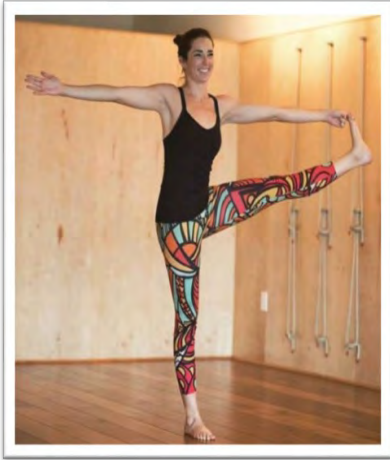


Country Day Creative Arts

The 2018 Artists / Teachers



***We wholeheartedly thank
the 45 CDCA Interns
for all their help and support!***



Emilia Aguinaga
New Orleans, LA

Yoga

Emilia grew up in Quito, Ecuador and has lived in New Orleans for a little over a decade. Emilia loves languages, yoga, food, and meeting new people - it's no surprise, then, that she loves to travel and brings her yoga mat with her wherever she goes! In her life outside of CDCA, Emilia is a yoga teacher at Freret Street Yoga and works as a climate change and climate justice community organizer.

Michael Arcos
New Orleans, LA

Video

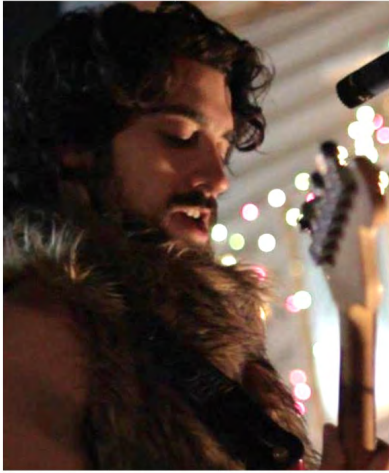
Michael Arcos, raised in Miami, FL, began his film career editing on VHS and has been working in film and video for over a decade. His films have screened at: Calgary Underground Film Festival, New Orleans Film Festival, Cucalorus Film Festival, Maryland International Film Festival, Glasgow Short Film Festival, Lisbon International Film Festival, Borscht Film Festival and others. He was commissioned to create live performance installations for site-specific screenings of this film at the Cucalorus Film Festival 2015 and The Standard Hotel in New York City in 2016. Arcos currently lives and works in New Orleans where he continues to focus on creating new work through film, sound design and animation.



Graham Burk
New Orleans, LA

Theater

Graham Burk returned to New Orleans after completing the Master's program at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, Scotland. He has performed as an actor in New York, New Orleans, London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and various theatres across the U.S. He has taught theatre at Hynes Charter School and Lusher Charter School. Graham first experienced CDCA at the age of seven and is thrilled to be back as a senior staff member!



Dan Cardillo
New Orleans, LA

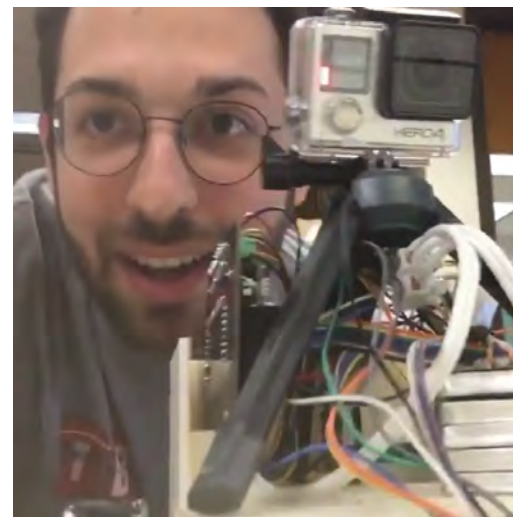
Music & Sound Effects

Dan is a musician in New Orleans. In the past, he's done post production for multiple features and short films. Currently, he earns his living playing guitar in clubs on Frenchman Street. He's looking forward to creating weird noises and kooky characters with CDCA!

Michael Ceraso
New Orleans, LA

Robotics

Michael is excited for his first summer with CDCA. After working as a salesman for Tesla in New York, he moved back home to study electrical engineering at the University of New Orleans. He designs circuit boards, builds battery packs, and leads TONS of tutorials on electrical engineering with UNO's Robotics Club. Most recently, he traveled to Austin, TX, for a robotics competition where UNO teams placed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd - beating out the more than 30 schools in attendance. Let's go play with electromagnets, motors, and automation!



