

Alessandro Gallo

5 Days Workshop Outline:

The goal of the workshop is to help every participant build a small figurative clay sculpture that can work as a final piece or as a study for a later project.

I will offer my personal perspective on hand-building a piece, sharing all stages of my method from idea to finishing, in order to express a personal narrative.

Suggested material:

Students should bring printed photographic reference of a model. Full figure shots from at least 4 different points: front, back, left and right sides. If possible add all the 3/4 and some close ups of interesting details. The more, the better.

Steps to have useful reference material:

-Ask someone (friend or relative) to model for you or ask them to take pictures of you.

-Work around a simple concept and choose a pose and clothes that work with it. Like standing and waiting or sitting and reading.

-Once the model is ready he or she has to hold the pose without moving until the photo shoot is over, so that the fabric folds and gestures are consistent from all angles.

Day 1 Introduction and one-day project

Morning 10am - 1pm, Introduction

- Introductions.

- Slide talk on Process and workshop overview.

The talk will include a lot of behind the scenes process shots and a few videos that I shot in the past couple of years to document how I work. They will offer a quick summary and precious insights into every step of what we will be doing in the following week.

- Start of a one-day project. Everyone will hand build one object that requires little or no hollowing, copying one readily available there and then. Something simple, like a shoe you're wearing or a handbag, a banana or the lunch sandwich. Anything as long as it's there. This fast exercise will be very useful in

a) breaking the ice and getting hands dirty right away

b) focusing on practice and method having fun, without sentimental attachment to the object

c) making a piece that will be fired on Wednesday and be ready to be painted on Friday.

Lunch Break 1pm - 2pm

Afternoon 2pm - 5pm, First project

- refining the day-one project
- working and addressing individual concerns
- hollowing and putting it back together
- finishing the project and setting it aside to dry

Day 2 Starting the Main Piece

Morning - Set up, armature and start

- Start preparation for the main piece. Everybody will be asked to come with printed photographic reference. Ask a relative or friend to model for you. Ask him or her to pick a simple pose you are happy with, sitting or standing, doing a simple gesture.
- Designing the piece: From subject to form. Choosing the posture of the figure, considering body language and the meaning of what we wear.
- Reference material. Working with models, getting the best from them.
- Digital photography. Digital sketches. Basic Photography and basic Photoshop tools. Making a block-poster.
- Work station: First necessary steps for working solid. Making sure the work station is well equipped and functional.
- Tools and materials: tips and suggestions on clay
- Armature: measuring, and building a support in order to being able to work with soft clay.

Lunch Break 1pm - 2pm

Afternoon - Roughing the piece in

- Sketching the piece, piling clay on the armature
- Roughing in volumes, building silhouettes using references, sculpting as drawing from different sides.

Day 3 Sculpting and hollowing Main Piece

Morning - Sculpting and refining

- Slide talk- Presentation of my work
- Refining volumes and clothes, focusing on main lines and elements

Lunch Break 1pm - 2pm

Afternoon - hollowing and putting back together

- Cutting the piece apart and removing it from the armature
- Hollowing all the parts
- Putting the pieces back together, scoring and slip, focusing on clay walls and seams

Day 4 Finishing and preparing to firing

Morning - sculpting refining

- Defining and shaping: individuating the lines of the posture, with special attention to the balance in heads and shoulders, shaping volumes, emphasizing the features of the figure, working on expression. Particular attention to clothes and folds
- Bringing gradually the figure to sharpness in all of his parts. Details.

Lunch Break 1pm - 2pm

Afternoon sculpting finishing

- Refining and finishing
- Focus on details and final surface
- Notions on drying and firing
- Shrink slabs and firing schedules for stoneware

Day 5 - Painting and finishing

Morning and Afternoon - Painting and finishing

- Notions on 'post-firing' including grinding and glueing.
- Suggestions and tips on materials and power tools
- Acrylic colors as a painting medium and other oil-based and water-based paints options used by contemporary artists.
- Basic principles of color theory, mixing colors and restoration techniques.
- Demos on how I paint and my favorite technique of layering many thin coats as well as other possibilities.
- Finishing and texture through layers of varnish