



ARTIST STATEMENT • JEAN OFFUTT LEWIS

I believe that a Creative Force created me. I believe I am part of that Creative Energy. And what do I do with that creative energy? I make art.

My work is conceived in an otherworldly, creative place. It is born in the real world and sometimes matures into a surreal world. Things get turned upside down. Or inside out.

I work in different media and am thrilled when I explore new ones. I primarily paint and work in mixed media, although I also like to draw and work in three dimensions: sculpture, and occasionally mosaics and fiber arts. I like to mix it up. There are so many different ways to express one's creativity.

Why would I appreciate just one species of flower? One tree? One bird? After all, I've lived in the city, in the country, in the desert, and near the water. They all had something very special about them. When I moved out West, I fell madly in love with rocks. They made their way into my art.

Now I am captivated with how light dances and flickers and moves in ever-changing patterns across water, at a certain time of day, during certain months of the year.

It really doesn't matter what medium I work in. What matters is that whatever is imploring me to make art is finally able to breathe once I begin a piece.

I love the freedom, the spontaneity, of washing my favorite colors over a sheet of deckle edge paper. Hot pinks, acid greens, gregarious yellows, neptunian blues, screaming reds.

The mental and visual twists I make when I gather disparate elements and juxtapose them into a mixed media piece. Bits from nature. Stuff I find on the street. Objects reimaged outside their element.

I never tire of the wonder and surprise of observing a line begin hesitantly, then gather certainty and velocity as it becomes what it becomes.

Art talks to me as it is being made. Sometimes it self-destructs, implodes, and rearranges itself until it makes peace with the medium (and the maker) and feels comfortable with the way it's being made. I need to let that happen, and trust that it's becoming what it wants to be.

A work is finished when it says so. (Although sometimes I may not be listening and could overdo it.) After I make art, I always feel good. But sometimes, after I hear a little voice inside me say: "It is finished," I also might feel a bit let down. Because the thrill of creating is over. And what will I do next?

Then I think about the ideas that have been incubating inside and realize it's time to manifest one. Or perhaps I don't have any preconceived idea at all. Maybe I just have that gnawing feeling to make art and the overwhelming curiosity to witness what will emerge from it all.

So I go to the studio and see what wants to be made. What *must* be made. And then I do what I was born to do. Create.