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# Passions in nature

Carrie Leigh Metheny  
*University of Iowa*

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PASSIONS IN NATURE

by

Carrie Leigh Metheny

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Master of Fine  
Arts degree in Art  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

May 2012

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Kee-ho Yuen

Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Carrie Leigh Metheny

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the  
thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree in  
Art at the May 2012 graduation.

Thesis Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Kee-ho Yuen, Thesis Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve McGuire

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Sutowski

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monica Correia

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES...	iv
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II MY DEVELOPMENT AS AN ARTIST.....	1
CHAPTER III TECHNIQUE .....	6
CHAPTER IV DESCRIPTION OF PIECES.....	8
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION.....	19

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		
1.	Flame, Armour, Copper, Silver, PMC3, 8x12.5x5in .....	2
2.	Chicklet, Teapot, Cups, Sterling Silver, Abs Plastic, Aluminium, 4x3x2in.....	3
3.	Evolving, Rings, Sterling Silver, Abs Plastic, 1x2x.5in .....	4
4.	GeoFlowers, Lights, Polycarbonate Film, 24x24x12in.....	4
5.	GeoFlower, Lights, Polycarbonate Film, 24x24x12in .....	5
6.	Building Blocks, Forming Blocks, Wood, 3.5x3.5x10in .....	6
7.	Dragon Fly, Titanium, Milling, 3x2x0.0125in.....	7
8.	Bubbles, Sculpture, Resin, Dye, 12x8x4in.....	9
9.	Moutain Girl, Sculpture, Resin, Dye, 15x10x3in.....	10
10.	Emerge, Sculpture, Bronze, 40x45x3in.....	11
11.	Lucky, Sculpture, Fine Silver, Bronze, 14x8x3in .....	12
12.	Decay, Sculpture, Copper, 12x8x4in.....	13
13.	Broken, Sculpture, Copper, 10x7x3in .....	14
14.	Fire Light, Light, Steel, 10x8x4in .....	15
15.	Fire Lights, Sculptures, Steel,10x8x4in .....	16
16.	AutoCad Bike, Drawing of Ti Girl, 54cm.....	17
17.	Ti Girl, Mountain Bike, Titanium, 54cm .....	18
18.	Evolution Bike, Cyclocross Bike, Aluminium, Powder Coat, 54cm .....	18

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

I grew up in very outdoor oriented family. I started out canoeing with my mother when I was still too young to remember. At age five I began to swim on a swim team where I began to fall in love with water sports. I became a lifeguard at age fourteen and then became a canoe, and kayak instructor. At age thirteen I joined a kayak club where I was the only girl. I then became a camp counselor. My life has always been centered on the outdoors, kayaking, climbing, hiking, and biking. I turned to art in 2002 after discovering that I had hip dysplasia. These experiences have shaped my life and I love being a strong woman while maintaining my femininity. I have always felt a sense of belonging in nature. Through taking art courses I have been able to express these attributes through my art.

## CHAPTER II

### MY DEVELOPMENT AS AN ARTIST

After receiving an associate's degree in communication design and went on to Radford University where I began taking courses in jewelry, metalsmithing, and ceramics. I fell in love with building things with my hands. Alison Pack, my professor, encouraged me to continue my education; I changed my major to jewelry and metalsmithing. My studies at Radford University gave me a chance to experience study abroad trips to Greece, London, and Paris. These trips abroad inspired me to create a series of wearable art. I am particularly interested in the ancient Greek time period between 750 and 146 B.C. My woman's body armour became an expression of my physical strength, my expression of the female being, and serves as functional pieces of art.

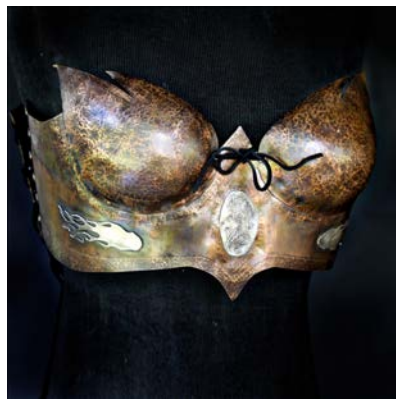


Figure 1

Flame, Armour, Copper, Silver, PMC3, 8x12.5x5in



I was accepted at The University of Iowa after receiving my bachelors of fine arts at Radford University. Course work at The University of Iowa has exposed me to a tremendous amount of new technology. My current work is a representation of my skills evolving from the use of new technology and new materials. My goal became to combine the use of new technology with traditional hand skills.

