

Adelka Polak & Justin Perlman

Where did you train?

Justin: I studied at the Art Students League of New York, but I've also worked in Italy. Much of what we do is self-taught.

Adelka: I went to Chatham University and within the first few days, I found the theater department, and knew that was the right place for me. But a lot of my work is also self-taught.

What types of art do you work in?

Adelka: I am a dancer at the Ridgefield Conservatory and I also make puppets and costumes to work with in my dances.

Justin: I work in metalworking and sculpture. I also paint and have been making my own paper with a press as of late.

What are your favorite materials and techniques?

Justin: I like Italian granite for my work, as well as copper and bronze, but also cherry tree and other woods for my sculpture.

Adelka: A lot of my techniques are the way that I dance or hold the puppets that I use on stage. Different movements show different emotions and moods, and so you have to change them for the audience.

How do you collaborate?

Adelka: Justin helps me to do the craftsmanship for some of the puppets. We had an installation piece behind the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra with big sculpture and around fifteen dancers, which was our collaborative brainchild.

Justin: We also spent a few months working on puppets and costumes for Tarzan the Musical, which was a great deal of work. They didn't even end up using a lot of the pieces we made, even though they were hand sewn and took hours to make.

Where did you work before you became the Artists in Residence at the Guild?

Justin: We used to own a gallery in the bad part of Pittsburg called The Slaughterhouse Gallery in an old warehouse that used to be a slaughterhouse. It was pretty spooky, the karma was weird; we would find skeletons and gigantic knives in the walls. We had a hard time getting people to come because there would be shootings and whatnot in the area, but towards the end of our time there, hundreds were coming in to see the art at openings.

How does the farm environment influence your art?

Adelka: Well, I do a lot of plein air drawing and painting, and I try to get Justin to as well.

Justin: I do most of my metalworking in an old horse stall, and there's tons of space to do work. I don't have to worry about the noise and whatnot either.

Any advice for young artists?

Justin: You have to be very confident in yourself and in your work, because it is very easy to give up when you aren't at first successful.

