



Artist Instructor Profile – Eric Olson

Eric Olson’s need to create has been a part of his life for decades. His journey as an artist began at a young age with early works in oil painting and batik – but his excitement over his discovery about how clay ‘moves’ is what led him to tour and find a teaching studio at the Armory Art Center.

“My initial impression was, ‘this is what a studio should look like,’ and, ‘they have everything and more that an art studio would need,” Olson said.

As an Armory Artist Instructor, Olson teaches basic methods of working with clay, just the way he was initially taught. He calls his teaching style easy-to-learn and fun. “The methods are tried and true and I use them every time I make a new piece.”

For Olson, sharing his experience and enthusiasm for clay and art with the community is joy. “It is an honor and a privilege,” he said. “I love seeing students ‘get it,’ and start moving clay. That’s when the magic happens.”

“One of the things I love about clay is I’ll never learn everything about it,” he said. “I’ve been learning about it ever since. It is a lifelong pursuit.”

He invites the community to get to know the Armory as a top-notch teaching facility that offers something for every level of artist, from introduction to different mediums and techniques – to advanced studies for experts looking to hone skills. “It’s a world-class facility all around.”

In Olson’s teaching studio, creativity and practice are at the center. “The main thing is just to make art,” he said, adding that artists shouldn’t worry if it’s good or bad, or if someone else likes it or not. “The more you do it, the better you get at it, and the piece you don’t like might move someone emotionally.”

“Create. Try different things. Learn different methods, but, by all means, create, create, create!”

– Contributed by, Laura Louise Tingo
JSS Marketing and Public Relations

ABOUT ERIC OLSON

Eric Olson first discovered his love for clay in 1994 while taking a class, through the Craftshop at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Under the instruction of teacher Cleo Kung, he was introduced to the techniques he still uses today, 27 years later.

Eric took to clay immediately and after six months of daily practice, he started a full-time business making and selling pottery. For the first seven years he sold his work at Juried Fine Art

Shows across the country. While attending these shows, he encountered many accomplished potters who shared their vast knowledge of techniques with him, furthering his abilities.

It was also at these shows Eric met a pottery collector who told him of events where the emphasis was the love of antique pottery and the people who collect it. After researching and learning about the makers from 100 years ago, Eric's work took on characteristics of pottery made during the Arts and Crafts period at the beginning of the 20th century. He began attending collector shows, and his work appears in collections around the world from the US and Canada, to China, the Netherlands and Great Britain.

Teaching was something that came naturally to Eric, and his enthusiasm for pottery comes through in his entertaining and fun method of instruction. His biggest joy comes from seeing students have that "Aha!" moment when the techniques click and beautiful pots emerge from a ball of clay. Eric has taught pottery to hundreds of students in Wisconsin, Michigan, Florida and Montreal.

Eric continues to sell his pots on his website, ericolsonpottery.com and plans to attend shows again after the pandemic eases. And, of course, he teaches wheel pottery at the Armory Art Center.