



MAKING ART

by Joel Fernando
Photos by Laurence Maultsby



Deborah Cavenaugh's

Art World

For every action there must be inspiration, and for every inspiration we have the choice to take action. Deborah Cavenaugh is a self-taught artist whose perspective on everyday life is reflected in her vivid artwork and community charged lifestyle. Her work, in its rich whimsy and dreamy visuals, represents an imagination that is figuratively uncluttered and free of doubt. She carries a joyous manner and has a very special talent in helping others find their way.

As the art world in Wilmington is constantly evolving, new niche locations are being sought out and declared by groups of artists. Deborah and five other artists have been working under the acronym WAWAS (Wrightsville Avenue Working Artists Studios), which features a growing number of artists located on Wrightsville Avenue and surrounding

streets. Their studios are open to the public every first Friday of the month from 6pm-9pm, allowing people to see their artwork in progress, before it hits the galleries. This "Studio Crawl" is unique because it allows patrons to spend time in the intimate atmosphere of an artist's studio and connect with them on a personal level.

The WAWAS strive to be inclusive of all art mediums, with only three requirements: you must currently be a working artist, be willing to open your studio to the public every first Friday, and pay a minimal membership fee which pays for promotional materials.

With three painters, two jewelers and one Stained Glass artist on the lineup, the WAWAS are still growing and exploring their newly established neck of the woods.

Facing page: (from left) Deborah Cavanaugh, Mitzy Jonkheer, Francisca Dekker, Julia Jensen

Francisca Dekker, a WAWAS painter, has work with transitioning colors wrapped in bold lines in both abstract and figurative styles, while Mitzy Jonkheer, a WAWAS jeweler and metal smith, creates life long bracelets, pendants and rings. These artists are establishing a very supportive type of alliance it seems, bonding through the diversity that makes each of them unique.

As Deborah has helped put together the WAWAS, she is also busy planning a 9-week art camp planned over the course of this summer. Children who are both experienced and beginners are welcome, and will benefit from the personalized curriculum that is offered to nurture each child's unique artistic abilities.

With only six slots allotted for each week-long camp, individual attention is guaranteed to each budding artist. They will receive guidance in a real working artist's studio, using real art supplies and creating work that will reflect a professional artist's process.

Each weekly session is booked separately, with different concentrations that will be practiced from week to week. From painting to sculpting to bookmaking, each session is guaranteed to develop the natural talents that each child exhibits under Deborah's supervision.

Deborah hasn't always been so busy as a visual artist and community activist. Growing up as a professional singer, she then turned to painting in her mid-forties and has now reached a level as a respected artist in Wilmington and across the country. Applying knowledge from her performing days to her painting, Deborah says that "A singer never leaves the audience out of the performance, they bring the audience in to feel what they feel." And that is the case for her paintings; there are almost always traces of water, flora, fauna and cozy little cottages all of which welcome the viewer into a world of interconnected simplicity. Her theme is consistently run throughout her pieces, and that is an appreciation for life as it is — being conscious of the beauty



that the ordinary world bestows. With an inspiring note written on each painting and card that she creates, she sets out to inspire and encourage others to live their dream."

Deborah says, "There are very few artists who are fortunate enough to live off of selling a few paintings a year," which has provoked her to branch out to other facets of the art world. Nationally distributing her manufactured lines of jewelry, greeting cards and art prints, has proven to be a successful venture, as well as her line of upholstery and decor fabric

designs, which will be released to the public very soon.

Deborah has reached her current status as an artist and mentor from allowing herself to evolve freely in avoidance of stagnancy. Creating something new for yourself could be the biggest change of your life. More importantly, when you have an idea or dream, you must not be afraid to run forward with it. To be free you must first learn how to trust yourself and the decisions that you make. ■

**The next WAWAS Studio Crawl –
July 3, 6pm – 9pm
Deborah Cavanaugh Artist's Studio
5028 Wrightsville Avenue
910.297.5383**

**Visit Deborah @ www.DeborahCavanaugh.com
Visit the WAWAS @ www.wawaswilmington.com
Sign up for the Summer Art Camp @
www.wilmingtonartcamp.com**

A multimedia savage of sorts, Fernando is a practitioner of communicatory experimentation on visual/audio platforms and currently is expanding his knowledge on grapevine health benefits, business dealings, socialite politics, cabinet making, reality show scouting, entrepreneurial research and culinary extravagance.