

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P.W. Stevenson". The letters are fluid and connected, with a cursive style.

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Preparator Portfolio

The following pages are a sampling of my work as a fine artist, designer, craftsman, and UND's Art Collections Manager/Preparator.

*Please note: you can find more of my work (art, design, and woodworking) on my website:
www.pwstevensonstudio.com*



UND Art Collections Gallery space at the Empire Arts Center.

The gallery space is in the form of an "L". This is the view of the space when first entering.

UND Art Collections Manager

While working as UND Art Collections Manager I wore many hats. I was the lead preparator, the head of the graphic design area, the main craftsmen, managed the UND Art Repository (including art documentation), handled all of the logistics, not to mention the health of the artwork and maintaining good morale and a healthy work environment.

As the University of North Dakota Art Collections Manager I installed between 35 to 45 exhibitions (usually about 15 to 20 a year). The exhibitions were of all sizes, some small (three to seven works), some contained 10 to 20 pieces, while other shows had 40 to 50 artworks.

UND has a collection of more than 2000 artworks ranging from ancient Greek, Egyptian, African, and Roman works through modern and contemporary works by the likes of Jasper Johns, Faith Ringgold, and Audrey Flack. Some examples of the types of artwork in the collection are: printmaking impressions, drawings, paintings, photographs, ceramic works, sculpture, metal-work and jewelry, as well as textiles.

The exhibitions were either located on the main campus or off-campus. Some examples of on-campus exhibitions are: the new Medical Building, the Education Building, the Chester Fritz Library, and the Law School.

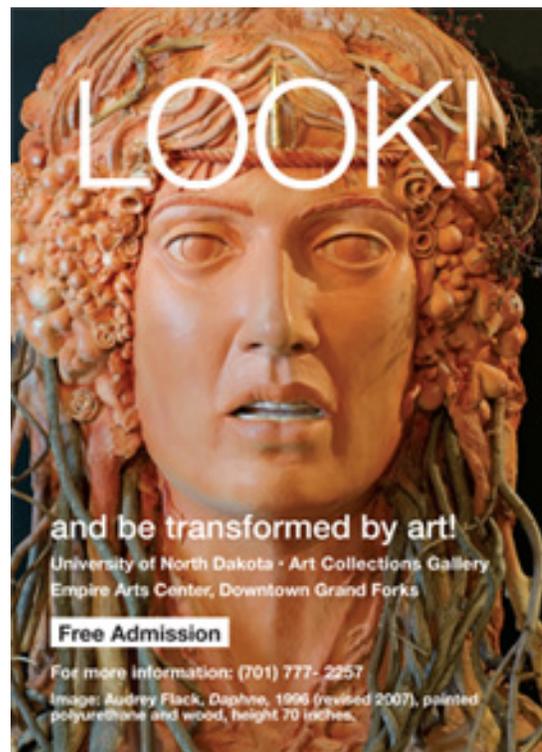
UND does not have a dedicated on-campus gallery to display its collections. However, UND has a great partnership with the Empire Arts Center (located in downtown Grand Forks) where we have three major exhibitions a year.

In role as graphic designer it was my responsibility to create the ads we placed in *Drinks Magazine*. They were quarter page ads showcasing our collections and exhibitions.

I was also responsible for creating the text panels for the exhibitions (both the main text panel as well as all of the text panels for all of the individual artworks). I was given a rough Microsoft Word document with the information. I recomposed the information into an Adobe InDesign document. I then printed out (onto “sticky-back”) the text panels and adhered them to white opaque Plexiglas. The process is detailed and somewhat laborious, but it produces a really professional result.

Above right: *Drinks Magazine* ad Fall 2016.

Right: *Drinks Magazine* ad Spring 2016.