Michael Dardant
New Orleans, LA

Juggling



New Orleans entertainer, Michael Dardant, is a true "Renaissance" magician! His original and stunning sleight of hand is enthralling and now globally award winning. As a comedian he catches crowds off guard with a genuine Cajun flair. He has been featured on television and film both as an actor and as himself. and has been seen juggling fire in commercials, music videos, and movies! Combining a vast variety of studies in entertainment has given Michael a creative approach to performing and coaching on every imaginable scale. Having taught courses in endeavors ranging from martial arts to improv comedy, his unique style comfortably captures any age group. We are excited to welcome Nola's own "Magic Mike" for his first year on staff with CDCA!



Mestrando DiSilva

New Orleans, LA

Capoeira

Rogério Valencio da Silva, better known as Mestrando Cocada in the Capoeira world, began training at the age of 15 in his city of Goioerê, Paraná, Brazil. At the age of 18, Mestrando Cocada began training with Mestre Fran and opened his own academy in 1999. Since coming to the United States, Mestrando Cocada has traveled all over the country as a guest of great Capoeiristas. In 2005, Mestrando Cocada appeared in the Sergio Mendes and Black Eyed Peas video "Mas Que Nada." He also appeared in the video "Miracles" with the group Arrested Development, which features Mestrando Cocada in a one-handed handstand. Mestrando Cocada has trained, taught, and lived Capoeira for over 20 years. He is now in New Orleans with the desire to introduce Capoeira and Brazilian culture to the people of this great city.

Toby David

New Orleans, LA

Theater

Toby David is an actor, storyteller and master of ceremonies in New Orleans. He is the architect and host of The Weekly Revue, a monthly variety show in New Orleans produced in association with Court 13. Toby is ready.



Julianne Dodds

New Orleans, LA

Costume/ Adornment

Julianne Lagniappe is a native New Orleans artist and lifelong maker specializing in costume and garment design. She works on spectacular Mardi Gras projects including royalty costumes and a Krewe du Vieux float, Burning Man wardrobes, and custom dress making for the fabulous New Orleans lifestyle. A well-made garment is key to any successful adventure!



Ursa Eyer
New Orleans, LA

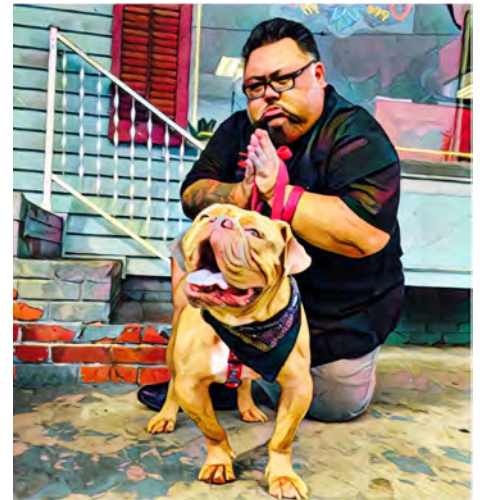
Comics

Ursa is a comic book artist and illustrator working out of New Orleans. She first began studying art at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and went on to receive a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. She spent time abroad at the Osaka University of Art, studying what would soon become her passion, comic book making. Her work explores social issues through depicting her own personal experiences in comic form. Ursa's work has been featured in The Huffington Post, Bustle, MIC, BuzzFeed, and published in New Orleans Living Magazine and Amandla Magazine.

Jerome Gacula
New Orleans, LA

Cooking

Chef Jerome Gacula grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and was educated at San Francisco State University. He graduated as a business major with an emphasis on hotel and restaurant management. He then furthered his studies in City College of San Francisco's Culinary Program. From there, Chef Jerome worked the various fields of the hospitality industry full circle, becoming Nordstrom Café Concept's Youngest Executive Chef. In 2008, he relocated to the great state of Louisiana where he has become Metairie Park Country Day's favorite vegan chef.



