

I have sort of a long history with sculpture...(three stories: 1967-68-ish,1993,2011); from Sari Grove (Mrs.)

My mom, my mum, took me to the “Y” when I was just a blonde lump...It was before I was 2-1/2, because I started real school at 2-1/2...

The “Y” was very very sophisticated in the clay business...They had giant old kilns that really worked & clay tables to work on with proper benches & big bags of clay, but like alot... The clay was the right colour brown & wet & the long table surface was wooden & could get dirty...

My mum just left me there with the much much older people, the adults, the heavysset woman who was already working on stuff that could be sold...Serious adult people...

I was there alot, at that clay department at the “Y”... Long enough, that whenever I try to sculpt something, my muscle memory kicks in & all those skills I learned as a blonde lump come back...

I carved alabaster with a hammer & chisel, well, you know, those various chisels that you use to carve stones with...I bought many large pieces of alabaster from Sculpture Supply Canada, & put them in the trunk of my Dad’s Audi which he gave to me when it got old...I had planned to do a sculpture garden of body parts, for The Toronto Sculpture Garden...This was in 1993-1994 in my own studio called Studio 2007 at Sherbourne & south of Front in the purple & green building (you know the one)...

What happened was this: My first sculpture was ‘stands with a fist’... I had seen Dances with Wolves not that long ago & I thought I should start with something familiar...So I was doing a fist coming up from a foot...Just that... I had also seen Camille Claudel, & the foot idea seemed like an easy way to start...Ok so, this was the first time I had hammered & chiseled, carved into stone, alabaster...



So what happened...um...It was amazing...My hands, the hammer, the chisel, the alabaster...It all came together & it came out Exactly as I had seen it in my mind...exactly...perfect...I freaked out...I couldn't be so talented...So skilled...Something was happening...The alabaster...The alabaster was mimetic...The alabaster was alive...I started remembering my visit to Trois Pistoles Quebec- it was so so very cold there- could animals, like harp seals, could they have become frozen & turned into stone? Like alabaster? Could I be working with living tissue? This was the only explanation in my mind for how could, the sculpture, had turned out...It was a fist coming up from a foot...

Too realistic...I started polishing the piece with various grades of sandpaper...Bought a hand sander in hopes that the job might become easier...The alabaster dust was enough that my father the neuro-ophthalmologist would reprimand me for endangering my eyes...I already had a thing removed when I was 8 or 9, something that fell in while I was skiing on a hard snowing mountain...I started work on the next piece of alabaster...Again, mimetic...The whole: "Is this stone alive?" question came back even stronger...I threw all the unworked pieces into my car & returned them to Sculpture Supply Canada...Didn't say why at the time...Maybe I did...It was upsetting for me...

In 1999-ish, Canadian Artists Representation Federation Artistes Canadiens (CARFAC) needed a small sculpture for the tables at an event in the old movie theatre converted to banquet hall type thing just west of Yonge & Eglinton...It needed to be cheap & easy to understand...All the members of Carfac were asked to make a small thing, under 70-75 dollars-ish cost of materials... I made a man, muscular, out of plant flower wire armature covered with self-drying white clay- from Lewiscraft...It turned out really nice...Carfac gave me 25 dollars back for materials, but that wasn't the end of it...

Hooked again, I started making small flower wire armatured sculpture with self-hardening white-ish clay...A ballerina in the splits...A fallen downhill skier, intended as a mascot for the Vancouver Olympics (made in memory of my Dad-the fallen skier)... Again, my mum took me one day to Al Green's sculpture school to see this new self-hardening stone material that Lorne Winters had invented called "Winterstone"... Someone nice showed me how to put glass fibres into it to make it stronger...I pugged around with a small piece in my hand & then we left...Too much dust in the air for me to work there...

Fast forward to 2011...I am building a Trumpeter swan Outdoor Sculpture for Bluffers Park (as intent- not commission), so that Trumpeter swans & humans & other predators will know that this is a Trumpeter swan friendly park...(There's a nice spot facing Lake Ontario in the bay)...In the months prior to starting this project I had been weaving artificial Trumpeter swan nests out of Sisal & using a simple monkey chain knot...I had stopped my oil painting habit because my eyes were telescoping...The arm strength I gained from weaving the nests gave me the ability to move to sculpture, large scale sculpture...Like the boy in The Karate Kid, you have to wash a car or paint a fence in order to get the back & arm strength

you need to fight a fight...The hard weaving was a necessary step to moving into public sized sculpture...I say this lest a young artist, or an old one, decide to switch into doing a large sculpture without having the prior muscle ability...

Also, I should add. I had been feeding 18 kilogram bags of wild bird seed to the wintering Trumpeters at Bluffers Park... 18 Kilograms because it was a better deal to buy the biggest bags...By the end of winter my back didn't hurt anymore when I hoisted the bags to & from my car to the swans...This was another important factor that led to me trying sculpture again...

p.s. I worked with FIMO at my mother's toy store called Play N' Learn... You could make colourful jewellery out of Fimo...You had to bake it & it made our oven smell...At Toronto French School we learned to make butterfly or sailfish metal bits that they gave us, into works of art, by putting pieces of special powder on the metal bits & cooking them & then it all came out shiny with real colours! I also learned how to make paper airplanes from my classmates there, which helped me to learn a little about how to do origami later...(A roommate at Harvard from Japan showed me how all her stuff could be folded tiny-like her hand electric fan- totally folded up! This is high-tech origami in practice...!) This is all I have to say for now about my history with sculpting- I am only writing this because my regular resume seems to have forgotten about this...Mostly because there is not a lot of money in sculpture in Toronto & I guess I didn't pursue it too seriously for that reason...You see, the outdoor weather here is so harsh that sculptures can fall apart real easily & also people steal them...But bronze is expensive & making it so heavy it cannot be stolen is a pain for the artist, 'cause then you can't lift it or put it in your car without help...I don't know, maybe my chances are better now for sculpture- I really love doing it- maybe Winterstone will be my salvation(Ok, Jesus is my salvation, but you know what I mean)...(I have figured out that if I add AcrylBond to the water it weatherproofs better!)... Sari