



Case Statement



A Ceramic Day at ARTISAN-LAB

Salt water mist rises over the cove. The air is crisp and a bald eagle is perched in the oak tree overlooking the tidal flats. The sun breaks through the clouds on its morning ascent over the tree tops and the smell of coffee wafts through the air.

Heather walks through the on-site greenhouse in search of fresh tomatoes to compliment her frittata made with farm-fresh eggs from Mandala Farm, while Enna roasts award-winning coffee for artisans in residence. Omar records the overnight kiln fire temperature as Gillian strolls along the boundary brook to collect organic material for saggar firing later that day. Miguel tends to the equipment, engaging the filter press and pug mills, while Peter quietly watches his glowing crystalline kiln which has happily kept him awake all night. Omar passes through the entryway and pauses to read the inlaid sign that was designed years ago by our founder to remind us of the reasons why we exist.

Today will prove to be full of meaning and activity at Artisan Lab. Spring residencies will be wrapping up their intensive semester in a few short weeks. The flurry of activity will give way to summer makeshops, enriching experiences, engaging conversation with local and summer visitors alike enjoying locally-roasted coffee and homemade pastries while overlooking the brook off the back deck. The efforts of long winter months have borne the fruits of creativity and filled the shop with product - functional ceramic ware, dazzling crystalline glazes, traditionally carved utensils and thoughtfully crafted one-of-a kind pieces. Café A Lab & Gallery opens its doors and welcomes visitors into a space where dedicated artisans excel at their craft and cultivate community for all to share.

10 Finger Thinking Mentors Imagination to Build Creative Capacity

The mission of Artisan Lab is to inspire personal growth through artisan crafts & technology by providing an immersive, resource-rich environment to empower individual creative capacity. However, making a living as a professional craftsman has become increasingly difficult in today's society. Challenges including financial obstacles, lack of resources, diminishing communities, lack of mentorship, and unequal opportunity prevent craftsmen from "making a life with their hands."

Whether a student sets out on a path after post-secondary education, but struggles to establish a sustainable business, or an adult aims to pivot their life direction and re-establish themselves as a professional craftsman, but lacks the mentorship and community necessary to transition to a new life, Artisan Lab bridges the gap. Our organization aims to address three fundamental drivers for the progressive loss of craftwork in society:

- **Lack of resources** – Any individual seeking skill development or facilities to create a profession from their craft is likely to face a considerable investment of time and money just to get started. Artisan Lab provides financial support, mentorship, equipment, and space to artisans with the passion, will, and personal courage to forge a way to make a living by expressing heartfelt artisan hand skills.
- **Lack of community** – Vocationally skilled craftspeople are in continuous decline with the resultant loss of a community of practitioners to mentor and inspire one other. The Artisan Lab community ethos is a cooperative collaboration dedicated to building and sharing the skills and creative inspiration to succeed as an independent craftsman.
- **Unequal opportunity** – Creative expression through self-employment is challenged worldwide due to societal inequality relating to differences in socioeconomic status, educational attainment, age, political opinion, gender identity, physical and developmental ability, racial and ethnic identity, and religious belief. Artisan Lab encourages all aspiring and professional artisans through 10 Finger Thinking to build a balanced and versatile mind and, at the same time, a sustainable living

Artisan Lab aims to address these challenges by growing and sustaining the heritage of professional artisans. We will pioneer innovative, immersive training programs to empower artisans in developing sustainable livelihoods.

We envision a creative collaborative community that mentors tangible imagination by first understanding and then dynamically supporting the dreams, aspirations, intrinsic aptitude, and genius of individuals. We empower individual creative capacity through personal-mentoring programs that blend traditional handcraft skills with appropriate technology in an immersive, residential, resource-rich environment. By exploring a wide range of projects, processes, and materials, participants are encouraged to build a diverse skill set that expands their perspective, strengthens self-esteem, fosters flexibility, and develops perseverance.



Artisan Lab is an oasis of 10 Finger Thinking, encouraging craftsmen and men to "do a job well for its own sake."¹ Artisan Lab propagates the view that thinking and tangible engagement are the foundation of making. This Artisan Engineering develops and nurtures the composite steps of the design process (the causes which create the result). Simple, efficient steps create results which are quiet, comfortable, and visually and functionally intelligent.

