

# Forming

## Clay and creative composites

A two year diploma programme with an optional Ba/BA (hons.).

CURRICULUM DRAFT

**Roots**  
**Materials**  
**Paths of Visualisation**  
**Production**

The Reykjavik School of Visual Art

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**Forming** is a two year joint program created by the Reykjavik School of Visual Art and the Reykjavik Technical School for art college students studying clay, ceramics, glass and related materials. The studies can lead to a BA Honours degree with European Institutions.

**Forming** is a lab-program where all the possibilities of the materials are explored, emphasizing the combination of traditional and new methods. Students will be encouraged to develop 1) singular production 2) creative mass productions 3) the expressive possibilities of the medium.

*Clay in its wet form is a material that gives little resistance, but as soon as it becomes ceramic, its resistance is total. The word ceramic combines all sculpted material from inorganic non-metallic material, where firing at high temperature produces the end result. Clay is an interactive synergetic material that constantly communicates.*

## OBJECTIVES

To improve the student's knowledge of the prime materials and the medium's potential, and to create possibilities of further studies.

To promote the study of ceramics in Iceland and broaden the opportunities in art and design programs.

To re-establish a traceable connection between creators and their works.

To form a relationship between education and commercial manufacturing.

## FOR WHOM?

The program is aimed at students who have completed an art program in upper secondary schools and intend to continue studying the visual arts.

This program is also for students with BA degrees desiring to improve their expertise and material know-how. Aspects of the program are open to continuing education and professional enhancement.



## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students, who have completed art/design program in their upper secondary schools or equivalent education, can apply to FORMING. Applicants are expected to have good general knowledge of the English language.

Applicants must present photographs of original work that is creative and technically proficient.

## STRUCTURE

The curriculum is divided into four semesters. Each semester is thought of as an independent part with a principal theme.

Course assignments and teaching strategies are designed so that students with different backgrounds and interests can approach their studies in individual ways.

The practical and theoretical parts of the study takes place at The Reykjavik School of Visual Art (90 credits). Required cultural, computer and business courses, molded into every semester of the program, will take place at The Reykjavik Technical College.

A semester lasts 15 weeks, and students are expected to complete 30 units each semester.



## MODULE A. **Roots**

Exploring the sources of clay, its potential combined with natural materials, and the discovery of traditional, natural, and new methods of transformation. Concepts such as traceability, new heritage, lifespan and sustainable development are explored.

The origin of ideas and customs in clay and ceramics are analyzed with the scope of exploring new places and spaces. Connections are made to the humanities, history, and economics.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Familiarizing students with the geo-scientific origins of clay, its essential properties, and cultural aspects.

Discover local clays and materials, both as a source and inspiration for creative works.

Exploring the forces of nature and their impact on practice and results.

Understanding the fundamentals of working with clay, throwing, and other methods of hand building.

Gain knowledge about low firing technologies, temperatures, and related earth clay.

Learn the history of Icelandic ceramics.

## **MATERIALS**

Earth clay, low-fired glazes, fired and unfired materials, pumice, ash, terracotta, sea salt.

# CREATING IDEAS

9 ECTS units

## Teacher/Lecturer

Brynhildur Pálsdóttir

## Course structure

Ideas are looked at contextually from every angle, from origin and conception and on through to realization, to examine how these ideas develop and how they relate to historically to the Society they occur in.

Examples of these processes will then be presented to deconstruct how a design can be taken from one stage to another. This should provide a working knowledge of the idea and design process and provide inspiration in support of your own idea development. With emphasis on the importance of discussion, there is a chance to talk about design within the team and evaluate an idea and follow it through.

Lectures are delivered once a week. Each lecture is formulated to support the practical projects that students have underway. Students can then use this information to generate and inform their work and develop their ideas with a mixture of practical, theoretical and technical skills.

The practical areas are porcelain, glass, Keraflex and silicone, to achieve a collection of work for the final exhibition. The students also have to hand in written assignments from the contents of the lectures.

