

Macalester mourns the loss of Art Professor Gary Erickson

St. Paul, Minn. – Gary Erickson, a visiting assistant professor of Art and Art History who came to Macalester in 1995, has passed away at the age of 60.

“Professor Erickson was a marvelous ceramic artist with an international exhibition record,” said Ruthann Godollei, chair of the Art and Art History Department. “He made beautiful, delicate porcelain based on natural forms. He was the backbone of our ceramics program.”

Erickson received his BA in Studio Arts from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn., and his MFA in Ceramics from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in Alfred, N.Y.

His [abstract ceramic sculpture \(http://ericksonclayart.com/\)](http://ericksonclayart.com/) has been shown nationally and internationally, including at the Jingdezhen Sanbao Ceramic Art Institute in Jingdezhen, China, the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, and at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, both in Minneapolis, Minn. His work is in the collections of the National Museum of American Art/Smithsonian Institution’s Renwick Gallery in Washington D.C., and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the People in Santiago de Cuba. He had solo exhibits at Minnesota State University, Mankato, in 2014 and at the Jingdezhen, China, International Academy of Ceramics.

He received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation and the Minnesota State Arts Board. On a Freeman Foundation grant in 2007, he traveled to [Sanbao Ceramic Art Institute in Jingdezhen, China \(http://ericksonclayart.com/video/\)](http://ericksonclayart.com/video/), the city where porcelain was invented and returned for several arts residencies there.

Erickson was one of only four international ceramic artists accepted for a residency at the Taller Cultural in Santiago de Cuba. His work in the Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale 2015, Icheon-si, Korea, won an Honorable Mention.

Godollei said Erickson was “dedicated and generous, and loved good food, music and dancing.”

“He’d have students over to his studio for a feast served on the ceramics they made. He believed in putting ceramics into the world for use and inspirational beauty. He led the students in making ceramics to raise thousands of dollars for food shelves through the empty bowls fundraiser project. Many of his students went



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on to receive graduate degrees and several became professional ceramists.”

His research in China included production of a teaching video about Jingdezhen porcelain. He spent many summers working in Jingdezhen, China, often collaborating with Macalester students.

Erickson produced beautiful ceramic architectural tiles and pottery and maintained a working ceramics studio in Minneapolis. He was also an avid dancer and taught salsa dance classes through the Physical Education Department at Macalester.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,138 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>).

May 20 2016

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