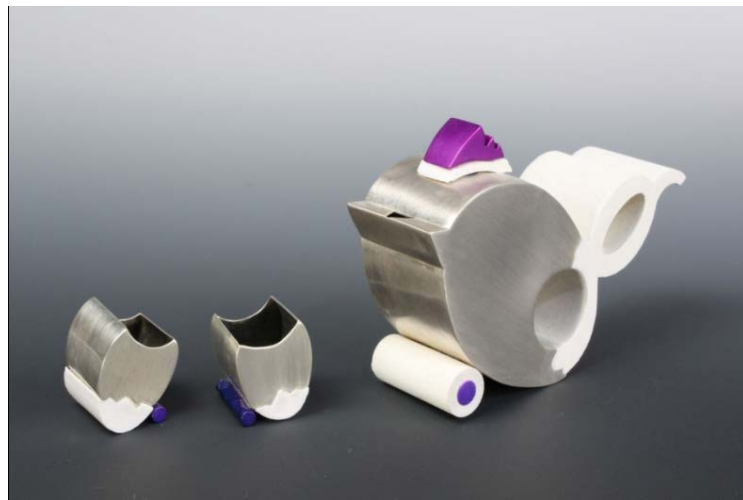


Figure 2

Chicklet, Teapot, Cups, Sterling Silver, Abs Plastic, Aluminium 4x3x2in



Figure 3

Evolving, Rings, Sterling Silver, Abs Plastic, 1x2x.5in



Firgure 4

GeoFlowers, Lights, Polycarbonate Film, 24x24x12in

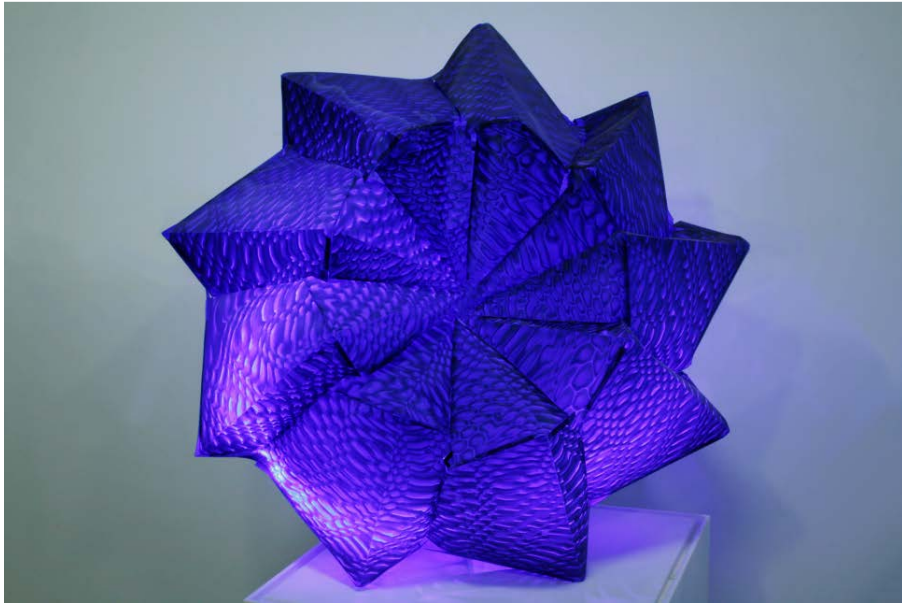


Figure 5

GeoFlower, Polycarbonate Film, 24x24x12in

### CHAPTER III TECHNIQUE

The programs I use are three dimensional programs such as Rhinoceros (nurbs modeling program) AutoCAD (two and three dimensional architectural program. The numerical control (CNC) machines I use are the plasma cutter (for cutting metal), laser cutter (for cutting plastics, rubber, and other materials), milling machine (for milling wood and metal) and rapid prototyping printers. My hands skills consist of traditional mold making techniques, and traditional metalsmithing techniques such as raising, soldering, welding, forming, sawing, and casting.



Figure 6

Building Blocks, Forming Blocks, Wood 3.5x3.5x10in



Figure 7

Dragon Fly, Titanium, Milling, 3x2x0.0125in

## CHAPTER IV

### DESCRIPTION OF PIECES

My work is a representation of personal study of the female form in nature. These forms have become an extension of nature and nature has become an extension of the forms. This work represents the beauty and adaptability of the female. Nature has become a decorative camouflage and in turn the forms have become a representation of the beauty of Mother Nature.