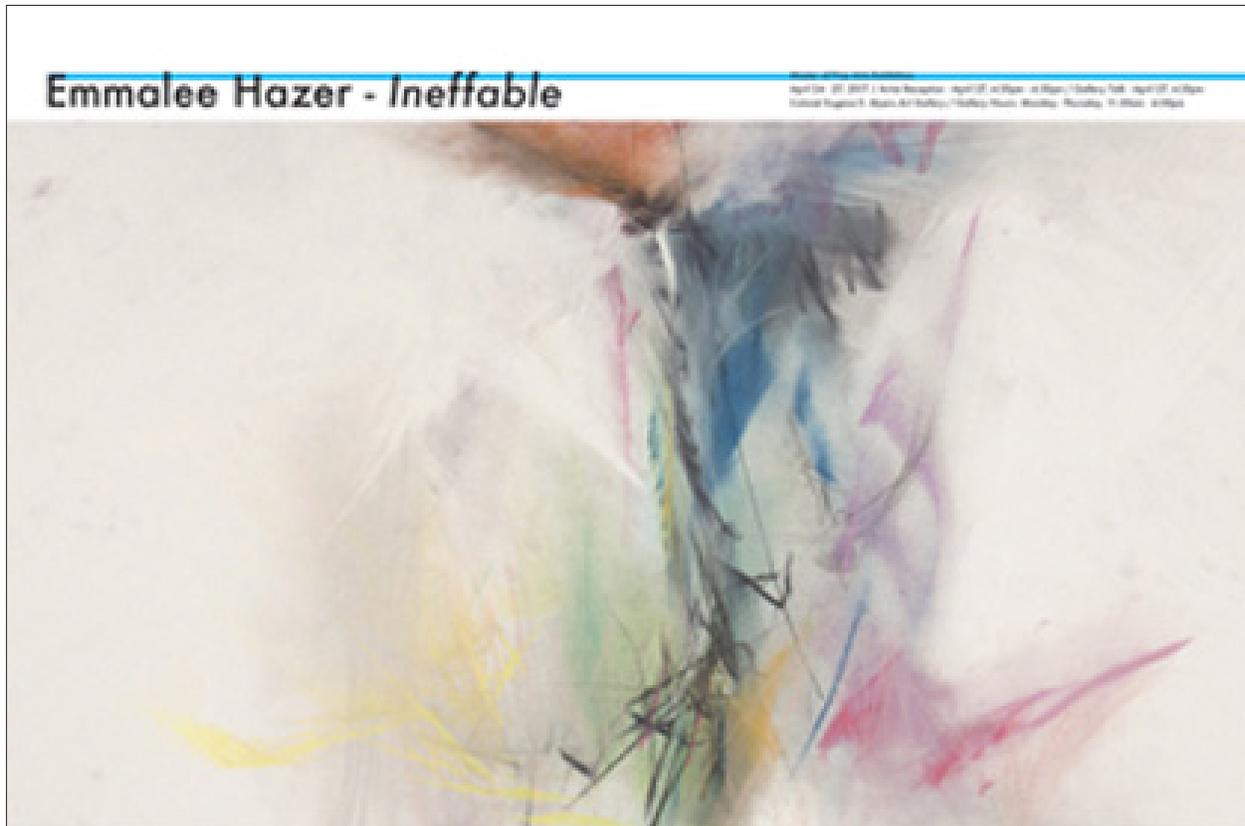


Professional Artist and Graphic Designer

I have done a number of solo and group exhibitions where I was both artist and/or preparator. I have also assisted many fellow artists in installing their exhibitions, included designing their posters and postcards.



Poster design for Jim Champion's MFA Exhibition.
(I also assisted in the installation of his exhibition.)



Top: Poster design for Emmalee Hazer's MFA Exhibition.

Above Left and Right: Postcard design for Emmalee Hazer's MFA Exhibition.

(I also assisted in the installation of the exhibition.)



Poster design for Charles Dreis and Ian Mabry UND Artists in Residence Exhibition.

Professional Artist and Graphic Designer / Personal Work

My work is comprised of pure abstractions and figurative abstractions. The use of the figure allows me a point of triangulation, so that as I sail on the waves of creativity I do not sail too far off course. Even my pure abstractions have a point of reference. It could be the roots of a woodcut or the idea that fire and water can work together to form something harmonious.



Poster design (1/3) for my
Master of Fine Arts Exhibition.



Gallery space as seen looking to the right just upon entry.

The photograph above and the one (*fig EAC SE 2*) on the next page are from my Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition, *Harmonies of Chaos & Order*. The exhibition was held in *Studio E* at the Empire Arts Center in downtown Grand Forks, North Dakota.

I designed and built all of the frames I used in the exhibition. There were 50 artworks in total.

