

# Heidi Marie Faessel

## INCHING TOWARD WHAT YOU LOVE

Story Collaboration by  
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Sometimes things take time. Sometimes we carry dreams in our hearts and keep them safe waiting for the right time to bring them into the light, nurture them, and then give them flight.



This was the case for local artist, Heidi Marie Faessel. Her path to becoming a visual artist had many delays, but she persistently kept moving in the direction of her dreams.

Creativity emerged in childhood, as she found much satisfaction and solace in drawing and making things. By high school, in southern California, she started creating small paintings exploring colorful abstract patterns.

Although she secretly wanted to go to an art school to study painting, she felt it would be more practical to find a way to use her creativity in a job that provided a regular income.

In California, she did some research at her local library and found the Fashion Institute of Technology/SUNY in New York City, which specializes in textile/surface design. After learning that upon graduation, the students have all the skills to work in the flourishing garment and home furnishing industries based there, she set her sights on realizing this plan.

While living in NYC for ten years, she earned her BFA, worked professionally as a textile designer in the home furnishing industry, and enjoyed the city to its fullest.

Heidi spent all of her free time going to museums and art galleries, taking art classes, and enjoying the rich cultural arts scene NYC had to offer. Her focus at this time was on her profession, so she just dabbled in personal art projects.

During these years, she and her partner would vacation in Montana- mainly coming to visit her sister, who lived in Kalispell. They both loved Montana and knew that when they were ready, they would move here and start a family. Then 911 happened, and they put their plan on fast forward. By the Spring of 2002, they made the move across the country from the Big Apple to the Big Sky Country.

Her first few years in Montana, there were some ups and downs. She made a small workspace in her basement and started focusing on her art again. Hap-

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profile } HEIDI MARIE FAESSEL.

pily, new friendships were forged, and her children were born, but there was a looming sense that more change was coming.

In 2007, her marriage ended. She became a single parent of 2 toddlers with a seriously compromised financial situation and few resources. Alongside the depressed economy, high unemployment, and her prior specialized work experience, her path to getting on her feet was uncertain and scary: it was a desperate time.

She needed to find a way to pay the rent and be the sole provider for herself and her children. Again, she got practical and started a residential cleaning service. This allowed her to work for herself, maximize the amount of time she could spend with her children, and minimize childcare expenses. Of course, this meant setting aside any visions she had of pursuing her artistic dreams.

Once the cleaning business was established, and the economy started to recover, she wanted to use her prior design education and experience, but now lacked the current computer and technology skills. She enrolled at FVCC, studying graphic design part-time, and continuing the cleaning business. Within a few years, she was able to merge her design knowledge with her new technological skills and start a new business providing graphic design services to local companies.

Over time, things changed. Her children grew, she remarried, she dissolved her cleaning business, and started to step forward, showing some of her art in public. Finally, the tipping point came...turning 50.

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She describes her current paintings as ‘organic abstraction fueled by the magic of our natural world.’ Lush and visceral, her work combines energetic brushwork, expressive line, texture and movement, to create an imagined space that is, at once, both striking and colorful.

Using a variety of mediums – acrylics, charcoal, color pencils, pastels, textures, and even brushes made from natural materials - her art practice is driven by the sense of creative discovery. It is the creative process of exploration and experimentation that keeps drawing her back to the studio day after day.

In addition to her paintings, she is currently developing a series of soft sculptures, utilizing discarded t-shirts she collects from her local community, and then transforming them into what she calls “objects of contemplation.”

“Sometimes seeds live beneath the surface of the soil, completely dormant and unseen until the right circumstances align. Then, from that little seed, springs forth something that prior was invisible and unknown. This is what it feels like for me now. I’m enjoying the sheer pleasure of what artist Georgia O’Keeffe called, ‘making your unknown known.’”

To see more of Heidi’s work, visit [heidimariefaesael.com](http://heidimariefaesael.com), the Walking Man Gallery and Frameshop in Whitefish, or throughout the summer, at the group exhibit “Quarantine Dreams,” at the new Kalico Art Center in Kalispell.

