

DEBORAH COLTON

PROFILE:



TEXT:
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D R E W B A C O N

FOR THE LOVE OF ART + COMMUNITY

There's something special about **DEBORAH COLTON'S** passion for art – a passion that transcends beyond the arts and revolves around a distinct theme of love for the community. In this intricate mix of creative and civic ideals, Deborah has managed to find her niche in the Houston art scene over the last 15 years, gaining recognition for all the hard work while setting examples year after year.

As far back as a toddler, art has been a part of Deborah's life. Growing up in Essex Fells, New Jersey, she remembers her mother's canvases and artwork strewn about her playroom. Living so close to New York City also meant opportunities for multiple trips to the city known internationally for its museums. **It was in college that Deborah Colton began exploring community service, eventually leading her to combine art with a desire to help the community.** Running for seven offices and getting elected to all of them, she ended college by serving as the President of the Student Government, a crowning achievement. After spending a number of years with 3M, she ended her career as a top national sales supervisor and saw herself travel quite extensively for her husband's profession, including eight years in Asia. It was in Bangkok, where Deborah began to help get local Thai artists' names beyond the country's walls. With her background in sales and business, the Thai artists' encouraged her to jump into the business side of art by helping promote artists' careers. *"As you can see, my destiny was to be the business person and promoter of artists, not 'the artist' myself, and to also stay active in community service,"* reflects Deborah.

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In 2000, Deborah began hosting Asian art pop-up exhibits downtown in conjunction with the Asia Society, which helped pave the way to collect funds for the Asia Society building that is in place today. After spending a few years gaining traction and immense recognition through her pop-up shows, Deborah Colton had a vision to open a studio that would enhance the arts of Houston, while not directly competing with anyone. *"Coming from a New York and international background, my vision was different from galleries that started in Houston. I wanted to open a gallery that would fill a void in the city and give Houston something it did not have already,"* Deborah says. She took a risk and opened a 6,500sf, NYC-style studio in the then-dilapidated area known as Summer Street in the First Ward. *"I knew that if the right art was shown there, everyone would come. And they did,"* she says with a smile.

Moving locations in 2008 to the current space off of North Street, **DEBORAH M. COLTON GALLERIES** thrives in a city renowned for its art. The current exhibit, entitled *"Collective Solid,"* showcases eight Houston-based artists who all share a collective space in EaDo known as El Rincón Social. Meant to examine the influence of shared creative space on artistic dialogue and output as well as the significance of community to an artist's practice, it's easy to see how Deborah aims to bring the community aspect to almost all her events. And when not working with her gallery, she's busy in the general art community, serving as current Co-Chair of City Art Works in addition to Chair of last year's Houston Fine Art Fair.

"We will always use our gallery as a platform for dialogue and use it as a voice for artists to help create positive change. This has been in our mission statement since we opened our doors way over a decade ago. This will never change," she says confidently.

And it's not hard to believe her.

www.deborahcoltongallery.com