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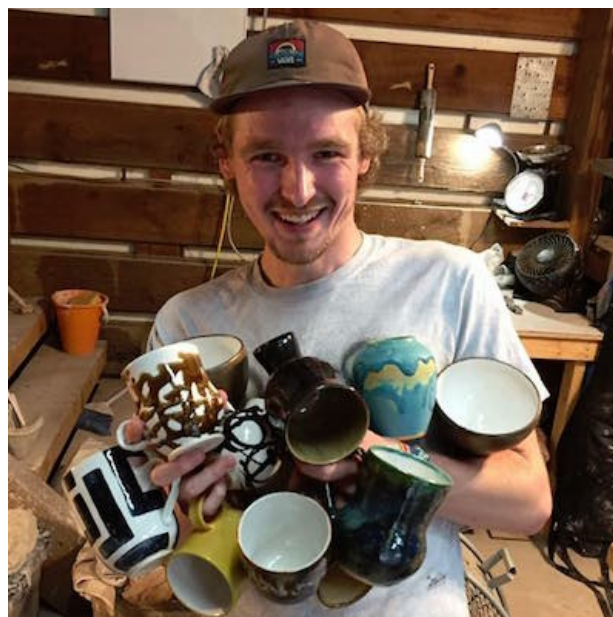
January 25, 2019

Tyler Myers '17 Discovers Passion for Abstract Art and Pottery

Tyler Myers '17 entered Gardner-Webb University ready to explore his career options. Undecided on a major, he took an art class with Assistant Professor Paula Spangler Casper. "I always loved art, but I hated showing people the art I made," Myers shared. "I was very skeptical as to what art was and looked like when I started my journey. I disagreed with a lot of the points Professor Casper made."

He didn't like abstract art, but as he learned more about it, he started creating his own. Myers also liked to draw graffiti, and Casper encouraged him to complete a mural for his final project in her class. "After that I was kind of hooked," he reflected. "I painted a mural in the art building. I finished the assignment at 6 a.m. the morning it was due. It was so cool to put so much effort into something, and to see the final result."

He chose to major in art and through his classes, discovered his passion and skill for making pottery. His senior show combined his talents. "My show was bright, crazy colors, which was inspired by my graffiti background," he described. "Ceramics was my focus, but I actually came up with the painting idea first, and the ceramics came later. I tried to blend the two worlds together. I ended up painting acrylic on pottery. My senior show taught me a lot about myself. I learned to express myself freely through art."



Professor Doug Knotts encouraged his creativity, and Casper gave him confidence in his abilities and helped him refine his artwork. Dr. Nancy Bottoms, assistant professor of art history, helped him put his thoughts and ideas into words. Professor of Art Susan Bell reminded him that his talent is a gift from the Creator. While improving his skills, Myers started to deepen his relationship with God. “I kept thinking that maybe I was called to ministry full time in some way,” he related. “My mom was a children’s minister. A friend went to the residency (at Midtown Fellowship in Columbia, S.C.), and encouraged me to apply.”



Midtown Fellowship is a family of churches that offers yearlong residencies to train young leaders. “I was skeptical and wasn’t sure I could do it,” Myers confided. “I did not feel prepared for it, but ultimately, I had this momentum going in my faith, so I ended up applying. They brought me on in their kids and family ministry.”

At the residency, he continued to share his talents as an artist. In a video promoting the South Carolina Baptist Convention’s Impact Conference, he is shown painting the word, “hope.” Myers was also asked to make 300 mugs for Midtown to give to volunteers as a way of thanking them for serving God faithfully. “This experience was so life-giving to me,” he said. “Working at Midtown helped me to realize that God has gifted me in different ways, namely with the desire and passion to create or produce the thoughts and ideas he has put in my head. Making the coffee mugs brought me joy and taught me how passionate I am for creating, and it’s something worth pursuing. I’ve started taking and making commissions for different clients and hope to gain momentum.”

If you are interested in learning more about the programs offered by the Department of Visual Arts, [click here](#).