

Q&A with Mixed Media Mosaic Artist **Susan Wechsler**

By **Stephanie Rew**

Photos courtesy of **Susan Wechsler**

Susan Wechsler is a mixed media mosaic artist and teacher who grew up in the mountains of Colorado and recently moved to Evergreen from Denver with her husband, David. Although she had to leave her Denver studio – which was in a large warehouse shared with 50 other artists – behind, Wechsler says that “here in Evergreen, I feel the community and the support for my art. It’s been a happy move!” We chatted with Wechsler about her unique creations and what she loves most about being in Evergreen.

EL: You describe yourself as a mosaic artist. What does that mean to you? How does your work stand out from other mosaic art?

SW: I consider myself a mixed media mosaic artist because my work is not

traditionally mosaic. Having a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Michigan and a master’s degree from NYU Tisch School of Theatre has given me an art foundation. But being a self-taught mosaic artist enables me to be creative with my techniques, which is what makes my art so unique.

EL: How did you get into mosaic art and what do you especially like about it?

SW: I feel life is a journey that needs purpose. Yes, I am an artist, but over the years I’ve found that my purpose is to empower others – mainly women with their own creative voices. That is why I teach. I get the joy that art brings into my life daily, but by sharing my talents and passions with others, I’m able to bring joy into their lives, too! I was born knowing my calling. I am one of the lucky ones that way. I won every art contest that I applied to, went off to art school and was the

darling of my class. My journey has always been clear, but not always easy.

EL: Do your pieces ever carry a message or follow themes?

SW: I work in a series. There are artists who are known for just one style, but not me! I get excited to challenge myself and create fresh new work. Lately, I’ve been working on a Native American series. One of my very first costume design projects was a PBS special on Standing Bear. I flew to Nebraska and worked with Native Americans, dressing them in period pieces for the movie. They were all so kind to me and welcomed me into their community with open arms. I was and still am fascinated by the pageantry of their costumes, especially the headdresses. It’s in the details, color and texture of these traditional garments where this work begins. I try to honor their culture, tradition and spirit in this series.



EL: It's easy to imagine that with mosaic art, the artist would have a tendency to collect all sorts of things that might later show up in a piece. Is this true for you?

SW: Yes! I am and always have been a huge collector of discarded treasures. I love to upcycle and rummage through flea markets, antique malls and gem shows to find that perfect piece that gives me inspiration. My studio is filled with beads, gems, china plates, stained glass --this is where my work begins, pulling from my huge collection to create a palette in which to create.

EL: Outside of making art, what do you do for fun?

SW: I get inspired by being amongst nature. My husband and I love living in the mountains. We like to take long hikes and bike rides right out our back door. My husband, David, is an excellent cook -- so you will often find us creating delicious meals in our kitchen and soaking up the beauty and peaceful scenery in our backyard.

More information about Susan Wechsler and her art is available at www.mosaicsbysusan.com. ■