I used a combination of materials: plexi-glass, pine, poplar, aspen, book-binders board (an archival material most commonly used by printmakers and traditional book-binders), mulberry paper, yupo, just to name a few of the materials.

In respect to lighting. *Studio E* has fixed pot-lights that can not be repositioned or moved. However, I was able to use some of my own day-light balanced lights in areas that required addition and/or fine-tuned lighting.



In regards to matting and framing my own work. I tend to float the piece in the frame without using a mat. However, I do take into account the space (“breathing room”) between the piece and the frame (the space the mat traditionally occupies).

I always take into consideration the archival qualities of the materials I use in my art as well as in my matting and framing.

Above (fig EAC SE 2): Gallery as seen looking from within the space out toward the entrance.

Right: Examples of my typical style of framing.
Temptation to Dance, Pineapple Art Center & Supply, Duluth, MN, Summer 2018





Photograph of my ergonomic computer desk as seen in use in my home studio.

Ergonomic Computer Desk

I have extensive knowledge in designing, engineering, and building a wide variety of studio furniture and devices. Some examples are: ergonomic computer desks (that tilt and can be raised up and down), storage flat-files that can double as work surfaces, monitor stands, work benches that are both sturdy and mobile, and easels (with counter weight pulley systems).

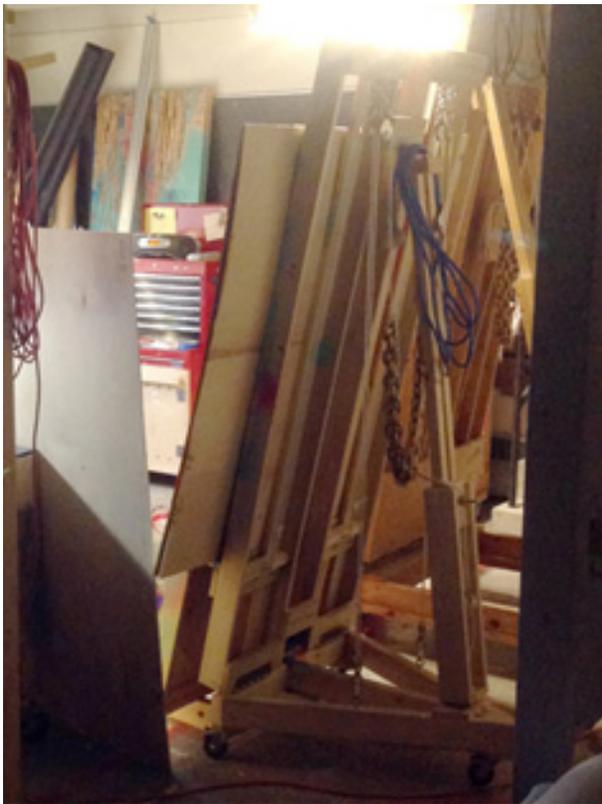
The image above is my ergonomic computer desk I designed and built. The base is from a reclaimed drafting table. It can tilt and can be raised up and down. I custom designed the desk top to conform to the human body, so that my wrists and forearms would be properly supported. The work surface is laminated butcher-block style wood (1" thick), with aluminum and mahogany trim. It has a supporting sub-frame of poplar that allows it to safely attach to the base.



Detail of left “stabilizing foot” of the ergonomic computer desk.

One aspect of this build that I am particularly proud of are a pair of “stabilizing feet” designed to control lateral play in the desk (as pictured on the right). They are elegant, simple, lightweight, and work perfectly. They are made of aspen, oak, and stainless steel (hardware). The angled oak elements of the are dadoed, glued, and screwed into the aspen tie-braces.

The monitor is suspended on an adjustable arm that is attached to a separate base that can be moved independently of the desk. It also serves as the perfect platform to attach work lamps. They are a combination lamp that produce properly balanced light.

