



Armory Instructor Profile – Won Ok Park

Won Ok Park moved to West Palm Beach in 2016 and soon became an active member of the Armory Art Center. She began teaching at the Armory in January of this year.

Won Ok studied at Ewha University in Seoul, Korea for her bachelor's degree and Rhode Island School of Design for her masters. She also studied at Yamada Reiko studio in Japan. She studied jewelry manufacturing in Hong Kong, at a Chinese jewelry store in Danang, Vietnam and at Kyung Wha Jewelry Institute. Won Ok studied sumi-e oriental painting at the Professor Chang Woo Sung Oriental Art Studio. At the Armory Art Center, Won Ok teaches jewelry making and oriental sumi-e painting with watercolor.

Her love of art began when she was in elementary school when she made sculptures with wire and folded origami figures. Although Won Ok had been a jewelry maker since the 1960's, she didn't consider herself to be an artist until the 1980's when she was a student at RISD. The teachers there praised her drawing skills and artistic talent. She then continued to explore different media like ceramics and glass and eventually considered herself an artist.

Won Ok is impressed with the facilities and equipment at the Armory Art Center. She especially appreciates the kiln and the tools to make jewelry. Won Ok loves the community of faculty, students and staff and finds everyone to be exceedingly kind and accepting.

The most important technical skills she teaches her students is calligraphy in sumi-e painting. If you can learn one important calligraphy brushstroke, you can transform it into an orchid, bamboo tree, or many other images. Won Ok also thinks the skill of integrating oriental techniques in brush calligraphy and crinkled rice paper (masa paper made in Japan) with western watercolor painting is an important skill to learn.

Outside of the technical skills, she likes her students to understand what Asians call "qi." Qi is the energy that you infuse in every mark, line, or brushstroke. You can feel connected to the qi of a piece of artwork. Won Ok believes that everyone can be an artist. After just one class in which you learn the basics, you can become an artist in that medium.

It's not surprising that Won Ok's favorite place to view art is in nature. She finds the most exciting pieces when exploring the bark of a tree, how the sun sets, or how the ocean reflects light and movement. Egon Schiele is her favorite artist for figure drawings. However, her all-time favorites are Japanese artist Hokusai and Chinese artist Chang Dai-Chien.

When she's not creating or teaching art, Won Ok enjoys making silk shibori scarves and clothes, cooking Korean food, and golfing. Her art is not currently available for sale to the public, but she's working on a website and hopes to display in exhibitions at the Armory soon.

You can read more about Won Ok Park at [this link](#).

– Contributed by Denise Mariani
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