- 27<sup>th</sup> August. Lecture by Brynhildur Pálsdóttir – the Dutch designer Hella Jongaruis.
- 17<sup>th</sup> September. Lecture by Elísabet Ingvarsdóttir – Arts and Crafts- William Morris
- 24<sup>th</sup> September. Lecture by Hildur Ýr Jónsdóttir – Jewelry, ceramics and her experiments with clay etc.
- Other lectures will be announced on a later date.

## The Aim

- Student should gain an understanding of the importance of “The Idea”.
- Students can create a vision and a working process to help them with challenging projects.
- Students should independently organize their work using a working-plan.
  - Students should be prepared to discuss the reasons behind their ideas.

## **Requirements**

Sketchbooks and written assignments.

## **Assesments**

Students will be assessed on their determination, their working practical skills and their ability to follow their ideas through and the final results.

There are continuous assessments going on throughout the entire term



# EXPERIMENTAL WORKSHOP WITH ICELANDIC RAW MATERIALS.

8 ECTS units.

## Teacher

Sigríður Erla Guðmundsdóttir

## Course structure

The project is, where the students work independently with Icelandic clay, raw materials and local resources. The working process should be carefully and systematically documented through the whole of the project. This has to be handed in at the end of the final term as research report.

Students have to analyze the clay and other raw materials and compounds locally available. They have to evaluate the qualities of the clay and the various possibilities it can provide in terms of both its potential and its limitations.

Students should expand their way of thinking in the context of Man and Nature. Students go on trips to secluded areas within the Icelandic nature to seek inspiration and for the students to observe the geological factor and what the natural forces could do to change the outcome of their experiments and for local surrounding.

Maximum firing temperatures for those experiments are 1150°C.

Lectures are held once a week; the subjects are related or indirectly related to the student's projects. Students use the information given in the lectures to research further and aid the development of their own work. Some written assignments are given following the lectures.

- Lecture 27<sup>th</sup> August. - Oddur Sigurðsson, Geologist - The Geology of Iceland in terms of clay and its use for ceramics.
- 
- Lecture 10<sup>th</sup> September. - Sigríður Ágústsdóttir - The origin of the clay pot and various hand making processes and basic firings techniques.
- 
- Lecture 11<sup>th</sup> September. – Ása Ketilsdóttir - Talks about her own work, made from found pieces of broken pottery.
- 
- Lecture 24<sup>th</sup> September. – Hildur Ýr Jónsdóttir - Discusses jewelry, ceramics and her experiments with clay.

## **Teaching schedule**

This project runs through out the term.

In consultation with the teacher, students will decide on the potential for using the material (clay), what product, what form, what concept, the kind of methods to use, appropriate firings and the mixing in of chemicals, oxides and other raw-materials in with the local clay.

The students should decide on what format they should use to document in detail their experiments, any working methods and progress, keeping practical and technical notebooks and taking photographs of the whole process.

Tutorials are held once a week to provide guidance and assist students with any problems and any decisions on what direction to take to achieve their aims.

## **The Brief**

Students are introduced to the origins of clay and other Icelandic resources from a geological and chemical basis. The students then look at the local geological resources with the view of using them as ceramic raw materials.

Having evaluated the potential of using the local resources for practical use.

Students should use a variety of practical working methods and firings, to provide a range of results from experiments with the local clay.

Each student should work independently and documenting their activities with photos and making notes on their experiments.

## **Requirements**

Work diary with progress reports, experimental notes and pictures. A seminar will be held in week 14 &15 to review the project.

## **The Assessment Process**

Continuous monitoring of the student's progression and how they conduct their experimental activity will form the basis of the assessment.



# MATERIALS & METHODS

13 ECTS Units

## Teachers

- Sigríður Erla Guðmundsdóttir – handbuilding 3 units.
- Póra Breiðsjörð – plastemould making 2 units.
- Brynhildur Þorgeirsdóttir – glass 1 units
- Bjarnheiður Jóhannsdóttir – surface texture, - solo studio worker 2 units.
- Skúlína Kjartansdóttir – computers – 3 dimensional design 1 unit.
- Written work 2 units.
- Final project 2 units.

