

# ARTIST SPOTLIGHT **Krissy Catt**



Artist Krissy Catt

Artist-Instructor Krissy Catt creates tall, slender figurines that shoot from their bases like stalks, or cosmic bodies. They're delicate, joyful, bright and mesmerizing. Her use of clay, light and refined.

A native of Edina, Krissy found her creative engine in college. While pursuing a psychology degree at the University of Minnesota, she took a ceramics course in her second year, which changed her direction unexpectedly. She almost immediately switched her major to Fine Arts. "My sister was always the artistic one in the family, so it was a surprising change for everyone."

"As a child, I was intimidated by [my sister's art work] – she was so good, I didn't do a lot. When I got out on my own, I discovered I really enjoy creating art and I wanted to pursue doing more." As many of the courses at the university were pottery and handbuilding in nature, she soon found herself "all over the place" working in different styles and forms, and decided to strike out on her own. She soon began to study under Professor Curt Hoard, continuing her handbuilding craft while exploring independent studies in sculpture. "He was sort of my mentor."

As her studies were coming to an end, she learned of the Northern Clay Center, which was just opening in St. Paul (now relocated to Minneapolis). She spent 20 years there perfecting her craft while raising a family and working outside of the arts field. During this period her work was applauded. "The public received it very well and were very interested in it, which was great because it's really what my soul wants to do – make figurative work." She continued creating "hundreds" of figures even after moving her studio to the basement of her family home.

After years of working in her non-arts career, her painter friend (and MCFTA Artist-Instructor) Ellen Richman encouraged her to try her hand at teaching. "I thought, well she's out here and I'd like to try that myself."



*Awakening of the Heart*, low-fire white clay



*Blue Star*, low-fire white clay

At first, Krissy started working with seniors with memory loss as a part of MCFTA's Outreach Program. Her interest in psychology created an art therapy approach to her instruction. "When seniors with memory loss get that piece of clay, they would get so into what they were doing. They would look forward to it every week – it was very rewarding. A lot of times they had things to entertain them, but not to create."



*Wonder*, low-fire white clay

Soon she began teaching other classes at MCFTA. Currently she teaches two ceramic sculpture classes in the Adult Program and a variety of classes and workshops in our Summer Arts Camp and Children and Family Programs. Her classes often sell out. "We have lots of fun and it's very lively. A big part of my class is community and my students really just enjoy each other. Everyone comes in with their own ideas of what they want to do. They learn something different from the other students as much as they learn from me."

The Art Center itself offers great inspiration to Krissy. She is happy to arrive each day to follow her passion in top-notch studios, and to teach students who are eager to learn. They inspire her daily. She takes pride in their accomplishments and marvels at their growth as artisans.

Of her own work, she hopes it "makes people happy." Ultimately, "I want the viewer to feel at peace or calm. Having a good influence on the world is really important to me." In between raising a family, "when I get the opportunity to work on my sculptures [it] brings a sense of calm and peace to me."

This fall she will be teaching **Ceramic Sculpture** and several single sessions in our intergenerational **Workshops for Families**.



Ceramic Sculptures by Krissy Catt