

# ArtStory

Pursuing quality of life.

## Conrad Snider Ceramic Sculptor, Tile-Muralist

Genre: Clay



*“Functioning as a full time artist is probably my definition of success.”*

*—Conrad Snider*

In most museums and galleries, signs reading “Please Do Not Touch” are often as ubiquitous as the art. You won’t find them in a Conrad Snider exhibition.

“I encourage people to touch the work,” he explains. “You can experience it visually, but that tactile interaction is terribly important. It provides a whole other level of experience.”

Conrad works in clay. His art is all large-scale and ranges from clay vessels to figurative pieces and hand-pounded tile murals. That “hands-on” quality of clay is also part of what attracted him as an artist. “I deal a lot with texture and the feel of the clay. There’s sensuality, a mass, an earthiness that I enjoy.”

Works of clay have been traced back to the beginning of recorded history. While other aspects of ancient cultures have disappeared, these objects have remained.

“I appreciate that ‘universal-ness’ and ‘basic-ness’... taking something that’s part of the earth and making it into a form that’s permanent. There’s a huge responsibility with that also.”

That sense of responsibility comes through not only in the scale of Conrad’s art, but also in its form, such as the hand-written text that appears on some of his pieces.

“Part of the idea is a visual texture. It’s not completely legible, but if somebody does read it, they sort of have to keep walking around it and touching it and following this text as it wraps around the piece. That extra level of interaction is what I was after.”

The text often speaks to some higher truth. “For the most part, they’re things I’ve written myself, or paraphrased from different sources. I don’t want to be too specific; I want people’s backgrounds to feed their experience. I would like to have people look at themselves and the world a little more thoroughly. So a piece like that really is trying to move people in that direction.”



Lately, Conrad has been creating more public art. “It’s a venue that interests me because people don’t have to go somewhere specifically to see art; it’s around them on a daily basis.” His works have been purchased by businesses and municipalities for display in a number of Kansas communities.

Is there a message Conrad hopes people will get from his art?

“It kind of depends on what piece they’re looking at,” he says. “All artwork exists on a continuum between the conceptual and visual or decorative elements. Some of what I make is more conceptual, with the text and figurative work. And some of the thrown vessels and wall murals are much more on the decorative end of things. With those I want there to be an experience of maybe just appreciating how it looks.”

