

Jo Pottery Group

The first time I went into hospital, it was an awakening. That's how I would describe it. An awakening of self awareness that had sort of a monumental level. That was so powerful that it was like I had taken a load of LSD or something. I was as high as a kite but I never actually went into a depression like people with Bipolar I just went high. If you see what I mean.

I'd just come out of hospital and things were quite wild. While I was in hospital I had done pottery which is something I had always wanted to do and so they said if you would like to carry on with it why don't you go to this group because they're doing pottery. I walked in and the first thing I did was do my own thing and I felt a bit embarrassed, if you know what I mean, because everyone else wasn't doing that. But now it's a much freer thing. That I really like that so everyone's creativity is allowed to flourish. Our pottery all looks different, I expect you've seen, people all come up with incredibly different things cos there's a lot more than just pottery going on in the class. For instance, I have always been quiet. You wouldn't think it. In that I don't speak up very much in a group of people and I've kind of learnt to interact with people in a much more articulate and confident way. Which has been really nice cos I've found out that they kind of like me. Then there's the undefinable thing, which is not really mental learning, which is the physical learning of actually moulding the clay and getting used to moulding it and your hands getting comfortable with it, if you know what I mean. Being able to carve it out in whatever form that you want. I've learnt to do that more. I've learnt practical things like if you make a big piece of pottery, you've got to put a hole in it, otherwise it will explode in the kiln. I've learnt some of how glazes change when you paint them cos it's quite different from painting a picture because the colours one way. When you put it on paper it's the same way but when you do it with glazing it's one way when you've just painted it and then it's a completely different colour when it's fired. So I'm gradually learning what things are going to look like.

This one is just that. It's an attempt to try out as many different glazes as I can on terracotta so it's basically rainbow colours all the way round. I did it at home actually. I took some clay home, cos Andrew lets me do that, and I rolled it out and tried to make it into a pot shape and the whole thing went sideways and wobbled all over the place and eventually I managed to get it to stay in one place. I ran my fingers up the edges so there would be a defining line between each colour. It's fun. I like it. I miss it when it doesn't happen.

I think interaction with people and being able to be creative are two things that are really beneficial. Everyone is very supportive. It's just lovely to know them all. Lovely people. I enjoy that.