

SIT DOWN WITH A SYCAMORE



Meet Emily Bennett

ISU Degree: 2014 - B.F.A. (Sculpture)

Current Jobs: Program Coordinator, Community Schools of the Arts at ISU;
Owner of Emily Bennett Studio

Hometown: Terre Haute, Indiana

Meet Terre Haute native Emily Bennett. This Indiana State University alum's passion for art started when she was a little girl. Her dreams and creativity have taken her to several roles, including Adjunct Professor of Art at the Herron School of Art and Design, Director of Education at the Swope Art Museum, and the business owner of the Emily Bennett Studio. She is a mom, wife, entrepreneur, and an innovative mind that continues to inspire the next generation of creators at ISU.



Q: When you were making your choice on colleges, what stuck out most to you about ISU that made you want to enroll?

A: I was very familiar with the campus! I had played in the fountain as a kid, I had walked from my dad's downtown business to the Commons for a snack after school, hung out with my friends on campus, had my dance recitals in Tilson – it just felt like the natural choice! I was also hoping to save money by living at home, and I was able to do that until my husband and I got married in 2012. After that, we moved into the University Apartments (Married Student Housing as it used to be called), where my husband's parents used to live while they attended ISU in the 1980's!

Q: What is your current job and what do you do?

A: I am the Program Coordinator at the Community Schools of the Arts at ISU. I create the content for all our classes, specifically our summer camps! I create a selection of camp themes for the seven weeks of day camps this summer, then make the content for each week, hire the art, music, and theater instructors, and plan each day hour by hour. I have also been involved with the Sustainability program on campus, the Rec Center,

and other departments. I oversee getting the word out about our amazing camp selections for kids in Kindergarten-8th grade, and I am tasked with hiring camp counselors and staff to help them have an amazing time and keep them safe while they are on campus. We teach art, music, and theater every week, all centered around a common theme, and this summer will be the best one yet as we are going from roughly 30 kids per week in camp to upwards of 200!!

Q: I see you're very involved with art, tell me about some projects, accomplishments, etc. that you're proud of.

A: Thanks for asking!

I have been a professional artist for quite some time, but recently (within the last five years) began to really put myself out there as far as showing art in galleries or applying for grants. I have shown my artwork in over 45 galleries across five states and have been featured in Fiber Art Now magazine! You can see my art locally at the Wabash Valley Community Foundation, where a piece I created hangs as part of the WVCF 30th Anniversary Project Permanent Collection. ISU also has a piece of mine in its permanent collection, and I am working on a mural

downtown behind Scout's Pizza that will be completed this month and was funded by a City of Terre Haute mini Mural Grant.

Most recently, I was named one of 28 "Hoosier Women Artists" by the Indiana Arts Commission. My artwork will hang in the Indiana state house for the next year as part of that honor. It was amazing to have been chosen from nearly 250 applicants!

I also received a grant from the Indiana Arts Commission last year as part of the Creative Entrepreneur On-Ramp Fellowship I was asked to join. The grant will fund an event on August 5th hosted by the Swope Art Museum titled Artventure: Weaving. It is a free, family-friendly, no skills required event! There will be an hourly story hour of the book "Woolbur", fiber arts-related equipment to try and watch demonstrations on, and a large community art piece to help create a giant weaving! It will be an excellent time for everyone!

(continued on next page)

Q: How did Indiana State University prepare you for your career and ultimately life? Whether that be through experiences in the classroom or outside of it?

A: I always say that Chester Burton's 3-D Design class changed my life. When I came to ISU, I thought I was a painter; then Chester taught me to weld, and my life changed course! Nancy Nichols-Pethic, my fabulous painting instructor, helped me through the process of my art completely changing. She let me experiment with texture and design elements related to sculpture until I transferred to the sculpture department ultimately. I still visit Nancy and Chester often. They were and still are two of my biggest role models in the art world. They guided me as my body of work went from 2-dimensional to 3-dimensional, from struggling to thriving, from unsure to confident! I was able to use equipment and tools in the Art Annex at ISU that I didn't have access to otherwise. I received a fantastic art education from the ISU faculty, and I have used what I learned at ISU every day since graduation!

Q: What are some of your favorite experiences or memories from college?

A: The first one that comes to mind is when I won "Best in Show" during a juried student art exhibition my senior year. I won two other awards that night as well, and I felt so validated, it was an amazing night! I also remember when a former president of ISU, Dr. Lloyd Benjamin, purchased my sculpture "Help Yourself" from another juried student exhibition my sophomore year!

Q: If you could go back in time and give college you or any current student any advice, what would it be?

A: Go to all the things! Do all the activities! Talk to people! Participate! You won't regret it. You've got the rest of your life to be a grownup and do boring stuff. Go do all the things that only college students can do, and have so much fun!



Sit Down with a Sycamore proudly highlights Indiana State University alumni who lead their industries, transform their communities, and represent what it means to WEAR BLUE! If you know someone positively impacting their industry, business, or community and proudly represents what it means to be a Sycamore, please email ISU-UniversityCommun@indstate.edu to nominate that person for Sit Down with a Sycamore. *Produced by University Communication, 2023.*