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Photo: Amy Jones
www.amyjphoto.com



Sue Lyet

"The seduction begins with objects, lovely old objects, tiny fragments of everyday life. These objects form the basis of my obsession." - Sue





Sue is absolutely one of my favorite people on the planet, and definitely the most creative. Ordinary objects that wouldn't even register on our radar become raw materials for the flow of ideas that are so original... some of them are shocking. Yes, shocking... in subject matter, in detail, in the way her work makes you think, it can be crazy and complex and everything has a detailed back story. For example: Sue is currently designing her "Feminist Earrings" made from the metal clips from feminine napkin belts. She scored about 20 packages, brand new in the box, and once she adorns those painful little reminders of womanhood with sterling wire and vintage crystal beads, the end result will be an elegant witticism.

Sue is a found object artist, but she wasn't always. Early in her career, her work focused on stained glass. From 1976-1990 Sue labored over jewel-toned shapes of glass creating work that will last for decades - becoming the antiques of tomorrow. In 1987 Sue made a big change, and left her government day-job to renovate an old country store. She filled it with antiques and works by local artists. During this time, she taught herself how to make baskets, focusing on historical reproductions.

She didn't discover her true calling as a "found object artist", until a dear friend needed help finishing his book "The Fine Art of the Tin Can" by Bobby Hansson. *"The focus of my work for the book was to blend the old with the new. The idea of using tin cans and other found objects to create works of art, is for me, a refreshing change in the mind set of our "throw-away" society and I find pure delight in interrupting the waste stream in this fashion",* said Sue.

Sue's art has been a reflection of her life, and many of her creations result from both joy and grief, but always with her sly sense of humor. When her mother died of breast cancer, Sue struggled to find a way to express her anguish. Hanging in her studio is a piece titled "Lucy's Walking Stick" a beautiful art basket woven around a single tree branch stripped smooth of it's bark. She poured all her loss into this beautiful piece of art, and found a way to go on and face the next challenge. Because of her own high risk of cancer, six surgical and five needle biopsies, she agreed to a preventative mastectomy. While coming to terms with this very personal loss, she created her self portrait. It's made of re-claimed litho-steel, wooden folding measure, fishing gizmos, glass and onyx beads and handmade sterling rivets. *"I look at it now, and see the symbolism: I couldn't run away from this so I didn't need feet, I was totally helpless so there was no reason to have hands, and there was no point in a head because I felt like I lost my mind. And since I had the luxury of creating a new me, to cheer myself up, I gave myself a fabulous figure! Life can be lived without fear. However there is always a price to pay for such peace of mind, it's simply hidden... beneath the surface,"* said Sue.

When Sue lost her best friend of twenty-five years in an alcohol related car accident, it took several years for Sue to work through the debilitating grief. About a year ago, she found a tiny dress form, and it was like a voice in her head started to whisper... to compel her forward.

"The eighth inch wide strips symbolize our lives... woven together, with a fit similar to a hand in a glove. Victorian curtain finials serve as wings and a hammered copper heart honors our friendship. The croquet ball headpiece hints at the 12 steps of AA with 12 beads between each headpin used to hold the beaded strands in place. An Underwood typewriter tag belt serves as a tribute to my fashion forward friend and an ever changing variety of necklaces wrap her with my love. Once completed, I thought briefly in regards to a title for this piece and was given an answer... it came like a whisper, floating through my mind... The Guardian, she said... and, finally I found peace." - Sue

Sue has found a new kind of peace and a new calling in life. For the past four years she has been the Resident Artist and Art Services Coordinator at Father Martin's Ashley, an Alcohol and Chemical Treatment Center in Havre de Grace. Her programs provide the opportunity for patients to relax, build self esteem and experience a healthy living pastime as they create jewelry for personal use, or as gifts for friends and loved ones. In addition to basic jewelry, sessions often include options such as cold-forged copper pendants, life necklaces or most recently... "The Joy of Living Project". A work-in-progress, that blends woven rattan, hammered copper and 2"x3" fragments of paper into an artistic statement regarding the small joys of healthy living. When completed three artworks will feature the personal thoughts of hundreds of patients, alumni, and staff members and become the first of many permanent art installations that demonstrate the healing qualities of art therapy within a recovery environment.

"This is the most rewarding work I've ever experienced, and I sincerely believe I've found my destiny at Father Martin's Ashley. Frequently, tears are replaced with smiles as my patients find success and gain self confidence... sometimes it's the simple things in life that reward us with pure joy, and I've found art to be a common denominator," sighed Sue.



Guardian Angel



For more info on Sue Eyet check out her website at www.studio432.biz