



A Sculpture's Studio: The Heart and Home of Heather Blume

by Sheryll Hirschberger Reichwein

As a young child, Heather Blume spent the days of her Cape Cod summers drawing in the sand. By the end of every day the tide would come and wash her masterpieces away.

"My mother was the artist in the family," says Blume. "She owned all of the artist's tools. It never occurred to me or anyone else that I should have them too. So I drew in what I had available. The sand."

A thirteenth generation Cape Codder, Blume spent her early years exploring the same beaches her ancestors walked centuries before. And though she's since lived in many other places and traveled much of the world, purchasing her Harwich home and studio five years ago was truly a return to her deepest roots—both personally and artistically.

Blume explains, "There were no TVs in my Cape Cod summers. The people I knew entertained each other with stories, full of pretending and imagination. I developed a love for narrative that is so much a part of who I am today."

A figurative sculpture and mixed media artist, Blume enjoys exploring aspects of narrative, such as metaphor, symbolism, and mythology. She holds a B.F.A. summa cum laude in Painting from the University of North Florida and an M.F.A. cum laude in Sculpture from the New York Academy of Art. Her work has been featured in exhibitions in New York, Chicago, Miami, Philadelphia, and at The Cape Museum of Fine Art in Dennis, as well as throughout Europe.

Blume explores the realm of narrative by creating a series of sculptures inspired by a core theme. For example, in her Ocean Series, figurative forms evolve into reflections of the ocean's essential personality expressing weightlessness, flow, and letting go.

"My grandmother was a literature major at Wellesley," says Blume. "Her love of narrative was passed down to my mother and through her to me."

In another series, Blume explores the narrative of the circus with acrobatic figurative pieces that may swing on a trapeze or fly through air. Dynamic and colorful, these sculptures capture the breadth of the circus experience.

"We moved around a lot when I was a child," explains Blume. "My mother was adventurous, restless. Our life was like a circus, fun and full of excitement!"

But she quickly adds that the "circus life" also had a downside, "My mother was a gifted artist who didn't get anywhere in the art business because she was never in one place long enough to make connections.

That was a big part of my moving to the Cape and settling in one community. An artist needs a place to work and a place to show; people need to know where to find you."

Located in a residential neighborhood, Blume's studio is in a barn-style building which served as a woodworking shop for the previous owner, who used it as his base while he built the adjacent home. Though Blume has made many adaptations to the barn to serve her specific needs as an artist, the quality of the original craftsmanship is apparent.

One of the most significant changes she made was the addition of an upstairs gallery, a long, narrow room with windows on either end and ample focused lighting, which displays her work to perfection.

"My small gallery is like a viewing room," she explains. "Most of my art is stored; I'm in the processing of cataloguing it now. When someone visits, I bring out those pieces I think will most interest them. It's a nice opportunity to talk one-on-one, to develop a relationship. When you show in a gallery, buyers rarely get to meet or speak with the artist. And the truth is, it's rare that someone else will talk about your work as well as you can yourself. Visitors who seek out and talk to the artist find common ground and a shared truth. These are the kind of people who want to buy my art."

Blume teaches at local art institutions such as Provincetown Art Association, Truro Center for the Arts at Castle Hill, and Cape Cod Community College. She also holds classes in her Harwich studio.

Heather Blume Sculpture Studio



Heather Blume Sculpture Studio
19 Old Tavern Lane
Harwichport, MA 02646
508-292-1113
www.heatherblume.com
heather@heatherblume.com



Through her Cape Cod sculpture studio, Blume's personal narrative comes full circle. "My mother sold her art her whole life, but moved so much that she never became well-known as an artist. Selling art is about building trust. People might say, 'I've heard of her. She had a show at the Cape Museum,' and then they can trust their instincts to look at and buy something new. My studio is validation, to others and to myself, of my career as a professional artist."

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