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A Conversation with Debra Reabock Arc Studio #202

By Sherri Cornett



Inspired by Escher, Dali, Magritte, and Warhol, Debra Reabock started taking photographs as a way to find relief from the stress of her corporate job. Her passion is transforming every day surroundings – modern, urban architecture and nature – into abstract geometric shapes and forms, so that viewers look at them in new ways. Despite or, surprisingly, because of the increased isolation of the pandemic, she has found that these “new abnormal” times have engendered opportunities for collaboration and new ways to present her photographs.

Sherri Cornett: Would you tell me first about your abstracts?

Debra Reabock: Abstract photography enables me to convey the richness of our everyday environment and express multiple perspectives through the interplay of light, space, movement, and dimension. Many of my photographs have a sense of energy in motion or a kinetic quality. They can be rotated to reveal a completely new perspective. I’m fascinated by what’s there that we don’t see at first glance.

SC: Do people ask if you manipulate the images?

DR: Yes, and the answer is that I seldom feel the need to do so. For some of them, I have added color to emphasize the atypical viewpoint. My vision is that they are calming and meditative and engage the viewer’s curiosity by expanding their awareness in a new way. Half the time, I am asked if my photographs are paintings!

SC: How do your abstract images connect to your personality and past experiences?

DR: My perspective has always been on the patterns and trends that make up the big picture. What are the pieces and how can they be re-arranged for a better result? My business background is steeped in sales, marketing and finding the “sweet spot win-win” for a positive outcome for all parties.

Initially, my goal was to make a difference by connecting art and non-profits. So, my photography career started by using art as a vehicle for fundraising. Being focused, goal oriented, and a good listener are life skills that have made an amazing difference in my business career and pursuit of my artistic passion.

SC: Could you tell me about your recent collaborative project?

DR: Cheryl Traverse, one of my collectors (and, in a full-circle way, my first boss in tech!), started creating very meditative, spacey, electronic music. She wanted to put photos to her music and reached out to work with me.

The process happened so organically. Everything came together via Zoom with Cheryl, a development guy and me. We created ARTSounds, a photo video with one of her songs, “Groovin’ on the Bend.” The camera scans across and moves in and out of my photographs.

SC: The video is a very hypnotic experience . . . Has this changed your thoughts on your artistic process?

DR: The video is another way to pull people in. They want to become part of the photos. Yes, this

opportunity has encouraged me to think of new ways to differentiate the presentation of my photographs, to look at programs that turn my photos into video and to expand my visual platform into a video footprint. I wasn't familiar with video – it has enticed my spirit of adventure!

SC: Would you like to share a particularly meaningful response to your work?

DR: Yes! I was honored to be invited by the Commonwealth Club for a solo show AND to be able to organize a panel discussion, “Artistic Creativity and Consciousness: Art as Positive Energy in these Turbulent Times” in January 2020. It was the first ever SOLD OUT art event at the Club! Matt McKinley (Vice President of ArtSpan), Michael F. Shea (LICSW and Integrative Psychotherapist), Robert Melton (Curator and Outreach Coordinator at the de Young) and I talked about, among other things, how art can be a vehicle for connection and conversation. And, now it is available via a [podcast](#).

SC: I am a strong believer in how art can create a framework for dialogue, questioning, expanding one's view . . . Is there anything you would specifically like to share from that panel?

DR: Yes! My photography is a beautiful nexus of art, the environment and science and is a vehicle that expands consciousness and can open us up to new perspectives. Another message I emphasized was the importance of having a positive outlook. I decided to “turn adversity to advantage” and use the stress of the current pandemic to focus more time on being creative. Instead of moving quickly through the world and expecting everything to be there.....I am taking in more of the world and being grateful.

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Debra's Instagram: @debrareabock

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