

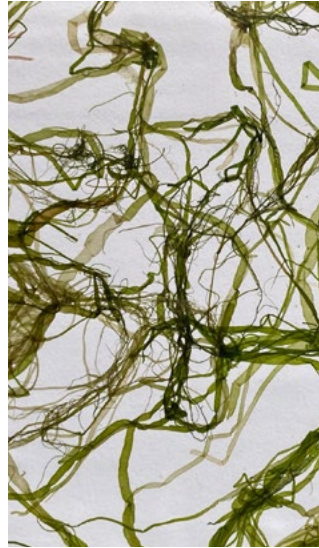
# claire ireland ceramics

## Hebridean Project

Funded by the Craft Pottery Charitable Trust

June 2024

I spend four weeks on South Uist, an island in the Outer Hebrides and immersed myself in a wonderful array of experimental techniques. I discovered the thrill of making natural glazes, under the watchful eye of Miranda Forrest. We explored how to process the different materials found on the island, including those she cultivates in her garden. We burnt the dried plant materials and sugar kelp stems in the drum of a washing machine to reduce them to ash. We also collected different minerals and rocks from the beach and at a local farmer's excavation site.



On days I wasn't in the studio; I explored the rugged sections of coastline that lay in front of the house where I was staying. There are very rocky sections in between stretches of sand. Lots of rock pools and seaweed and sometimes swathes of tiny shells and fragments of sea urchins. The island is home to a wonderful collection of different seaweeds which has a long history of harvesting and manufacturing due to the pristine quality of the coastline. I chose the very delicate ones to press and embed onto watercolour paper, keeping that lace-like quality it has when immersed in water. I dried some flat pieces to press into soft clay, cast, or use fragments to make prints on paper. The rest were sent home to process into glazes and incorporate in my saggar firings.

I used samples of the minerals we collected and made the ground pigments into paint, and homemade ink, applying them to watercolour paper by painting and printing. I also experimented with dried seaweed to make a bioplastic mixture which I supported with a fine cotton scrim.