We believe that Artisan Lab, once launched, will rebuild and strengthen a community of U.S. and international artisans seeking to sustain their lives through the artisan production of products. We will build collaborative exchange programs with historical and contemporary organizations, demonstrating a commitment to developing artisans and their creative vocational capacity. We have identified over 10 community partners with whom we will develop joint initiatives for the mentorship of maker enthusiasts.

In addition, we will create an Artisan Lab Café & Retail Shop to foster community connection, promote Artisan Partners' work, and build communication supporting Artisan Lab development. Entering the café, patrons will see artisans busy in the ceramics and media facilities with the fruits of their creative effort displayed for sale in the gallery. The ethos of

Artisan Lab will be demonstrated in the plates, bowls, and mugs used for serving and the artisan hand crafts offered for sale. Café patrons will enjoy high quality food and drink made from local, organic food supplied by neighbor collaborator, Mandala Farm. We will feature specialty roasted coffee by award-winning Boston enterprise, Gracenote Coffee. Mentoring our passion for making, we will offer opportunities for visitors to roast their own premium coffee. We envision a relaxed community space that is welcoming for our neighbors and long-distance visitors alike — a small village hub to share and build enthusiasm for 10 Finger Thinking. The goal of the café is to bring artisans and the public together in a way that leads to spontaneous synergy through creative conversation.

Planning for environmental sustainability is another core component of our organization. As residents of coastal Maine, we understand and take responsibility for the toll that climate change has taken on our coastal community, from changing ocean ecology to increasing temperatures and worsening storms. Building new energy-efficient systems, like a solar greenhouse, will allow residents and program participants to exercise 10 Finger Thinking (10FT) while reducing our environmental impact. We plan to mitigate the impact of our operations and engage our core values through the following initiatives:



Install rooftop solar photovoltaic panels to harness on-site renewable energy



Construct a wood-chip kiln fueled by locally sourced materials



Retrofit existing heating system to recapture kiln waste heat for re-use in heating Artisan Lab residential facilities



Install composting toilet system to reduce the burden on our water table and existing septic system



Construct and maintain an on-site greenhouse for residents to grow their own food between spring and fall



Participate in farm shares from Mandala Farm to support our local economy and encourage organic, sustainable agriculture practices

¹Richard Sennett – The Craftsman

The Three Pillars of Artisan Lab

Artisan Lab was founded under the basis of providing mentored, artisan programs that are varied and adaptable to individual visions. Whether professional artisans, developing artisans, or maker enthusiasts, our programs offer individuals an opportunity to focus on creative development, explore personal aspirations and techniques, and push exploration and experience to new levels. To that end, we've developed programming to focus on three foundational components:



Artisan Partner

Artisan Partners will form a cooperative whose members both mentor developing artisans and work as professional craftspeople. An Artisan Partner is a professional artisan whose creative process incorporates 10 Finger Thinking and Process Design. Artisan Partners would offer extensive experience in ceramics, wood, and metal as well as broad design, fabrication, and marketing skills. In addition, their work would be available for sale in the gallery store. Revenue produced from sales will allow Partners to maintain financial independence as they efficiently promote their craft through joint marketing. Artisan Partners are exceptionally skilled and focused individuals with passion to make the world a better place by mentoring developing craftspeople. Artisan Partners would reside on site or commute locally.

Artisan Resident

An Artisan Resident is a developing artisan who wants to refine their craft through immersion in a hands-on, experiential learning environment. Residents can elect terms ranging from one month to one year, during which time they may be developing a portfolio for graduate school, or transitioning from school to establish their own studio. Our residency program is designed to jumpstart artisan craft based vocational careers.

Artisan Residents will participate in our creative community in and out of the studio. They will collaborate in Artisan Engineering and 10 Finger Thinking with other artisans in the Mediashops as well as share meals in the kitchen, help in the garden, and support Artisan Lab Makeshop programs. This program is intended for individuals who will be resident on site or commute locally. Scholarship will be available through an application process and awarded based on demonstrated financial need.

Makeshops

Makeshops offer the opportunity for maker enthusiasts to create unique projects which hone artisan skills in a supportive environment. Artisan Partners and Artisan Residents will develop and lead multi-day explorations supporting the vocational aspirations of Makeshop participants, rubbing elbows with practicing professionals.

