

# The teacher files

PHOTO AND STORY BY VICTORIA TINKER

Are you thinking about joining an art class? If you like throwing pots and Frisbies in your free time, then Nora Brodnicki is the teacher for you.

**The Clackamas Print:** What classes do you teach?

**Nora Brodnicki:** I teach the history of western art. I teach Art 204, 205, 206. I also teach ceramics, both beginning and intermediate ceramics.

**TCP:** What's your favorite class?

**NB:** I don't have a favorite I like. They're very different parts of my brain and different parts of my body and I like both of them.

**TCP:** How do you view your teaching style?

**NB:** I have high expectations of my students. I think we learn best when we work hard. I think that I am kind and I want my students to be successful, so I try my best to help students. Some students don't want help or have other things going on in their lives, so I feel like I'm a pretty approachable person and yeah, my goal is to have my students be successful.

**TCP:** What's your favorite part about teaching?

**NB:** Oh! Seeing how the students develop their ideas, their work in studio art ceramics. It's about where they start in the beginning phase and then learn how to throw a pot

and make a beautiful ceramic form. So it's really cool to see what students do inside. With art history, too, some of my students never look at art and wind up loving art as a result of the class, so that's the best part.

**TCP:** Why do you teach?

**NB:** I teach because I like working with people. I like working in team situations.

**TCP:** What's the coolest and worst job you've ever had?

**NB:** Well this is the coolest job I've ever had. And the worst job I've ever had: I did inventory while I was in graduate school that was not fun because I was up in the middle of the night doing inventory counting stuff at like big box stores.

**TCP:** Do you have a piece of artwork that you're most proud of?

**NB:** [For] my graduate thesis work, I made thrones. They're tiled thrones. I called them "thrones of control" and I had a lot of fun making those and it was also pretty challenging making those. I love the image of Melancholy or Melancholia. So she winds up on a lot of my pieces.

**TCP:** Do you have a favorite artist?

**NB:** It kind of depends what term I'm teaching in and I would say there are several artists that drew me towards researching art history and one of them is Hieronymus Bosch. I love Sandro Botticelli. I think Marcel Duchamp is quite wonderful. His great work is his fountain, which is a urinal turned on its side. I love the Venus of Willendorf. We don't know who the artist is, you know, she's like a fornina calf, she's just a tiny little portable work of art from the Paleolithic era.

**TCP:** What are some of your other hobbies?

**NB:** I play ultimate Frisbee, that's one of my favorite things. Right now, I'm coaching my daughter's soccer team. I have two German shepherds so I spend a lot of time with my kids and my dogs and my husband. The other thing that I do when I'm not working is I make art so that's a big hobby.

**TCP:** Do you have a specific thing you do while creating art?

**NB:** My music choices really vary on mood, you know. I listen to an eclectic and a broad variety of music. I've been finding that recently what's on my music player, down in the basement where my studio is, I have the Grateful Dead, Genesis, and this is like old Genesis, but then occasionally I've also had moments where Mos Def winds up playing.



ON THE COVER: Photo illustration by Brandon Chorum, photo by Andrew Koczian.



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