Mark Gibson New
Orleans, LA

Swimming

Mark Gibson most recently finished his Master of Fine Arts in Contemporary Performance and has a Bachelors in Physical Theatre from LSU in Baton Rouge. He is an aerialist and has performed in original creations both locally and abroad at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Mark first began working as a lifeguard for the Boy Scouts of America at his local camp in Alabama when he was fifteen, teaching swimming, lifesaving, and various boating styles including rowing and small boat sailing over seven summers. Mark is also an Eagle Scout. He is excited to be teaching Water Olympics at CDCA!



Patsy Grace
New Orleans, LA

Painting & Bookmaking

Patsy Grace received a BFA and a MFA from The School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. She has two self-released CD's entitled Name Her Lucky and Toodleloo, too. Her children's book, The Wise Sophia, has been performed as a puppet play at Manhattan Theater Source in New York and various venues throughout New Orleans. Her work has been featured in a variety of publications and exhibitions including The Gambit Weekly, Mignon Faget, Harrah's Casino and Anthropologie. She continues to perform live throughout New Orleans.

Lauren Gehman
New Orleans, LA

Assistant Director

Lauren is the head of the counseling department at Metairie Park Country Day, where she enjoys teaching psychology and helping to coordinate community service projects. Lauren is also part of the adjunct faculty of Tulane's School of Social Work and maintains a small private practice. Lauren is drawn to Country Day Creative Arts year after year due to the inspiring teacher and student artists!



Susan Gisleson
New Orleans, LA

Director of CDCA

Susan Gisleson taught art for eighteen years before becoming the director of Country Day Creative Arts. She is a New Orleans based artist and educator and a founding member of the literary and visual arts non-profit Press Street, Antenna Gallery, and the 24 Hour Draw-a-thon. Susan has also designed signature floats for the Krewe of Muses as well as some of their throws. She believes that CDCA is a place where dreams become realities and realities become dreams.



Dom Graves

New Orleans, LA

Sculpture

Dom Graves builds crazy things with and for crazy people including but not limited to Mardi Gras floats, contraptions, haunted houses, tiny robotic tree frogs, paintings, sculptures, cyborg wookiee themed little free libraries, turtle ponds, experimental instruments and more. Dom also likes to weld, mache', paint, make costumes, tinker, play piano, and DJ on the radio.

Jerrell Hamilton

New Orleans, LA

Dance

Jarrell Hamilton is a Mother, Educator, Performer, Choreographer, and Scholar. She has just received her Master's Degree at Tulane University in the Interdisciplinary Dance Program. Jarrell initiated her studies at NORD/NOBA Center for Dance and NOCCA. She has studied with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, San Francisco Conservatory, Jacob's Pillow Improv Traditions Institute, American Dance Festival, the Urban Bush Women Summer Leadership Institute and U.B.W. Choreographic Residency. Jarrell is a five time Big Easy Classical Arts Award nominee. In 2018, Jarrell presented her first full-length performance work entitled, E P I S O D E S. Recent Credits include, Jelly's Last Jam (Le Petite Theatre), Ain't Misbehavin' and Bob Hope and Friends (National World War II Museum), Dooky Chase Foundation 90th Celebration, Unheard Voices NOLA, Definitive Femme Festival, and Krewe Du Kanaval with Arcade Fire.



Kate Hanrahan

New Orleans, LA

Painting

Kate Hanrahan is an artist and teacher living in New Orleans. She graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design with a BFA in Painting in 2007. She has shown her work nationally in Atlanta, Savannah, Boston, New York, and New Orleans, as well as, internationally in Canada and France. She has been a teaching artist through Community Works of Louisiana at the International School for the last seven years. A mural artist and mixed media artist working in painting, paper cut-outs, photography and installation, she believes that art should be accessible to everyone. For the last several years, she has been focused on creating large scale public art works.



Kelsey Jacobsen
New Orleans, LA

Sign Language

Kelsey Jacobsen is a Sign Language Interpreter who just moved from San Diego, California. She has always been fascinated with languages. Her love of Sign Languages comes from the beauty and diversity of the language and the culture. She is looking forward to a wonderful summer with CDCA!

