



Middle Eastern Ceramics

Historical And Contemporary Connections

Christy Wittmer

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Project Summary

At its best the process of creating an artwork leads to unplanned results. My role as a teacher is to support students as they navigate and respond to the unexpected in their work, to challenge them to move beyond familiar concepts and encourage them to take risks. I believe that a knowledge of art history and contemporary art are important underpinnings for a contemporary artistic practice, and I build this into each course.

These lesson plans have been designed for the course ART162: Ceramics II. This course is primarily focused on developing the students' skills at throwing on the potter's wheel. As a ceramic artist who has lived in China and studied Chinese ceramics, my initial interest in Islamic art was to explore the connections and influences between Middle Eastern ceramics and Chinese porcelain along the Silk Road. The first lessons of the term will focus on the history of Middle Eastern Ceramics. We will discuss the influence of Chinese blue and white ware on Persian ceramics, especially after the Mongol invasion. As there are many excellent examples of blue and white painted Sultanabad ware plates and bowls, this is paired with students' learning how to throw a plate on the potter's wheel.

Next the students will learn how to throw vases and closed forms on the potter's wheel. For this lecture we will look and the important development of Lusterware in Middle Eastern ceramics. For both of these lessons, plates and vases, surface decoration will be an important component. We will look at examples of Middle Eastern ceramics to see how the artisans used surface decoration to break up the space of the ceramic form. Students will utilize Persian design strategies to decorate their plates and vases, while inventing their own patterns and images.

Through researching contemporary art of the Middle East I noticed themes that made relevant connections between historic ceramics and contemporary art, especially geometric abstraction, poetry and calligraphy. There are several contemporary sculptors who create geometric abstract sculptures. We will look at this contemporary work in conjunction with intricately patterned historic ceramic tile work

that decorates mosques. The appearance of infinitely repeating patterns is believed by some to be an appropriate adornment for the interior of a mosque or religious building where visitors are contemplating the infinite nature of the universe. For this project students will learn to use the extruder tool and create their own geometric abstract sculptures with the pieces they extrude.

Calligraphic decoration is prevalent in many forms of Islamic art including ceramics, architecture, textiles and metal work. The calligraphic text sends a spiritual message to the viewer. Many contemporary artists in the Middle East, influenced by this history, create paintings and sculptures which utilize calligraphy in a way that the writing becomes a graphic element in their work. For this lesson we will look at historic ceramics in which the calligraphy functions as design with a message. We will compare Middle Eastern text-based work with contemporary Western art that utilizes text. Then students will learn to make a teapot which they will decorate using writing.

Poetry is an important part of Middle Eastern culture and many artists' have been moved to create work in response to a poem. In preparation for this project, we will read a poem before each lesson of the course. When they are introduced to the Middle Eastern Art and Poetry project, they will be familiar with Rumi and other historical and contemporary poets. We will look at the work of Middle Eastern artists who create work based on poetry and listen to an interview with artist Hossein Valamanesh. Then students will learn how to throw a sectional form and create a sculpture based on a poem of their choice.

Clay in the wet form has many interesting properties and states in progress that are not visible in the final fired work. To encourage students to observe closely what the material is doing at all phases of working with it, students will be required to create a video or stop motion animation of their interaction with clay. As examples I will show videos made by Tala Mandani, Avish Khebrehzadeh and Shiva Ahmadi. While their animations are made with painting instead of clay, students can look at them for narrative development and qualities that make for an interesting animation.

This course will not be a comprehensive study of the history of Middle Eastern ceramics, nor trace its roots on the Silk Road. Instead it will provide students with an experience of Middle Eastern historic and contemporary art while teaching them ceramic techniques to improve their skills so they will be prepared to advance in the course. It will also provide insight into how contemporary artists generate ideas in dialogue with historical art to create work that is relevant today. It is my hope that these lessons will give students a positive and varied experience of Middle Eastern art, culture and history while stimulating their curiosity to learn more.