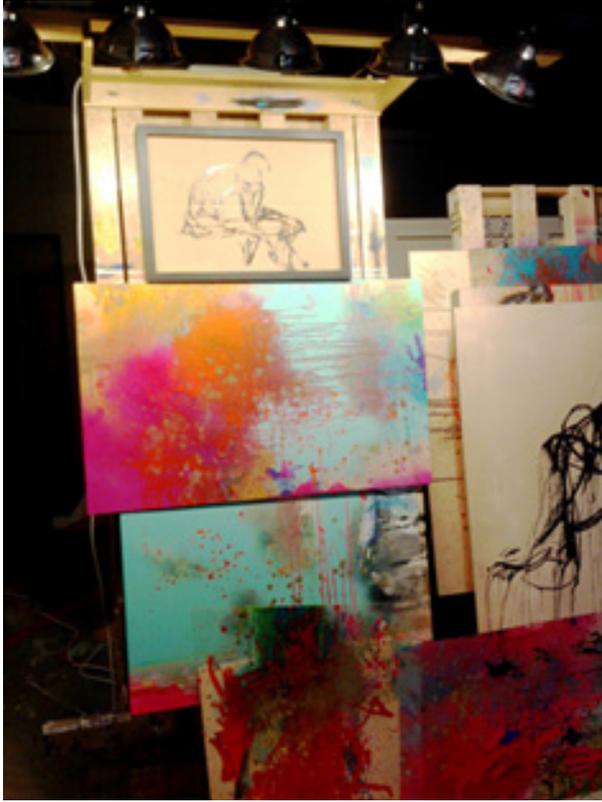


Night time photograph of my MFA graduate studio cubicle space, looking in from the hallway.

Easels

The image to the right shows the back/counter-balance sides of two of my easels. The one in the foreground is slightly smaller than the other (approximately 30” wide, 36” deep, and 72” tall), has a triangular base, and was designed to be able to move easily from classroom to classroom. It was built in 2013 and based on it’s older, larger sibling.

The larger of the two easels was built in 2010. It has a square base, it measures 36” wide, 36” deep, and about 90” tall, it has the ability to hold a 36” x 72” reenforced plywood painting panel (approximately weighing 45 pounds) with great ease. (As shown in the photograph on the above left).



Night-time photographs of my MFA graduate studio cubicle space from the inside displaying the use of my easels holding artwork in preparation for a critique.

I used heavy chain (counter weight) with a system of pulleys to act like a block and tackle for each of the easels. The chain was connected to nylon rope and feed through the pulley system which is connected to the easels.

The array of lights (seen in the photographs above) were attached to the easel's track system and could be adjusted as needed. They were plugged into one power-strip/extension cord so that they could be turned on and off with ease.



Photograph of finished flat file tables installed the UND Art Repository.

Flat File Tables

I designed and built these two flat file work tables while I was the University of North Dakota Art Collections Manager. The project began from a large discarded flat file that was more than eight feet tall. I cut it in half with the help of a couple of friends and made it into two identical units. I made two new tops and redesigned/rebuilt the inner supporting structure. The drawers are 48” wide and 36” deep and about 4” tall. The total height of the unit is about 35” tall. The tables were designed to be comfortable to work at while standing. They were created in the spring of 2016.



Photographs of the project while it was being built.

The color variation in the photographs is due to the place they were taken. The Repository has well balanced lighting while the wood shop, where the project was built, does not.



Photograph of finished Chinese Window Frames (“Twin”) on display at the University of North Dakota.

Chinese Window Frames

In March and April of 2014 UND hosted a wonderful Chinese artist, Hua Yuexiu. She had an exhibition at the University that was curated by Dr. Crystal Hui-Shu Yang (who was one of my professors while I attended UND).

Since it was well known to my professors and fellow graduate students that I could be relied on to design and build (sometimes on very short notice) fantastic creations and displays, I was asked to create standing frames to display Hua Yuexiu’s paper cuts and Window Flowers.



Photograph of finished Chinese Window Frame (“Large”) on display at the University of North Dakota.

