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by BECKY NEEMS on NOVEMBER 14, 2013 2:00 PM · NO COMMENTS

Carrie McFarland's hobby requires a lot of tools. She uses files, picks, hammers and even a crème brûlée torch. You'd expect it to be something sturdy and quite the undertaking, but it's actually metalworking for her jewelry. Instead of finding pendants and assembling them on a chain she melts sheets of silver to create her own pieces of jewelry. On top of the metalworking to create necklaces and rings, she makes embroidery-flossed pieces and revamps vintage locket. We spoke with McFarland about her metalwork and her [Etsy shop Bright as Yellow](#) for this week's [MidMo Etsy](#).



Photo by Becky Neems

Vox Talk: How did you get started with crafting?

McFarland: I've always loved making jewelry since I was little. (Such as) Embroidery, friendship bracelets. In college (I made) a lot of macramé and hemp stuff. More recently I've started experimenting with resin, the decorative papers, and covering surfaces with them like the vintage lockets that I have. As far as the crafting world goes, I love sewing clothes and purses. I was trying to figure out how I could incorporate the sewing into jewelry making. That's how I came up with the idea for the fiber necklaces. I was using embroidery floss to wrap metal rings and sort of weave them together to make the different forms.

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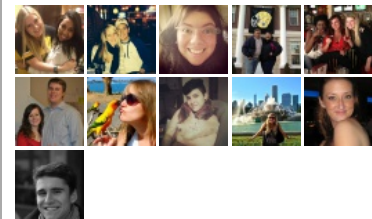
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VT: How did metalworking come into the picture?

McFarland: The next thing (I was going to try) was going to be a big jump. I really wanted to enter the world of metal because I knew I wanted to start from scratch and make something. So I took a few classes through a friend that I met at a craft fair. She was teaching classes out of her little studio at her home. So I took three different classes about using a jeweler's saw, a torch and precious metal clay. I wanted someone to teach me how to do that before I lit my house on fire. From there I started coming up with my own ideas and styles.



Photo by Becky Neems

VT: So how does that work? Do you just get bits of metal and start making whatever you want?

McFarland: I get sheets of metal like sterling silver, metal wire and metal clay and just going from there. That's why I wanted to take the classes because I really wanted to start from scratch. I wanted the whole piece to be my own. Using a torch is super fun, melting stuff. Even with the scraps, I dug a crater out of my kiln brick and melted them down. When I was little I collected rocks a lot and fossils, so when I learned how to set stones and make a Bessel for a stone I got really excited to incorporate different rocks and stones into the pieces.

I have wire that's all different thicknesses and sterling silver and copper sheets. I use my saw and cut one, two, three, four discs. I have a dapping block, so what I do is after I have a little circle, I put it in here and pound it with different sizes (of hammers) to get it to dome to get the shape. After I use my torch and just solder everything together. After you cut a piece out, the edges are usually pretty rough, so you have to file it. I dip it in and out of the solution to clean it because after you fire it it becomes black. To get all that stuff off you have to put it into a solution because it's really acidic.

VT: How do you make the lockets?

McFarland: The lockets are popular. They are a good size to fit a picture in. I found them on another shop on Etsy and Ebay. I had to search them out because they are vintage and stock up when I can. I cleaned them because they were nasty when I got them. I found illustrations from an old dictionary so I put them on there with resin to seal it.

VT: What about the embroidered necklaces?

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McFarland: I get different sizes and widths of metal rings, so I do the rings individually with a needle and thread and knotting it as I go. When each piece is done I sew them together.

VT: When did you think it was a good time to start selling this stuff on Etsy?

I started making gifts for family. Also if I wanted a piece of jewelry I would figure out how to make it. I would be wearing (what I've made) in public and get a lot of compliments on it. I thought "People might buy this," so I decided to open an Etsy shop. I did that in October of 2009. I started doing a few fairs here and there. Not a lot but two a year.



Photo by Becky Neems

VT: Have you ever been to a craft fair?

McFarland: I started doing a few fairs here and there. Not a lot but two a year. We've taken a couple trips to Chicago for fairs, the DIY Trunk Show. It's fun once you start doing fairs you make friends. One (fair) I like to do is called Strangefolk Festival in O'Fallon, Illinois. We just moved here from a small town called Wellsville in July. I've been upper busy with my new job as an occupational therapist in the schools, but I hope to next year. This year had been maintaining the Etsy shop. I try to update it a couple times a week by putting fresh items in. That's all it takes.

VT: Any last thoughts?

McFarland: Even though I'm learning new techniques with the metal, I still enjoy doing the lockets and the embroidery floss necklaces because those are pretty unique things that draw people. I keep learning new things with the metal.

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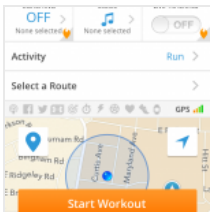
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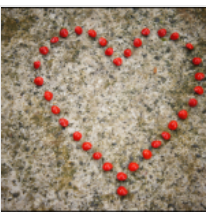
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