Special thanks to Amy Newhall for her guidance, suggestions and poetry.

Course Description

Ceramics II is a continuation of Ceramics I with emphasis placed on the mastery of wheel throwing, surface decorating and glazing techniques, expanded critical awareness and the development of a personal aesthetic. Lectures, demonstrations, group discussions, assigned projects and critiques will further assist in growth and critical understanding of the issues in the ceramic arts, preparing you for upper level study in the medium.

Prerequisites: ART161. Text required: None.

Course Competencies

- Demonstrate the ability to manipulate a variety of clay and clay bodies.
- Demonstrate a continuation of hand building techniques.
- Throwing on the potter's wheel, a continuation of the cylinder form.
- Wheel trimming and completion of forms.
- Demonstrate a competency in surface decorating techniques.
- Use clay inlay and stamping techniques.
- Combine various forms in clay.
- Describe firing schedule and firing procedures.
- Combine various methods of applying glaze.
- Use alternative methods of firing ceramic ware.

In addition to competencies students will:

- Research ideas, plan projects and sketch designs.
- Exhibit curiosity, creative problem solving and a willingness to try new things.
- Explain their work in relationship to concepts, ideas, techniques, processes and experiences.

Calendar and Assignments

- Week 1:** Introduction to course, throwing and trimming refresher.
Assignment: Four 6 inch cylinders, cut in half. Aim for straight and even sides from lip to base and flat bottom inside. 10pts
- Week 2:** **Lecture:** Lusterware
Demo: Plates and platters
Assignment: Two thrown and trimmed plates with surface design. 10pts
- Week 3:** **Lecture:** Sultanabad ware
Demo: Throwing closed forms
Demo: Throwing a chuck for trimming
Assignment: Two closed forms with surface decoration and a thrown chuck for trimming. 15pts
- Lecture and Demo:** Surface decoration techniques.
- Week 4:** **Lecture:** Geometric Abstraction, Tile work and artists Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian and Shirazeh Houshiary
Demo: Extruder or Tiles
Assignment: Create a piece that explores geometric abstraction either in form or surface decoration. 10-15pts
- Lecture and Demo:** Glazing, glaze making and firing.
Assignment: Mix 2 glazes and apply to test tiles. 5pts
- Week 5:** **Lecture:** Video/Animation
Tala Mandani, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPky6BvW1IM>
Avish Khebrehzadeh, <https://vimeo.com/52620098>
Shiva Ahmadi "Lotus", Video <https://youtu.be/3qSJ5HTKyUU>

Demo: Video/Animation

Assignment: Video or animation with clay, 10pts

Week 6: **Lecture:** Middle Eastern Art and Poetry

Demo: Sectional throwing

Assignment: Create a thrown or hand built piece inspired by a poem.
15pts

Week 7: Work, Video/animation due uploaded to Canvas or bring it to class on a drive.

Week 8: **Mid-term Critique**, 5pts

Week 9: Spring break!

Week 10: **Lecture:** Calligraphiti: Text and Teapots

Demo: Teapot, throwing off the hump

Assignment: Teapot (hand built or thrown), 15pts

Extra credit opportunity: Make two cups to match your teapot, 5pts
Research and sketches due week 11.

Week 11: **Lecture:** Alternative Firings, Raku and Saggar

Week 12: **Last day to work in wet clay**

Week 13: **Last day for leather hard work**

Week 14: Bisque fire and glaze work.

