

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT **Doug Garder**



Artist Doug Garder

Doug Garder is passionate about many things - his wife and partner in life's journey, art history, his own artistic journey, teaching, cooking and travel, just to name a few. He has the soul of an artist and the heart of a teacher. After completing a B.A. in Studio Art and English at Southern Illinois University and taking a year off to cook for a living (in order to fund a further study of art) he was given the opportunity to travel and was awarded a scholarship to attend West Virginia University where he earned an M.F.A. in painting.

He made his way to Minnesota via Oklahoma where he was Gallery Director for Cameron University. Minnesota became home in 1985 "because it seemed like a great place to live." He has been a working and teaching artist in Minnesota ever since.

He first found MCFTA in the late '80s when he participated in a juried show and later taught acrylic painting in the early 90s. He has taught at several local art centers, in the U of MN's extension program and as an instructor at Art Institutes International Minnesota for 17 years, all while creating his own art. He's clearly happy to be back at MCFTA where he currently teaches *Pen and Ink drawing*, *Learning to Draw*, and *Intro to Acrylics*. He says "It's wonderful to be back in this building. The facility is beautifully designed with lots of natural light, which is excellent for painting and drawing. This building fosters learning delightfully!"

A natural teacher who has been teaching for more than 40 years, his passion for the subject is obvious the minute you meet him. "I teach what I know. I've been able to express myself in the classroom based on the experiences I have had in the studio, which become internalized, sometimes at emotional and intellectual levels. I think every artist who teaches can say that." He is both encouraging and supportive, making sure his students really get something out of his class. He encourages his students to "produce something that is meaningful to them. They are often creating a piece they never dreamed they would be able to do." Mara Miller, Adult Program Director, puts it this way: "I truly admire Doug's own artistic work in both pen and ink drawing and acrylic painting, but what I enjoy about



Fishing Boats Isla Mujeres, pen & ink & watercolor

Doug is his enthusiasm toward his students' work. I think he gets as excited about their art as he does about his own." Now that sounds like learning delightfully and we encourage you to try it!

He describes his own artistic journey as one of many changes. "I went through a period in the late 80s early 90s when I was really exploring the inner spectrum — what was in my head." In 1991, Doug produced 20 paintings for the North Dakota Art Gallery Association coined *Inner Spectrum Landscape* (also displayed in other ND and Ohio venues). He describes those pieces as a product of his own imagination but with

a landscape space for its compositional structure. He was also exploring nuances of color, "really trying to capture something emotional, a feeling, which is a big part of Expressionism."

Now his work has become more of a personal narrative. "My work right now is more representational than it has ever been. I like to travel. I like archeology. My recent work is based on my passions now which really involve traveling with my wife. Right now we are exploring Mexico. I try to capture the spirit of a place, whether it's a Mayan pyramid or the West Irish Coast. Hey, I'm a bloody tourist!"

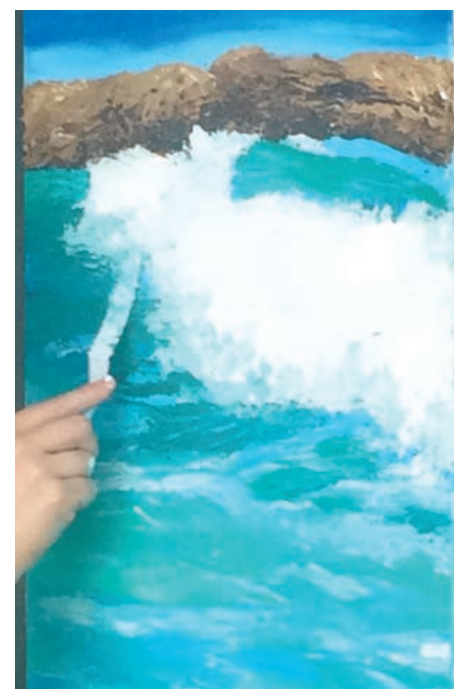


The Caribbean Isla Mujeres, acrylic

Doug has exhibited his work in nearly 100 juried, group and solo exhibitions across the country. Along the way, he has had many sources of inspiration. As a student, he was taken with Edvard Munch and the emotion and angst he was able to evoke in his work. Over the years he has been inspired by many other artists including Albrecht Durer for pen and ink along with the Group of Seven, Canadian landscape painters of the 1920s and 30s. "It's very interesting, I'm learning a lot about forms and painting and composition — I am always learning! Hokusai (The Japanese artist who created *The Great Wave*) said after creating 10,000 pieces of art in his lifetime that he would never be a master. He said this when he was in his 90s! I think that's the thing with art. You're always growing. You go through changes and I have certainly gone through a lot of changes in my work over the years. I'm thinking at some point I might get back to Expressionism, maybe go completely abstract. I might surprise myself...and other people. I just love the mark."



Castillo, Muyil, Mexico, pen & ink



Acrylic student Grace Bocek painting a wave