## Course structure

- Earthenware will be used and fired at maximum 1150°C and various experiments done with related materials to mix with the Earthenware clay.
- Emphasis is on various hand modelling methods. Simple plaster moulds for pressing into and mixing of a casting slip made from Icelandic raw materials.
- The term finishes with a final 5-week module project where students work on their ceramic pieces for the end of term show. Over those five weeks it is expected of the students that they take their ideas and work to deeper levels in terms of their personal approach to materials, methods and ideas.
- Students will undertake a project to consider the solo studio maker in terms of planning a business.
- Students will be introduced to the 3 dimensional programme RHINO.

Lectures are delivered once a week. Each lecture is formulated to support the practical projects that students have underway. Students can then use this information to generate and inform their work and develop their ideas with a mixture of practical, theoretical and technical skills.

The students also have to hand in written essays from the contents of the lectures.

Teaching schedules are provided from each teacher within the “hands on” modules. It is expected that the students build on the “Idea-bank” within each module with their materials and methods.

## Teaching schedule (see from each individual teacher)

According to timetable both teachers and students work alongside and partly independently.

Weekly lectures cover various subjects that relate to the students work module.

End of the Academic year exhibition. Students will set up and display a collection of their work produced within the last 5 weeks of the course.

## **The Aim**

- Students are expected to use this experience to get a feel for the material and then evaluate the various qualities it can provide in terms of both its potential and its limitations.
- Students should develop their ideas sympathetically with each material introduced to them.
- Student should have a substantial understanding of how to follow working methods of those materials introduced within the teaching module.
- The student must have a reasonable understanding of handling clay that is fired at maximum 1150°C.
- Students should gain certain skills to a level where they can independently tackle their own final project during the last 5 weeks of the module. And in order for students to increase their own knowledge and mastery of these materials, it's useful to develop a personal relationship towards the materials in relation to their own ideas.

## **Requirements**

- Written assignments from each module.
- Finished ceramics work at the end of the school year. Set up of the final exhibition.
- Work submitted. Diary/sketchbooks/worknotes/reports and group discussions.

## **Assessment**

40% of the assessment is based on how students adopt the various technical and practical craft skills, and also how students master an affinity with the material.

10% of the assessment is based on the students organizational skills and their ability to set up their own final show and present a collection of their work for exhibition.

25% of the assessment relates directly to working diary/sketchbooks/experimental-work records and written assignments.

The final 25% of the assessment relates to the end of project reports and conclusion, where creativity, determination should clearly be evident.





## MODULE B. **Materials**

The study of new clay technologies and material development.

Students will work, among other places, in the glass studio of Gler in Bergvík.

Ceramics will be seen in a new social context and relevant new chemical composition explored.

The term includes a two-week study trip in Germany.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Student awareness of various attributes and appearances of clay in society.

Student understanding of the past and future evolution of clay, its characteristics, and possibilities, and develop ideas based on unforeseen use of the medium.

Student cultivation of individual and specific knowledge.

## **MATERIALS**

Porcelain, stoneware, glass, plaster, organic materials, rubber, concrete, silicone.

## **METHODS**

Plaster modeling and molding. Glaze: experiments and chemistry. Experiments with concrete-related materials.

# **MATERIALIZING IDEAS**

9 ECTS units

## **Teacher**

Hrafnkell Birgisson

## **Course structure**

Students will consider the way material and the human imagination constantly leads to new man made objects.

This should provide an overview of things and inform the development of the ideas within the project during the term.

This is an opportunity to observe the connection between design ideas in different kinds of objects and evaluate the reasoning behind them. It is a chance to discover innovative approaches and create a new perspective, this should give rise to surprising and unexpected results that direct a new vision and feel for the material.

