

Gary Traczyk

Biography

Gary Traczyk was born in 1969 on an Air Force base in Homestead, Florida to Polish-Italian and Vietnamese American parents. When Traczyk was seven, his father's military career required that his family relocate to northern Italy. The artist attributes his early interest in the arts to the five years he spent there, much of which was filled with wide-eyed exploration of world-renowned Venetian museums.

Education

Gary Traczyk's fine art education includes acceptance to the highly selective New World Conservatory (now New World School of the Arts) in Miami, Florida; a Renaissance art study program in Florence, Italy through Florida State University (FSU); and apprenticeships with veteran sculptors. Long fascinated by the work of George Rickey, Alexander Calder and Jose De Rivera, Traczyk immediately took to stainless steel as a medium.

"I loved that steel sculpture could look simple and clean, but that it's complex and difficult to make," Traczyk said of his art, which often requires using found objects (tree stumps, chairs, or concrete blocks, for example – and total physical exertion) to shape the metal. "I loved the challenge."

He secured his own studio in 1997 – within a year of his first experience with the material.

Prior to launching his artistic career, he earned two bachelor's degrees in finance and multinational business at FSU, with a minor in art. Shortly after graduation, he entered the fire academy in Ocala, Florida – a pivot Gary Traczyk (whose father, uncle and godfather all served as firefighters) can only explain as instinctive.

"I was around it my whole life, with my dad," Traczyk said. "So when I became a part of it, I felt like it was family."

Gary Traczyk was ultimately offered a spot in Miami-Dade County's Fire Rescue service – a placement he had craved for the opportunity to train and serve on diverse equipment (helicopters, fire boats, SCUBA, Et. al), all of which he is now certified to operate.

Artistic Career & Exhibitions

Between shifts, Gary Traczyk quietly and methodically honed his skills as a stainless steel sculptor. After four years of practice, he finally felt his art merited exhibition, and he applied to his first show.

In a 1999 breakthrough, his work attracted the attention of The National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (now YoungArts Foundation), and he – alongside already well-known sculptors John Henry and Albert Paley – was invited to donate his work in a benefit auction. In his first of many charitable contributions, Traczyk was energized to find his piece had commanded a barrage of bids, raising thousands of dollars to benefit young artists.

“I was kind of shocked,” said Traczyk, who has since made charity a staple of his work. “And I started to feel like I really had something.”

Gary Traczyk’s kinetic steel sculptures have since appeared at numerous renowned art exhibitions, including Art Basel Miami Arts Week; Art Hamptons in New York; SOFA Chicago; Art San Diego; Toronto Art Expo; Beverly Hills Art Show; Miami International Art Fair; Art Santa Fe; Art Coachella; Texas Contemporary; Art Expo NYC; Spectrum Miami; SeaFair Miami Art Fair; and Art Palm Beach, among others.

Collaborations & Features

Gary Traczyk has collaborated with notable artists including Romero Britto, and his work has been featured in Celebrated Living Magazine American Airlines; Art Daily News International; Miami Herald; NBC Television; Southwest Art Magazine; Palm Beach Florida Weekly; Malibu Times, ArtBlend Magazine, Castle Rock Entertainment and HGTV.

Giving

From the very beginning of his personal success as an artist, Gary Traczyk has continuously donated his work for the benefit of philanthropic organizations and individuals battling personal illness. Beneficiaries include National Breast Cancer Foundation; Life Alliance Organ Recovery Agency; Autism Speaks; Lupus Foundation of America; Arthritis Foundation; Operation Smile; Baptist Hospital; Boys and Girls Club of Broward County; YoungArts Foundation; Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden; San Diego Children's Museum; Fisher Island Day School; and Miami Marathon.

He also donates his time by making in-person appearances at schools throughout South Florida.