

Northwest Missouri State Art Faculty

Christopher Graves

Assistant Professor

Graphic Design

As an accomplished artist and creative director who has real-world experience with some of the world's best-known companies such as IBM, FranklinCovey, Novell and Gerber, Christopher has a proven ability to understand the needs of business, and to blend them with the aesthetics of design and art to create communications solutions that are clear, compelling and memorable.

As an image-maker, he excels at detecting patterns, recognizing opportunities and making meaning out of seemingly disparate patterns. With empathic understanding of both visual and business problems, he can combine seemingly unrelated activities into not only something new and bold, but effective.

In addition, as an educator he has honed the ability to react and understand student needs. Detect group dynamics, guide discussions. Guide the focused flow of strategic direction. Solutions become integrated. Clearly understood. And correct for the problem given.

Christopher has extensive teaching experience on the collegiate level, both as an Associate Professor at Kendall College of Art and Design, and as an Adjunct at Brigham Young University, Chandler Gilbert Community College, California State University Long Beach and Santa Monica College. In the fall of 2009 he joined the faculty of Northwest Missouri State University.

Laura Kukkee

Assistant Professor of Art

Ceramics

Laura Kukkee is currently Assistant Professor of Art, heading the ceramics program and studio. She teaches all levels of ceramics, from beginning to advanced. She is responsible for the entire ceramics curriculum, which includes all aspects of handbuilding, wheel throwing, clay and glaze development, kilns and firing technology, kiln building and repair, ceramics history as well as advanced level studies in materials exploration and concept development specific to ceramics. She is faculty sponsor for Northwest's Clay Club, which holds a twice-yearly exhibition and sale, sponsors Northwest's "Empty Bowls" fundraiser and takes several field trips each academic year.

Laura Kukkee studied with Kirk Mangus and Eva Kwong at the School of Art at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, earning her MFA degree in 2004. Originally from Toronto, Ontario she is an alumnus of Victoria College at the University of Toronto where she earned a BA in Anthropology in 1992. Laura studied ceramics at the Sheridan College School of Crafts and Design in Oakville, Ontario with Bruce Cochrane and Winn Burke, graduating in 1999. Following graduation from Sheridan College, Laura spent three years as artist-in-residence in the ceramics studio of Harbourfront Centre in downtown Toronto from 1999 to 2002. During her time at Harbourfront Centre, she taught community ceramics classes and participated in many shows; she has exhibited at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art and was regularly invited to participate in the highly competitive "Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition".

In 2007, Laura was chosen as an Emerging Artist by Ceramics Monthly magazine. She has won many awards in the United States and Canada, including being awarded a prestigious Individual Artists grant from the Canada Council for the Arts in 2002. Most recently, she was awarded "Best in Show" at the Regional Juried Ceramics Competition at the University of Dallas in 2007. She has an active exhibition record, and is regularly invited to participate in competitively juried ceramics exhibitions, both national and regional. In January, 2009, she was invited to participate in "Beyond the Brickyard", the national juried exhibition at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts. She has had several solo exhibitions since joining the Department of Art at Northwest, including showing at the Leedy-Voukos Art Center in Kansas City, MO and her most recent solo exhibition in March, 2008 at the University of Dallas.

Mr. Philip Laber
Deputy Chair, De Luce Gallery Director, Professor
Printmaking, Photography, Drawing

Philip Laber joined Northwest Missouri State University in 1976 as Director of the Photography Program and to teach drawing courses. Today he directs both the Photography and Printmaking programs, shares responsibilities in Life Drawing courses, is Director of the Olive De Luce Gallery Program, and assists the Chair in Department management. He teaches all levels of photography and printmaking courses and one section of figure drawing each year. In 1995, he founded the Art Department Study Abroad Program and has since directed short term summer study programs, on alternating years, in countries including: Italy, France, Spain, Greece, Britain, Morocco, and Turkey, introducing students to great works of art and diverse cultures. He is a former sponsor of the student Art Club.

Mr. Laber holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Northwest Missouri State University (1972), post-baccalaureate art history credits in International Studies from Northern Illinois State University, a Master of Arts from the University of Iowa (1975) and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa (1978). Prior to his appointment at Northwest, he held the position of Medial Photographer in the Department of Bio-Medical Communications, School of Medicine at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska (1973-1974).

Phil is an active artist who has participated in numerous regional, national, and international peer juried exhibitions throughout his career, including 2008 museum and gallery venues located in Los Angeles, California; Bradenton, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; Clinton, New Jersey; Wichita, Kansas; and Minot, North Dakota. He is currently the Mid America College Art Association Vice president for Continuity having served two previous terms as Board President. He was invited to the Chautauqua Institute's Center for the Visual Arts, Chautauqua, New York, in 2006 to teach printmaking and in the same year was visiting artist for American University, (Washington, D.C.) Art Department's Study Abroad Program in Corciano, Italy. In 2004, he was invited to the Taller Experimental de Gráfica, the state experimental printmaking studios in Havana, Cuba as a visiting artist and coordinator of a small group of U.S. artists representing the Medical Missions group of Kansas City. The artists worked collectively with children in a local pediatric hospital doing art therapy projects. He has curated several unique exhibits for the De Luce Gallery including an exhibition of contemporary Cuban prints he helped collect and organize for the Racela Educational & Charitable Foundation in Kansas City. The collection of over 70 prints is now on loan to Northwest Missouri State University's Department of Art. For more information on Mr. Laber and to view his creative works, please visit his personal web site at www.philiplaber.com.