Artisan Lab Makeshops explore traditional and mixed media projects in immersive, multi-day programs. Participants will explore material strengths and limitations and expand their tool choice and use capabilities as their craft skills advance. Scholarship will be offered and awarded based on documented financial need.

Acorn to Oak

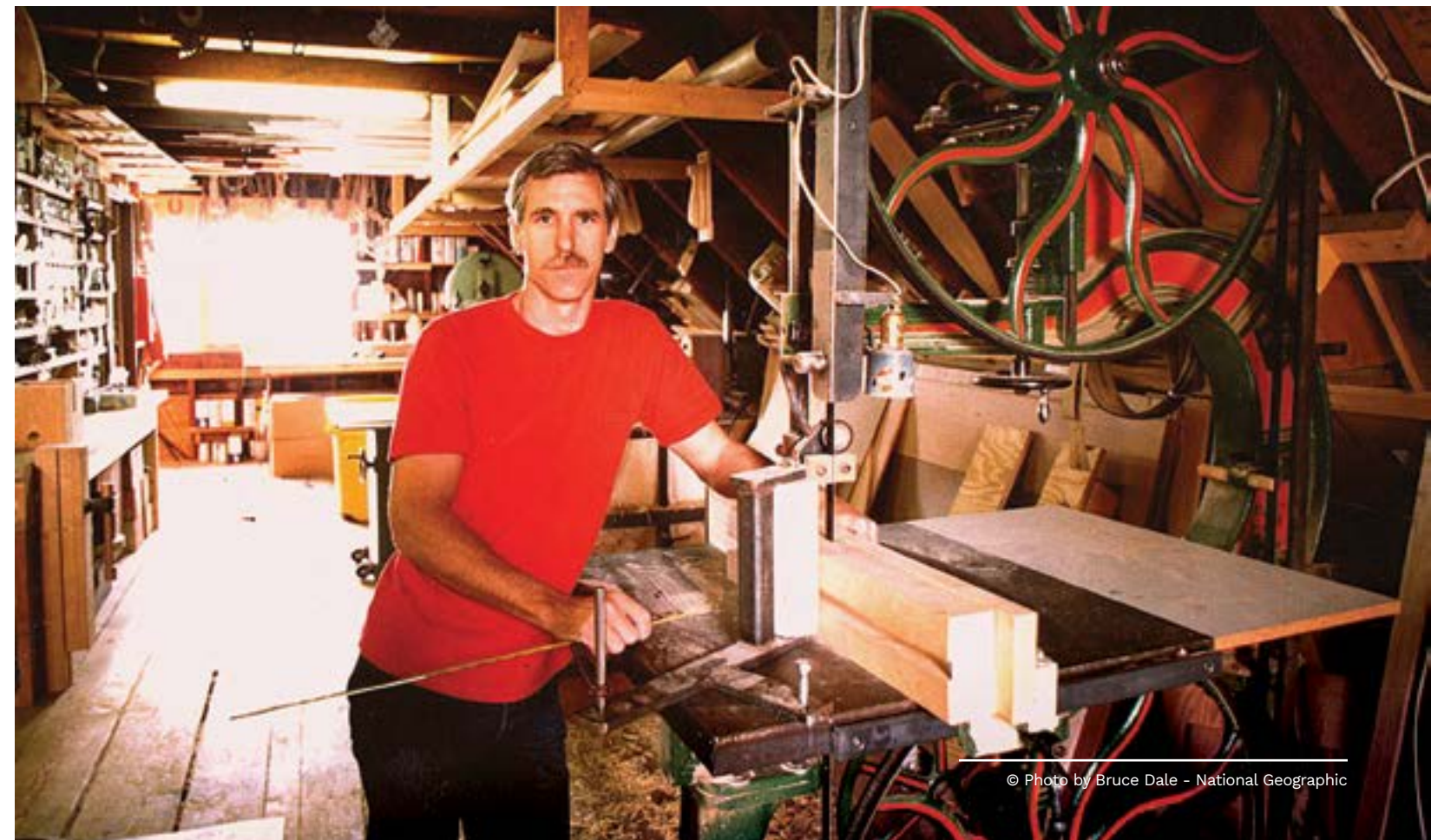
In 2018, Artisan Lab was established as a nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3). Artisan Lab is a transformation of Maine Kiln Works (MKW), a professional ceramics production facility and shop owned and operated by Dan Weaver of Gouldsboro, Maine for the last 49 years.

