

2010

Guide to Art in Louisiana

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Combusting Buddha by Julie A. Siracusa • siracusadesign.com

Gallery Insider Cover Artist Profile 2010



Julie Siracusa

How does a girl that loves lizards get to do exactly what she wants to do? “Choices” she tells her friends, “please understand I’m making choices.”

But the decision to choose art over everything else, even time with friends, wasn’t any easy one for cover artist, Julie Siracusa. Growing up in Morgan City, Siracusa’s mother, a talented seamstress, made sure that her two daughters were surrounded by it, enrolling them in art classes very early. “Bob Greenwood was my first teacher,” says Siracusa, “and he told my mother that he wasn’t there to baby-sit, he was there to teach art.” Not to worry since Siracusa knew instantly that art was what she was there to do. But while the passion for art continued to burn through her young life, it soon came time for college....and choices. Though choosing a double major in fine art and architecture seemed the logical decision, a few years later the call to earn a living could not be ignored.

And so began a twenty year career in graphic design, creating identities for other people. But the art was always there and always influenced the design work. “I’ve made sure that my graphic design maintained the human element by incorporating drawing into my work, something by hand,” says Siracusa. “Today it’s always digital in the end but, as an artist, I understand how it gets there, I understand what’s behind the technology since I was designing before the technology existed. I understand the tools and the process.”

So what happens? What is that turning point when an artist realizes that enough is enough, that time won’t wait for the art to be expressed? In Siracusa’s case that time came in a casual, unexpected conversation with an artist friend that caused her to ask what price she was willing to pay to carve out easel time. While life was good, professionally and personally, something was missing, the balance was off. “I finally was able to see that if I didn’t express myself in what feeds my soul, I’m not okay,” says Siracusa, “but some people don’t get that.” And when it didn’t matter that they got it or not, the choice was made, the sacrifices would have to be made, the art would have to take precedence over everything.

And as if they could be silenced no longer, the subjects of the work materialized on the canvas. The angels, the Buddhas, and the lizards came to life. “The subjects of my painting have to have a spiritual component,” says Siracusa, “it’s not just about composition, they have to speak to me, drive me through the process.” And though this artist’s dreams are often haunted by the deadlines that dominated her graphic design life, Siracusa feels that when under pressure amazing things happen in her art.

These days, Siracusa isn’t just dreaming of being an artist any longer. Her choices were made and her desires are clear. Though she still produces award-winning graphic design work Siracusa is determined, “I want to start each day behind the easel and be under a deadline for a gallery show or commissioned work. I want someone to be moved by my pieces.”

And like starting at the bottom of one of her totems, the artist is climbing her way up, though what’s ahead is uncertain. What’s certain? The soul of Julie Siracusa is being fed and the art waits no longer.