Lecture: Presentation/Photographing artwork

Assignment: 3 photographs of your artwork, upload to Canvas by final critique. 10pts

Week 15: Last day to glaze

Week 16: **Mandatory clean up** (one grade down if not attended)
Final critique of all work, 5pts and removal of work

Lesson Plan: Plates, Platters and Sultanabad ware

Course: ART 162 Ceramics II

Topic/Concept: Plates, Platters and Sultanabad ware

Teaching Methods:

1. Directed Discussion (whole group)
2. Interactive Lecture
3. Demonstration
4. Project-based Learning

Goals & Outcomes/Competency:

Outcomes:

2. Demonstrate a continuation of hand building techniques.
3. Throwing on the potter's wheel, a continuation of cylinder forms. (III)
4. Wheel trimming and completion of forms. (III)
10. Demonstrate a competency in decorating surface techniques. (IV)

Goals:

1. For students to develop an awareness of Islamic art history through studying ceramic functional ware.
2. For students to understand how historic Middle Eastern artists have added surface decoration to ceramic works and created Sultanabad ware.
3. For students to learn how contemporary artists use surface design.
4. For students to understand how to make a plate.
5. For students to understand how to add surface decoration and apply glaze to their work.

Measurable Objective(s):

1. Students will **demonstrate** how to create plates on the wheel and hand built.

2. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply surface decoration to clay with inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing.
3. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply glaze.
4. Students will **describe** how what Sultanabad ware is and how it developed.

Anticipatory Set (hook):

The whiteness of stonepaste clay provides a canvas for 13th and 14th century ceramic artists could apply pigment directly, and a new type of decorative ceramics emerged called Sultanabad ware. It consisted of black and blue designs on a white clay body. Often the decoration was of vegetal patterns inside radial frameworks. The black slip was stable and used for drawing the outlines and fine details. The blue was very runny and used for filling in shapes and highlights. Kashan in Iran was one of the primary ceramic centers during this period.

This period is called the Ilkhanid Period (1256-1353). The Mongols had invaded Iran. "Il Khan" means lesser Khan, and Genghis Khan was the ruler of China. The Il Khan ruler of Iran, Mahmud Ghazan (r. 1295-1304) converted to Islam, and created public policy in support of Islam helping the Islamic decorative arts of this period to flourish. East Asian elements were incorporated into already established Persian and Islamic designs to create an artistic vocabulary that was emulated across the Middle East and India, and profoundly affecting the ceramic arts.

Instruction (day 1):

After the Anticipatory Set the project will be introduced: Students will create plates using the pottery wheel and hand building. Students will use inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing to decorate the surface of their plates.

First we will look at examples of historical plates especially Middle Eastern Sultanabad ware. Then we will look at images of plates and platter by contemporary artists.

After the interactive lecture the students will spend 3-5 minutes sketching their ideas for plates and surface design.

Then the instructor will demonstrate how to throw a plate. Trimming a plate and hand building a plate will be demonstrated on Day 2.

Closure Check for Understanding:

Students will make two thrown and trimmed plates and two hand built plates. Over the course of several class periods students will use the potter's wheel and hand build plates they design. They will use inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing to decorate the surface of their plates. Instructor will check for understanding and offer guidance to students one-on-one, as needed.

Notes:

Surface design techniques and glazing will be taught in an earlier lesson and will be relevant for their finished work for this lesson and will be part of the assessment for this project.

Lesson Plan: Vases, Closed Forms and Lusterware

Course: ART 162 Ceramics II

Topic/Concept: Vases and Closed Forms

Teaching Methods:

1. Directed Discussion (whole group)
2. Interactive Lecture
3. Demonstration
4. Project-based Learning

Goals & Outcomes/Competency:

Outcomes:

3. Throwing on the potter's wheel, a continuation of cylinder forms. (III)
4. Wheel trimming and completion of forms. (III)
10. Demonstrate a competency in decorating surface techniques. (IV)

Goals:

1. For students to develop an awareness of Islamic art history through studying ceramic functional ware.
2. For students to understand how historic Middle Eastern artists have added surface decoration to ceramic works.
3. For students to learn how contemporary artists use surface design.
4. For students to understand how to make a closed forms on the pottery wheel.
5. For students to understand how to add surface decoration and apply glaze to their work.

