

the Art Cellar

Bill Hickman

"I make art. A self-taught artist, I learned to weld in high school and my approach is somewhat crude. I enjoy shaping and piecing; hammering, bending, and rolling; then, welding these parts into forms, watching the warping effects of the heat and handwork bring forth unique characteristics into characters and sculpture. I often use scrap objects such as saw blades, barbed wire, and various types of nails to further detail my work. The finishing phases are like working in a completely different art medium. I do sketch out and plan my work, of course, but as I prime to inhibit rusting, I begin to immerse in visualizing the layers and tiers of painting I am about to begin, in order to achieve rich colors and build textures. I have sometimes used a jeweler's grinder and other tools to add detail. I use a water based automotive paint so the work can be indoors or in sheltered outdoor spaces. I love the entire process of turning flat, cold sheets of steel into organic, lively creatures and characters, which might catch the eye by playful appearance, but inspire some sort of contemplations as well. Then I feel most satisfied in my process, especially when I am still wondering a bit myself." - Bill Hickman



Growing up in the sixties and seventies, Bill Hickman grew up moving around the United States with his parents, both in the military, and two other siblings. After discovering welding at Encinal High School in his tenth grade year, Bill soon began creating metal artworks and sculpture. He immediately knew that he was meant to be a metal artist. Through moving so much and changing schools, Bill often felt disconnected. After moving to Alexandria, Virginia to finish his last two years in high school Bill decided to explore the feeling of isolation and detachment and delved deeper into his metal work. He also decided to dabble in the culinary arts as not to be a, "starving artist." In 1979, Bill moved to Raleigh, North Carolina where he got a job at an eclectic restaurant across the street from the North Carolina State University campus that supported his art for the next 18 years. Bill had a small studio space where he created and sold his art, which changed from simple wire frames to full sheet metal forms with nails and metal rods for hair, fingers and legs. Through the years, Bill exhibited and showed throughout North Carolina and even so far as Chicago, Illinois and New York City, New York.

Today, Bill Hickman sculpts full-time in Raleigh, North Carolina.