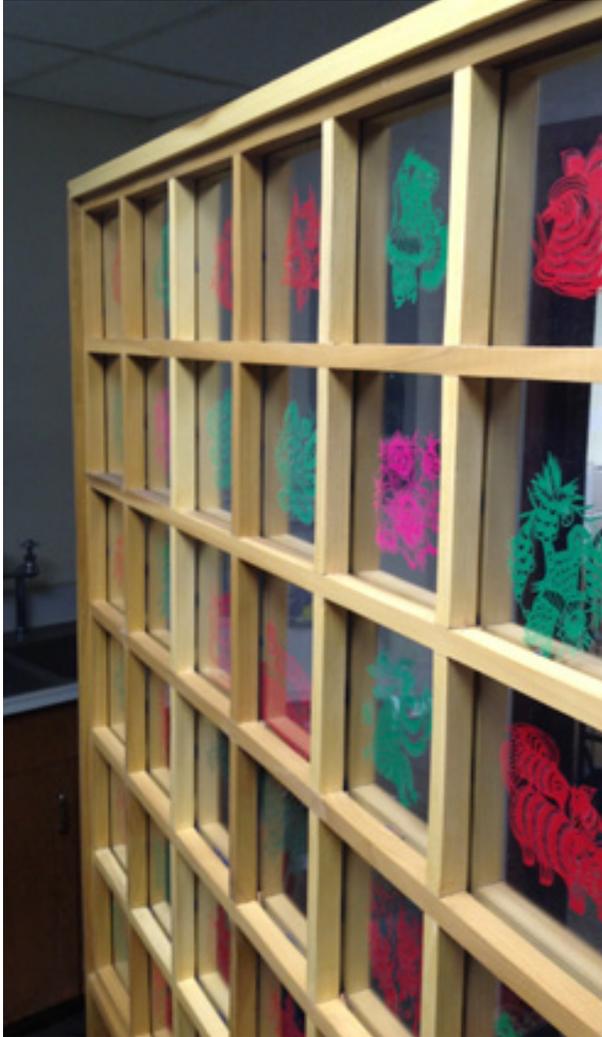


Detail image of the a rabbit joint on the corner of the large frame.



Detail image of a dado joint on the large frame.

I designed and built three frames, two (twin) medium sized frames (as seen on page 15) and one large frame (seen above). The frames are made of poplar and plexi-glass.



Above: image of the large frame displaying the half-lapped lattice work that secures the plexi-glass.

Right, above and below: photos showing the use of dado and rabbit joints that were used to secure the base and legs.





Photograph of custom portfolio.

Custom-Built Portfolio / Flat-file

I was contacted by a client who saw the “Studio Flat File” (see photo on page 17) I built for my home studio on my website and contacted me about the possibility of creating something for him. He was looking for something that could fit under a bed, safely archive artwork, and work like my flat file. What I designed, and discussed with him became a cross between a suitcase and a flat file. Unlike other art portfolios this has a removable tray/shelf for small and medium sized artworks. The portfolio is made of aspen, mahogany, red oak plexi-glass, plywood, with brass hardware.



Detail of portfolio, hinge and lid support.



Detail of portfolio with custom handle with brass and red oak details.



Photo of portfolio with mahogany splined corners.



Photo of my Studio Flat File.

Lighting

In regards to my experience with lighting as it pertains to my role as UND Art Collections Manager. A lot of the lighting situations I encountered while installing on-campus exhibitions could not always be controlled in the same way they were at the Empire Arts Center.

The on-campus exhibitions were usually in places that either used fluorescent lights (in which case UV filters were installed) or LED lights. More often than not the lights were in fixed positions so that we were unable to aim them in a way that would best showcase the artwork.

This is contrary to the situation at the Empire. The Empire had gallery style track lighting, fitted with LED daylight balanced bulbs. During installations the lights could be positioned to best illuminate the artwork. The only exception was a small hallway in the back of the gallery where the area was illuminated by fluorescent lights, which of course had UV filters in place.

It should be noted that as a standing rule at UND Art Collections we always used UV protective plexi-glass whenever we matted and framed any and all artwork. We always used vitrines that were made with UV protective materials.

Lighting for Art Documentation

In regards to my experience with lighting as it pertains to art documentation. I always like to use natural day light or day light balanced lights, a digital single lens reflex camera, and a tripod. In the past I have used traditional daylight balanced light bulbs in task/work lamps. However with the advent of LED lights I designed and built my own LED day light balanced armature lamps for the purpose of documenting artwork.

Vitrine for Tibetan Tapestry

Here is an example of one of the many vitrines I custom designed and built while I was the University of North Dakota Art Collections Manager.

The tapestry is very delicate and is held securely and safely in the vitrine with handmade clips I designed and build specifically for this artwork.

The design is a hybrid between a vitrine and a shadow box frame.

The tapestry rests on acid-free foam board which is supported by a sub-frame that fits perfectly into the back of the frame itself. All of the connection joints of the sub frame are all half-lapped for strength and support, as well as glued and screwed. The frame has miter joints that are glued and reenforced with splines.



