

STUDIO VISIT

Kristine Poole

Santa Fe, New Mexico



Just the Facts

Clay

Laguna's Buff Sculpture Body and Red Sculpture Body, terra cotta for small, quick sketches

Primary forming method

coil and slab building

Primary firing temperature

cone 5, oxidation gas firing, electric firing for smaller works

Favorite surface treatments

using a curved wood gouge to inscribe stories into the sculpture surfaces and relief motifs; mixing powdered, earth-toned pigments into a stain base and brushing or spraying the finish, replicating some of the natural color variations that occur in a gas firing

Favorite tools

Philippe Faraut's eye tool (wood version), Mudtools yellow and red kidney-shaped ribs

Wishlist

more space

"Where do we go now?" I asked. "To stroll the fields of our imaginations," he said, and off we went. I met my husband Colin ten years ago when he asked me to tango and we have been dancing together through art and life ever since.

Nestled in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountains of Santa Fe, our studio and home originally belonged to Colin's grandmother, renowned sculptor Una Hanbury. Managing the space to accommodate two full-time artists with multiple bodies of work in various disciplines requires versatility, creative use of space, and . . . lots of wheels.

Studio

Our home is a traditional adobe house that we renovated to suit our "all art, all the time" sensibilities. Forgoing nonessentials like a dining room, living room, and TV, we created a contemporary home that integrates indoor and outdoor spaces and features an 1100-square-foot gallery/exhibition space, a 600-square-foot primary studio and a 450-square-foot kiln/metal-working studio, which has two electric kilns, a front-loading gas kiln, and bronze finishing equipment. Given our temperate weather much of the year, projects that are particularly noxious or messy are often tackled al fresco.

The studio is flooded with natural light via skylights and window walls that open onto the back gardens and aviaries (we raise exotic pigeons that often visit the studio as we sculpt). Our work spaces have abundant track lighting that is color matched to daylight, providing a smooth transition for nighttime sculpting. The gallery has window walls everywhere that



highlight our artwork against a backdrop of mountain vistas and xeric gardens.

I am a ceramic sculptor and also work in bronze. Exercising both disciplines provides a more diverse palette of sculptural options. Colin is a sculptor and painter. Accommodating the workflow of two productive artists requires adaptability—consequently, just about everything in the studio, from furniture to equipment, is on wheels. The studio is frequently (and quickly) reconfigured to suit our current projects. When one of us is preparing for a show or we’re sculpting a monumental commission, our workflow expands into the exhibition space. Flexibility is key and everything has its place, which keeps the studio fairly tidy.

Even though things can get a wee bit congested, we revel in sharing the same space—constantly talking, giving input, sharing ideas, and collaborating on sculptures. Our rapport, camaraderie, and support for each other are my favorite parts of how our studio functions. We began combining our studio practices and renovating our physical studio space a decade ago. Learning and developing the myriad of skills required in a successful studio practice is a life-long, ongoing commitment.

Paying Dues (and Bills)

An illustrator friend of mine said he imagines my day as, “going into the studio, sitting around being all inspired, and making things.” Yeah, well . . . not exactly. Sculpting is only one part of how I spend my days and, like most artists, it’s the part I wish I could spend more time doing. I have a BFA in ceramic sculpture from Northern Michigan University. After graduation, I apprenticed with John Glick, where I learned about the daily operations of an effective art practice. In our studio, I spend more time on business than I’d like: providing information for shows, publications, and applications; returning calls; attending to emails and social media; bookkeeping; photographing; working with models; preparing talks; and managing our commission/show/production calendar.

My daily schedule is largely deadline-driven. Deadlines motivate me and I generally say yes when asked to participate in events, so my calendar is usually packed months in advance. Most days start at the gym around 6 AM with cardio (during which we study anatomy videos on proko.com) and weightlifting (insurance for the sculptors’ lifestyle where most things are big and heavy). After a quick walk with the dogs, the work day begins with critical need-to-do’s. It



releases them from my mind so, when I start sculpting, I can focus on my work. Usually we do art-related activities until 9 PM, with breaks for meals. Our schedule can be intense—there are times when we work literally from 5 AM to 11 PM for weeks on end to keep projects on track.

Marketing

Selling through a variety of methods has the advantage of allowing us to create works we're passionate about while buffering the roller-coaster of a sometimes wildly fluctuating income. Most of my life-sized ceramic sculptures are purchased through the gallery EVOKE Contemporary in Santa Fe, for whose time and efforts in placing my work I am ever grateful. We host collector events and studio visits regularly and participate in the annual Santa Fe Studio Tour. We also teach the occasional workshop; take part in group shows; and do two major art expos each year for sales, visibility, networking, and to connect and reconnect with other artists. We are fortunate to count as dear friends a number of insightful, enthusiastic, and generous collectors who host art events to share our work. The last

few years have been consumed by commissions, including a recent monumental sculpture for the Carnegie Library in Michigan.

Visibility translates directly to more opportunities. As sculpture is something best experienced in person, I find online platforms less desirable for sales and use social media primarily to increase my visibility. I keep the focus of my threads relative to art, posting works in all stages, and information about upcoming events and places where my sculpture can be seen.

Playing on many playgrounds has also been an effective marketing approach, professionally and personally. Our work bridges many genres and we continually seek out and nourish relationships in these different communities.

Mind

While we don't take days off, we do travel often for exhibitions and talks, scheduling in museum getaways, which always inspire and invigorate us. We're passionate about studying historical artworks and plan vacations around specific pieces and museums we want to visit, generally overseas.



We adore audiobooks, podcasts, and Pandora. When I need an infusion of happiness, I have my go-to playlist of love songs. As part of my creative well-being, I fill sketchbooks with collages and ideas for future sculptures and shows. These books function as a combination of inspiration boards, journals, sketchbooks, and workbooks. The process is enormously satisfying and in times when I'm spinning my wheels, flipping through the pages gives me a roadmap to get back on track. When confronted with a serious mental roadblock, I go for a jog. I take a few moments to define the problem clearly beforehand, then let my mind wander as I run. Invariably, potential solutions surface and I'm re-energized to dive back in.

Most Important Lesson

I'm happiest when I am busy. Having many irons in the fire means that if one opportunity doesn't pan out, there are several others I can focus on to keep from getting derailed. Juggling business, commissions, and my personal art is challenging. When the art that I'm most passionate about gets put on hold for too long, I feel lost—it's important to maintain the balance.

Many years ago, in the wee hours of the morning, I sat alone, bathed in the warmth of the kiln that held the final pieces for my BFA exhibition. Quietly, I pondered the future, the relevance of what I was doing, my self-doubts and excitement about the unknown. I wondered how I would know what the next steps on my path were. And I heard these words, as clearly as if someone had spoken them directly into my ear: "Do not doubt your muse. As I live, you shall not fail." Wherever they came from, those words resonated deeply with me—then, as a young woman and still today. In them, I hear "Trust yourself. Trust your voice and your vision. Respect and delight in your artistic soul and enjoy every moment you have to create."

Website: kristinepoole.com

Facebook: Kristine Poole

Instagram: [@kcpooleartists](https://www.instagram.com/kcpooleartists)

Gallery: <https://evokecontemporary.com>