Measurable Objective(s):

1. Students will **demonstrate** how to to create closed forms on the wheel

2. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply surface decoration to clay with inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing.
3. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply glaze.
4. Students will **describe** Middle Eastern Lusterware and the process used to create it.

Anticipatory Set (hook):

In pottery, luster painting, a glittering metal effect on the surface of the pottery was an important development in 9th century Iraq. This technique spread from Iraq to Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Spain, England and eventually to America. Creating Lusterware is an extremely difficult process in which silver and copper oxides were combined with sulphur and other materials and used to paint a design on a glazed and fired object. It was then re-fired in a reduction kiln where the oxygen was drawn out from the metal oxide leaving a metal film on the surface which refracts light and creates a lustrous appearance. Lusterware was a closely guarded process shared by only a few families of craftspersons. Migrating craftspersons from Iraq introduced Luster painting to Egypt.

Instruction (day 1):

After the Anticipatory Set the project will be introduced: Students will create closed forms and vases using the pottery wheel. Students will use inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing to decorate the surface of their plates.

First we will look at examples of historical vases and vessels especially Middle Eastern Lusterware. Then we will look at images of vases and closed forms by contemporary artists.

After the interactive lecture the students will spend 3-5 minutes sketching their ideas for closed forms and surface design.

Then the instructor will demonstrate how to throw a closed form. On Day 2 the instructor will demonstrate how to throw a chuck, a cylinder form used to hold vases

and bottles for trimming. Then the instructor will demonstrate how to trim the vase/ bottle.

Closure Check for Understanding:

Students will make two thrown and trimmed closed forms. Students will throw their own chuck for trimming. Over the course of several class periods students will use the potter's wheel to throw vases and closed forms they design. They will use inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing to decorate the surface of their closed forms. Instructor will check for understanding and offer guidance to students one-on-one, as needed.

Notes:

Surface design techniques and glazing will be taught in an earlier lesson and will be relevant for their finished work for this lesson and will be part of the assessment for this project.

Lesson Plan: Geometric Abstraction

Course: ART 162 Ceramics II

Topic/Concept: Geometric Abstraction

Teaching Methods:

1. Directed Discussion (whole group)
2. Interactive Lecture
3. Demonstration
4. Project-based Learning

Goals & Outcomes/Competency:

Outcomes:

2. Demonstrate a continuation of hand building techniques. (II)
5. Use clay inlay and stamping techniques. (IV)
6. To combine various forms in clay. (II)

Goals:

1. For students to develop an awareness of Islamic art history through studying ceramic tiles.
2. For students to understand how contemporary artists have used geometric abstraction.
3. For students to understand how to use the extruder.
4. For students to understand how to apply glaze.

Measurable Objective(s):

1. Students will **demonstrate** how to create geometric abstract sculpture using repeating extruded clay forms.
2. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply surface decoration to clay with inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing.
3. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply glaze.

4. Students will **describe** how contemporary Iranian artist use geometric abstraction.

Anticipatory Set (hook): We will look at images of historic and contemporary artwork.

The historic work will focus on ceramic and tile work with geometric patterns.

Geometric patterns occur in a variety of forms in Islamic art including architecture, ceramics, textiles and metal work. Because the worship of idols is forbidden in the Koran, figurative art is not used to decorate religious buildings or mosques. Instead, geometric or vegetal forms are made into intricate patterns. The appearance of infinitely repeating patterns is believed by some to be an appropriate adornment for the interior of a mosque or religious building where visitors are contemplating the infinite nature of the universe.

The sources for intricate geometric patterns already existed in Iran in late antiquity from Greek, Roman and Sasanians cultures. Islamic artists appropriated elements from these traditions and elaborated on them making the patterns more complex and intricate, stressing unity and order. Islamic astronomers, mathematicians and scientists were instrumental in helping to develop this new style.

Although the patterns were generated from simple shapes like a circle or square, the patterns were repeated, combined and interlaced to create complex patterns that are a distinguishing feature of Islamic art.