Mr. Armin Mühsam
Associate Professor of Art
Painting and Drawing

Armin Mühsam joined Northwest Missouri State University as the Director of the Painting Program in 2000 and is responsible for teaching all levels of painting. In addition to that, he teaches all levels of drawing and oversees the Drawing Program.

Mr. Mühsam holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Applied Sciences in Munich, Germany (1994) and a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Painting from Montana State University in Bozeman (1997). Prior to his appointment to Northwest Missouri State, Mr. Mühsam taught painting and drawing at Munich Community College and at various private art schools, and served as the editor for the visual arts section of "Applaus," a monthly magazine covering Munich's cultural scene.

Since his starting date at Northwest, Mr. Mühsam has had more than 20 solo shows in the U.S. and abroad, was featured in more than 20 invitational exhibitions and so far had his work included in more than 60 national juried shows. Mr. Mühsam has been a visiting artist or panelist at over 15 schools or conferences. He is a member of College Art Association and Mid-America College Art Association. Mr. Mühsam is represented by the William Havu Gallery in Denver, CO, Sherry Leedy Gallery in Kansas City, MO and Galerie Lichtpunkt in Munich, Germany.

Kim W. Spradling
Department Chair, Professor of Art
Art Education

Kim W. Spradling joined Northwest Missouri State University in the fall of 1984 as Director of the Art Education program. He became Chair of the Department of Art in 1998. Dr. Spradling holds a Bachelor of Science degree, with a major in art and a minor in biology, from Northwestern College (1972), a Master of Art in Art Education from The University of Iowa (1977), and a Doctor of Philosophy in Art Education from The University of Iowa (1983). He has taught K-12 art as a public school teacher in Iowa, and prior to his arrival at Northwest, he taught at Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska. In addition to directing and teaching in the Art Education program, Dr. Spradling also teaches courses in fiber arts and papermaking.

Dr. Spradling was named Missouri Higher Education Art Educator of the Year in 1994 by the Missouri Art Education Association. He has been the newsletter editor for the Art Educators of Iowa and for the Missouri Art Education Association. He was President of the Missouri Art Education Association from 1998 to 2000. He holds memberships in the National Art Education Association as well as the Missouri Art Education Association.

Craig Warner
Associate Professor
Graphic Design, Interactive Digital Media

Craig Warner joined the Northwest Missouri State University Department of Art in 1998. Because of his extensive computer graphics background, he designed a new computer lab and began teaching all computer graphics courses in addition to a foundational course. Mr. Warner is responsible for the graphic design curriculum and the interactive digital media curriculum. Mr. Warner teaches Introduction to Design, Introduction to Creative Electronic Imaging, Advanced Creative Electronic Imaging, Creative Digital Animation, Computer Assisted Graphic Design and the Interactive Digital Media Senior Seminar.

Mr. Warner holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art and Art Education from Graceland University and a terminal degree from the University of Kansas, A Master of Fine Arts in Design (1975). In addition to his 19 years teaching a Graceland University, Southwest Minnesota State University and Northwest Missouri State University, he has worked in the Kansas City area for 14 years at several advertising agencies, studios and his own company specializing in graphic design, illustration, photography and starting in 1985, computer graphics.

On the Northwest campus, he sponsors two student organizations -- Big Shoe Graphics, an art student advertising agency club in the art department and the Liahonna Club, the component of the Community of Christ.

In the past ten years, Craig Warner's personal work has existed between his graphic design, illustration and photography work. His imagery, when not pure graphic design, is a blending of drawings migrated into animation software and lit and positioned as you would with photographic subjects, sometimes incorporating digital photos and always with an illustrative humor juxtaposed against impossible combinations of unrelated objects made partners with image processing software.

Within the department, Mr. Warner creates graphics for the art gallery and the marketing of the annual Visiting Artist season in the gallery.

Glenn Williams
Assistant Professor of Art
Sculpture

Glenn Williams joined the faculty of Northwest Missouri State University in 2003. He is currently the director of the Sculpture and the Three Dimensional Design programs where his teaching responsibilities include Three Dimensional Design, Jewelry and Metals, Sculpture, Advanced Sculpture, and Sculpture Processes. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Mr. Williams is also in charge of supervising and maintaining the woodworking and metal fabrication facilities. He is the faculty sponsor of the Art Association and coordinates the annual student art exhibition.

Mr. Williams received his M.A. (1998) from the University of Northern Iowa with a dual emphasis in sculpture and jewelry and his M.F.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2003) with an emphasis in sculpture. Mr. Williams' works have been exhibited throughout the country in international and national juried shows and invitational exhibitions most notably: The 9th International Shoebox Sculpture Traveling Exhibition, touring various galleries and museums around the United States; The Underground Railroad Exhibition, Northern Kentucky University, KY, exhibition held in conjunction with the opening of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; and Projections, Manifest Gallery, OH, reviewed in the Jan/ Feb 2009 issue of Sculpture Magazine.