

Bryan Van Benschoten Biography



I was born and raised in the Catskill Mountains of New York State. In 1960 as a freshman in Margaretville High School, my artistic talents were noticed by an observant art teacher, Burt Van Scoy. Through this nurturing I was encouraged to attend Alfred State University College of Ceramics, and graduated with a BFA in 1968. This was in the midst of the hippie era and the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations; and as unlikely as it was, I got interested in the military. While in college I attended ROTC and obtained my officer's commission, and

upon graduation served in the military for 2 yrs.

After an honorary discharge I moved to Detroit, Michigan and was employed at The Edison Institute (Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum). Working at the institute was a very rewarding experience of training others in the business of ceramics, specifically pottery production of early American Pottery from the 1700's through the early 1900's. I also did supervisory work in other craft areas and was employed as master potter for just over 38 yrs.

Just prior to retiring from The Edison Institute I was hired at Adrian College, Adrian, Michigan in Dec. of 2008 as Kiln Coordinator. In Jan. 2009 started teaching Sculpture classes and in Jan. 2010 began teaching Ceramics classes. I am still involved in all 3 areas at Adrian College.

I have demonstrated the processes incorporated by early American potters at Michigan colleges, high schools and for the Michigan Ceramic Artist Association. My work has been exhibited in numerous shows and galleries nationally, as well as internationally exhibited and demonstrated in South Korea. An article about Greenfield Village and me was featured in the May 2003 issue of Ceramics Monthly Magazine.

Some of the most important pieces that are in my repertoire of functional wares would be fruit bowls, yard flower pots, bird baths, puzzle jugs, face vessels, ring bottles, and dinnerware sets.

In 2010 the construction of my pottery studio began, igniting a rebirth in my own personal art work. This brought on works which are less functional, more contemporary and aesthetically appealing. I try to change the appearance of my line of work, on a regular basis, so it stays interesting, fresh and new to those that have become patrons. A benefit of teaching is that I have begun working in other mediums - wood, concrete, stone and metal - that has renewed my interest in the field of sculpture, which had been dormant since the early 1970's.

With a lifetime of being in this line of work, it has never become boring, nor have I lost interest in producing for those who love art and the handmade. I want to be able to work until my last day on this earth, creating pottery and sculpture as my lasting legacy.