Kourtney Keller
New Orleans, LA

Big Art

Kourtney Keller is a mother, daughter, comrade, artist, teacher, karaoke singer, wife, and human (most of the time). She enjoys messing with perception and working with folks who have illuminatingly mad creative ideas! This summer at CDCA she is preparing to build new worlds—tactually!! Mz. Keller is very excited to be back.



Austin Laugand
New Orleans, LA

Cooking

Austin Laugand is a chef and works for Metairie Park Country Day School. Austin has worked at Country Day for the past 6 years and counting. He has conquered different skills in all parts of the kitchen from the Prep Room to the Kitchen Manager. Besides his love for the Culinary Arts, Austin also loves his kids and beautiful wife for the past 18 years. He has been exploring the world of baking and is looking forward to sharing what he has learned with CDCA!



Don Lewis

New Orleans, LA

Theater

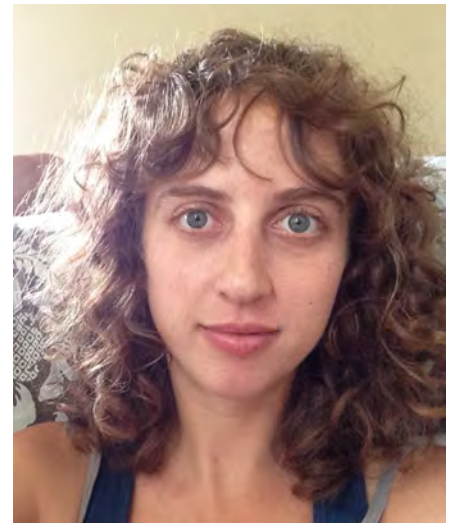
Donald Lewis, Jr. is a graduate of N.O.C.C.A. and attended the College of Santa Fe, NM and UNO. He performed in the New Orleans premier of "Fragments." He has performed with the Alliance for Community Theaters and received their "Big D" Lifetime Achievement Award. He has performed with the Anthony Bean Theater Company, Chakula Cha-Jua Theater Company, Cripple Creek, Young Audiences, Tulane Shakespeare Festival, Jefferson Performing Arts Society, and many others. His writing credits include co-writing, "A Dose of Reality" by Cast Productions and "On one Foot" with Dr. Michael Chafetz, which premiered at Dillard University for their annual conference on African-American Jewish Relations. Donald was the Head of the Theater Department of the Recovery School District's Gifted and Talented Program. He is the current Stage Manager of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival's Kids Tent.

Becka McLaughlin

New Orleans, LA

Sink Manager

Becka McLaughlin is a stage, production, and box office manager, and general organizer of people, places, and things. She has been living and working in New Orleans since 2008, and is an ensemble member of Goat in the Road Productions. Becka is excited to rejoin CDCA for her second year.



Carlos Ochoa

New Orleans, LA

Gymnastics & Fencing

Carlos Ochoa is a native of Lima, Peru and has been a physical education teacher and fencing coach for over 25 years. Carlos started fencing when he was 7 years old and his specialties are teaching fencing, gymnastics, and soccer. Carlos started the first fencing club for children in the city of New Orleans. He has had several fencers participate as Junior Olympics' qualifiers and he himself is a former member of the Peruvian National Fencing Team. Carlos also introduced the first portable/mobile rock climbing wall in the greater New Orleans area.



Jeanie Osborne
New Orleans, LA

Mosaics & Mixed Media

Jeanie Osborne is a full-time art teacher at Louise S. McGehee School. In her studio, she paints, makes collages, and mosaics. She also loves to sew, garden, photograph, and sing! A teacher in New Orleans since 1984, she incorporates much of the CDCA spirit and philosophies in all her classes. She exhibits her art in group exhibitions and sells her art in local art festivals.

Margaret Parsons
New Orleans, LA

Visual Arts

Margaret Parsons is a mixed media artist from Covington, LA. In 2016, she received her BFA at Pacific NW College of Art in Portland, OR, where she studied animation and also apprenticed with a professional sign-painter. She is currently the art instructor at St. Andrew's Episcopal School and gets to make art with everybody (Pre-K through 8th grade.) Outside of the classroom, Margaret makes one-line drawings and paintings in which she keeps her hand on the page (or the wall) for the entire process. She is inspired by dancers, poetry, seashells, and of course, her students! After CDCA this summer she will be an artist-in-residence at Can Serrat in Barcelona, Spain.