Instruction (day 1):

After the Anticipatory Set the project will be introduced: Students will create an abstract sculpture influenced by the geometric patterns that occur in Middle Eastern art and architecture. Students will use the extruder to create a multiples which they will use to design a repeating pattern.

Then we will look at images of artwork by contemporary Middle Eastern artists. We will focus on the sculpture and installation work of two Iranian sculptors. Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian's work is largely based on geometry. It is inspired by ceramic tile, metal work, wood and plasters found in old mosques. Farmanfarmaian

worked with artisans in Iran to have her mosaic mirror tile pieces constructed. Shirazeh Houshiary's work has strong Persian influence. Her work explores spiritual concerns and draws on Sufi mystical doctrine and the poems of Rumi, a 13th century poet. This will expose students to a variety of abstract sculptures and stimulate ideas for designing and making their own.

After the interactive lecture the students will spend 3-5 minutes sketching their ideas for repeating patterns.

Then the instructor will demonstrate how to use the extruder and slice the extruded forms to make "tiles." Then we will explore manipulating the tiles to create different patterns.

Closure Check for Understanding:

Students will make a geometric abstract three dimensional sculpture. Over the course of several class periods students will use the extruder to create the sculpture they design. Instructor will check for understanding and offer guidance to students one-on-one, as needed.

Notes:

Glazing will be taught in an earlier lesson and will be relevant for their finished work for this lesson and will be part of the assessment for this project.

Lesson Plan: Video/Animation with Clay

Course: ART 162 Ceramics II

Topic/Concept: Video/Animation with Clay

Teaching Methods:

1. Directed Discussion (whole group)
2. Interactive Lecture
3. Demonstration
4. Project-based Learning

Goals & Outcomes/Competency:

Outcomes:

3. Demonstrate the ability to manipulate a variety of clay and clay bodies. (I)

Goals:

1. For students to observe, discover and record qualities of wet clay.
2. For students to understand how to use clay to generate their own ideas.
3. For students to learn how contemporary artists use video and animation to explore ideas and narratives.

Measurable Objective(s):

1. Students will **demonstrate** how to create a video or animation of their interaction with clay.
2. Students will **describe** ways contemporary artists have used video and/or animation to explore ideas and narratives.

Anticipatory Set (hook):

In ceramics, work often looks best after it has been made but before it dries, when the clay still has the water in it. Also, clay in the wet form has many interesting properties and states in progress that aren't visible in the final fired work. This project puts the

emphasis on clay as a material rather than clay becoming a fired finished piece. I will give students a fist-sized ball of clay and ask them just to experiment with manipulating it, not making it into anything, just playing with it. Then we will talk about what they observed about the clay.

Instruction (day 1):

After the Anticipatory Set the project will be introduced: Through manipulation, exploration and experimentation with clay, students will notice qualities of the wet clay. They will then document their observations and/or interactions with clay in a stop-motion animation or video project.

First we will look at examples of video/stop motion work by contemporary artists:

Tala Mandani, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPky6BvW1IM>

Avish Khebrehzadeh, <https://vimeo.com/52620098>

Shiva Ahmadi "Lotus", Video <https://youtu.be/3qSJ5HTKyUU>

Then we will discuss the students' experience with video/animation and programs and options they can use. The instructor will demonstrate technology as needed.

Here is a list of resources which will be included in Canvas:

iMovie Tutorial Text.pdf

Resources for free stop motion video editor:

<https://www.aiseesoft.com/resource/stop-motion-video-maker-free.html>

Students have access to Adobe Premier while on campus. Here's the link on how to sign up to use it:

<https://www.cgc.edu/services/technology-support/tech-central/Documents/Adobe/Student-signup-official.pdf>

Mac computers on campus also have Apple Final Cut Pro.

