

REAL WOMEN | PROFILE

BY CARLA LITTLE

Loretta Domaszewski's artful life

Loretta Domaszewski has been an artist — and an art teacher — for nearly as long as she can remember. “I had a teacher in third grade who had me get up and teach a class on how to draw,” she remembers.

Since then, she has created a full and varied career as a working artist, who also gives back to the community.

The primary inspiration for her art has always come from nature. As a child, she loved exploring the shorelines and boat yards of her native Connecticut, and water is the focal point of many of her landscapes. “I’ve always felt a magnetic pull to the water,” Domaszewski explained; “I try to capture its constant motion.”

Domaszewski’s professional art career began in Massachusetts. After earning a BFA from Boston Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, she worked as a gallery director of the Artist Association of Nantucket, and exhibited her work in local and national galleries, universities, and museums. Her work is known for its unique and saturated color combinations, and especially its ability to capture



Courtesy Loretta Domaszewski

light. “As a visual artist, I see the world through light, layers, and pathways,” she said. Others are drawn to her work for the same reason. As Julia Becker, a professor at the University of Great Falls put it, “Loretta is able to work with the paint to actually create light.”

Since moving to Bozeman in 1990, Domaszewski has continued to paint natural landscapes, drawing ideas from the local trails and waterways. The crisp, mountain air has inspired a subtle change in her style and technique. “My paint-

ing is more textural than it was before,” she said, “and the horizon lines are more crisp because there is less moisture in the air.”

In Bozeman, Domaszewski has also broadened her own horizons by adding teaching and community art to her work. After many years of teaching at Bozeman High School, she now leads a wide range of specialized classes, from private sessions in her studio at the Emerson to outdoor workshops for children and adults to community-based lessons at the Cancer Support Community Center, the Bozeman Lodge and Hillcrest Independent Senior Living Communities. She finds that teaching nurtures her own work: “I get inspired watching other people paint — I get inspired by inspiring.”

Locally, some of Domaszewski’s best-known creations are displayed in public places. Working with kids in the public schools, she has created large murals at both Hawthorne Elementary School and Sacajawea Middle School. “One of my callings is to create new environments for people to live and work in,” she said; “I think that these projects have helped unify each school

Q&A

BALANCE: What do you consider your greatest strength?

LD: I have endless ideas, I like to give shape and structure to things and make them happen.

BALANCE: What do you consider your greatest weakness?

LD: My strengths are my weaknesses. Expecting too much of myself, living in the moment, following every tangent, fretting about not having enough time in the day and burning the midnight candle.

BALANCE: Who are your heroes/role models?

LD: I think about people I meet every day that have touched and inspired me through their unconditional love, creativity, and care of others...who make a difference through their dedication, perseverance, and hard work.

BALANCE: What's your favorite book?

LD: In my 20s I read *Portrait of an Artist*, a biography of Georgia O'Keeffe. This book may have been a catalyst for my own lifelong dedication to the arts, pioneering spirit, nature, independence, and education. *Harold and the Purple Crayon* is a favorite, because he creates his own reality. I am also fascinated by Masaru Emoto's *Hidden Messages in Water*, and I look forward to reading my 18-year-old son's first future novel.

BALANCE: What is the key to balancing your roles in personal, family, career, and health matters?

LD: This is the most challenging job I ever loved. I actually taught myself to juggle many years ago. I strive to be better with balancing my life than keeping multiple objects in the air, all at once. I drop the ball on a daily basis. As a self-employed artist, wife, and mother my life is about setting goals, making plans, but I live more in the moment, constantly "letting go," being grateful for what I have, pushing away the guilt, and having faith that everything will work out.

BALANCE: What is the best advice you have ever used?

LD: Work like you don't need the money, love like you've never been hurt, dance like nobody's watching, sing like nobody's listening, live like its heaven on earth. And 'Just Do It!'...with kind thoughts, kind hearts, kind words, and kind deeds.

BALANCE: What is your dream job?

LD: Traveling the world with my family, painting, teaching, and doing an environmental or humanitarian non-profit project every year, without any financial constraints, and always returning home to Bozeman.

BALANCE: What do you most want to change about yourself?

LD: Read more, learn more, move more, play more, sleep more.

BALANCE: What do you most love about yourself?

LD: I act on my inspirations. I am both sophisticated and down-to-earth. I am compassionate, honest, respectful, and humble. I believe in the value of learning, where I don't give up or am afraid of failing. We all make mistakes. I have learned to forgive myself and others.

BALANCE: What do you do to relax?

LD: It is all about feeling good, inside and out. I try to eat lots of fresh vegetables, do yoga with my husband, get fresh air by hiking, biking, or taking daily trail walks with friends, family, and my favorite beagle. I work on staying calm through simple prayer meditation.