

AN INTRODUCTION TO ALLEGRA MARQUART

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The snow belt, just southeast of Buffalo, NY is where Allegra grew up. Always drawing and painting lead her to studies in art at Cornell University and the University of Buffalo. Eventually she earned her Masters of Fine Arts at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, where she majored in printmaking.

Her first teaching job was in Kalamazoo at Western Michigan University. From there, in 1976, she joined the Printmaking Department at the Maryland Institute College of Art and there she stayed until retirement in 2010.

Allegra has, for decades, been involved with representational imagery. Some has been from observation. Much more has been an interpretation of daily events. Most importantly, to her, during the past twenty years, has been her unique visual response to old fables, stories and songs. The narrative has dominated and decreed the medium.

Etchings made by Allegra are in a variety of collections including that of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Zimmerli Art Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Huntsville Museum of Art. Pieces of her Art Glass have been purchased by the NIH in DC and by the Art Bank Collection/DC Arts Commission.

The Maurine Littleton Gallery represented Allegra's art glass at the Wheaton Arts Center and at SOFA Chicago from 2007 until 2017.

One of the most recent features that is unique to Allegra's work is the panels of loosely woven threads she makes to create an environment for the glass shapes. The thread work is light and airy with a fragility; very different from glass but lending another level of visual and tactile richness to each piece while expanding on the story.

Her involvement with fables grew from using her own narratives but her attraction to glass was instant and could only be explained after experience with the stuff.

Now, she says, "The stories address the human condition with humor, satire, invention and exaggeration. Interpreting a fable through glass means that the very medium holds metaphors relating to the conditions of life. Glass takes so many forms. It holds light, it breaks, it's strong. It's delicate, seductive, expressive and frustrating. It's not easy to make it the way I want it to be. That's why I work with glass."