## **The aim**

- Students will be able to develop ideas based on the character of the material directly or create a transformation.
- Students will understand the necessity of developing ideas
- Students will shape their personal view and methodology
- Students will learn to appreciate patience, precision and perfection
- Students will work independently, well organized and with clear objectives
- Students will be able to explain and discuss their ideas

## **Requirements**

Sketchbooks and written assignments.

## **The Assessment Process**

When the assessments are done, both the student's practical skills and their interpretation of their ideas are taken into account according to each modular unit.

30% of the assessment relates to creativity and innovation within the idea development.

30% of the assessment relates directly to sketchbook work, work-plan and documentation of their working in progress.

40% of the assessment relates to the final conclusion.

And in general students diligence, they're practical skills and their ability to follow their ideas through to a final outcome.

The ideas and the creativity of students will be judged in all practical areas in "Materials & Methods" in the final project. This is done in relation of number of units for each section: Porcelain 3, Glass 3 and the final project 2. There is on mark given for the whole of the written assignments.

There are continuous assessments going on throughout the entire term.



# RESEARCH AND EXCURSION

8 ECTS units

## Teachers

Hrafnkell Birgisson, Ólöf Erla Bjarnadóttir and others.

## Course structure

This module is based on a research trip abroad to visit Universities, companies and establishments that have advanced developments and production using ceramics and porcelain.

Hubert Kittel, Programme Leader for Glass and Ceramics, Department of Art and Design - Burg Giebichenstein University – Halle – Germany. Will visit Iceland in March to present a number of lectures and demonstrations for the students.

Following that, a trip is also planned for students to visit Germany. Organised in partnership with staff from Burg Giebichenstein University, Halle.

An itinerary for Industrial and Academic visits during this time, along with any preliminary research and preparation, will be formulated from the end of February to the beginning of March. Students should use this time to decide on a subject area they wish to research while visiting these establishments.

The plan initially is to visit:

**Munich:** Porzellanmanufaktur Nymphenburg in Munich

**Eschenbach:** Kerafol Ceramic Tapes

**Selb:** Rosenthal Creative Center, Industry Museum, Rosenthal-Museum, Berufsbildungszentrum für Porzellan, Hutschenreuther-Kunstabteilung a.o.

**Dresden:** Fraunhofer Alliance for High Performance Ceramics, IKTS

**Berlin:** KPM, Königliche Porzellan Manufaktur

**Dessau:** Bauhaus Dessau Foundation

**Halle:** University of Art and Design, Halle

The students should observe any developments of new materials and production methods.

Lectures will be held at various times and venues during the journey. Students should keep a journal to document anything interesting they find and gather and record all relevant and related information.

### **The Aim**

- Students should familiarize themselves with the various ceramics materials and their practical use.
- Students learn to work independently. Recording, compiling, documenting and photographing any primary and secondary research in their own journal.
- Students are introduced to similar students studying comparative subjects in Universities abroad, on a pier-to-pier basis, to compare knowledge.
- Students are expected to address and evaluate the use of recent technical developments that have occurred in ceramic production lately.

### **The Requirements**

A written report supported by photographs and any written notes following the research trip to Germany.

Should be submitted and presented in week 17.

### **The Assessment Process**

25%. Based on student presentations. As an introduction into the research material compiled about those company's students have studied.

25%. Based on students active involvement during the research trip, alongside their planning and independent working methods.

50%. Based on research in form of written report. Taking into account documentation, format and presentation.



# MATERIALS & METHODS

13 ECTS units

## Teachers/Lecturers

- Ólöf Erla Bjarnadóttir – Plaster mouldmaking, porcelain slipcasting, oxides and colouring compounds, 3 units.
- Sigrún Ólöf Einarsdóttir and assistants – Glass casting, 3 units.
- Bjarnheiður Jóhannsdóttir – Glazes, 1 unit.
- Svafa Einarsdóttir – Silicone casting, 1 unit.
- Hubert Kittel – Keraflex porcelain sheets, 1 unit.

