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Surprise sculpture at Club Fit is energizing

By Abby Luby



Jodi Carlson pictured with her sculpture on display at Club Fit in Jefferson Valley. Her show runs through December 31.

It's always been a feather in the cap of Club Fit in Jefferson Valley to exhibit the work of local artists. And if you're a member struggling for a work out routine – the art is a good visual crutch. While dragging your body in the wee morning hours to get your blood pumping the artwork - colorful photographs, watercolors – is the perfect silent inspiration needed to get through kick boxing.

The current show at the health club entitled, "Sculptures," is wonderfully different and Club Fit has clearly outdone itself in the art world arena. Gracing the mezzanine walls for the month of December are sculptures by Jodi Carlson. That's right, sculptures on the wall, with two wonderful pieces outside the main entrance as show teasers. The work is scintillating and perfectly reflects health club energy. Swirling metal shapes undulate between slight aluminum structures and are gaudy, energized statements especially created by Carlson to fit on the club's walls. These site-specific pieces are made from recycled aluminum from former road signs that used phosphorescent materials so they glow at night. Shiny, fragmented words and large letters coil around, jab out and somersault back. About 25 percent of the materials in the piece, "Wind," are from aluminum road signs.

The longest and largest piece in the show, "Under Sea," is 20 feet long

and stretches along the main corridor. It was directly inspired by the active ebb and flow of folks at a health club.

“I was inspired by the long, empty wall above the pool,” explains Carlson at the show’s opening reception last week. “I had to spend hours in the hot tub because I was recovering from spinal surgery and the empty wall above the pool tugged at my imagination. I kept wondering what would I put there?”

“Under Sea” is a lyrical conglomeration of shapes, the fruit of Carlson’s experience and imagination based on what she saw every day at the club. “There are shapes representing different physiques of people working out whether it was slower, more relaxed people taking yoga classes or the more active ones.” There are even a few metal cut outs that look like the human spine which Carlson claims were likely from her subconscious during her free-flowing creativity.

Clearly Carlson is inspired by artists Alexander Calder (1898-1976) and Henri Matisse (1869 – 1954) and although she started creating the aluminum sculptures only two years ago, they are sophisticated works of whimsy; they are reeling and topsy turvy with fun, delicate edges. “Bunny” is a smaller work, made of a headlight frame Carlson scavenged from a street in Mahopac, where she lives. This ‘collage’ seems to float despite being made of metals. By trade Carlson is in the home improvement business, but she also used to be an occupational therapist.

“I’m familiar with putting handles on things and how they work,” she explained, pointing out that many of the aluminum constructs of her work have that “hands on feel.” This past fall her work “Click,” now outside the club near the front door, won first prize in the competitive Putnam Arts Council’s Annual Juried Show. Her work has also been shown at Collaborative Concepts at Saunders Farm in Garrison, the Sculpture Barn in New Fairfield, CT. This show at Club Fit is her first solo show.

Carlson’s large arch greeting club members is “Gate” and the fact that Club Fit considered putting art on their grounds also sets a precedent. For all of us holiday weary members rushing in from the cold to burn off those extra seasonal calories, Carlson’s work may supply that extra bit of energy needed to get you through it all.

***“Sculptures”
runs through to December 31***

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