

Dean's Outstanding Internship Award – Certificate of Merit
院长优秀实习生奖表扬状 (2024/25)

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My Journey in Seyu Ceramics

1. Introduction

This article aims to review my fruitful journey as a studio assistant at Seyu Ceramics (Seyu) during this summer internship. The studio is operated by my familiar ceramics lecturer, Mr Ng Ka Ho and the experience of working there provided me invaluable positive effects in the area of ceramics and definitely helped me develop the relative essential occupational skills. Before the start of my internship, I did detailed research on his studio's Instagram profile, which shows the art projects and events that are linked with society.

2. The Background of Seyu

Seyu was founded in November 2021 and reopened in July 2024 with the ownership of Mr Ng. The studio did not have additional employees, but there is a collaboration between Mr Ng's business partner, JOJO, who is responsible for the marketing and retailing services of the company. The primary target for Seyu to achieve in the ceramics industry is to provide advanced ceramics modelling techniques. Seyu provided a series of workshops, including wheel-throwing, hand-building and modelling lessons, aimed to assist the student in enhancing their skills. Additionally, Seyu would participate in market events to let the students sell their works, which boosts the social bonding between ceramics lovers.

3. Targets and Goals

Before entering the internship programme, I had set clear objectives for myself to ensure rewarding and delightful experiences. The goals included: Acquiring studio operation skills, gaining ceramics education knowledge, and product designing experiences. I have prepared my mind to meet my internship with my passion and determination, and I was looking forward to learning and growing in a supportive working atmosphere. Glad to report that I achieved a huge fulfilment in my satisfaction. It is essential to give credit to Mr Ng's guidance and support, which assisted me a lot in striving for my goals.

4. The Role of a Studio Assistant

As a studio assistant, I received special opportunities to participate deeply in various aspects of the studio operation. This multifaceted position gave me invaluable experiences in practical and management perspectives. In the following section, I will describe my target-related experiences and reflections.

4.1 Acquiring Studio Operation Skills

The most important part of my job responsibility involved studio operation; I participated in many kinds of works that were very important to the operation of Seyu. My daily tasks included the following:

- **Cleaning studio:** The task that I took a role in at first was tidying and cleaning the studio spaces. These areas were usually full of mud and tools everywhere so keeping a clean environment for the artist and workshop's smooth process is necessary.
- **Materials preparation:** I learnt how to prepare materials for classes, including clay recycling, loading and unloading kilns and making glaze test pieces. These parts are the centre of running the studio, and the details and efficiency need to be considered.
- **Packing the goods for sales:** I also participated in the packing and organising of the market goods during exhibitions and markets. This required me to understand the products and ensure them to be presented in an attractive way for the customers.

Other than the manual labour work, Mr Ng also encouraged me to explore more on the studio's administrative works. These include designing copywriting, visuals and videos for Seyu's Instagram. This part of the internship allowed me to utilise my visual arts abilities in a digital environment and explore the creative sides of studio management.

4.1.1 Deliverable

During the whole internship period, I produced some outputs that benefitted the studio operation:

- New organized studio space, which enhanced the working motive and efficiency.



- Promotional posters and materials



- Posts and photos for social media platforms



4.1.2 Reflection

The experiences taught me the lessons of time management, perseverance and resilience. I learnt to face tasks that seem to be dull with a positive attitude and knowing the importance of them for the whole operation of the business. The ability to keep motivated in repetitive work is definitely important as this makes me contribute to Seyu in a more effective way and develop my personality simultaneously.

4.2 Gaining Ceramics Education Knowledge

Before the internship, my background in ceramics was limited as I only learnt the foundation knowledge in my major course. However, I desired to expand my understanding and skills. The internship opportunity provided me many chances, and let me learn different advanced ceramics skills that were not taught at school. Some key learnings included:

- **Glaze research and experiment:** Luckily, I had time to research glaze and try different groupings and techniques. This applied learning was important for me to understand the chemical natures of glazes and their reactions in the firing process.
- **Advanced ceramics skills demonstration:** I participated in different ceramics skills demonstrations by Mr Ng, observing his movements in hand-building, wheel-throwing, and kintsugi and applying the skills through practice. This session greatly enhanced my ability and faith in ceramics production.
- **Trial class job shadowing:** I followed Mr Ng's working schedule in order to do job shadowing in different workshops, including regular, moonjar and trial classes. He gave me an opportunity to be a helper in the trial class, which let me know more about the teaching methods and the complexity of ceramics workshops.

4.2.1 Deliverable

Because of my active participation in Seyu, I could produce some satisfactory ceramics. These physical learning outcomes let me have concrete testimony of the growing journey in the internship.



(From left to right)

Picture 1: Testing of product design for the experiential class

Picture 2: Artworks for the studio exhibition

Picture 3: Glaze test pieces

Picture 4-6: Experimental process of moulding

4.2.2 Reflection

I realised the importance of owning cross-curriculum knowledge when I was handling the ceramics techniques. Understanding the nature of glaze and clay chemistry knowledge required me to borrow knowledge from various subjects, which brought out the spirit of application, patience and experimentation in having a top position in ceramics learning. Teaching ceramics is not easy, but to achieve the possibility of being a studio owner, I have to put much more time into practising ceramics production.

