to wander into the wildlife park for coffee and cake. During this time we will take a half hour lunch break.

Please bring lunch with you. After lunch we will start glazing our second pots whilst we wait for the firing to finish. Once the kiln has reached temperature you will, one at a time, take

your pot out and place it into a bin of sawdust, let it flame and then put the lid on. (we can do this for you if you don't want to)

We leave it to do its magic for 20 minutes. We will then load the kiln for a second firing.

When your first pot has been in the bin for 20 mins you will then remove it from the bin to place in a bucket of water to cool. 5 mins later its ready to clean up and admire its beauty.

After you have stared at your pot in amazement we will sit tight and wait for our second pot and follow the same process again.

Where will the firing take place?

Due to the nature of the firing, raku is to take place outside. We have our own garden at the front of the studio. If we have to cancel the firing due to bad weather, I will contact you first thing in the morning of the firing session. We will still continue if its only very light rain or wind.

Will I be able to take my own pot out of the kiln?

Absolutely! This is a very hands on workshop and you have complete control handling your hot pot. If you change your mind or are unable to, we are very happy to do this part for you.

What do I need to wear?

Please dress appropriately. It's important to cover as much of yourself as possible when you are handling your hot pots. Absolutely no t-shirts, shorts or sandals! You may arrive in summer clothing if weather is very hot but you will need to change when it's time to take your pot out of the kiln. We recommend jeans (but not ripped jeans please!) and long sleeve t-shirts or jumpers. Shoes must be completely closed. We recommend trainers or walking boots.

I will be providing fire proof aprons, face shields and gloves. We also recommended bringing a face covering as there will be a bit of smoke around. Please bear this in mind if you suffer from any respiratory problems.

Health and safety

We will give you a safety briefing and explain the steps you need to take when handling your pots from the kiln into the bin of combustibles. You will practice holding your pot using the tongs beforehand until you feel confident. You will be asked to sign a disclaimer on your first session. This activity is only dangerous if you don't follow proper instructions.

Any questions please don't hesitate to ask.

Look forward to firing with you soon!