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**A Conversation with
Dianne Hoffman**
Arc Studio #103
By Sherri Cornett



As a self-described imperfect perfectionist with a dark sensibility, Dianne Hoffman also has a clever sense of humor. She enjoys seeing the glimmering sparkle in her viewers' eyes as they make sense of the metaphors and details in her assemblage vignettes. If she feels she doesn't have a needed element, which are mostly donated to her by her supporters, she pushes her imagination to figure out an alternative idea that is still multi-layered and intriguing. The resulting euphoria further drives her determination to succeed, which was evident in how she rose to the challenges of presenting the recent project *Awakened By The Midnight, A Bay Area Dark Art Exhibition* at Arc Gallery, for which she was curator and producer.

Sherri Cornett: Would you first tell me how Dark Art was represented in your show?

Dianne Hoffman: As I stated in the catalog, Dark Art offers a prophetic viewpoint of ourselves and the world around us by depicting alluring attributes with an unsettling orientation. This movement transmits the mystery of macabre and uncanny surrealism with a vitality that far exceeds seasonal clichés of Halloween. Through compelling works by Bay Area artists, the show could readily tap into primitive and enigmatic aspects of the subconscious.

SC: I can only imagine how much plans had to change from initial conception to actualization in July due to the pandemic.

DH: Yes, I had no idea I would have to scramble to come up with a plan B and then a plan C, in which I set up a virtual platform (Zoom) to host the opening reception. I still chose to physically hang the 57 artworks from the 24 phenomenal local artists. It was also available via a website I developed to host an online gallery with a point of sale to process purchased pieces.

SC: Besides not being able to gather together in the gallery space, how was the opening reception different? Were there any upsides?

DH: Because the show and the opening were online experiences, we could open up viewing to a very wide audience . . . to anyone in the world with WiFi and the Zoom link. I heavily promoted it wherever I could, including [Episode 81](#), on the podcast [Drawing From Experience](#), so there was a lot of interest. I hosted the event directly from the gallery and interviewed each artist about their work via Zoom from their "shelters in place." I also took private in-person appointments for people who wanted to visit the gallery. In the end, the event was a great success that I am very proud of.

SC: Were there other challenges to overcome?

DH: I am very comfortable candidly speaking to small groups of people, but I admittedly suffer from severe "stage fright" when it comes to a larger audience. Knowing that I would be on camera and viewed by potentially hundreds of people the moment we went live was a challenge. But, this show meant a great deal to me and I had put so much work into bringing it to fruition. When the moment came, I was able to dig deep and clench hold of the confidence I needed to pull it off.

SC: Would you tell me how your personality would help readers understand more about your work?

DH: Oh man, this is a loaded question and makes me chuckle. I'm a compassionate old soul that embraces broken people as well as broken things with no intention of fixing them but rather a need to shed light and acceptance on the beauty of their brokenness. On another episode of [Drawing From Experience](#) from 2018, I talk about how I am drawn to broken people because I find them more interesting. As much as I strive to live in the present, I don't discount that we all have a backstory. All of the components in my assemblages look worn, weathered, and abandoned like they've seen better days. By placing them together so they profoundly speak to each other, I am able to collectively grant these objects a "second coming" and an alternative, higher purpose. I do feel like every one of my completed pieces is alive with things to say, hearts to touch and a home waiting to encompass them.

SC: After such big effort for this exhibition, how will you recharge?

DH: I am longing desperately to get out of the City and sit in a lovely wooded forest away from all human contact and just listen for a while to the trees sway, the birds sing, the bugs buzz, the leaves rustle, a creek babble and the critters scamper.

SC: That does sounds lovely. I hope you get there soon!

Dianne's Website <https://diannehoffman.wixsite.com/artist>
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