



PROFILE

LIVING CREATIVELY

Lynn Duryea '69 sculpts a career as an artist

by SUSAN LINDT



Sculptor **Lynn Duryea '69** knows commercial success — for years, Tiffany & Co. sold her hand-thrown vessels in its iconic Manhattan store. But success didn't come easily: Along the way, she briefly worked in a sardine factory, endured the craft-show circuit and came to accept the unknown.

“To be an artist, you must be comfortable living with uncertainty,” she says. “I’m fortunate. There are compromises I’ve made to be an artist, but I never had a 9-to-5 job that made me miserable.”

Geography, as much as any grand plan, dictated Duryea’s trajectory. After majoring in history at Bucknell, Duryea started a master’s in art history and took pottery classes. Eventually, she abandoned graduate school and a starter job at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to settle on Maine’s Deer Isle, where she studied at Haystack School of Craft. She embraced the creative community, developed galleries and partnerships, exhibited internationally and won prestigious awards, taught workshops and volunteered.

“It was the first time I was around people who were living their lives creatively,” she says. “We made a family, and many of us are still there. It’s home in a really deep way.”



Photo: Joshua White

Lynn Duryea '69 with WRAP #2, a steel and slab-constructed terracotta sculpture, a piece which is inspired by architectural structures.

Then Duryea had an amazing Act II: In her 50s, she earned an MFA and landed

at North Carolina's Appalachian State University, where she taught for 12 years. After retiring in 2016, she returned to Maine, where she works at Sawyer Street Studios, a pottery and clay sculpture studio that she co-founded. She continues producing and exhibiting her signature pieces that reference – without replicating – familiar forms.

“It's nice to feel a sense of accomplishment at this point,” she says. “I love what I do, but it's not without stresses. I tell my students there's no one way to live a creative life. Figure out what will sustain you financially and emotionally and be willing to take some chances.”

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