

Name: Deborah Brod

City: Cincinnati, Ohio

At sunrise, just after Israel's 40th anniversary, on a kibbutz near the Sea of Galilee, I trimmed banana trees each morning, with a machete and a crew of others; and each evening, I watched the sun set over the Sea of Galilee. Traveling through Israel, I remember the land, the heat. The feisty people. The seas and oases. And the ancient stones. All my works here reference these visceral elements, but the thread connecting them is the language, the words, the writing, representing people's ideas and feelings made visible, physical. So, each artwork here, including every "re-art", includes many copies of the cover of a "vintage" Hebrew-writing notebook: many hands, poised with many pens, expressing themselves and their culture through their writing, particularly their handwriting, and so by extension, representing "the many faces of Israel," the many voices, as seen through their words. Playing with and affirming the term, "people of the book"! Ancient, hand-written, often illuminated manuscripts in both Hebrew and Arabic flow from these hands and pens. I intentionally honor and overlap these two types of writing, and so, by inference, these two rich cultures...re-vising or re-visiting history?! wishing for the future?! I digitally curve, fold, layer, and make transparent these manuscripts, similarly to how I work with textiles. So I revive these digitally preserved ancient texts, and I re-purpose and transform them through contemporary digital means, adding to them my own recent photos and scans (for example, an orange-half, a matzah, sand on the shore of another sea), and incorporating them into the new artwork I make from the images of the photographers from Netanya and the digital illustrator from Cincinnati.

In my "original" piece, the girl(s) from an ancient Arabic astrological text, with the hands from the Hebrew-writing notebook may appear to be the main "characters." But the curling, flowing texts flying from their hands vie for attention and are equally important here, suggesting the fecundity of the female mind and imagination, largely unrecognized at the time that these manuscripts were actually created (and, still, perhaps, even now...!) I'm curious to see what the Netanya and Cincinnati artists make of this piece, how they'll each re-purpose and transform it. I enjoy the porousness and surprises inherent in this process: being permitted, well, asked, to change others' artwork, but also letting my artwork be changed by others...why not?! (although there is admittedly the "safety" here of hanging on to one's "original!")

How do I work and play with others' original artwork? By channeling, and sometimes challenging, aspects of the original image. I respond to the mood and the message (as I interpret them). I include the "feel" of the colors and some of the formal aspects of the original composition. Like partnering in a dance...elaborating on a conversation...answering an unasked question...!?

and THANKS

Thanks especially to Alan Brown for inviting me to be part of this cross-cultural art exchange, and for being such a patient cat-herder(!), to both Sharon Spiegel at the Mayerson Jewish

Community Center's Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, and to Abby Schwartz at Hebrew Union College's Skirball Museum, for enthusiastic support.

And thanks to my mother, Ruth Weintraub Brod Banta for her love of words, her creative life and mind, and for sending me to Hebrew school at a very young age (at least until my Bat Mitzvah)! I can still read and write (but not always translate!) Hebrew! Thanks to my father, Stan Brod, for showing me, by example, the sublime beauty of Hebrew calligraphy. And thanks to my grandparents, Eva and Dave Weintraub, for encouraging my desire to explore, and especially to my grandfather, for passing on to me his love of books, of learning for the sake of learning.

Deborah Brod has M.F.A. in painting from the University of Cincinnati (1992), and a B.A. from Oberlin College, the Sorbonne (Paris, France) and the University of Cincinnati (1980) in French and Fine Art. With a background in painting and drawing, her artwork incorporates many media and approaches, including textiles, digital imagery, and installation. Her multi-media artwork has been exhibited regionally and nationally, including twice at the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center's UnMuseum, the Weston Art Gallery (Cincinnati, solo exhibit, several group exhibits), the Springfield Museum of Art (solo exhibit), the Virginia Beach Center for the Arts, and the Textile Arts Center (Chicago). Cincinnati Children's Hospital's Family Resource Center and Emergency Department both feature commissioned artworks by Debbie. She has recently created commissioned works for the Mayerson Jewish Community Center (Cincinnati, 2016) and for the inaugural year of Cincinnati's Ish Festival (2017).

Grants include Arts Midwest/NEA Regional Visual Artist Fellowship, two Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowships, Kentucky Foundation for Women Grant, and Summerfair Regional Artist Grant.

Debbie has been an artist-in-residence with the Ohio Arts Council since 1994, and travels throughout Ohio and neighboring states to do intensive community-based art projects with people of all ages, from pre-schoolers to octogenarians. She has taught art to children, teenagers, and adults at many schools, colleges, art museums, community art centers, and other institutions, for more than twenty-five years.

Debbie has lived in France (1977-78) and England (1984-87), and has traveled in Europe, Israel, Russia, Mexico, Canada, Dominica, Sri Lanka, and India. Her daughter, Naomi, currently lives in England.