A website for creating stop motion:

<https://screencast-o-matic.com>

Closure Check for Understanding:

Students will make a video or animation of their interaction with the clay. Over the course of several class periods students will use the potter's wheel or hand build to and video or photograph what they observe. Then they will create a video or animation piece which they will share with the class. Instructor will check for understanding and offer guidance to students one-on-one, as needed.

Lesson Plan: Middle Eastern Art and Poetry

Course: ART 162 Ceramics II

Topic/Concept: Middle Eastern Art and Poetry

Teaching Methods:

1. Directed Discussion (whole group)
2. Interactive Lecture
3. Demonstration
4. Project-based Learning

Goals & Outcomes/Competency:

Outcomes:

2. Demonstrate a continuation of hand building techniques. (II)
3. Throwing on the potter's wheel, a continuation of cylinder forms. (III)
4. Wheel trimming and completion of forms. (III)
6. To combine various forms in clay. (II)
10. Demonstrate a competency in decorating surface techniques. (IV)

Goals:

1. For students to develop an awareness of Islamic art history and culture through studying ceramic functional ware.
2. For students to understand how historic Middle Eastern artists have used for idea generation and making meaning in their ceramic works.
3. For students to learn how contemporary Middle Eastern artists poetry in relationship to their artwork.
4. For students to understand how to express an idea with clay.
5. For students to understand how to add surface decoration and apply glaze to their work.

Measurable Objective(s):

1. Students will **demonstrate** how to create a ceramic object, sculptural or functional based on the text or imagery in a poem.
2. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply surface decoration to clay with inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing.
3. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply glaze.
4. Students will **describe** how contemporary Iranian artists use poetry to generate ideas for their work.

Anticipatory Set (hook): Many Middle Eastern contemporary artists are influenced by poetry. In preparation for this project and to learn about Middle Eastern culture we will begin every lesson by reading a poem aloud from a Middle Eastern poet. When we begin this lesson, the students will have been hearing poetry and thinking about the visual images expressed in these poems. We will begin this lesson with a poem as well. We will read Rumi in class as well as other famous classical Persian poets such as: Hafez (Hafiz) and Sa'adi, Nizami, Attar, Firdausi (Firdawsi).

Then we will listen to the interview with Hossein Valamanesh discussing his sculpture *The Lover Circles his Own Heart*, the title is a line in a poem by the Sufi poet Rumi, and the poem inspired the artwork. Its circular motion echoes the rhythmic dance and flaring skirts of the 'whirling dervishes', devotees of the Mevlevi Order of Sufism, who practise whirling as a form of physically active meditation, of remembrance of God and unity with the divine. Rumi was a dervish. Here is the link to the interview: <https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/works/2005.4A-C/>

Instruction (day 1):

After the Anticipatory Set the project will be introduced: Students will create an object using the pottery wheel or hand building that is inspired by the language in a poem. The students can find a poem they want to use for the project or use one of the poems we have read in class.

Next we will look at examples of works of art by Middle Eastern artists that have been inspired by poetry. Then we will look at sculptural artwork by contemporary artists that have a strong narrative element or visual imagery.

Then the instructor will demonstrate how to throw a sectional form.

Closure Check for Understanding:

Students will make an object, sculptural or functional that has been influenced by the imagery in a poem. Over the course of several class periods students will use the potter's wheel or hand build an object they design. Instructor will check for understanding and offer guidance to students one-on-one, as needed.

Notes:

Surface design techniques and glazing will be taught in an earlier lesson and will be relevant for their finished work for this lesson and will be part of the assessment for this project.

Some of the poems we will read:

Farewell, by Ibrahim Najji (Egyptian) and sung by Umm Kulthum

Leave me, my love, it's time to part
this paradise is not my portion.
I had to cross a bridge of flame whenever
I visited this land of bliss.
Yet I've been your life-long companion
since earliest youth and your tender years.
But now I come like a transient guest,
and go away like a bird of passage.

Has anyone drunken with love like us,
seen love like we have seen it?
We built a thousand castles on our way,
Walked together on a moon-drenched road,
Where joy danced and leapt before us,
we gazed at stars that fell, and we possessed them.

