



ART

## Emily Knighton

*ARTIST. TEACHER.*

*SPACEMAKER.*

by Anna Mitchael

**F**irst you see ivy growing over the partial-wall. Untamed. Inviting. Then there is the oversized art. The table loaded down with curated objects of nature — to examine, sketch or dream about. Moments before, you were at your normal pace of a day. There was a list of things to do — places to go, boxes to check. But now ... you are here. In this studio that is a space for making space. For slowing down. Stepping out of the every day. Creating. Emily Knighton appears with her welcoming smile and your art class begins.

Knighton came to art the way many people arrive at their professional pursuits: in a tiny dorm room her freshman year. The question she asked wasn't typical though. Instead of "Where can I get a job?" or "What will get me the highest salary?" she asked herself, "What am I drawn to?"

She thought of art classes she had taken in high school. Pottery classes she could recall from childhood.

"They were times when I felt so alive," she said. And so, her pursuit of art began.

The studio art program at Baylor gave her a sprinkling of different disciplines. While Knighton concentrated on graphic design, she also studied printmaking, sculpting, photography, ceramics, surface design, painting and drawing. As it ended up, that scope was integral for the teaching she would soon do. But it was all still coming together, disparate puzzle pieces drifting toward the center.

After Baylor, Knighton tried a few directions of art-related jobs but then really found her stride through teaching at a Waco school.

"Art class became this place where kids could let their guard down," said Knighton. "I loved cultivating a space where mistakes are OK, even inevitable, where we can practice real artistic skills alongside life skills like problem-solving and perseverance in a setting that's a safe, soft space to land."

For seven years, she passionately pursued teaching, until she needed a better balance for her family. That was when she dreamed up Art Club Co., and eventually began teaching from her home studio.

The classes started small, but as word spread, she slowly added more offerings.

"There's always a balance," she explained.

In addition to raising her son, Knighton also works as the merchandise manager at Fabled Bookshop & Cafe. And it's important for her to keep the space she urges others to make for themselves.

Typically, the Art Club Co. roster includes weekly classes, summer camps, doodle dates and her newest offering — the longest lingering puzzle piece — process drawing.

In college, Knighton stumbled onto work by Heather Hanson, an artist and former dancer. Hanson danced with art tools in her hands so that as she moved, she marked the paper, and the final pieces became visual records of the experience.

Knighton thought of that work for years, then finally gathered courage to try her own version. With one piece of canvas fabric taped to the floor and charcoal in each hand, Knighton spent hours making marks as music and thought moved her. When the drawing was complete, she could sense the healing transformation. For a long time, Knighton honed this therapeutic experience as a private practice. But now, as is her way, she offers it to others.

In a world that so sorely needs it, another soft place to land.

## Come Join the Club

Visit [artclubco.com](http://artclubco.com) for more information, registration and to sign up for seasonal newsletters with new offerings.

### After-school classes

Classes teach foundational art ideas and practices in a calm and fun atmosphere with a sprinkling of nature inspiration.

### Summer camp

These weekly themed camps are immersive and engaging. Kids learn skills and create projects that make them proud.

### Process Drawing

These unique, creative sessions are for grown-ups only and are offered on a private or semi-private basis.

### Doodle Dates

This is a creative time for mom and her little "date" to spend an hour together making art and a memory.



Photo by Katelyn Kasper, [kasper-creations.com](http://kasper-creations.com)

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