Maine Kiln Works was founded on the Artisan Engineering ethos: process drives good design. Dan's dedication to creative expression and production efficiency empowered a self-sustaining professional practice that grew gradually and organically through the years. While he is known for functional stoneware and porcelain forms, the processes and equipment designed and built by Dan apply innovative and unique solutions to traditional fabrication, such as custom die making for clay extrusions and hot crystalline glaze photography to capture glaze development during kiln firing.

This capacity for fabrication innovation is the foundational motivation to launch Artisan Lab, a place where aspiring, developing, and professional artisans may develop and strengthen unique skills to make a life working with their hands. Our unique facilities and attention to process design allow participants to move abstract design concepts to the Makeshop facilities where ideas become tangible.

Artisan Lab is located in a place of stunning natural beauty, situated on a year-round brook linking a 460 acre fresh water pond and tidal saltwater cove a short drive from Acadia National Park. Everyone who comes through the door, whether they are professionals that form our artisan collaborative, or visitors to our shop and café, will enjoy the peaceful landscape and inspiration that comes from being surrounded by creative expression.

Dan Weaver has committed to transforming the MKW facility, an 8,000 Sq. Ft. workshop housing over \$500,000 of specialized equipment, to launch an incubation space for international artisans of the 21st century.



© Photo by Bruce Dale - National Geographic



Plans for Growth

Over the next 10 years, we plan to implement a four-phased approach to developing the organization.

PHASE 1 | 2018-2020

Seed Organization

In 2018 Artisan Lab was incorporated as a nonprofit organization under IRS section 501(c)(3). The board of directors approved bylaws and articles of agreement, and created a strategic plan outlining our transition plan and development over the next 10 years. They consulted with a variety of experts on fundraising, start-up business development, real estate development, website development, residential educational programs, marketing, promotion, communication, and grant writing. In addition, they will work to launch fundraising activities, secure the Maine Kiln Works physical plant and equipment, execute a staffing plan, and develop programming.

PHASE 2 | 2021-2022

Facility Renovation; Programs Begin

In Phase 2, we will host a series of Makeshops, designed to build support in the artisan community and establish our Artisan Partner and Artisan Resident programs. We will undergo a progressive space planning exercise and accessibility upgrade to prepare for the full facility retrofit, Café ALab will open to the public for year-round operation and we will install solar panels to visually demonstrate our mission for sustainable operation.

PHASE 3 | 2023-2025

Program Expansion

In Phase 3, Artisan Lab will continue to expand our programs and facilities. We will expand our collaborative with 2-3 Artisan Partners and expand to support 4-6 Artisan Residents. We will increase our Makeshop offering to occur bi-monthly, developing new content within our resident Artisan community. In 2025, the planned facility expansion will be completed—to support year-round residential space for a maximum of 12 people

PHASE 4 | 2026-2030

Full Implementation

In Phase 4, we will achieve our Vision of a residential, immersive, collaborative, artisan maker community. Artisan Partners will lead participant makeshops, simultaneously developing their own work and mentoring Artisan Residents to realize individual projects during their tenure at ALab. We will continually host Makeshops, deriving new offerings via collaboration with our community of artisans. Café ALab operation, will become a hub for our larger community with evening and weekend programming and food service.



Three years ago I encouraged and have followed with interest your plans to develop an immersive Artisan Lab enterprise. I congratulate your recent receipt of nonprofit status which will empower fund-raising to transform your goals to reality.

Your proposed Residency and Makeshop programs which will explore the gap between thought and action—to directly understand the powerful interface—and fluently use them together is the bedrock of experiential education.

Artisan Lab envisions exactly the type of off-campus, live-in, 24/7/365, total immersion educational and hands-on creative skills development that College of the Atlantic students are actively encouraged to pursue. College of the Atlantic looks forward to watching the evolution of the ALab experience, which has been carefully conceptualized over the past few years.

We are hopeful that, down the road, College of the Atlantic students can take personal and professional advantage of what this unique educational concept was conceived to offer. Many years of development and fund-raising lay ahead, hard work that is required to realize this opportunity. The good news is that the work involved is well underway, work that College of the Atlantic endorses and is watching with great interest.

