

"The first question I ask myself when something doesn't seem to be beautiful is why do I think it's not beautiful. And very shortly you discover that there is no reason." --John Cage.

# Ceramics: Ceramic Sculpture

School of The Art Institute of Chicago • Spring 2014

**Instructor:** William J. O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Art, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

**Office Hours:** W, 12:00-1:00 P.M. & BY APPOINTMENT • Email Contact: wobri@saic.edu

CER 2051-0001 **Ceramics: Ceramic Sculpture** • Monday 9 AM- 4 PM • 3 credit hours

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces students to sculptural ideas executed in various ceramic hand construction techniques including slab, coil, press mold, etc. Students will explore how the unique physical characteristics of clay can contribute to the content of the work. Construction strategies will be examined in a conceptual context, investigating issues of space, technology, and architectural implication to build a dimensional perspective of personal and societal relevance. Emphasis will be on process, exploration, and discussion.

## Course Requirements

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### Student Attendance

If a student misses MORE than three classes, whether or not for a reasonable cause, s/he will fail the class, if s/he does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal with a grade of "W". Deadlines for withdrawal: November 1, 2011 (Fall semester); March 28, 2012 (Spring Semester). If a student attends FEWER than three classes his/her financial aid, merit scholarship, academic standing, and/or immigration status will be compromised, regardless of an individual faculty member's modifications of these recommendations.

#### **Reasonable cause to miss a class might include:**

- **Illness or hospitalization,**
- **Observation of a religious holiday**
  - **Family illness or death**

# Plagiarism

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The School of the Art Institute of Chicago prohibits "dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the School" (Students' Rights and Responsibilities, Student Handbook). Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. One plagiarizes when one presents another's work as one's own, even if one does not intend to. The penalty for plagiarizing may also result in some loss of some types of financial aid (for example, a No Credit in a course can lead to a loss of the Presidential Scholarship), and repeat offenses can lead to expulsion from the School. To find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, you can (1) go to the portal, select the "Services" tab, and click on "Plagiarism" under "Academic Advising and Student Success"; (2) go to the SAIC Web site, select "Departments, Degrees, and Academic Resources," then select "Libraries," then select "Flaxman Library," and then click on the plagiarism links under the "For Our Faculty" tab; or (3) read about it in the Student Handbook under the section "Academic Misconduct."

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

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SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health or chronic physical condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) by phone at 312.499.4278 or email at [www.dlrc.saic.edu](http://www.dlrc.saic.edu). DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to all of your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located on the 13th floor of 116 S. Michigan Ave.

## Writing Center

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MacLean Center Basement, 112 S. Michigan Ave., B1-03

SAIC offers free, hour-long writing tutorials at the Writing Center, which is located in the basement of MacLean. Tutors are available to assist all currently enrolled students with any stage of the writing process, including the following: getting started with writing; forming a claim or thesis statement; developing ideas; strengthening organization; improving writing style; revising drafts; correcting grammar and punctuation errors; addressing MLA, CMS, and APA style questions; and citing references. Writing Center tutors work with students to help them find their own solutions to questions. Rather than correcting or editing papers for students, tutors work with students to help them identify issues that need further attention. Tutors may ask students to discuss their ideas as a way to specify, clarify, or deepen them. Tutors may also offer feedback on drafts, suggest writing approaches, review information, and help students analyze their own writing. Ultimately, the goal in the Writing Center is to help students become more proficient, independent writers.

### APPOINTMENTS

To schedule an appointment with a Writing Center tutor, students first need to create an account through our online sign-up system: [www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/writingcenter](http://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/writingcenter). Once students have set up their own account, they may sign up for appointments. Weekly standing appointments are available upon request. When students come to their tutoring appointments, they should make sure to bring their assignments with them. Schedule instructions are available outside of the Writing Center suite (in the hallway outside of MC B1-03).

### CONTACT INFORMATION

wcenter@saic.edu

Coordinator: Leila Wilson, [lwilson@saic.edu](mailto:lwilson@saic.edu), 312-345-3588

FALL AND SPRING SEMESTER HOURS

Monday - Thursday: 10:00 AM - 7:15 PM, Friday: 10:00 AM - 5:15 PM

## STUDIO PRODUCTION/EXPECTATIONS:

It is mandatory you are in the studio working between the hours of 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. If you are not going to be in the studio working for some reason please inform myself or the Teaching Assistant if you are going to be somewhere else

### STUDIO PRODUCTION EXPECTATIONS:

This class will consist of 4 major projects, you will be given guidelines concerning each project. It is mandatory for a complete grade that you complete all assignments and attend the critiques/discussions.

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## Individual Projects/Meetings:

During the course of the semester you will be required both in writing, and in person meet with William J. O'Brien and the Teaching Assistant to discuss and present your projects for the semester. You are expected to have a concise and focused direction with your work to participate in this class. In addition you should be able to work independently on your work and have the capacity to work during the day on your work. Individual meetings with William J. O'Brien will occur twice during the semester. You will be required to in writing have 2 different projects for the semester. The first is for the mid-term critique and the second is for the final critique.

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## Required Readings/Discussion:

There will be required readings for this class. There are assigned deadlines for the readings throughout the semester. It is a requirement that you are prepared for discussion beforehand for class. To ensure this preparedness you will need to provide a one-page paragraph summarizing the most significant aspects of two of the readings before the discussion.

