



## Art Professor Sharon Loudon: Anything but "Boring"

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The first day of classes each semester is usually a pointless, mind-numbing syllabus day. But my first day of introductory drawing was a change of pace; instead of dull it was intriguing, mostly thanks to my professor, Sharon Loudon. Professor Loudon is new to Vanderbilt's art department, having just started teaching here this semester. However, as I learned when I sat down and spoke with her, she is not at all new to teaching art. Having taught for twenty years at various other colleges and art institutes, Loudon is starting her career at Vanderbilt with plenty of experience.

Professor Loudon first peaked my interest in class because of her enthusiasm. I could immediately tell just from the way she was talking about the subject of drawing and art in general, that she was passionate about it and especially about teaching it. Teachers who are so obviously in love with their careers are hard to come by these days, especially at universities, and when you find one, it makes the class that much more valuable.

Her enthusiasm was hardly diminished when I met with her in preparation for this article. Professor Loudon was incredibly warm and humble when I asked her questions about her life experiences, from traveling around for art exhibitions to one of her current projects, editing an upcoming book of essays about the lives and careers of contemporary artists. She seems to be constantly busy with art shows, teaching jobs and outside projects, which are all going on at the same time, yet she somehow managed to meet with me on short notice. She also assured me that helping her students is her first priority. How cool is that?

Though she is involved in all of these projects, Professor Loudon still dedicates much of her time to working for non-profits, giving workshops in various cities for kids, mostly those whose schools lack arts funding. She started a creative workshop fourteen years ago, leading children as they use luminous paint to build and decorate model towns that glow in the dark. It's known as "Glow Town."

Professor Loudon spoke seriously of her "Glow Town" workshop, saying it was inspired, like everything she does, by her own private work. She sees "Glow Town" as a way to give back and create opportunities for artists, something she feels is one of her most important roles as a working artist.

After I finished asking her questions, Professor Loudon insisted that I come to another student's art opening and talk with her about my artistic endeavors. She was truly as interested in me and my less-than-impressive experience. Professor Loudon kept thanking me for choosing her for this week's Campus Celebrity, musing about how she is so boring. But I say that anyone who can be involved in so much, find time to work for non-profits and still dedicate energy to getting to know each of her students individually is far from what I would classify as "boring."

Learn more about Sharon Loudon at <http://www.sharonloudon.com> (<http://www.sharonloudon.com>)