

## Krista Cameron - Keeping the Spirit of SLC Pottery Alive

By: Diana Earle - Diana Earle Clay Sculpture



Krista Cameron at the wheel. @kristacameronpottery

ATHENS - Krista Cameron opens her arms, and a blast of sunshine envelops the world of clay. I have known and loved Krista since she was a 'kid'... and I am impressed with her heartfelt tenacity. Krista has been teaching clay for 23 years...starting with Developmental Services. Those children's classes embraced wee potters from all backgrounds. St. Lawrence College Summer School of the Arts children's classes put both of her feet on the path to becoming a great clay teacher.

Today The Krista Cameron Pottery School, from her home base in Charleston Village, is a joyous destination for students. Her nucleus continues to draw clay addicts from near and far. Kingston potters also adopt Krista as a treasure. Amaranth Stoneware has boasted Krista as a teacher for years; now, she is teaching advanced classes at the Kingston Potters Guild.

Krista taught adult pottery classes at St. Lawrence College for years until the Ceramics Program was abruptly closed this year. I mourn the loss of the Ceramics Program but also recognize the ripple effect of Krista's impact on the wider clay community. The legacy of the College has created exceptional potters and teachers like Krista over the years. However, Krista's work has steadily carried on in our community even further than her wide arm span ever imagined,

spawning new young potters and groups of enthusiastic students now building studios of their own.

In recent years, Krista and I collaborated on a community ceramic mural with a group of students titled "School of Fish" for the Brockville Aquatarium. I am reminded of a passage we stumbled upon, shortly after completing the project: "Students are arrows launched into the future." As teachers, we may never see where they land, but it is good to draw the bow that sets them on their way.

There are more fans in Krista's club than just me. Her student's words speak for themselves. As a long-time potter from a very long line of College potters, my advice: "Fly, little Claybuds, Fly..."

**Evelyn Leon** - What I love the most about Krista as a teacher (and person) is her completely infectious positive attitude. There are always 'not so happy' accidents in the pottery world. A pot flies off the wheel while I'm trimming... a part snaps off while I'm fussing with it.



Evelyn Leon www.ceramicevelyn.com @evelyn.b.leon

Krista always helped me to see the best and make that dented bowl into an apple: emphasize that break as if I intended it to be there. She would remove the frustrations because she always made me see the versatility of clay. Even if I didn't love a shape, a nice glaze could transform it!

That has really stuck with me as a maker and teacher myself. Ceramics come with heartaches. I have learned to keep an open mind and to adapt to the medium. I often end up loving my "happy accident" pot!



Sarah Hamelin www.cabooseco.com @cabooseco

**Sarah Hamelin** - Krista was one of my first instructors, teaching me the foundations of throwing, hand-building and surface design. It's been 7 years since I first touched clay, and I can still hear her words of wisdom when I work in my studio.

She creates an environment that allows comradery, welcoming the innate difficulties of clay with encouragement, excitement ("Try it!"), and good humour. It is not an easy craft to master, and having someone who believes in your abilities from the start, matches your enthusiasm, and reassures you, is incredibly important to traverse the learning curve. Studying in different studios over the years, I realize this type of environment has been most beneficial to me.

Having a supportive teacher like Krista helped build faith in my capabilities, and that equipped me to learn the technicalities later on with more ease. Now further into my pottery career, Krista is a huge supporter as I start my own practice: from building sculptural work to learning new firing methods or helping me formulate new glazes. She shares her experience

and knowledge freely, which I know comes from a place of reverence for the craft. Krista's dedication to her students, her practice and offering support to other local potters has a huge ripple effect in our community.

**Aleatha Aiken-Sherrer** - "Figure it out!" This is Krista's Mantra. Krista never says: "That won't work," unless it's an obvious disaster waiting to happen! More likely, "That's making me nervous..." and "Let's try to fix it." My beloved teacher Krista might say, "Let's try to fix it." when I'm pushing clay boundaries. But she's still not saying, "Stop!"

Krista invited me to take a class with her a few years ago. She encouraged me to gather images of pots that appealed to me. My Pinterest board, titled "omg pottery" was bursting with hundreds of techniques. It was delightful that before I ever touched clay, I had explored a million ideas... and could bring them to Krista to teach me.



Aleatha Aiken-Sherrer IG @aleathabean FB Aleathabean

She is the best, most encouraging, cheerful, and knowledgeable teacher. She's willing to learn and get excited with me. My pots are functional pieces for now; when I am ready to take the next creative step, her wise words will be, "Aleatha, let's figure it out!"