



Instructor Profile | Gerard Bartlett, November 2022

For Gerard Bartlett, art isn't merely a profession. It's a way of life. Based in Hobe Sound, Florida, Gerard is a welding instructor in the Armory Art Center's sculpture department. His background in wildlife art and sculpture has earned him numerous accolades, but he says it comes back to being inspired by nature—and inspiring others.

Gerard's earliest memory of creating was in the fourth grade, when he sketched Snoopy, the iconic Peanuts pup. In high school, he took private woodcarving lessons. He also received a three-day lesson on wildfowl carving with acclaimed artist Don Briddell, who used knives and power tools rather than chisels. That training kickstarted Gerard's woodcarving career, earning him top awards in local, regional, and international wildlife carving competitions, including the Ward World Carving Championship in Ocean City, Maryland, and first place at the inaugural World Fish Carving Championship (saltwater division) in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Eventually, Gerard decided he wanted to make even more art. To do that efficiently, he'd need to change mediums. A year-long apprenticeship in 2001 at the Johnson Atelier in Princeton, New Jersey gave him the chance to do that. There, he absorbed everything he could about creating bronze sculpture, including mold making, metal-chasing, and welding. Still, he says woodcarving (and its cleaner, quieter nature) is still his first love.

Gerard learned about the Armory many years ago, while he was looking for a foundry to work in. But he wouldn't begin his teaching career until a couple of years ago, just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Despite that obstacle, he's made more connections and received more opportunities than ever to showcase his work.

What he loves most about teaching? The freedom to express his love of art and inspire his students to reach beyond their "perceived limitations."

"One of my attributes is that I'm a spark that can light others on fire," he said. He wants his students to walk away with a basic understanding of balance, composition, and how to create metal art safely—after all, welding is not for the faint of heart.

"No matter what level of skill you have, you can learn to make impressive and lasting works of art. You can do anything [you] set your will to do, with enough time or [resources]."

When he's not teaching at the Armory, Gerard creates sculptures for a metal art company in North Palm Beach. And, he's an adventurous outdoorsman. He has worked as a guide, mate, and captain in Alaska, Cabo San Lucas, Nova Scotia and beyond.

"Growing up, I spent a lot of time hunting and fishing. My brother was actually a world famous fisherman. Honestly, I liked [being outside] more than studying!" he said. "I know how things are supposed to look in the wild, so I have a good idea of how to translate that to sculpture. And, I see the hand of the Artist so clearly. To me, the balance, forms, and colors in creation are perfect. It's inspiring."

Gerard can be commissioned to create pieces. Inquiries can be made on [Facebook](#) or via text at (561) 201-7666.

— Contributed by Hannah Deadman-Arnst
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