### Readings:

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Richard Tuttle and the Comfort of the Unknown, Molly Donovan, *American Art*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 102-125

Embodiments and art beliefs: On Yves Klein, FILIPPO FIMIANI *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 57/58 (Spring/Autumn 2010), pp. 283-298

The Spell to Re-integrate the Self: The Significance of the Work of Yayoi Kusama in the New Era, Yuko Hasegawa, *Pamela Miki Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, Issue 13 (Spring/Summer 2006), pp. 46-53

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# COURSE OUTLINE

During the course of this semester we will have both written, studio critique, and formal presentation assignments due.

Below is a brief summary of the projects for this course:

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**Week 1- 4:**

**Individual Meetings, Project #1, Readings Discussion #1**

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**Week 5 – 8:**

**Mid-term Critique Presentations, Readings Discussion #2**

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**Weeks 9-15:**

**Individual Meetings, Project #2, Readings Discussion #3,  
Final Critique Presentations**

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## Weekly Schedule

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**Monday, January, 27th**

**Week 1: Introductions. Demonstration of Pinching, Coil Techniques**

**Out of Class Reading:**

Richard Tuttle and the Comfort of the Unknown, Molly Donovan, *American Art*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 102-125

**Assignment Due February 3rd:** Prepare for Individual Meetings with William J. O'Brien & Tiffany Sung (Previous examples of past work, a paragraph/outline of intentions for semester)  
Roll 50 coils in preparation for Project for following week.

Demonstration of Pinching Techniques,

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**Monday, February 3rd**

**Week 2: (Morning) Individual Meetings with William J. O'Brien and Tiffany Sung  
(Afternoon) Advanced Coil Building Techniques, Slip and Scoring, Slap Roller Demonstration**

**Assignment Due September 10th:** Build 3-5 Sculptural Forms at least 15" in one direction

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**Monday, February 10th**

**Week 3- (Early Morning) Discussion of Sculptural Forms  
Introduction of Project #1**

**(Afternoon) Lecture on Ceramics, Funk Ceramics, Arte Povera, Cross References to Minimalism, Scatter Art, Installation, Feminism**

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## Monday, February 17th

Week 4- (Morning) Work Time Project #1,

(Afternoon) Discussion of First Reading: Richard Tuttle and the Comfort of the Unknown, Molly Donovan, *American Art*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 102-125

Out of Class Assignment: Continue Work on Project #1: Exaggeration

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## Monday, February 24th

Week 5- (All Day) Work Time Project #1

Out of Class Assignment: Continue Work on Project #1: Exaggeration

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## Monday, March 3rd

Week 6- (All Day) Work Time Project #1

Out of Class Assignment: Finish Work on Project #1: Exaggeration

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## Monday, March 10th

Week 7- (9-2) Midterm Critique, Project #1 Exaggeration

Out of Class Reading:

The Spell to Re-integrate the Self: The Significance of the Work of Yayoi Kusama in the New Era, Yuko Hasegawa, Pamela Miki *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, Issue 13 (Spring/Summer 2006), pp. 46-53

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## Monday, March 17th

Week 8- (Morning) Introduction of Project #2, (Afternoon) Discussion of "Objects beyond Objecthood"

Out of Class Assignment: Work on Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

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## Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>

Week 9 – (All Day) Work Time, Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

Individual Meetings with William J. O'Brien and Michael Carney

Out of Class Assignment: Work on Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture,

Read Reading #3, Embodiments and art beliefs: On Yves Klein, FILIPPO FIMIANI *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 57/58 (Spring/Autumn 2010), pp. 283-298

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## Monday, March 31st

Week 9- (All Day) Work Time Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture,

(Afternoon) Discussion of Reading #3 Embodiments and art beliefs: On Yves Klein, FILIPPO FIMIANI *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 57/58 (Spring/Autumn 2010), pp. 283-298

Out of Class Assignment: Work on Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

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## Monday, April 7th

Week 11- (All Day) Work Time Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

Out of Class Assignment: Work on Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

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**Monday, April 14th**

**Week 12- (All Day) Work Time Project #2:** Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

**Out of Class Assignment:** Work on Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

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**Monday, April 21st**

**Week 13- (All Day) Work Time Project #2:** Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

**Out of Class Assignment:** Work on Project #2: Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture

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**Monday, April 28th**

**Week 14 – Critique Week, No Class**

**Out of Class Assignment: Prepare for Final Critique, Project #2, Spontaneity, Risk and Gesture**

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**Monday, May 5th**

**Week 15- Final Critique**

# ASSIGNMENT

## #1 & 2

### **Assignment #1: (Due Monday, Feb 3rd):**

part1: 10 Artists who define, influence your practice. Please do research to compile a list of 10 artists who influence, define your practice, examples of their work would be helpful for group discussion in case no one has heard of their work before. Prepared for your meetings with William J. O'Brien and Tiffany Sung

### **part2: Drawings, 5 drawings per week**

As part of the general course requirement for this class you need to make at least 5 drawings per week. We will regularly in the morning session be discussing the importance, relevance of drawing within your practice. Any interpretation of drawing is permitted as long as there are 5 per week to discuss both in individual meetings and occasionally group discussions. This will serve as a bridge to discuss creative process as well as clarify critical and conceptual issues within projects throughout the semester.