Written assignments from selected lectures, 2 units.

Final project, 2 units.

## Module structure

Students are introduced to variety of materials such as: porcelain, glass, plaster, metal, silicone, and Keraflex porcelain sheets.

- Using porcelain to explore the mixing of porcelain slip, combined with the use of oxides and other compounds to provide a range of outcomes.
- Creating “Master” forms to make plaster moulds for porcelain slipcasting as well as moulds from cast iron for glass blowing and glass casting.
- Students develop glass pieces that should be fully finished off at the glass studio Gler í Bergvík. n.b. It is not possible to finish off the glass pieces after the glass course is finished.
- Experiments with casting silicone and to explore how porcelain and silicone could function together.
- A week long seminar will be held, where a guest lecturer from Halle University in Germany will demonstrate to students his knowledge and working methods used to process Keraflex porcelain sheets.

During last 4 weeks of the module, using the materials and working methods they have studied throughout the term, students should begin to develop their own personal project. It is expected that the students will have deepened their understanding of the materials and adopted a personal direction to plan and present their ideas, ready to begin work on their final collection as they move towards the end of spring term and the final show.

Following the timetable, students will use their practical skills working independently in the workshop, alongside a teacher. Researching their ideas through practical studio work and by using the library resources.

Through students developing independently and in different ways their experiences and knowledge should provide a broad range of directions benefiting the whole group. In seminar discussion groups, each individual can share their ideas and seeking support and advice.

The college caretaker can provide some technical support in the workshops on tuesdays from 12.00-15.00 and in some cases can help and give some technical advice on materials and working methods.

The college is open till 22.00 hrs from mon-fri. Saturday till 13.00 hrs. For further information refer to the term timetable.

Lectures are held regularly on aspects that relate directly to the module brief as well as other subjects in a broader context. There are a number of written assignments from selected lecturers and students are expected to use this information given to further research and develop their own work.

Teaching schedules will be handed out to students by each individual modular cell teacher.

## **The Aim**

- Students are expected to use this experience to get a feel for the material and then evaluate the various qualities it can provide in terms of both its potential and its limitations.
- Students should develop their ideas sympathetically with each material introduced to them.
- Students can make simple single drop-out plaster mould, two-part drop-out plaster mould and multipart slipcast plaster mould.
- Each student needs to grasp a good understanding of all those practical skills introduced to them during the term.
- Students need to establish a good overview of working processes of both blowing and casting glass.
- Students to gain certain skills to a level where they can independently tackle their own final project during the last 4 weeks of the spring term.

## **Requirements**

- Complete the assignments from each modular cell.
- Ceramics project should be completed by the end of spring term.
- Set up of show, and present own personally created collection
- Provide supporting documentation of written assignments, sketchbooks, experimental and technical progress reports and alongside evidence of participation in group discussions.

## **The Assessment Process**

40% of the assessment is based on how students adopt the various technical and practical craft skills, and also how students master an affinity with the material.

10% of the assessment is based on the students organizational skills and their ability to set up their own final show and present a collection of their work for exhibition.

25% of the assessment relates directly to working diary/sketchbooks/experimental-work records and written assignments.

