

COURSE TITLE	INTERMEDIATE PORTRAIT SCULPTURE: EXPRESSION AND GESTURE
COURSE CODE	EC2502SC6
TUTOR	LAURA POSTLE
START DATE	20/01/2025
DAY & TIME	TUESDAYS, 6.00 - 9.00PM
LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED
LOCATION	BANKSIDE CAMPUS
DAILY BREAKDOWN	
Date	Topics/ Skills covered
20/01/2026	Setting a pose for a "portrait with gesture" requires an understanding of the complexities that arise when the head tilts or turns. We will spend time studying viewpoints and angles, with particular focus on observing the model accurately from the profile. Sculpting will then begin with the careful placement of the tragus notches, ensuring the gesture of the model is captured correctly, while keeping the underlying support post embedded within the sculpt. PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS VITAL THAT YOU ATTEND THE FIRST TWO CLASSES
27/01/2026	A successful portrait depends on careful attention to the profile, creating a nuanced silhouette and establishing accurate facial heights and proportions. We will practice tracking the model's head tilt—a challenging but essential skill, especially when capturing gesture and expression. PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS VITAL THAT YOU ATTEND THE FIRST TWO CLASSES
03/02/2026	Once a few key measurements have been used to establish an accurate profile along the face's tilted centerline, we can begin visually mapping out depths—such as the eye sockets, the back of the nostrils, and the corners of the mouth. These key depths will then enable us to begin building the widths from the front. Cheekbones and eye sockets will be defined, and the sculpture will start to take shape.
10/02/2026	No class
17/02/2026	Once the portrait's heights, widths, and depths are accurately established from all key front-on perspectives, we can begin examining it from a three-quarter view, refining the fullness of the face, including the cheeks, eyesocket corners and the forehead.
24/02/2026	Modelling features really starts to bring the sculpture to life. Working back from the profile and the filtrum, sculpting mouth can really start to give a sense of depth to the sculpt. We will look at whether the model is holding a slight smile or expression in their mouth, how this can vary throughout the session and how to capture a subtle but captivating expression in our piece.
03/03/2026	Depending on the model's expression, we will study the natural asymmetry of the eyes, whether the gaze is directed downward or to one side. Time will be devoted to creating a convincing sense of focus, as well as exploring how modelling techniques can be used to shape shadows and guide the viewer's eye—suggesting the presence of colour within the iris.
10/03/2026	Modeling light and shadow is essential in portrait sculpture. Capturing highlights on the forehead and shaping shadows across the cheeks and features helps define the differences between flesh, cartilage, and bone. We will explore both over-modeling and under-modeling, discussing how each approach can create intrigue and focal points while softening other areas. These techniques will allow us to capture the model's key characteristics and enhance likeness in the final sculpture.
17/03/2026	In the final weeks, we will focus on bringing the portrait fully to life. This stage allows time to refine the surface, capturing the model's subtle forms—such as the gentle shaping of the cheeks and the nuanced turns of the eyelids and mouth corners. It is often one of the most rewarding parts of the process, offering the opportunity to look more deeply into the work and add depth, character, and vitality to the finished sculpture.
24/03/2026	Sculpting a stable base is essential to ensure the portrait will stand securely after firing, as well as withstand the kiln process itself. Toward the end of the course, we will turn our attention to the model's clothing and neckline, creating a sculpted representation that both frames the portrait aesthetically and provides a solid foundation. Finally, we will cover the techniques of hollowing and preparing the piece for firing.