Tony Sutowski has been an amazing inspiration and has shared his wealth of knowledge with me. He has taught me mold making and large scale casting techniques. I have used these techniques to express my intense love of metal and my passion for natural forms. Metal has become a representation of Mother Nature's and my own strength. I use metal to make nature a more permanent substance. I use resin in my forms to pursue an idealistic representation of nature, as well as representing nature's beauty, my sense of belonging, and our ability to adapt.

My forms consist of six different elements. "Bubbles" is my representation of my love of water, my love of kayaking, and water's fundamental purpose in life.



Figure 8

Bubbles, Sculpture, Resin, Dye, 12x8x4in

“Mountain Girl” represents my love of the Blue Ridge Mountains, my sense of home, and my sense of belonging.



Figure 9

Moutain Girl, Sculpture, Resin, Dye, 15x10x3in

“Emerge” represents the essence of nature and its fundamental gift of life.





Figure 10

Emerge, Sculpture, Bronze, 40x45x3in3

“Lucky ” represents the sweet elegance of nature and its charm.



Figure 11

Lucky, Sculpture, Fine Silver, Bronze, 14x8x3in

“Decay” represents a sense of fire, passion, and nature’s brutality



Figure12

Decay, Sculpture, Copper, 12x8x4in

“Broken” represents the danger of nature and my feelings upon learning that I have hip dysplasia.



Figure 13

Broken, Sculpture, Copper, 10x7x3in

In conjunction with my forms I have been working on a series fire lights and bike frames. Fire lights were inspired by sitting by the camp fire. Fire has a way of calming and inspiring me. I have always loved the shadows and flickering lights. My goal became to capture these elements in metal.



Figure 14

Fire Light, Light, Steel, 10x8x4in



Figure 15

FireLights, Sculptures, Steel, 10x8x4in

Building bike frames has given me a chance to express my femininity in the beauty of the frame itself as well as expressing my love for metal. Bike frames have given me the opportunity to learn CNC milling techniques, rhino cam, and other technologies. Riding bikes gives me the ability to feel the sun on back, the wind in my face, and earth below my wheels. These frames have given me the opportunity to truly explore nature and art on a different level.

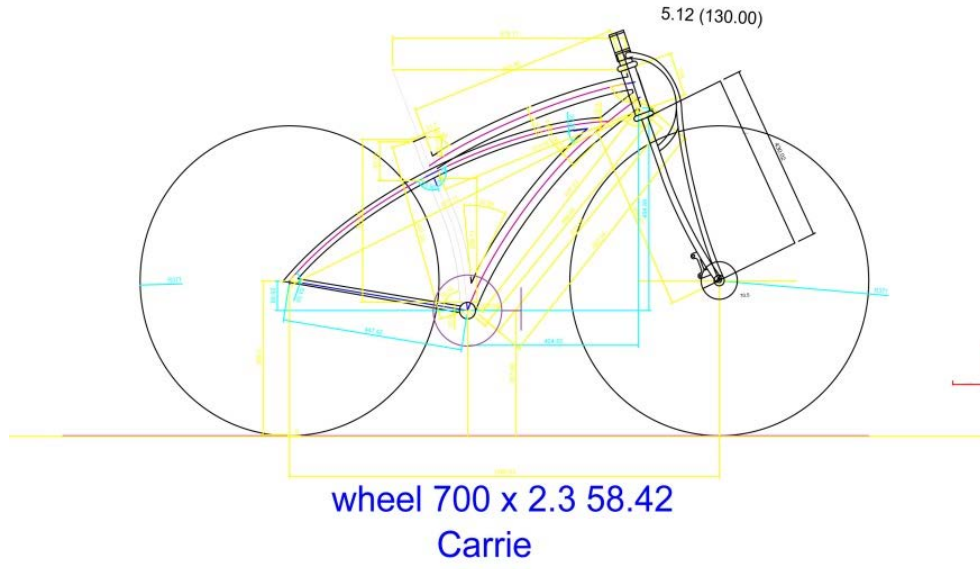


Figure 16

AutoCad Bike, Drawing of Ti Girl, 54cm



Figure17

Ti Girl, Mountain Bike, Titanium, 54cm



Figure 18

Evolution Bike, Cyclocross Bike, Aluminum, Powder Coat, 54cm



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Through my art I hope to achieve a representation of my femininity, my strength, my sense of belonging, and my love of nature. I plan to continue to combine the use of new technology with traditional hand skills. My goals are to continue to learn new techniques and challenging myself to learn more technical skills so that my pieces will become stronger both physically and visually.