



# ChesterfieldPatch

ARTS

## Chesterfield Artist's Career is Taking Off

Dawson Morgan's work is currently being featured in St. Louis and New York.

By **Christopher Reilly** 6:00am

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At Art St. Louis XXVI, The Exhibition, Dawson Morgan and her husband, Brad, are relaxed and friendly, taking the time to discuss Morgan's ceramic work, "Tête de Moine" or "Monk's Head."

Brad Morgan chose the name for the cheese in Switzerland said to resemble a monk's head. The edge of Morgan's sensual sculpture resembles the small rosettes created when the cheese is shaved with a special tool. The piece sold on the exhibition's first night.

Morgan is a relative newcomer to the arts scene, but her passion about her ceramic work, frequently inspired by nature, and her drive has gotten her works as far as New York.

Morgan studied art at [Millsaps College in Jackson, Miss](http://www.millsaps.edu/) (<http://www.millsaps.edu/>). After stints in Washington, D.C., New Orleans and Switzerland, Morgan and her family settled in Chesterfield in 2008. Then, her dedication and devotion for her art took on new significance.

"It's like the passion was always in my pocket," Morgan said, "but I had put it away for my children, put it away for my husband, put it away to move...and it became time to cash in on my passion."

Morgan burst onto the local art scene seemingly from nowhere, and it wasn't long before her work began appearing in galleries and juried exhibits in the area.

### Chesterfield Arts

(<http://chesterfield.patch.com/listings/chesterfield-arts>) in particular has been very important to Morgan since her return to St. Louis, and she is quick to credit them.

"They gave me my first big push, putting me in solo shows. They inspired me."

She has studied many forms of art, but has chosen to devote herself to ceramics.

"I like working with my hands...touching...forming the clay," Morgan said. "You wouldn't make hundreds of something if you weren't nutty, if you didn't really believe in what you're doing."

With a keen attention to the shadows cast by her work, Morgan crafts and manipulates the clay on a large open table, constantly adjusting an edge here, a curve there, observing how the shadow changes on her table surface and surrounding objects.

Morgan's goals for a piece are simple.

"It needs to be pretty," she said. "It needs to be beautiful to look at."

In her collection called "MODOT Works," Morgan gathers plants and grasses from the side of Missouri highways and presses them into the clay to make an impression. Then, she forms the clay into a piece inspired by the plant itself. One vase from the collection, "Missouri Highway Grasses" is also in Art St. Louis XXVI, The Exhibition.

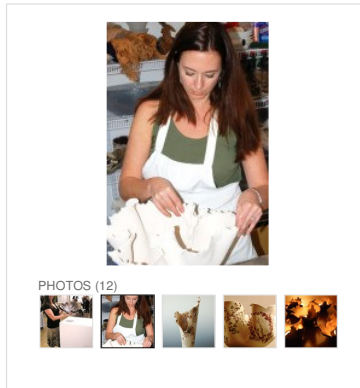
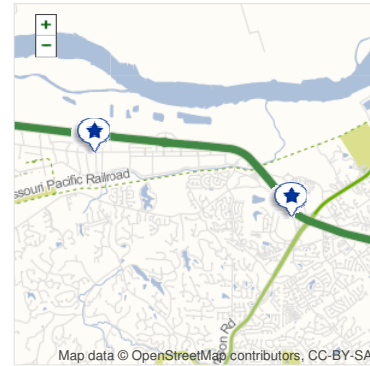
"To me, it's meaningful when art is created through a relationship with nature," Morgan said. "We need to be better stewards of our earth, appreciate the natural beauty. We could do a better job."

This October, Morgan's drive—"hardheadedness," as she puts it—got her work into [MC&Co](http://www.mcandco.us/), a gallery in New York (<http://www.mcandco.us/>).

"I talked my husband into letting me tag along on a business trip to New York, but he really wanted me to go," Morgan said. "Instead of shoes and clothes, I took two rolling bags stuffed with my artwork."

Morgan lugged those bags through the city from gallery to gallery. The reaction she got from MC&Co's owner was unexpected.

"They bought 17 pieces on the spot. I can't describe what I felt right then. Excitement, relief."



When asked about her future, Morgan shares an anecdote.

"I was on an archeological dig in La Paz, Central America, and I sat there looking at these shards of pottery they had collected," Morgan said. "Each one told a story, and I realized my art is like that. Even after thousands of years when it's broken and buried, each of the shards of my pottery will still have a story to tell."

**Where:** Art St. Louis XXVI, The Exhibition runs through Dec. 30 at 555 Washington Ave., Suite #150, St. Louis, MO 63101.

Morgan's work is now being shown at [Wood Icing Gallery](http://www.woodicing.com/) (<http://www.woodicing.com/>), [Art Trends gallery](http://chesterfield.patch.com/listings/art-trends-gallery) (<http://chesterfield.patch.com/listings/art-trends-gallery>), [Augusta Woods, LTD](http://www.augustawoodltd.com/) (<http://www.augustawoodltd.com/>), in Augusta, Mo., and in St. Louis city at [Krueger Pottery](http://www.kruegerpottery.com/) (<http://www.kruegerpottery.com/>) and [Third Degree Glass Factory](http://www.thirddegreeglassfactory.com/) (<http://www.thirddegreeglassfactory.com/>)—who invited her as a ceramist.

To contact Dawson Morgan, view her work, or arrange a purchase, visit her website at [dawsonmorgan.com](http://www.dawsonmorgan.com) (<http://www.dawsonmorgan.com/>).

**Have you seen Dawson Morgan's work? What did you think? Tell us in the comments.**



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**Tracy**

9:07am on Monday, November 15, 2010

Way to go Dawson! You know how much we love you and your work!

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