And we laughed like two children together,
ran and raced with our own shadows.
After this nectar's sweetness we awoke-
how I wished it had never been so!
Night's dreams had vanished, the night was ended
the night that used to be our friend.
The light of morning was an ominous herald;
dawn loomed up like a wall of fire.

Love Compared by Nizar Qabbani (Palestinian)

I do not resemble your other lovers, my lady
should another give you a cloud
I give you rain
Should he give you a lantern, I
will give you the moon
Should he give you a branch
I will give you the trees
And if another gives you a ship
I will give you the journey

A Lesson in Drawing by Nizar Qabbani

My son places his paint box in front of me
and asks me to draw a bird for him.
Into the gray color I dip the brush
and draw a square with locks and bars.
Astonishment fills his eyes:
"...But this is a prison, father
Don't you know, how to draw a bird?"
And I tell him: "Son, forgive me.
I've forgotten the shapes of birds."

My son puts the drawing book in front of me
and asks me to draw a wheatstalk.
I hold the pen
and draw a gun.
My son mocks my ignorance,
demanding,
"Don't you know, Father, the difference between a
wheatstalk and a gun?"
I tell him, "Son

once I used to know the shapes of wheatstalks
and the shape of the loaf
and the shape of the rose
But in this hardened time
the trees of the forest have joined the militia men
and the dull rose wears fatigues
In this time of armed wheatstalks
armed birds'armed culture
and armed religion
you can't buy a loaf
without finding a gun inside
you can't pluck a rose from the field
without it raising its thorns in your face
you can't buy a book
that doesn't explode between your fingers."

My son sits at the edge of my bed
and asks me to recite a poem,
A tear falls from my eyes onto the pillow.
My son licks it up, astonished, saying:
"But this is a tear, father, not a poem!"
And I tell him:
"When you grow up, my son,
and read the diwan of arabic poetry
you'll discover that the word and the tear are twins
and the Arabic poem
is no more than a tear wept by writing fingers."

My son lays down his pens, his crayon box in
front of me
and asks me to draw a homeland for him.
The brush trembles in my hands
and I sink, weeping.

Wandering Around an Albuquerque Airport Terminal by Naomi Shahib Nye

After learning my flight was detained 4 hours,

I heard the announcement:

If anyone in the vicinity of gate 4-A understands any Arabic,

Please come to the gate immediately.

Well—one pauses these days. Gate 4-A was my own gate. I went there.

An older woman in full traditional Palestinian dress,
Just like my grandma wore, was crumpled to the floor, wailing loudly.
Help, said the flight service person. Talk to her. What is her
Problem? we told her the flight was going to be four hours late and she
Did this.
I put my arm around her and spoke to her haltingly.
Shu dow-a, shu- biduck habibti, stani stani schway, min fadlick,
Sho bit se-wee?
The minute she heard any words she knew—however poorly used—
She stopped crying.
She thought our flight had been canceled entirely.
She needed to be in El Paso for some major medical treatment the
Following day. I said no, no, we're fine, you'll get there, just late,
Who is picking you up? Let's call him and tell him.
We called her son and I spoke with him in English.
I told him I would stay with his mother till we got on the plane and
Would ride next to her—Southwest.
She talked to him. Then we called her other sons just for the fun of it.
Then we called my dad and he and she spoke for a while in Arabic and
Found out of course they had ten shared friends.
Then I thought just for the heck of it why not call some Palestinian
Poets I know and let them chat with her. This all took up about 2 hours.
She was laughing a lot by then. Telling about her life. Answering
Questions.
She had pulled a sack of homemade mamool cookies—little powdered
Sugar crumbly mounds stuffed with dates and nuts—out of her bag—
And was offering them to all the women at the gate.
To my amazement, not a single woman declined one. It was like a
Sacrament. The traveler from Argentina, the traveler from California,
The lovely woman from Laredo—we were all covered with the same
Powdered sugar. And smiling. There are no better cookies.
And then the airline broke out the free beverages from huge coolers—
Non-alcoholic—and the two little girls for our flight, one African
American, one Mexican American—ran around serving us all apple juice
And lemonade and they were covered with powdered sugar too.
And I noticed my new best friend—by now we were holding hands—
Had a potted plant poking out of her bag, some medicinal thing,
With green furry leaves. Such an old country traveling tradition. Always
Carry a plant. Always stay rooted to somewhere.
And I looked around that gate of late and weary ones and thought,