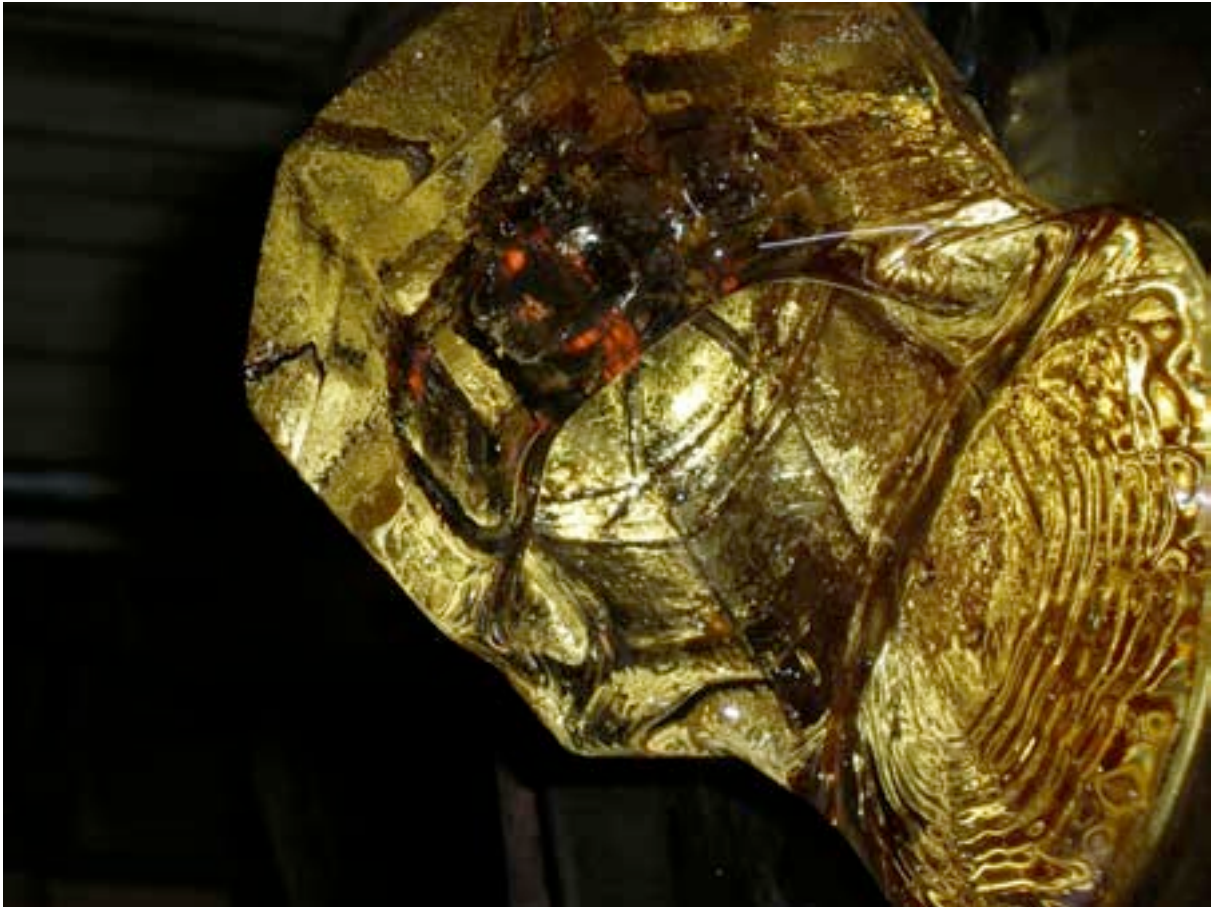
The final 25% of the assessment relates to written assignments from cell modules delivering working progress and final conclusion.

Where we look for originality, skill development and organization.

NOTE: Short tutorials are held of those modular cells of more than one ECTS units. For lesser modular cells receive a Mark.(grade)

For written assignments there is one collective grade for the complete collection.





## **MODULE C. Paths of Visualization**

Students are encouraged to develop personal themes and ideas, and will explore connections between their ideas, the arts and subjects like ethics, philosophy and cultural values.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Research within a personal area of interest to broaden perspectives.

Expand personal perspectives, their relationship to the materials, and possible connections in a larger context.

Enrich technical skills. Work and time organization.

## **MATERIAL/METHODS**

Students enter with a foundation from other studies or from other encounters with the material and deepen the methods that they have acquired. The tutor instruction is individual to each student.

## **MODULE STRUCTURE (DRAFT)**

Their emphasis in teaching is on the human body through clay, drawing, short conceptual projects and philosophy.

6 weeks of short projects which all have connection to the different phenomenons of the body; surface, organs and inner forms, their structure and texture. But also the connection between them, their function and perception.

