

Decadent Dreams

February 1-26, 2017

The Loading Dock Gallery

Western Avenue Studios

122 Western Avenue

Lowell, MA

This February, thirteen Merrimack Valley artists have collaborated to unveil unique “metal clay” jewelry masterpieces at the **Decadent Dreams** exhibit, opening on February 1st and running through February 6th at the Loading Dock Gallery at Western Avenue Studios in Lowell. You may be wondering...”What is metal clay?”. Londonderry artist Michela Verani offers a simplified description of this relatively new medium:

“Nanoparticles of metal (gold, fine silver, sterling silver, copper, bronze, steel) are held in a moist (water) organic (cellulose product) binder, worked like clay and fired in a kiln. After firing, the product has all the abilities of standard metal”.

The artists in **Decadent Dreams** share a common experience; after working with other metals and art forms, the properties of metal clay have opened the door for new artistic expression. Amherst, NH artist Ruth Levine sums it up this way: “My aesthetic focus is to find new ways to bring out and enhance natural patinas, to create mixed metal pieces, and to combine new techniques and art forms into my work. The sculptural process and the technical challenge allow me to produce unique, one of-a-kind designs.”

The wonders of nature have served as inspiration for many of the pieces in **Decadent Dreams**. Woburn’s Rosa Elena Rivera’s “Orquidea” (“Orchid”) was designed after visiting an extraordinary exhibit of orchids: “I decided to make an orchid that would be able to bloom at any time of the year.” Nature also inspires Leominster artist Paddy Marcotte to “replicate nature or work from patterns to build something entirely new”, while, at the same time, “capturing a sense of organic growth”. Her “Dogwood Blossom” necklace design originated as a gift for her mother after her father's death using actual blossoms from the dogwood tree he had planted for her. Nantucket light, colors and textures inform the creations of Bretworth Apthorp, who lives on the same island where the artist’s love of jewels and jewelry began years ago.

Loading Dock Gallery artist Laura Doran, also a member of the Greater Boston Metal Clay Guild, has orchestrated **Decadent Dreams** as a means to introduce local artists and the public to the art of metal clay. You are invited to join the artists at the opening reception on Saturday, February 4 from 5 - 7pm and at the Metal Clay demonstration on Feb 26th from 1-3pm on the loading dock. You are also invited to enjoy First Saturday Western Avenue Studios and the annual “Gifts form the Heart” celebration from noon-5 on February 4th . The events are open to the public, free of charge and there is free on – site parking.

Decadent Dreams runs at the Loading Dock Gallery from February 1 through February 26, 2017. The Loading Dock Gallery Hours are 12-5:30pm Wed, Fri & Saturday, 12 - 8:30pm on Thursday, and 12-4pm on Sunday.

For more information, visit theloadingdockgallery.com or call 978-656-1687