

Gwen Marcus

For more than a century, the Cape has had a history of being a significant crossroad for artists of distinction. The fact that Gwen Marcus, a gifted and talented sculptor of international acclaim, has chosen to live here is a testament to our rich culture, but perhaps even more so to the powerful inspiration drawn from the unique landscape. “I am very fortunate to have such an amazing studio,” Marcus says of her space which overlooks miles of Nauset’s outer beach. “I grew up in New York and I loved my studio in the city, but my husband wanted to move to the Cape full time, so he built this space to lure me. And it worked!”

Marcus says her artistic talents were recognized as early as kindergarten by teachers who identified “something unusual in my ability to draw” and those natural instincts have driven her work throughout her life. Her work spans a range of sizes and subjects as she sculpts for herself, as well as others, with her commissioned work in great demand. She says the approach to creating her pieces takes a different tack depending upon whether it is a commission, or a personal piece spawned from a variety of inspiration. “When I create for myself, it is a very free process. I respond to the clay and allow it to guide my work.

I’m not thinking of anything other than just making this piece breathe and come alive. When I take on a commission, it is driven by the mission of the piece. I am trying to convey something about the person that I discover through the process of getting to know them.” Explaining the subtlety of how her process informs the nuances found in her work, she touches on a recent monument she completed of Vice Admiral Colin J. Kilrain that was installed in Braintree. “He is such an impressive yet humble man, but there is also something very good about him, that was very important for me to honor in him. So many military statues are imposing and kind of scary. He had a formidable career, but at his core he is a very thoughtful and complex individual who is very approachable and that is what I tried to achieve.”

The pieces Marcus creates for herself are drawn from her own creative and appreciative forces. Her dog Jake has been captured in a variety of playful and endearing poses, and the life models she uses regularly all inspire her inquisitive nature she explores what she can create starting with a mound of clay and finishes with a bronze piece that will last for eternity. “Clay is where it all happens for me, that’s my happy place. The tactile nature of it



Raincatcher • 41" h x 17" w x 19" d



The Bather • 51" h x 30" w x 37" d

fuels me and that’s where I can explore everything that will come through the piece,” she explains. Her process starts with creating an armament for each piece and then working with the clay as she attaches to the “skelton.” A rubber mold of the piece is created which allows the finite details—as Marcus makes her mark with tools and her own fingers and hands—to emerge. Wax is poured into the mold and left to harden, at which point the wax version of the art Marcus captured from a live moment in time, is broken out, re-assembled, and submersed in a slurry



Lucky • 4.5" h x 6" w x 8.5" d

to create a shell. From there the final piece is cast from molten bronze at a foundry. Her commissioned pieces are generally one-of-a-kind, and her personal work is available in limited-edition releases.

Marcus’ work is exceptional—that is evident at first glance. Yet it is the gravitas that she has earned through her work and a long list of lecture appearances, workshops and national board affiliations that confirms her world-class status. And she has chosen the Cape as her inspiring place to create. How lucky. 🌊

~Julie Wagner

Gwen Marcus is represented locally by Tree’s Place in Orleans and the Louisa Gould Gallery in Vineyard Haven, where this summer she will be featured in an exhibit in July.



The Catch • 59" h x 28" w x 19.5" d