



I have been trying to figure out “the Figure” for the last 3 years. It was mine and my husband’s plan that once our son had finished his bachelor’s I would be free to go back to school. The realization dawned that it would be extremely difficult to “go to” graduate school. We live in Abiquiu, New Mexico and are quite planted there, with both obligations and a passion for the place. Going “off” to school wasn’t as feasible as it once was. The solutions for me were workshops. This year alone I’ve been to 5 workshops and I’m not through yet.

August 15-19, 2016 - I went to a wonderful workshop at Santa Fe Clay, which wasn’t even a long arduous drive from home to attend. [Christine Golden](#) taught her method of building the figure in “Beyond the Figure”. Christine Golden is a figurative ceramic sculptor whose work is extraordinary. She has been working with clay since she was 15 years old, and has around 20 years’ experience in the media.



Christine Golden was in some ways the most valuable workshop I’ve attended yet. She builds the figure from slabs, a technique that I love. I already build hollow for the most part any way, but this method provided me with so much more exact control of anatomically correct forms. I was and am truly amazed at the precision that can be attained through working with slabs. I have been to several workshops that address the face, some that discussed the shoulders, but this one went beyond to encompass the torso, arms and hands.

Now I know there are some out there that would say to me that each time I’ve gone to another of my heroes’ workshop I say “this was the best one yet” and I have to confess that is true. There is an element of catching more and more each time as each teacher has a different approach so that hearing some things from a different perspective can help to truly clarify them in your mind. With that said though, Christine Golden was “golden”. She is such a gracious and giving teacher with an unending amount of energy and focus. Her preciseness in building the figure reminded me of [Tip Tolland](#). Many of the measurements, average head heights and anatomical references, I had heard Tip Tolland discuss. At the week’s end, references to emotional expression in the face reminded me of Tip also.



Christine Golden’s approach to the face was similar to [Debra Fritts](#), although not exactly the same. Christine relies on a tape measure and Debra presents her information based on traditional drawing and painting proportions of the face. Debra often uses the idea of drawing with clay to reinforce those concepts.

Golden’s building for the torso and arms can be compared [Lisa Clague](#)’s method, although each have their own unique approach. Christine also gave specific measurements to keep the figure on track and anatomically speaking. Golden once again always reckoned back to specific measurements to retain correct proportions. I really appreciate adding that tool, which lends a more precise way to build, to my tool box. All and all I feel like I have gained years of experience in just five days.



Jacquita Beddo at Christine Golden Workshop Santa Fe Clay

Another windfall from this workshop was meeting and getting to know Lauren Karle. She was Christine’s assistant for the workshop. She, of course, is also a member of NMPCA and will teach a segment at the upcoming New Mexico Connections workshop at Ghost Ranch September 9-11, 2016. **Lauren will be presenting “Sewing Clay: Darting Slip-transferred Slabs.”** The workshop is sold out but there is a waiting list. I hope you don’t miss this opportunity to get to know another extraordinary member of the NMPCA.

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