

ARTIST STATEMENT

2020 shed light on many dysfunctional patterns of our systems, including our personal lives. For me, it also brought opportunities to acknowledge the unhealthy bonds, release them gracefully and start the regeneration process from within. One of the defining parts of my identity, the sculptor, has always been in the background, with limited access to her core abilities.

When my work hours, as a contract lead designer, at a local company was cut to zero due to a pandemic, a rare chance to focus on my sculptor identity emerged. Thereupon, I promised myself to complete the unfinished artwork created throughout the past eight years. This was an undertaking where each piece was quietly helping me to sort through suppressed layers of hurt, heal from unspoken heartbreaks, and reclaim my abilities and creative powers.

Naturally, that led to the revival of abandoned artwork; with each sculpture my intention was turned inward towards the processing of distressing life events, integrating their meanings and looking for healing. In a sense, giving breath of life to forgotten sculptures echoes back as reclaiming the facets of the forgotten self. At last, the sculptor within is fully reachable, consciously practicing and patiently healing.

Ultimately, an aspiration to contribute to the larger revival of figurative sculpture as an art form in the Hudson Valley has emerged, leading to my first solo exhibition **REVIVAL** at the Arts Society of Kingston.

The body of work in the exhibition, summed up under the concept of revival, is mainly figurative and portrait sculptures that convey subtle reflection on my process of transformation, catalyzed during 2020. The subject matter of my art, human figures or fragments - sculpted from live observation of a model [pre-pandemic] - are encompassed in a world of feelings, emotions, or storylines. The context my sculptures find themselves in, is an attempt to grasp, analyze and accept the variety of realities, perceived as private or collective. Personally, this has turned into a form of self-care & self-healing practice while dwelling in solitude.

Being repeatedly inspired by classical & contemporary figurative sculptures as well as their mastery of precision, materials and surface treatments has led to experimenting with metallics and patina finishes on ceramic sculptures. The results are enchanting to my senses, and I truly hope the viewer can experience this visual journey.

Themes that captivate my awareness are dreams & consciousness, human & vessel forms, solitude vs. loneliness, healing practices, open spaces and light, music and emotionally bonding experiences. I continuously look for ways to inspect and express those concepts through my artistic exploration.

BIOGRAPHY

GÜLNAR BABAYEVA is an emerging figurative sculptor based in the Hudson Valley, New York. She moved here from Baku in 2010 to study art & design thanks to the generosity of a local family.

Due to idiosyncratic life circumstances she took a non-traditional path to sculpture training. As an early career sculptor she practiced observational figurative sculpting with master sculptor Tricia Cline at Woodstock School of Art. She graduated with two associate degrees in Fine Arts and Advertising Design & Graphic Technology in 2012 from SUNY Ulster, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from Azerbaijan University of Languages.

Babayeva, a multidisciplinary creator, started cultivating her sculptor identity intentionally during the pandemic by means of sculptural expression with clay.

Her art has been shown in group exhibitions locally at the Arts Society of Kingston, Kingston ArtWalk, Robert H. Angeloch Gallery of WSA, Muroff-Kotler Visual Arts Gallery of SUNY Ulster, Plaza Gallery of SUNY Plaza, Albany, NY as well as virtually since she has embarked on her artistic path. Her sculpture *Young Shaman* was included in the first Kingston Annual 2020, A Premier Regional Fine Arts Exhibition juried by Julie Hedrick.

Babayeva has been working as a visual designer with a range of clients since 2013. Currently, she is a freelance designer and practicing sculptor at her studio Caspian Müse.

Gülнар Babayeva is a member of the following arts & design organizations:

Arts Society of Kingston (ASK)

Woodstock Artists Association and Museum (WAAM)

AIGA | The Professional Association for Design

Connect with the artist on instagram

@caspianmuse or at **gulnarbabayeva.com**

Support Gülнар's gofundme cause for an **art grant**:

