

Kristin Baetz



1. Did you make any art before becoming a member of the BIAWW?

I have been doing multi-media and fine art for about twenty years. I first started out with stained glass, photography, really got into some watercolours and now I'm doing oil painting. I really enjoy all kinds of art. I do work with clay sometimes too. I would say I've definitely enjoyed doing artwork for a majority of my life, well before my car accident, well before the injury.

2. What do these programs mean to you?

It's becoming more than a hobby. It's something that I enjoy doing and I find you meet some really incredible people through it, it's been fun. When I first found out about the different art programs through the BIAWW, I was still pretty sick with my brain injury and pretty isolated. The fact that I already had an interest in art but wasn't doing much of anything during the day other than just rehabilitation appointments, it was pretty awesome to join other people doing art who had experienced a similar injury. To me it really made a big impact on my life and also helps me to meet other people but also help me to have some art and productivity.

4. What medium do you like to work in the best? What was the most memorable program for you?

I definitely enjoyed the acrylic pour. Why I liked that one was because it wasn't as structured. The glass class to me I found to be really challenging. I really enjoyed that you mix the paints and then watch the pour come out onto the canvas. I found it very relaxing and really calming, which for me really benefited my brain at that time. That was one I really enjoyed. I also enjoyed the clay, and found that one really relaxing as well and the instructions easy to follow. Those two are the ones I participated in and really enjoyed.

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With my brain injuries and my other injuries, I had a really difficult time trying to find productivity in my day, and I came up with this idea of creating little magnets for your fridge. I got the idea one day when I didn't have my schedule together and realized that I needed a menu schedule on my fridge for my appointments. It's better to have those on paper and I thought "hey magnets would be cool to make" and I started making these tiny little magnets with wood and painting the wood and gluing them onto magnets. I was using clay, dried clay and wood and putting them on magnets and then decided to confront the Brain Injury Association and say "Hey this is something I'm doing, I would like to see if we could try and sell these magnet to people to try and make some money for fundraising for the agency." I also participated in running one workshop. I did one worksop there with several other participants and members of the agency and had some fun. People enjoyed it, as far as I know. The actual title of them is Brainetic Magnetics and we've sold some magnets through the agency. I have an interest in continuing with that, I think it's been great.

I think it's a little micro project that was fun to try out. The magnets are really tactile, so it's easy to make. Anyone at any stage or age and even depth of injury can do it as long as they are able to use their hands. I brought that element in to see if it could be beneficial for other people, including myself, that it's easy to do. It took off as far as it could and I was really happy to provide that and be part of the community there.

5. Why do you think these programs are important?

I would say that you don't have to be creative or an artist to do any of these programs, I think that anyone could come in and participate and try. It's really about connecting and using your brain and focus and some of those skills that we struggle with, those of us who have acquired a brain injury. I'm also a strong believer in small products or productivity. To me, that's really important to be able to walk away with a piece of art, big or small. As well as being part of a group, not doing it alone and being part of that afternoon or day, it's a nice feeling for sure.