

ABBI KENNY

B. Amore

Upon first meeting B. Amore, I was struck by her generosity and openness. Her eagerness to share experiences and learn from those around her was evident from the beginning of our encounter as she led me through the hallways of the Waltham Mills Artists Association. Amore is an artist, educator, poet, writer, and founder of The Carving Studio and Sculpture Center in West Rutland, Vermont.

As we talked in Amore's gorgeous studio overlooking the Charles River and Waltham Common in the renovated historic woolen mill, I was struck by her endless excitement for creating and sharing. Set up with a seating nook near the door for casual conversation, her studio then opens up to rows of tables where she sorts through and works on her sculptural pieces. Many of the works are from her recent project *Street Calligraphy* utilizing found gloves. Almost painterly, Amore colors the now firm hand-wear with an impeccable eye. They become iridescent bronze-like sculptural forms immediately tied to our bodies and connect-edness. One of Amore's most recent projects is her *Arc of Healing Hands* at Tufts Medical Center Boston. This stunning work composed of numerous gloves is her way of extending gratitude to the medical profession, while providing a sense of loving support to patients treated there. In her studio, Amore showed me the many objects she has collected or been given by friends and family members. "I love working with what I find on the street—taking the most ordinary, discarded objects—gloves, cardboard, old street signs, bits and pieces of broken objects



Arc of Healing Hands
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The gloves in this sculpture were gathered from caregivers and patients at Tufts Medical Center in and around Boston, including our friends. The *Arc of Healing Hands* is a tribute to the spirit of loving care which supports the healing process. The gloves on either side were composed after visits to the hospital. Offered with gratitude on November 15, 2022.

and transforming them into works of art—combining them with color, text, other objects in unexpected ways." A few of Amore's new artworks will be included in a group show at Atlantic Works Gallery in February 2023.

Amore has lived an incredibly rich life with a vibrant career. Growing up in East Boston to an Italian family, she was constantly surrounded by the experiences of immigrants. During Amore's childhood, her mother worked with immigrants newly arrived in Boston and often brought home intensely moving stories of their lives. Her mother's compassion for their experiences guided Amore early on, and her passion to share the stories and histories of people has continued throughout her life. Following her studies at Boston University and the University of Rome, she began her career as a social worker.

While a young mother, balancing her job and raising her family, Amore sat in on a sculpture class her sister was taking, and she was instantly hooked. While carving a piece of wood given to her by the teacher on her living room floor, she found something essential to herself that had been previously missing. From then on, she continued her pursuit of art, moving from wood to stone carving, then becoming an arts educator herself. Following a summer spent at the Vermont Marble Company in Proctor, VT, with a group of her students, Amore founded the Carving Studio and Sculpture Center in 1987.

Amore has had exhibitions of her work at SOHO20 Gallery, Ellis Island, and The Tenement Museum. Her show at *Lifeline—Filo della Vita: An American Odyssey* at Ellis Island, 2000, was a massive culmination of research into her family's immigration stories and others who passed through the island. She created monuments and reliquaries for loved ones and strangers. By using her family's artifacts and researching the stories and genealogies of others, the exhibition was

Above: *Arc of Healing Hands*: Tufts Medical Center, Boston, 2022: found gloves archivally preserved, acrylic, wood, 3' x 5' X 5". Photo: Brian Harris. Below: Amore in her studio with *Glove Buddha* (in process), found gloves archivally preserved, acrylic, wood, stone, text, 36" x 24" x 3". Photo: Jon Olender.

an ode to a universal desire to care for and learn about our own families' pasts. Amore sees "the theme of immigration as the quintessential odyssey. Most of us are either immigrants or progeny of immigrants." Her devotion to people's struggles, passions, and histories is the throughline in her work.

Amore explained her focus in life as bringing people together despite our perceived differences. Regarding her projects utilizing photographs of faces and her recent work with gloves and other found materials, she says, "[it] is all about our interconnectedness, our common humanity. We are really one human family, with the same basic needs. It is not easy to live with this reality and accept the complexity of our differences and increasing polarization in the current political climate, but the base reality is that we are not so different." Amore's entire career in sculpture, writing, and educational work has always aimed to support and bring people together. She says of her writing, "I write reviews to support other artists. ... It's a way of giving back after all my years of making art and creative writing." Seemingly tirelessly, she continues to make beautiful and touching work for the benefit of others using her creative talents.

Abbi Kenny is a painter and writer from Boston. She is an MFA painting candidate at Boston University and received her BFA in painting with a minor in Art History from RISD.

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