*This is the world I want to live in. The shared world.
Not a single person in this gate—once the crying of confusion stopped
—has seemed apprehensive about any other person.
They took the cookies. I wanted to hug all those other women too.
This can still happen anywhere.
Not everything is lost.*

Lesson Plan: Calligraphiti: Text and Teapots

Course: ART 162 Ceramics II

Topic/Concept: Calligraphiti: Text and Teapots

Teaching Methods:

1. Directed Discussion (whole group)
2. Interactive Lecture
3. Demonstration
4. Project-based Learning

Goals & Outcomes/Competency:

Outcomes:

3. Throwing on the potter's wheel, a continuation of cylinder forms. (III)
4. Wheel trimming and completion of forms. (III)
6. To combine various forms in clay. (II)
10. Demonstrate a competency in decorating surface techniques. (IV)

Goals:

1. For students to develop an awareness of Islamic art history through studying ceramic functional ware.
2. For students to understand how historic Middle Eastern artists have used text to add surface decoration and meaning to ceramic works.
3. For students to learn how contemporary Middle Eastern artists use and incorporate text into their artwork.
4. For students to understand how to make a teapot.
5. For students to understand how to add surface decoration and apply glaze to their work.

Measurable Objective(s):

1. Students will **demonstrate** how to create a teapot with a handle, spout and lid.

2. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply surface decoration to clay with inlay, sgraffito, water etching and/or slip trailing.
3. Students will **demonstrate** how to apply glaze.
4. Students will **describe** how contemporary Iranian artist use text in their two- and three- dimensional artworks.

Anticipatory Set (hook): We will look at images of historic and contemporary artwork. The historic work will focus on ceramic functional work with written phrases that function as decoration that also convey a message to the user of the piece. Interest in calligraphy and its ornamental possibilities is directly linked to the exalted position of the Qur'an in all Muslim societies. Because the worship of idols is forbidden in the Qur'an, figurative art is not used to decorate religious buildings or mosques. Instead, geometric, vegetal forms or calligraphic decorations are made into intricate patterns. Calligraphic decoration is prevalent in many forms of Islamic art including ceramics, architecture, textiles and metal work. The calligraphic text sends a spiritual message to the viewer.

Instruction (day 1):

After the Anticipatory Set the project will be introduced: Students will create a teapot using the pottery wheel or hand building. Students will use text as a decorative element on the teapot.

First we will look at examples of teapots made by artists. Then we will look at images of artwork by contemporary Middle Eastern artists. We will focus on the text-based work of Sayed Mohammad Ehsaey, Parviz Tanavoli and Azra Aghighi Bakhshayesh. We will also look at Western contemporary text-based art and artists.

After the interactive lecture the students will spend 3-5 minutes sketching their ideas for teapots.

Then the instructor will demonstrate how to throw a lidded vessel, and a spout and assemble them into a teapot.

Closure Check for Understanding:

Students will make a teapot with a lid, handle and a spout. Over the course of several class periods students will use the potter's wheel or hand build a teapot they design. They will use words and repetition to design an engaging surface decoration for their teapot. Instructor will check for understanding and offer guidance to students one-on-one, as needed.

Notes:

Surface design techniques and glazing will be taught in an earlier lesson and will be relevant for their finished work for this lesson and will be part of the assessment for this project.

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