4.3 Product Designing Experiences

I focus on the artwork and its ideas but usually omit the technical skills and elements for thinking about product design before the internship. Nevertheless, my time in Seyu widened my horizon in product design, which covered many important aspects:

- **Cost consideration:** I learnt we need to consider the cost of the ceramics production, for example, time, raw materials, etc. I understand the choice of design affects any artists who are hoping to sell their works.
- **Market opinion and marketing:** I was rewarded with the analysis of the market opinions and trends. This understanding was very important for creating products that could echo with the consumers and stand out from the competitors.
- **Artwork management:** My learning has expanded to artwork management, social media operations, curating exhibition and product cum workshop design. They strengthen the importance of choosing all-rounded methods during the creative process. With also the extended learning on the artworks management, social media operation, exhibition planning and product and workshop design.

4.3.1 Deliverable

The outputs I produced according to my product design goal included:

- Promotional tools for the studio products, including posters and videos.



- Starry sake glasses class design.



- Ceramics created by molds. There was the process of trial and error.



4.3.2 Reflection

Through the challenges faced in Seyu, I bore the difficulties of fulfilling deadlines and managing the administrative work in mind. I learnt that managing and organising time in an effective way is really correlated with the effectiveness of operating the designed schedule. I had harvested significant memories of the works behind the scenes of the successful art creation when I dealt with the difficulties.

5. Suggestion for Further Personal Development

In reviewing my time spent at Seyu, I realised that not only did my ceramics techniques and abilities improve during this wonderful adventure in the internship, but I also took a huge leap in personal development. I clearly understand more about my passion towards ceramics and the direction I am hoping to chase.

6. Room for Improvement

Although I made great progress during the summertime, there is still room for improvement, especially in the following areas:

- **Physical and mental strengths:** I discovered the needs from the comments of my colleagues, and I wish that I could enhance my toughness physically and mentally. In the work of a ceramics studio the physical power needed is very huge, and increasing my muscles could make me able to bear more challenging tasks. Other

than that, a stronger mind could lead me to deal with the conversation and teaching of the customers in a more comfortable way.

- **Work-life balance:** I usually work overtime, and I was aware of the importance of keeping the balance between work and rest. Finding the charging time is the key to maintaining creativity and preventing tiring the occupation.
- **Continuous practice:** I understood that acquiring ceramics skills is a long and continuous process. I planned to refine my skills and explore more new techniques outside of the internship.

7. Personal Reflective Insights

After the whole internship programme ended I had a review on myself. I would like to grab the chance to experience ceramics, which is a form of art that I have been interested in for a long period of time. I discovered that this is a trip of transition. This led me to explore my interest in ceramics more deeply and think about the significance of the earth as a medium of expression. I discovered that I loved the free form of handcrafting, which provided me with a creative outlet that was missing in academic pursuits.

I embraced an inquiry mindset and felt empowered to ask questions and seek guidance. This proactive attitude significantly enhanced my learning experience, allowing me to gain valuable insights from colleagues and mentors.

8. Critical Reflection About Seyu Ceramics

In the contemporary social context, the ceramic industry faces unique challenges and opportunities. Immigration, changes in consumer behaviour and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted ceramic market dynamics. Many studios have had to adapt or close, resulting in lower-quality products being filtered out, leaving behind more polished art projects.

As ceramics is a profession required by our hands, it is very difficult for me to find sources of evidence about the industry online. Therefore, the opinions mentioned below were mostly by the artists from the related industry.

9. Plans for Further Development

The valuable time participating in Seyu studio enriches my curiosity and excitement to explore ceramics in the future. My plans for further development included:

- **Continuous Practice:** I will take the time to practice ceramics regularly, focusing on both foundational skills and advanced techniques. This ongoing commitment will allow me to refine my craft and deepen my understanding of the medium.
- **Skill Up:** I hope to expand my knowledge in studio operations, marketing strategy, and product design. This holistic approach will allow me to successfully navigate the complexities of running a ceramics studio.
- **Networking and collaboration:** I plan to network with other artists and ceramic enthusiasts to pursue opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange. Building a supportive network has been crucial to my growth as a ceramic artist.

10. Conclusion

Overall, the experience of being an intern student in Seyu Ceramics is a journey of transition. It has reshaped my understanding towards ceramics and my personal growth. I was rewarded with treasurable skills and knowledge through the applied experience,

guides and cooperation with the partner, which would definitely guide me to my dream. As I am stepping forward, I am really looking forward to the challenges and opportunities in my future ceramist pathway. Sincerely, thank you for the support from Mr Ng, JOJO, and other intern colleagues, and for keeping me excited about learning this gorgeous art form.



A photo with my dear teacher and colleagues during the opening of the studio exhibition



A set of “Fishlegs”, my favourite works throughout the internship