



PONY FROM A DIFFERENT TALE
Encaustic, crochet, wig hair, 2.5”w x
18”h x 7.5”d

ON PINS & NEEDLES

THERE'S A FINE LINE BETWEEN PLEASURE AND PAIN.

There are certain designs that simply memorize us. Kim Bruce's collection of fine art sculptures, entitled *Heels*, is one such collection. Using footwear as a medium of expression, *Heels* prove the power of footwear goes far beyond fashion fads and catwalk trends.

Born and raised in Canada, Bruce studied fine art at The Alberta College of Art & Design and The University of Calgary. An artist specializing in fine art sculpture, her work utilizes everyday objects to express thought provoking questions. "I am a visual problem solver who invites the challenges of working with incongruous materials," says Bruce. "This often leading to new and exciting processes that investigate bitter sweet contradictions concerning life's fragility."

Using the human form—in this case the foot—to express her artistic vision, Bruce's creations were designed to provoke musings about the state of our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. "*Well Heeled* started this series when I thought of your feet getting pins and needles," says Bruce. "I use multifaceted double entendres that exploit puns. I love visual puns, but my work goes deeper than that and can have many levels of meaning."

As a medium of expression, shoes are often used to express the way society views women, wealth and our acceptance of pleasure meets pain. Our obsession with height and dominance all come into play when it comes to footwear design and statement pieces, something Bruce explores in her creations. "High heels represent in a word, sex because it certainly is not comfort," says Bruce.

"For women in lower income areas it may present encouragement and a means of measuring success, decadence and abundance. On a practical note; there is no practical note."

These days Bruce has swapped her heels for more practical wear, leaving the height to her sculptures. "I had a pair of four inch spikes that I used to wear out dancing when I was younger," reminisces Bruce. "I'm still not sure how I pulled that off; dancing barefoot comes to mind. Once I settled into my twenty-year career of running a design firm, my heel lowered. Luckily in a creative business one does not have to, nor is expected to, conform to conservative dress."

Geography often plays a role in one's personal view and creative endeavors for Bruce; however, a global perspective is only a click away. "I remember in college we were taught that the trends start in Europe and trickle down to western Canada (where I live); this could take a year or two," says Bruce. "Now with the Internet, there's no reason not to be global. Where one lives is arbitrary, as long as you have a good Internet connection. People find my work online from around the world. Which in turn has presented exhibition opportunities in America and Europe."

With an arsenal of contemporary works and limitless inspiration, Bruce's footwear-inspired pieces give us food for thought. "I want people to experience something when they look at the work; be it positive or negative," says Bruce. "I want to evoke a response. If it does that, then the piece is a success." *KimBruce.ca* — ANASTASIA RUBIN