From working with students to spearheading the drive for a state-of-the-art sculpture studio, Ed Mayer defines what it is to be an artist for all seasons.
Firewood stacked in asymmetrical rows alongside a farmhouse. The pattern ice makes as it forms on plastic snow fencing. The geometrical shapes created by the fronds of palm trees swaying in a tropical breeze. These are the phenomena that excite Ed Mayer, the University at Albany's professor of sculpture, who discovers art all around him - especially in the temporary, random assemblages of our quotidian experience.

Mayer encounters the world with a cocked head and a wry grin. When he is at work imagining the possibilities of a large installation piece, he dreams in the complex, repetitive geometric shapes - "modules," he calls them - of his favorite metier. "I can never really let it go when I'm working on a piece," Mayer says.

An advocate of "found art," he's an unrepentant scavenger who stops his Honda Element (the back seats were removed to make more cargo space) any time he finds something useful. "I love the scavenger hunt," Mayer says. "I spend a lot of time rooting through garbage to find something useful." Mayer maintains a "Dumpster dive" list of potential candidates and teaches his students how to approach this search. "If you see something that could be useful, you should take it," he says. "It's all part of the process." Mayer's latest find was a large, old Geiger counter from a nuclear facility. He repurposed the instrument for a new sculpture project.

Mayer's sculpture studio is a testament to his dedication to his craft. The 30,000-square-foot facility is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and provides a dedicated space for his students. "I never thought I'd have a studio to work in," Mayer says. "Now I can work on my own time and with my own projects." Mayer's studio is open to students, and he encourages them to visit and use the facility to further their own creative endeavors.

Mayer's influence extends beyond the University at Albany. He has taught at several universities, including the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Oregon. He has also been a visiting artist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Rhode Island School of Design. Mayer's work has been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Museum of Modern Art in Cleveland.

Mayer's passion for sculpture is evident in his teaching. He is known for his hands-on approach and encourages his students to experiment and take risks. "I want my students to be adventurous," Mayer says. "I want them to explore and push the boundaries of what they think is possible." Mayer's students have gone on to successful careers in the arts, including teaching, exhibiting, and working in various capacities within the art world.

Mayer's dedication to his craft and his students is evident in his work. "I'm always looking for new ways to approach my art," Mayer says. "I want to continue pushing the boundaries of what's possible." Mayer's work is a testament to his commitment and passion for sculpture and his continued exploration of the art form.