Jess Pinkham
New Orleans, LA

Creative Writing



Jess Pinkham is, at heart, a sea creature; photographs and the postal service help keep her entertained on land. She always has a camera in her bag, and, for years, has sent a postcard every single day. Animals and children are among her favorite company; she's done a lot of work with both. She's embarked on solving the mystery of why so many people bring snakes to second lines, and is thrilled to be back at wondrous CDCA.



Keri Pollock
New Orleans, LA

Business Manager

Keri is so happy to be a part of CDCA for another glorious year! She is the Business Manager and can be found working, but really having fun, in the office. Prior to working at CDCA, Keri lived in Atlanta and worked at Eileen Fisher for 7 years selling clothing to boutiques in the Southeast. She wears her Eileen Fisher samples that she was busy hoarding during her working hours whenever she can. Outside of CDCA, Keri is busy being a mom to Max and Sarah.

Mike Seely
Marrero, LA

Team Games

Mike has been an educator and coach in the New Orleans area for the last 16 years. He spent 10 years in Jefferson Parish schools as a physical education teacher and head coach of both baseball and football. Mike currently teaches science and coaches football and baseball at Hahnville High School. He believes that team sports can bring out the best in people and show how creative they can be to overcome the obstacles set out before them. Mike also enjoys the teamwork aspect of sports and helping people to learn to work together to overcome adversity. For Mike, "it's one of the greatest parts to being a coach and educator."



Michael Skinkus
New Orleans, LA

Music/Radio

Michael Skinkus has spent the last quarter century in New Orleans working as a band leader, recording artist and sideman as he deepened his studies of African Diasporic drumming styles. Over the past 25 plus years, Michael has apprenticed himself to many master drummers from Senegal, Haiti, Brazil, and Cuba. A dedicated player of Batá drums, Michael was sworn to the drums of his teacher in Havana, Cuba in 2001, earning the title of Omo Aña. Michael earned a Master's Degree in Latin American Ethnomusicology from Tulane University in 2003. A popular recording artist, Michael can be heard on recordings by the late Johnny Adams, Cubanismo, Dr. John, Irma Thomas, and the Radiators, to name just a few. Presently, Michael continues to perform and tour with many Latin and Jazz music ensembles, and leads his own band, Moyuba.



Mitch Soileau
New Orleans, LA

Media Arts

Mitch Soileau is a full-blooded Louisiana Cajun, an educator, and a graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design. He has experience working and exhibiting in Austin, New Orleans, Atlanta and New York City where he worked as studio and production manager for photographer Joyce Tenneson. In his free time Mitch likes to create photos and short films with friends, play music, and enjoy life. He is currently the media arts department chair at Lusher Charter School in New Orleans.

Anais St John
New Orleans, LA

Musical Theater

Anaïs St. John is a creole songstress and a seasoned performer at jazz, opera, and musical theater. She has just completed a residency as the featured performer at the Windsor Court Hotel. She holds a master's degree in vocal performance and 18 years of experience as a music educator. Anaïs is currently the Lower and Middle School Music Teacher at Trinity Episcopal School, where she received the Iona Richardson Excellence in Teaching Award in 2010. A longtime headliner at Jazz Live at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, she has graced the stages at some of New Orleans's most revered jazz clubs including Snug Harbor, D.B.A., and Le Chat Noir. Anaïs has been featured in several international Jazz Festivals. Most recently, Jazz Ascona in Switzerland, and Umbria Jazz Fest in Italy. She has also been a staple at the annual French Quarter Festival as well as at New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, Bayou Boogaloo, and Satchmo Fest. Anaïs has been nominated twice for Big Easy Awards for her Cabaret shows and was recently named one of New Orleans Magazine Top Female Achievers.

