

# “Building Community”: One brick at a time



If you're looking for something fun, free, and fantastic to do this weekend, head over to [the Baltimore Museum of Art](#) to meet Josh Copus and participate in his interactive Brick Factory, which is part of his greater project “Building Community.”

My mom, the boys, and I visited the museum on Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> to celebrate my birthday (and because when your mom is an art teacher, there is no summer vacation from learning!). After visiting the exquisite sculpture garden, we headed over to the lawn on the opposite side of the museum where we found Copus, elbow deep in clay harvested in Perryville, just a few miles from our house.

“Welcome to the Brick Factory!” he said. “Would you like to help me make some bricks?”



Collin joined Copus on the other side of the table where he explained the history of brick-making and the vision behind his project. While Collin and Copus filled a wooden frame with the terra-cotta colored clay, Copus explained that after the bricks hardened, they could be stamped with letters and etched with designs. His goal is to create a public installation with all of the bricks created by museum-goers. Every brick will be unique, yet all formed of the same material and the same process. It will be one small way to bring Baltimore together.



After they packed the frame with the clay, Copus lifted the frame and, like magic, six perfectly formed bricks appeared before our eyes.



Copus set them aside to dry, explaining that after they became “leather hard,” they would be fired. But first, they needed to be stamped and decorated.

Each of the boys made a brick, stamping their names with plastic letters and a rubber mallet.



Collin used pottery tools to draw people and sharks on his brick.



As we worked, I learned that Copus is from North Carolina and that he creates other ceramic works of art, as well. He’s enjoying his visit to Baltimore and visibly loves his chosen line of work. His energy was so contagious that we chose to spend most of our afternoon working with him rather than taking in Monsieurs Matisse and Degas. There’s nothing like spending time in the presence of a living artist.

Before we left, Copus gave us a brick with the word “COMMUNITY” stamped on it.



Copus asked Collin what community meant.

“Like a whole city of people coming together,” he said.

“That’s exactly right!” Copus said. “And that’s what this is all about!”

It was a great way to spend a summer afternoon. We were, in a sense, our own community of artists, contributing to an even greater community called Baltimore. I’m looking forward to seeing Copus’ final production, where every one is more than just another brick in the wall.

You can catch Copus and the Brick Factory throughout the weekend at the Baltimore Museum of Art. It’s a fun, free way to participate in Baltimore’s art community.

[Here’s more on Copus and his Building Community project.](#)