

How did you come to own the Cross art gallery?

I have been in this building probably twenty-five years. I started out with a studio, and it just kind of evolved. And I am pretty devoted to carrying local art. It's a struggle. However, you know, that's the majority of the work in here is local.

About how many artists sell through you here?

There are probably 70 artists in here, give or take, maybe more.

And how many from UK, do you have a lot of professors' work here?

I have a few. A lot of galleries are exclusive which doesn't allow them to actually show here. But I do have UK professors who are 3D. I will carry some metal people and I carry Clay Harrison, Hunter Stamps and Bobby Scroggins and Jim Wade.

If an artist wants to sell their work here, what's the process? They first have to come and talk to you or is there an application process, or how does that work?

Well, it's sort of a juried process, and they send slides -- well, most people don't do slides any more, so it's usually images via email, and it's very crowded at the moment, and so I am pretty full, but you never know. There is always room for that special talent.

So you are interested in helping the art community in Lexington?

Yeah, but this gallery carries some international people as well. I do want the work to be professional and quality. Not that I am against showing students' work, but I don't do much of that because they are still developing their skills, you know. So I look more for the professional artist as showing the work. But I am a retail space, so it sort of crosses over. I am in a mall, it is retail, so I do have the variety which makes it a different type of gallery.

Okay, but what I mean, really, but what tips would you have in teaching the students to become successful in their art?

Well, I can only talk about clay, I can't talk about any other area. However, I would say that's a tough one because that goes with any field. You know, you have to be well-skilled and you have to be creative and you have to be smart,

and with art, the difficulty in art you need about four careers in one because you have to advertise, so you have to be able to promote yourself, you know. You can't just learn how to make art because then what do you do with it, you have to be able to promote yourself, you have to be a business person because you are selling your work.

So it's not just one thing, so I tell people don't limit yourself to just the material because there is other aspects in it, you know, and we are in a technical world now, you know, with computers and all that, so you know, you have got to have other skills, and it's hard.

Do you think people are getting away from art to depending much more on technology, instead of using their hands, they are using technology?

I think everything goes full circle. I think handmade items for awhile were big, and then we got into this kind of commercial kind of thing, but I think it's coming back to it. I think people will always love the handmade, so I think there is always a market for it. You know, art is typically -- and this is just an opinion, of course -- art is typically the last thing we budget for in life. I mean, the average person, once they have everything else, they budget for art and so it always falls short. But everybody wants art, everybody loves art, you know, it's like saying you don't like chocolate. Everybody likes that. So it's like saying everybody likes it and wants it, but can they afford it, that's the question, you know?