



Deborah Murphy

Who are you and what do you do?

My name is Deborah Murphy, I am 50 years old and I was raised in the suburbs of Chicago. I have also lived and worked in New York and moved to Springfield six years ago. I am very happy to call Springfield my new home and to be close to my parents who have lived in Chatham since 1986.

I believe that art is a physical expression of a psychological state, no matter if good or bad. We reflect the world and conditions of humanity for the viewer when we create visual art. I

work primarily in oil paintings, knitted metal, yarn tapestries and mixed media pieces.

I am primarily known for large-scale abstracts and actually have some work in the German Embassy on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. I have several private collectors and one of my collectors is a very well known Hollywood producer. I believe people should be able to purchase quality work from local artists instead of feeling that they need to travel to St. Louis or Chicago, which is why I plan to open my own gallery space, here, in Springfield one day.

Where did you study?

I'd never had an interest in art, had never been to an art class, never cared about art at all and in fact I hadn't even stepped foot into the School of the Art Institute of Chicago until I attended. Before I discovered art I was a Cook County adult probation officer, but in 2002 I was attacked by an inmate at the Cook County Jail and knocked unconscious. While recovering I began to paint, primarily out of boredom, and people wanted to purchase my work. I applied to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and was humbled when I was admitted, given a

full scholarship and a year later won the Bare Walk Endowment.

Which past or present artists inspire you and why?

I am inspired by all art, but especially by outside artists because I relate to them so strongly. I never tried to be inspired by any particular person or medium. I work with whatever is in my hands. If I am out of paint, I knit metal, if I have no metal to knit, I will sculpt. It does not matter what the end result is, I work straight from the gut with no outcome in mind.

What has been a seminal experience?

After I finished my undergrad work in 1988 I thought it was a good idea to move to New York at 22 and become an officer. I saw an incredible amount of ugliness as I was assigned to the South Bronx. It is a part of me, my story, my life experience and it shows in my work. It gave me the courage to travel to Europe alone. I believe that no matter what field or business you are in if you go to New York, you will compete with the best and if you survive, you are a changed person for life.

What work do you most enjoy doing?

I don't enjoy doing any of it. It is a love / hate relationship. It is something I must do, I look at a piece, think it is done, then 10 minutes later it's driving me crazy and I rework it. It's like the partner you hope will change, and never does.

What themes do you pursue?

Abstraction and the juxtaposition of hard and soft, masculine and feminine. I have started doing very large-scale abstract pieces 10ftx20ft. Those are primarily focused on color and structure.

What is your dream project?

My dream project would be a piece that inspires the world to make a cohesive positive change for something. I think I would like to teach victims of abuse or child trafficking to use that pain and create; to give them some relief from their own minds.

Do you remember your first piece of artwork, how old were you and what was it?

My first piece of work I remember well. I wanted a table and I couldn't find anything that I liked. I went to a stained glass store in the western suburbs of

Chicago and found this beautiful glass. The owners were horrified when I took a hammer and smashed the entire thing. I made a table with the pieces and resin on top. It represents how we destroy things so easily then work so painstakingly on putting them back together in a cohesive manner.

If you would like to learn more about Deborah or view her work you can find her on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.