



Examples of Lynn Ostermann's charcoal-on-paper illustration work. Below: Lynn Ostermann's "I Walked Out Barefoot," rendered with black charcoal and red oil paint, draws awareness to domestic violence.

Artist Lynn Ostermann

DRAWING FROM LIFE

Written by Mike Lauterborn
Contributed Photos

Among the many talented artists in Fairfield County is Lynn Ostermann, who is known for her expressive charcoal drawings and, more recently, sculpture work. FCL connected with her recently to capture her story, influences and inspiration.

Lynn was a Westporter for 15 years before moving to Fairfield earlier this year. "The east side of Fairfield and Black Rock have really become burgeoning artist colonies," she noted. "My Stratfield neighborhood in particular has a lot of working artists and photographers — I love that."

Lynn was born on the North Shore of Chicago, where her family has had ties for generations, moved to Los Angeles when she was four then returned to Highland Park, Ill., for her teen years. Her family tree is dotted with interesting characters, including her mother's uncle who was a Securities and Exchange Commission Chairman (after whom a law



center at Yale University was named), her father's uncle who was a Marine General and a great-grandfather whose company designed during World War II what would be known as the bomber jacket.

Lynn claims a lifetime interest in art. "I can't recall a time I didn't have a sketchbook in my hand," she said. With regard to early influences, she points

to her grandmother's house, where she would peruse distinctive oversized books like "The Chateaux of the Loire I Love," "The History of Art" and "Faust," with fantastic illustrations by Harry Clarke.

Pursuing art as a major in school, Lynn earned the equivalent of an Associates Degree from the American Academy of Art in Chicago and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute. She did post-graduate classes at National-Lewis, Parsons and a summer program at Yale. Remarkably, she also did flight training and obtained a private license to pilot single-engine aircraft.

Early on in her career, Lynn was an art dealer and managed galleries, beginning at Batz-Lawrence in Kansas City. "I was lucky to have had two incredibly dynamic bosses who took me under their wings, gave me sound advice and taught me the basics of the art world," she said. "Sally Batz was one of the most charismatic people I've known and had a gift for the social side of the art world. She made it seem effortless because she genuinely enjoyed people. And Susan Lawrence really knew art — her mother had been a giant force in the New York art world in the 1950s and would talk about legendary artists the way we might talk about old friends. Susan taught me how to value art for collectors."

Also in the Midwest, Lynn worked for the legendary (and eccentric) Bob Carlson at Gallery Carl Oskar, which sold prints by great 20th-century artists like Lucian Freud, Christo, Rauchenberg and all the big '80s NYC artists. She also worked for Joseph Glimmer in Chicago, who sold pieces by Picasso, Munch, Chagal and Durer. She describes Glimmer as "utterly brilliant, a terrific mentor and probably the most knowledgeable print dealer I've ever known."

In New York City, Lynn worked at Christie's, designed jewelry and managed a gallery in



Lynn Ostermann stands beside a six-foot high cave she created from cardboard, carved insulation foam and dry brush techniques.

SOHO, but began itching for a new experience. She put the art world on the back burner for a bit to fly planes.

Lynn has shown her work near and far, and called out two notable experiences: her first one-woman show right after college graduation at Cynthia Miro and James Kazanjian's Lithium Gallery in Kansas City, Mo., and the National Art Club's "Cigar Box Show," where she was given a

cigar box to make into art. Fellow exhibitors at the latter included Robert Indiana, Roy Lichtenstein, Will Barnett and Andre Serrano. Lynn's contribution was a "celestial" piece with egg tempera and meteorite.

In her approach to art, Lynn calls herself a jack of all trades. "Different ideas are best expressed in the language that best suits them," she says. Recently, she sculpted a life-sized faux stone cave using cardboard, carved insulation foam and dry brush techniques, to display at a school museum night. For a Westport Library display, she used black charcoal and red oil paint to create an illustrative statement about victims of domestic abuse. "With a good foundation in fine art, you become adaptable and multi-faceted," she added.

Lynn further explains, "The process of making fine art is mysterious and artists have always loved the idea of a fickle muse. I see media stories and have experiences that end up in my art. I begin with a concept but then it takes on a life of its own. Its creation is so much like having a child — you begin with an idea but it's really its own entity. In its purest form, it's really more of an epiphany than a contrived action. When a friend's mother passed away, I drew a portrait of her without thinking — it was just pure inspiration and somewhat mystical."