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LOCAL ARTISTS WHO

AN ARTISTIC VOYAGE:
EXPLORING LOCAL

THE INFLUENCERS

JUNE 14, 2018

Meet Debbie Korbel



LOCAL STORIES



Today we'd like to introduce you to Debbie Korbel.

Every artist has a unique story. Can you briefly walk us through yours?

I was shy as a child and I spent a fair amount of time playing alone—which is either an indicator of creativity or being socially awkward—although I guess one doesn't necessarily exclude the other. It narrowed my career choices to: "artist" or "lone shooter." I loved to make things, to draw, to paint and to generally get lost into my own head. It was fun.

However, it wasn't a straight line to becoming a sculptor; there were several stops along the way. I painted, both abstract and Chinese brush painting, I started a small jewelry company and designed and created jewelry from natural stones, all the while owning and operating a retail music and gift store. I had always enjoyed creative writing and did some comedy writing for television, (The Tracey Ullman Show), wrote some screenplays and am currently working with a partner composing music and lyrics.

Several years ago, I took a sculpture class and finally found what was for me the perfect form of expression: sculpture. I loved the messy, tactile nature of sculpture. I started out doing pieces only in clay but that quickly evolved into my using a large variety of materials including wood and metal in my assemblage sculptures.

Please tell us about your art.

Many of the sculptures I make are "assemblage" sculptures— that is, a sculpture which is assembled from many different objects. It is an additive process as compared to stone carving, where material is taken away. The work I do often consists of found objects, so my sculptures might contain things as disparate as electrical wiring and an egg beater.

I create my sculptures by using parts of my own original sculpture (sculpted out of clay and cast) combined with an assortment of objects that I have collected. When I was a kid, I would look at the patterns in wallpaper and see animal shapes or stare at the linoleum tiles in my classroom (where the teacher was droning on about The Declaration of Independence) and see fairies and leprechauns. At the time, I just assumed everyone did that. As an adult, I really do approach my sculpture material the same way by standing back and looking for what I "see" emerge.

When I begin a new piece, I don't have an exact result in mind, nor do I sketch out an idea or make a maquette before I begin a piece. This smells like work to me. I never liked making outlines in school, either. The thought of working like that takes the joy of surprise out of it for me.

Often, the initial impetus for the sculpture occurs when I find some interesting fragment of metal or wood. Then an idea takes root and evolves from that "catalyst" piece. I work, piece by piece, trying different things out until I see the shape that needs to be filled, letting the sculpture evolve organically. Every sculpture is like a puzzle for which I find and fit each seemingly unrelated piece together in its most expressive form in order to create something new.

Choosing a creative or artistic path comes with many financial challenges. Any advice for those struggling to focus on their artwork due to financial concerns?

I wish I had a better answer. The path of an artist can be difficult. Being an artist is not really a choice, though. I think we are compelled to create, to express ourselves and somehow, we find a way, whether that be by working our "day jobs" and/or living on tight budgets. I would say not to worry too much about selling your art but on just making the best work that you can.

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How or where can people see your work? How can people support your work?
Please contact me to see which galleries currently have my work or to arrange a studio visit.

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See photos of Debbie Korbel’s work below











