

Michelle Greene

Artist/Sculptor

www.michellegreenesculpture.com

New York, NY



Michelle Greene may earn her living off of reusing existing materials now, but she has been practicing the trend long before she was getting paid for it. Recognizing at a young age that we have moved into what she calls a “throw-away society,” Michelle began appreciating the beauty of the past and understanding the value of materials. Instead of being wasteful, she utilizes reclaimed and recycled materials as a way to connect the past to the present. Today, Michelle works in her Brooklyn studio to create sculptures – both public and private – that mold the past resulting in truly unique designs.

Below are excerpts from a conversation with Michelle Greene.

How would you describe your specific style of art?

In the general sense, I would say that I create sculptural works. Aesthetically, I believe that my art has a certain industrial beauty and style. This is in large part dependent on how I create my sculptures and what type of materials I use. When I incorporate greening and recycling, I like to meld the old with the new in an innovative way. Some of my pieces have function and some don't but all are unique and incorporate outside-the-box trends.

How do reclaimed materials work into your designs?

A lot of the projects that utilize reclaimed materials are spontaneous and come along as an idea I get to connect the past to the present. For example, when designing the benches for the Brooklyn Navy Yard Park, I first looked at the surrounding buildings that were going to be torn down. I was immediately drawn to the glass block used as windows in an old machine shop and began thinking of ways to work it into my designs. Since the park is on the water, I thought the glass block would allow for beautiful reflections while giving all those who sit on the benches a glance at the past. The benches are a great example of my desire to recycle materials in a new and innovative way.

Similar to the benches, I also chose to recycle ship doors and the cast aluminum lid used as the ship's transmitter box. The doors worked perfectly as tables while the lid of the transmitter box ended up constructing the perfect barbeque.

What would you say makes your art different?

I am lucky enough to lease my own studio so I get to do all of my own fabrication and welding. The result is a lot of improvisation and creative spontaneity. Unlike some artists that begin with a clear-cut vision or designs, I simply enjoy the process that leads me to my vision. Discovering the unknown as I create really inspires me along with exploring new possibilities and watching the work evolve. The process at which I work really helps make my work unique and special.

Finally, what advice would you give to aspiring artists or those just starting out?

The only security you have as an artist is the knowledge that you have a passion for creating art – that is what sustains you.