Photo of Tibetan Tapestry in custom vitrine/frame.



Photo of Tibetan Tapestry, detail of custom special clip.



Photo of Tibetan Tapestry, sub-frame and security hardware.



Photo of Tibetan Tapestry, detail of splined corner miter joint.

**Vitrine/Mount for
Red Grooms**

Here is another example of a special mount I custom designed and built while I was the University of North Dakota Art Collections Manager.

The artwork was a last minute addition to an exhibition.

The mount is made out of oak. I first used biscuits and wood glue to join the elements of the vertical section and the horizontal section. I used a dado/rabbit joint to unite the sections and joined them with wood glue and wood screws.

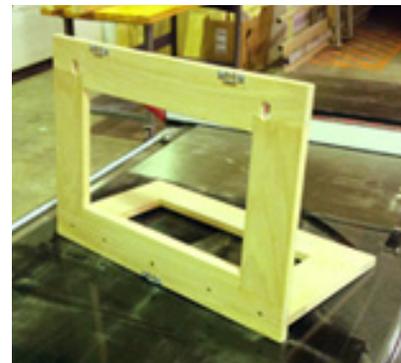
The mount allowed us to display the artwork at the Empire Arts Center and secure it safely to the wall.



Red Grooms artwork installed on my custom mount in the exhibition.



Front view of Red Grooms mount.



Back view of Red Grooms mount, showing security hardware.



Here are some more examples of custom display stands I designed and built for ancient artifacts. Each art object has it's own special display stand specifically designed for it. I made them out of mahogany, bamboo, and stainless steel.



To the left is another example of a custom vitrine I designed and built for a painting by Joseph Francis Nollekens.

Framing

I prefer to build the frames for my own work whenever possible. It is something I take a great deal of pride in. I find that when I build my own frames it strengthens the connections between my artwork and how it is displayed and represented. This is not to say that I do not understand and appreciate frames that are created outside my shop by other entities. As UND Art Collections Manager I have designed and built frames and purchased frames from outside sources. I appreciate the options these choices offer.

Matting

In regards to matting my own work, I tend to float the piece in the frame without using a mat. However, I take into account the space (“breathing room”) between the piece and the frame (the space the mat traditionally occupies). I always take into consideration the archival qualities of the materials I use in my art as well as in my matting and framing for institutions and other artists.

In my capacity as the University of North Dakota Art Collections Manager I used white museum grade (acid free) 4 ply and 8 ply matt boards for virtually all of our artwork matting needs. There was only one instance I did not use a white matt board; it was for a specific artifact, a UND flag that was taken into space by an alumna on one of her trips to the International Space Station. The flag was framed along with her picture. The piece is currently on display hanging on the wall outside of the office of the President of the University of North Dakota.

I always work thoughtfully, carefully, and above all mindfully when placing, mounting, and the actual process of securing a work of art into and on to a board and mat. This is a process I have done time and time again. I have excellent hand eye coordination, hand skills, and am extraordinarily precise and meticulous, and always use the proper tools, such as: gloves (cotton and nitrile (powder free)), styluses, bone-folders, x-acto knives, scalpels, graphite pencils (never pens around artwork), a variety of erasers, clean cotton rags, paper towels (Viva tends to work best), micro-fiber towels, and that is just the beginning of the list.

I have framed/matted/mounted everything from a flag (that has been to the International Space Station), Picasso, Kathe Kollwitz, Faith Ringgold, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, ancient illuminated Bible pages (vellum), photographs, print-made impressions, drawings of all

kinds, paintings, architectural water-colour renderings, an ancient Egyptian beaded mummy mask, ancient Roman artworks, ancient Greek artworks, painting and sculptures.

I have an expansive and ever growing knowledge of all kinds of materials: wood, paper, Yupo, canvas, plexi-glass, paint (watercolour, oil, and acrylic), ink (printmaking and drawing), and ways in which to use them. I have been drawing and painting since I was born. I am an accomplished drawer, painter, printmaker (I specialize in woodcuts and intaglio), bookmaker, and craftsmen.

I use all of this knowledge in everything I do as an preparator, art handler, artist, art collections manager, graphic designer, lecturer, art instructor, and craftsman.

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