

# .Artist Talk



## Jeff Muhs

sculpture Study in Form

Born in Southampton, NY, during the late 60's, Jeff Muhs learned woodcarving from his father at a young age. He went on to attend college at the School of Visual Arts in New York where he turned his attention to painting. Working with oil on canvas, Muhs created abstractions of Long Island landscapes through a process called slipstreaming.

He's also dabbled in the figurative, recreating iconic images that have appeared throughout art history from the Renaissance to Abstract Expressionism.

interview Hannah Rose Prendergast



Jeff Muhs, 'The Gardener's Dilemma', Concrete and Garden Hose, 14" x 14" x 22", (c) Jeff Muhs 2013

The Gardener's Dilemma

Jeff Muhs



Jeff Muhs, Untitled, © Jeff Muhs 2013

Jeff Muhs

Atelier

In 2010, Muhs added ‘furniture designer’ to his repertoire with the Mid-century modern Emirate Collection. For now, he cements the curves of a woman’s body into corsets, harnesses, Choos and Manolos. These sculptures form an unbreakable bond between hard and soft, allowing Jeff Muhs to reach the heart of eroticism.

Was there a moment you knew that you wanted to become an artist?

Creating is what I’ve always done. Painting, drawing, building of all things, from the most inspired to the most mundane, has always been very rewarding. It never made sense to do anything else.

What makes your erotic art unique?

Eroticism in art is as old as art itself. My art is a product of my personality and perspective. I hope to take my unique understanding and sensuality and add it to the continuum.

Is some of your work a commentary on how women are pained to fit aesthetic ideals? Why or why not?

I won’t pretend not to have aesthetic ideals, but the work is certainly not meant to be a commentary on a woman’s struggle to conform to social norms. People with pains, will see pains. I think the work is more about pointing out and examining the nature of sensuality.

What techniques do you use to cast your concrete sculptures?

My process for creating these concrete sculptures is something I call ‘*Dynamic Free Casting*’. Within this process, I have developed new methods for forming concrete. My compulsion is to orchestrate, as completely as possible, command over the powerful forces inherent to the medium, thereby pushing the limits of the materials and my ability to control them to the absolute maximum. The sculptures or physical record of these efforts leave the materials and process bare before the viewer while presenting me with new forms to explore. The result is a fertile ground for creation where I plough the realms of the Internet and leave the new realities in my wake.

What do you love about working with concrete?

I like the idea of creating something with the permanence of stone. What starts as water and dust becomes solid, like the manifestation of a thought.

Which periods of art history are you most inspired by? Why?

The Renaissance, when art explored and perfected expression through representation, particularly the human form. Then abstract expressionism, when the artist, having mastered and understood expression through representation, was able to release themselves to the realm of pure creation.

You’ve said before that your father is the most influential person in your life, besides teaching you woodworking, what else do you admire about him as it relates to your work?

My father, in some sense, laid out the model of living outside ‘*working for someone or something else*’. He marched to no one’s drum but his own; that’s an important thing for an artist.

**Which medium of art do you most enjoy working with? Why?**

If I were only to do one thing creatively, it would be sculpture.

There's something about manifesting in three dimensions that is extremely rewarding. I also enjoy working within the constraints of paint on canvas. Everyone is given a rectangular white field and paint. To define the infinite possibilities within that format is fascinating.

**Which medium of art has garnered you the most attention? Why do you think that is?**

I have built my artistic career on painting, but to give you an idea, with curators, editors and on social media, the response to sculpture over painting is probably 500 to 1.

When I figure that out, I will build a new career in sculpture.

**Are there any other mediums of art that you're looking to tackle?**

I truly work in all mediums. In my desire to make larger sculptures, I am exploring materials other than concrete, such as fiberglass or metal.

**Your body of work is diverse, what's the unifying theme among all of your paintings, sculptures, and furniture?**

Whether it's the memory of a sunset or the curve of a woman's body, my work strives to understand the true nature of beauty and our relationship to it. Ultimately, it is about accessing the source of that beauty.

**Where do you see yourself and your work five years from now?**

I often seek out the company and conversation of artists significantly older than myself.

I am deeply curious to know if the well of creativity is endless and what it's like to live that for a lifetime.

I see my artistic efforts and purpose changing over time, I think for the better. Five years from now, I don't think I will be doing what myself or anyone else expects.