I believe College of the Atlantic students need the innovative placement options planned by Artisan Lab and the College looks forward to exploring ways to support, collaborate, and create mutual benefit when your hands-on programs are up and running.

Darron Collins
College of the Atlantic President



Dreaming a Vision into Reality

To launch our vision, we need to raise a total of \$933,000 over the next three years which will encompass our capital campaign and annual fundraising goals. Of that amount, \$655,000 will be used for capital improvements including the architectural design process, renovations for the 8,000+ sq. ft. building including workshop space, residential facilities, gallery and café. The funding will also support the purchase of equipment and tools, and enable us to hire essential staffing positions.

In addition, we will need to raise \$279,000 over the next three years to support annual operating costs. Of that amount, \$225,000 is expected to be raised through grants and foundations and \$53,000 from individual donors. To enable us to accomplish our vision, we will need to increase our budget dramatically over the next three years to support renovations, staffing positions, program development and scholarship funding. Our budget for the next three fiscal years:

Description	2021	2022	2023	2021-23
Capital Campaign	\$180,000	\$225,000	\$250,000	\$655,000
Grants (start-up and program expansion)	\$150,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$225,000
Individual Contributions	\$15,000	\$18,000	\$20,000	\$53,000
Total	\$345,000	\$268,000	\$320,000	= \$933,000

While these goals are ambitious, they are necessary to ensure our success – and we know we can meet them through the generosity of our donors and the community. Every dollar we raise will directly support the development of our organization, curriculum, design and structural renovations, programming and staff to mentor 10 finger thinking and guide future craftspeople.

Artisan Lab is planning to spend 10% of its revenue on administration. That means that 90% of your gift goes directly to supporting programs and services for development of future craftspeople.

Friends of Artisan Lab

In addition to one-time gifts, our Founders Society recognizes donors who pledge a capital campaign gift commitment, payable over the next three years. These supporters form a core group of investors who will enable our growth and strategic advancement for years to come.



Our community of supporters makes it possible

Join us in supporting craftswomen & men today

We hope you will join us to create a vital community which fosters the development of life transforming skills, inspires imagination, and encourages everyone to invent and realize their highest potential. Your support is needed now more than ever to strengthen our community and sustain the heritage of professional artisans.

To join our endeavors, please contact Dan Weaver, (207) 669-0666 or email info@artisanlab.org





Artisan Allegory

A very long time ago on the dark to us but sunny side of their moon—lived a world of beings who practiced expressing themselves by helping others.

Following a life time of self-interested play a ‘one eyed donkey’ living on a brook between pond and sea decided he would invent a way to help others understand themselves by making things that were usefully beautiful. Sitting by the fire he went to sleep wondering how he would ever manage to do that.

The very next morning a beautiful Princess with silky auburn hair, braided over her shoulder, poked her smiling face through the shop window and asked if she might sleep in one of the empty chairs by the fire and teach him how to make others happy. Poor ‘one eyed donkey’ thought he surely must be dreaming but decided pretending he was awake could do no harm. Both feeling exhausted they curled in chairs by the fire to sleep and awakened to find flowers of all colors and kinds blossoming in the most peculiar places throughout the shops. The astounded ‘one eyed donkey’ pretended this was perfectly normal and thought it would do no harm to continue to imagine he was awake.

All day long a constant stream of happy children ran through the shops with every footstep sprouting a completely new flower of colors never before seen. At weeks end the children picked the flowers to take home because they prevented the doors and windows from being closed against the night chill.

The ‘one eyed donkey’ and the beautiful Princess took to sharing their meals, sitting with feet to the fire, sleeping in their chairs until morning when the children returned and raced happily around the shop with flowers sprouting in their footsteps. The flowers grew and grew and grew and gradually over the years the ‘one eyed donkey’ grew another eye so he could see ‘exactly’ how the beautiful Princess was able to make all the children happy.

The village gossips could never understand how the formerly ‘one eyed donkey’ and beautiful Princess got along so well and stayed warm and happy through the long cold nights. The multi-colored flowers were never revealed as the source of their warmth and happiness.

Dan Weaver
Founding Partner, Artisan Lab





Community
makes it happen.

Artisan LAB 
ten finger thinking