

## Get to Know the Artists in *Color*: Barbara Downs

Several of the *Art in the Arboretum: Color* participants shared their personal histories and thoughts on art and being an artist by responding to the following questions.



**What person, place, or event has been a primary influence on your work and why?** There have been so many primary influences over time, especially in terms of an artist that I might be paying attention to at any particular time. I have an abiding appreciation over the years for Mark Rothko, but there have been many others. But in addition to artists, my very first printmaking teacher in college, John Nava at the University of Redlands, was very influential in terms of developing my working methods and studio practices. Although we were doing printmaking, I

would credit him with teaching me to not be fearful of process, which led me to also not to fear experimentation...with materials, with subject matter, with ideas.

**Adjectives that best describe you as an artist/person:** Experimental, changing, inward-turned.

**Adjectives that best describe your work:** Varied, expressive, particular.



**If you had a personal philosophy/motto, what would it be?** Do whatever it is that you need to do with your life. Find that thing, or those things, that are calling to you. Let yourself move headlong and without fear into your own unknown future.

**What might surprise someone about you/your work?** Despite the superficial differences from medium to medium, or from series to series, of course my work is all connected

(because it all comes from the same person!). I have a restless sort of creative side to me and I like to experiment with materials, color, mediums, and subject matter, but I circle around and come back to the same thing time and again.

***What are your thoughts on the Color Exhibit (an integration of the beauty of nature with the beauty of sculpture)?*** I saw a walled garden in Ireland this past summer that had a rather surprising incorporation of sculpture within it. It was surprising to me because I didn't expect to walk around a corner and see modern sculptures amid the conventional walled garden. They were perfectly suited to their environment because they were landscape-based, and, when I saw them, I instantly thought about the installation that Susana Arias had just done at the Arboretum. They gave me a thrill and made me think about the connection that we can have to art within our environment.

View more of Down's art at <http://bdowns.com>