

D1 ARTS

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ART

Highland artist finds hope in mixed media

By Stephanie Sokol
For Digital First Media

Art came to Kelly Wittenberg at a dark time in her life. She'd lost her job, and then lost her father.

But in a time of sadness, the Highland artist found hope and inspiration through the mixed media angels she makes. They gave her comfort, and upon taking them to art fairs and galleries, she found they made an impact on others, as well.

"It was a form of therapy for me,"

IF YOU GO

- 16th annual Orchard Lake Art Show
- July 28-29.
- 6900 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield Twp.
- hotworks.org/event/orchardlake-fineartshow.

says Wittenberg, who had never made art before, nor had any formal training, but found joy in the creation process.

As she continued on the path of

her newfound passion, she took her work to a gallery for feedback, and then began taking her pieces to art shows.

"A big part of me I'm sharing with the public and that makes me really happy," Wittenberg says. "That's what I stuck with and after finding success, I was no longer looking for another job."

Working in her home studio, Wittenberg prefers to work quietly and maintain focus.

Each work takes around three

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Artist Kelly Wittenberg of Highland will exhibit her multimedia pictures at the Orchard Lake Fine Art Fair this week.

COURTESY KELLY WITTENBERG

Show

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hours to create, depending what she's doing with it. Working in an inking technique she came up with, Wittenberg begins with an acrylic background that she dries and then frames. The next step is to add dried flowers and finish the piece with gemstone embellishments, some of which she buys, and others taken from her husband's late grandmother's art projects. Her next show will be the Orchard Lake Fine Art Show in West Bloomfield Township, and she is excited about having more chances to share her passion with others.

"Meeting the people who will buy my works and having the time to talk to them is a very neat experience, especially when people come in and say 'This is a feel-good booth,'" Wittenberg says. "I feel like they're feeling what I do when I make the piece and that really touches me."

With 45 professional

artists, the show is produced by Hot Works, whose shows are ranked as some of the best juried art shows across the United States. Orchard Lake Fine Art Show was voted in the top 100 art shows for 10 years in a row. Hot Works Executive Producer Patty Narozny says this art fair has something unique to offer.

"We bring many artists to the Orchard Lake Fine Art Show who do not participate in any other Michigan art shows," says Narozny, a 30-year Oakland County resident. "You will see many new artists at the show this year."

In the opening day of the show, 18 artists will receive awards. Hot Works also works to bring art education to the community, and offers a youth competition for two age groups, with awards and a class on site.

In addition to awards and art, there will be local food and live entertainment, with musical performances by One Love Reggae Band, Sheila Landis Duo, Detroit Jazz Band, Kevin Mazur and Vladimir Gorodkin.