These projects will be in close context with the seminar in philosophy.

Once a week over the period, there will be drawing lessons with different teachers. They are thought as to help students developing their ideas quickly, through the pencil, to think through the pencil, open new fields and use the drawing as a source of three dimensional work.

There will also be one big project where students work independently on using and deepening the knowledge of methods and skills, they gained in former modules, A and B.

The supervisors are two artists in the field of fine arts.

In the technical field of ceramics, the emphasis is on throwing. Two times, two weeks over the period. Several teachers and hopefully one guest teacher from abroad with demonstration.

Glasses will also be taught once a week over the period.

## SEMINAR IN PHILOSOPHY

6 ECTS units

### Teacher

Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir

### Course structure

The topic of this seminar will be the phenomenology and aesthetics of body, art and nature. The seminar will consist in lectures and lively discussions where students are encouraged to take an active part. We will also go on small fieldtrips where we will have an opportunity to try out the ideas we are discussing.

Valuation: The students will keep a diary where they will, among other things, document their own ideas about the topics we are discussing. They will also prepare questions for discussions and write an essay at the end of term.

#### I. Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology

Readings: The World of Perception, "Eye and Mind", "The Intertwining, the Chiasm"

In this part the students will be introduced to the French philosopher and phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty. His philosophy is a theory of perception, which he thought of as the basis for all our knowledge of the world. We are connected to the world through our bodies and our perceptions, so if we want to look at how we live in this world and how we can have knowledge of it, we must pay more attention to our perception. His ideas present a certain criticism of scientific thinking which divides the world into small parts to categorize without paying attention to how reality appears to us in our perceptual experience. We will take a close look on his ideas in the paper "Eye and Mind" where he talks about art and how artists approach the world in a phenomenological way; in art we pay attention to direct bodily perception, in art the artist communicates his connection to the world through the body, without necessarily conceptualizing and defining it with words.

#### II. The Aesthetics of Art and Nature

Readings: Chapters from The Aesthetics of Natural Environments, edited by Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, chapters from Aesthetics of the Natural Environment by Emily Brady.

In the last 20-30 years philosophical aesthetics have again started to pay attention to the aesthetics of nature. One of the main questions in aesthetics of nature is whether we can explain the aesthetics of art and nature in the same way or if the aesthetic perception of art is radically different from the aesthetic perception of nature. What is aesthetic perception? What does such an experience consist of?

### III. Art and Icelandic landscapes

Readings: "Nature's Otherness and the Limits of Visual Representations of Nature" and "Heild sem gerir mann heilan" by Sigríður Þorgeirsdóttir.

In this part we will look at how Icelandic nature has become the topic of many artists, both foreign and Icelandic. Sigríður Þorgeirsdóttir will visit us and give a lecture.

### IV. Aesthetics of the Everyday

Readings: chapters from *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, edited by A. Light and J.M. Smith

Here we will look at how the everyday; our homes, workplaces, the streets we walk on, the weather, smell and view through the window in the bus can be sources for aesthetic experiences.

### V. Art and nature as basis for self-knowledge

Readings: "Nature" by Ralph Waldo Emerson, chapters from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau and chapters from *Art as knowledge* by A. Young.

Here we will look at what role nature and art can possibly play in our search for self-knowledge.

### VI. Fieldtrips

We will go on fieldtrips where we will study our first hand experience of the aesthetic perceptions of nature, art and the everyday.



## MODULE D. **Production**

Industrial production of ceramics is introduced. Technology and mass production is examined.

Technical solutions for molding are studied, and different procedures for production will be explored.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Learn to evaluate the economic feasibility of production methods.

Learn to develop ideas with production parameters.

Learn to look at production procedures in a creative way in order to intervene, reconfigure or regroup particular parts of the procedure.

Expand technical knowledge of sophisticated moulding and computer processes with 3D applications.

Obtain training in communication with manufacturers.

## **MATERIAL/METHODS**

Complex mould production, 3D computer modeling and printing.