Dear Sculptors,

Welcome to Releasing the Figure in Clay! My name is Cynthia Siegel, and I will be your instructor for this enjoyable and informative six-meeting course in figurative clay sculpture. Accompanying this letter is a list of tools and materials for you to bring with you to class. The list is divided into the tools we will need for sculpting and handling the clay, and for applying textures and surface treatments. Experienced sculptors are welcome to bring their favorite tools for these processes. Most of the tools listed can be found at Phoenix Ceramics, 350 Coral St # D, Santa Cruz, CA 95060-2138, (831) 454-9629, Tue - Sat 10 am - 5:30 pm. Other tools, particularly those that I use for hollowing out sculpture, have come straight from the kitchen, and can be found at supermarkets or other stores that sell housewares. You can often find these tools at bargain prices in secondhand stores such as Goodwill or The Salvation Army. Local art supply stores such as Palace Arts and Lenz also offer a small selection of wooden and metal sculpting tools.

The $45 materials fee paid at the time you enrolled for the class covers the cost of two 25# bags of sculpture clay, a wood armature for pieces made first in solid clay, then hollowed out, the fee for our three sessions with the model, and some supplies for surface treatments of slips, washes and terra sigillata. If you would like to explore a wider variety of colors in your sculpture, Phoenix Ceramics carries the entire palette of Western underglazes in inexpensive 2-ounce jars. I will have a small amount of additional clay available for purchase for $12/bag. I will arrange one pick up time after the course is completed for students to retrieve fired work.

Please take some time before the start of our class meetings to gather imagery and ideas from your life, interests, travels, and dreams, and organize them into a sketchbook or journal that you will bring to our class meetings. It is always a delight for me to see the transformations as this imagery leaps off of its pages to inform your ceramic sculptures.

I’m looking forward to sculpting the figure with you in June!

Warmly,

Cynthia Siegel
Materials List for Releasing the Figure in Clay with Cynthia Siegel

Tools for constructing, sculpting, hollowing and reassembling

- Fettling knife
- Pin tool
- Clay cutting wire
- Ribs: 1) metal kidney-shaped rib;
- 2) very flexible rubber rib (Kemper blue rib, also Sherrill ribs are great!)
- Turntable, 8” diameter: Phoenix stocks a useful white melamine one; or, purchase 6” lazy susan hardware at Home Depot for $5 and attach it to a 10-12” piece of plywood.
- Fork
- Dinner knife/table knife
- Melon baller
- Grapefruit spoon
- Small sponge and bucket for water
- Towel
- Piece of eggcrate foam, 16” x 16” x 2” (minimum thickness)
- Two pieces of plywood, 12”, for transporting sculpture
- Bamboo skewers, 12”
- Toothpicks
- 2-4 wood sculpture tools. Choose a variety of shapes.
- 1-2 medium-sized loop tools, round or triangular shapes.
- Apron/Workclothes
- Plastic to cover your work-in-progress. (good sources are dry cleaning bags and lightweight garbage bags)
- Sketchpaper (or sketchbook) and charcoal (or pencil or pen)
- Optional: dental tools for detail work
- Optional: rubber-tipped clay shapers for detail work, smoothing
- Optional: items that can be pressed into the clay while it is still soft, to create texture/imagery. Bring what intrigues you. Some suggestions are: wire brushes, letter typeset, keys, stamps, rocks, leaves, etc. Hardware stores are great for discovering cool texture tools!

There will also be many options to choose from in the studio.

Tools and materials for surface treatments

Brushes, assorted sizes and bristle firmnesses for adding texture: minimum to bring: 1” flat, ½ “ round, ¼” round.

Jelly jars/small yogurt containers for mixing washes/slips/sigillata/underglazes (bring 6-10)

Optional; q-tips, makeup sponges to apply surface treatments

Optional: sponges, variety of textures, to add texture and to apply surface treatments

Optional: underglazes, your choice of colors. Western brand available at Phoenix Ceramics in 2 oz and 16 oz containers.

Optional: mason stains to use in terra sigillata and in washes, your choice of colors. Phoenix sells small samples of many colors.