Memorial Resolution
Christyl Ann Boger
(May 30, 1959 - June 17, 2018)

Christyl Ann Boger, associate professor of ceramics at Indiana University, Bloomington, passed away in her home on the afternoon of Sunday, June 17, 2018. She was 59. Christyl began at Indiana University in the fall of 2001, joining the faculty at the then Henry Radford Hope School of Fine Arts as a visiting assistant professor. She was hired as an assistant professor in 2005 and earned tenure in 2010. In her time at Indiana University, Christyl was a cherished colleague and an honored friend of great renown. Her accomplishments and accolades are prominent in the field of ceramic art. The depth and breadth of her impact on the ceramics community and our program was extensive. Chris was among the elite of our faculty, achieving worldwide fame and recognition for the power and quality of her work. Her works focusing on the human figure are iconic, instantly recognizable as elegant, precise and uncompromising in content and construction. The top-ten ranking of IU’s ceramics program in years past was in no small part due to Professor Boger’s presence here at IU. Beyond her professional aura, she was also a teacher of genuine explorative urgency and seriousness of purpose.

Prior to coming to Indiana University, Chris earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting in 1996 from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. She went on to study ceramic art at Michigan State University from 1995 to 1996 and to earn her Master of Fine Arts degree in ceramics in 2000 from Ohio University, Athens. The legacy of her career began with her time spent as a summer instructor and resident artist at the Archie Bray Foundation. The residency was closely followed by the recognition of her amazing figurative works as the Evelyn Shapiro Foundation Fellow at the Clay Studio in 2001, the same year she began her fruitful tenure at Indiana University.

Highlights of Professor Boger’s career are numerous. She was a recipient of the NCECA (National Council on Education in Ceramic Arts) Emerging Artist Award in 2003. She was represented at SOFA Chicago and New York, her works gracing the SOFA banners flying high in Chicago. Her works are in the collections of Diane and Sandy Besser of Santa Fe, New Mexico, the 21c Hotel Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, and Guldagergaard International Ceramic Research Center in Skaelskor, Denmark, where she was also the summer artist in residence in 2007. Christyl’s record of creative activity kept pace with her reputation. She and her works were in constant demand for exhibition and artist workshops. Her work was featured in the exhibition “Staged Stories” at the Renwick Gallery, one of four artists selected alongside Mary Van Cline, Mark Newport and SunKoo Yuh. This important national show, curated by Nicholas Bell, showcased the emerging trend of incorporating narrative into craft, and reevaluated the direction of contemporary craft at the turn of the last decade. Other notable exhibitions include “The Chymical Object, the Evelyn Shapiro Fellowship Exhibition” at Wexler Gallery in Philadelphia; “A Tale to Tell: Contemporary Narratives in Clay” at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Michigan; Pygmalion’s “Gaze Reimagined: The Figure in Contemporary Ceramics” and “Offshore” at Longstreth-Goldberg Gallery in Naples, Florida. Her work has also been shown at The Clay Studio, Philadelphia, SOFA New York, and Creative Alliance Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland.

Professor Boger’s reputation in the field is hard to overstate and her work remains a serious force in clay. As some of the most highly accomplished figurative works in the field, Christyl’s pieces are routinely used as exemplars of the strength of figurative leanings in ceramics and have often come to represent the entire field itself. Furthermore, Christyl has been included in a number of art texts,
notably *The Figure in Clay: Contemporary Sculpting Techniques by Master Artists*, which has become a standard figurative reference and the textbook for ceramics programs across the country. Christyl’s pursuit of residency experiences both nationally and internationally spoke to her hunger for continued creative diversity and engagement. From her residencies at Denmark’s International Ceramics Research Center to Montana’s Archie Bray Foundation to the prestigious Evelyn Shapiro Fellowship, Chris expanded her international acclaim. Of the very small group of accomplished figurative clay artists who are household names in the field, Christyl Boger will forever be one of them.

Christyl magnified our faculty with her deep understanding of contemporary art, sculpture, the figure, and the ceramic processes. She adeptly synthesized and reconciled all of these under the umbrella of fine art theory and practice, which she shared through her courses for both undergraduate and graduate students in the school. Christyl’s experiences beyond the studio, particularly her earlier career as an events coordinator, imbued her instruction and mentorship with skills in both organization and proactive initiative. This was also evidenced by her disciplined studio practice. Her dedication to the studio served as a strong model for our students and a confirmation of a ripe and active artistic life. From her daily interaction with undergraduate and graduate students in her oversight of the program, to her significant service contributions to the school, Christyl inspired a sincere drive to connect and guide. Her engagement in studio practice boiled over into the classroom where we often found her working with vigor - assisting students, putting in extended contact hours, and giving individual attention that was always above and beyond.

Christyl was an artist. Her skills and vision were provocative and magical. Her continued creative work was steadfast and disciplined. Her focused and methodical work ethic was natural - an outgrowth of her need to clearly and originally share knowledge. Christyl was a teacher. The creative atmosphere and seriousness of our program was a direct reflection of Professor Boger’s stature. She has left an indelible mark on the ceramics community by way of her landmark bodies of work and the legacy of student successes guided by her demanding sense of rigor for research and balanced by a humanity expressed through her genuine and pragmatic concern for our students.

This resolution will be presented in and become a part of the minutes of the Bloomington Faculty Council, and family members and friends will receive copies of the resolution after its presentation in the council.

Malcolm Mobutu Smith
Associate Professor of Ceramics
Sidney and Lois Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture + Design
Indiana University Bloomington