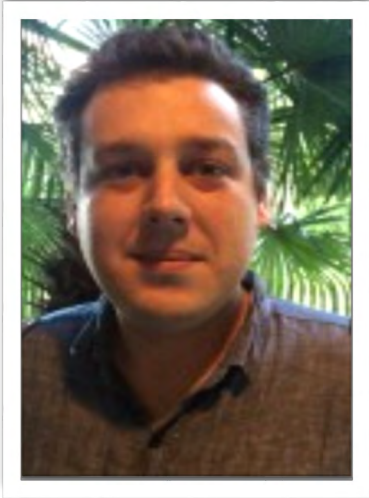


Rahsaan Thomas
New Orleans, LA

Cooking

Rahsaan Thomas, a cook at Metairie Park Country Day, developed his passion for cooking as a preteen while on summer vacation. Watching his grandmother command the kitchen was both awe inspiring and intriguing. He loves cooking New Orleans favorites and putting his own spin on traditional Creole and Cajun staples. Weekends you'll find Rahsaan sharpening his culinary skills in his kitchen at home, preparing fun favorites for his wife and two daughters. After graduating from O. Perry Walker Senior High School, Rahsaan earned diplomas from the New Orleans area Job Corps and The Culinary Institute of New Orleans. Throughout his twenty plus years in culinary arts he's worked at English Turn, The Creole Queen, and on offshore vessels.





Jeffrey Thurston
New Orleans, LA

Ceramics

As well as being an active studio artist, Jeffrey Thurston teaches at Tulane University as an adjunct professor of ceramics. His work has been exhibited throughout the United States and most recently exhibited at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts. His work is also part of the permanent collection of the Museum of Northern California Art.

Elise Toups
New Orleans, LA

Painting & Claymation

Elise's Louisiana roots influence her work and masquerade plays a reoccurring role. She will happily share her costume box, wigs, and estate sale finds with others. Bouncing between painting, sculpture, video, and community engagement, keeps her absorbed in endless art possibilities. She has shown and has work in museums, galleries, and private collections across the United States, and in Brazil. Elise has a background in psychology and painting from Louisiana State University, graduating in 2005. She completed her Masters in Studio Art at Michigan State University in 2014.



Paul Troyano
New Orleans, LA

Woodworking

For over 20 years, Paul Troyano, the Mid-City craftsman, has been collecting branches and trees of all kinds and repurposing them into unique, hand-crafted furniture and utensils for his certified green company, Living Furniture. Trees are one of our most valued resources. Paul tries to use trees and nature to inspire his work. Paul is a member of The Furniture Society, The American Craft Council, The American Association of Woodturners, and The Louisiana Crafts Guild. He has shown his work at Jazz Fest and exhibits monthly at The Arts Market, as well as, galleries around town. He has taught woodworking at Metairie Park Country Day School and CDCA for the last several years.



Sam VanTassel
New Orleans, LA

Puppetry

Sam is a recent arrival in New Orleans, coming just this year from the far end of the Mississippi River. He was born and raised in Minnesota before finding his place in the amazing world of cardboard and puppetry. He has spent the last two summers working (playing) at Adventures in Cardboard, a youth summer camp devoted to medieval fantasy and creative construction. He is also a puppeteer and parade artist with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater, working on puppet shows and their annual Mayday Parade. Since moving to New Orleans he has been building cardboard sculptures for Mardi Gras parades, and he is beyond excited to work with new generations of cardboard artists and puppeteers.

Alison Wells
New Orleans, LA

Photography

Alison Wells is a New Orleans native who has been spending her summers at CDCA since the early '90s turning watermelons into pinhole cameras, printing portraits on eggs, and training ring leaders for a Flea Circus. When not at CDCA, Alison keeps busy teaching elementary arts at Louise S. McGehee School and raising a family in Bywater.



Abby Wetsman
New Orleans, LA

Fabric Art

Abby Wetsman stepped into the world of CDCA as a 7 year old, constructing beds out of match boxes for the fairies that lived in one of her classrooms (there were tiny blue foot prints to prove it). She then continued, not missing a year, as an intern for 9 years. She graduated with a B.F.A. in Fibers from Savannah College of Art and Design. As a collector and analyzer of objects, words and ideas, she continues creating, often utilizing the processes of natural dye and embroidery to transform fiber and found material. She is excited to embark upon her 4th summer as senior staff.



Tom Woodin
New Orleans, LA

Ceramics

Tom Woodin taught in the gifted visual arts program in Orleans Parish for 14 years. He teaches carpentry and woodworking at Chalmette High School. With an MFA in sculpture from the University of New Orleans, Tom uses a wide array of materials in his work, which manifests in organic forms and man/nature themes.

