



The Creative Life in Our Cities: A Conversation with Debbie Lim

We have many talented artists and creatives living and working in our Farmington/Farmington Hills community and our weekly interview series, sponsored by City Life Realty, will introduce you to some of them.

Today we feature artist Debbie Lim.



When did you first get started in the arts?

When my siblings and I were very young, our parents were very poor. Instead of coloring books, our mother gave us paper or cardboard boxes to create something with. When I was in 5th grade, I designed the school flag and won the art contests whenever the schools had them.

Did you receive formal art training?

I came from a very creative family. My mother was a child prodigy in music, my father was an artist, my aunt (Ethel Gold) was an illustrator in New York and did art for *Highlights* magazine, schoolbooks, and many children's books. My younger sister (University of Maryland Dean, Dr. Adrienne Lim) is one of the most talented artists I know!



Who has been a mentor to you along the way?

Actually, it was life itself that kept me sketching. I am a self-taught artist. On the personal side, I had a very hard childhood, having only my art (and my siblings). My art was my “way out” to escape reality. My twin sister and I were “aged out of the foster care” system, turning shy of 16-years-old. Art was the only thing in my life that gave me stability.

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conversations going, people
acknowledging the beauty around them.*

Are you a member of any local or regional arts groups?

No. I never thought I would be accepted, so I never tried.

Can you describe something you've created that is particularly meaningful to you?

I used to design clothes and used some of my designs for a local dance show that my twin sister and I were on, a “flopped” movie (with Jay Leno and Pat Morita) and I had over 200 fashion shows and my clothes were featured in two stores in the early 1980s. I taught myself how to make patterns from newspapers and how to sew! I felt that was a gift from God. That part of my art I felt was a gift and I was proud of it. As for my art now, I love creating art that has a Feng Shui flair to it and Wildlife art! So, to answer the question, my art with designing clothes, my Feng Shui art, and, of course, sketching wildlife are all meaningful to me.



Has your art appeared in any city programs or events, such as the Public Art Program at City Hall or Art on the Grand?

Yes, currently I have a “Tiger in Water” colored pencil art that is hanging in the Farmington Hills City Hall and I had a solo show for the entire month of June 2019! I was also part of the Holiday Art Market! That was a lot of fun and the first time I ever did anything like that!

Can you share a favorite quote about art or life?

This is something I always say to myself: *Everything in my line of vision, I see art and color ... Keep your life colorful.*

What advice or suggestions do you have for younger artists?

Keep drawing and being creative. Limit yourself on your cell phones and concentrate more on yourself – no matter if it is singing, drawing, playing an instrument or acting – stick to it no matter what. YOU WILL slip but KNOW to get right back up and start it all over. NEVER give up on yourself!

What do you think is missing from the arts community in Farmington/Hills?

With the new group running the Cultural Arts Division, I’ve noticed more arts programs for children and adults.

Why is celebrating and promoting art healthy for a local community?

Art keeps everything moving, conversations going, people acknowledging the beauty around them. I try to tell people that EVERY DAY. Most people walk around life like zombies. Most do not see, REALLY SEE the beauty around them. With art popping up here and there one will see more color and perhaps notice the beauty around them. Then the cycle begins. *Art keeps everything moving, conversations going, people acknowledging the beauty around them ...*

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