

Press Release: Outdoor
Sculpture Recognized

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Immediately

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The sculpture on the Jones
House Community Center
lawn will be recognized
Friday, July 6 during the
Concert on the Lawn.

“The Gamble,” has been
on the lawn for a number
of months but the artist
Kelly LaForte will be on
hand this Friday to talk
about her art during the
gallery reception that will follow the concert.



LaForte was born in Sebring, Florida on June 27, 1987. She was raised in an artistic environment, with her parents owning their own ceramic shop. She was therefore encouraged to explore her imagination. With age came a maturing respect and love for many different forms of art. As she grew up her creative outlets ranged from simple paper and crayons to exploring clay art. At the age of twelve her parents sold the ceramic shop she had grown up in and relocated her family to Hayesville, NC. Around the age of fourteen Kelly became more and more fond of contemporary art, particularly metal sculpture. “I think I became attracted mainly to metal because of its rigidity and sleekness,” says LaForte.

At the age of sixteen she finally decided to take her curiosity to the next level. She enrolled in the welding program at Tri-County Community College, in

Murphy, NC. There, Kelly learned how to cut, weld, and roughly shape steel and aluminum. Most importantly she met many people who would help her get her foot in the door as a metal artist. As soon as she acquired basic skills and knowledge of metal working, she began to experiment with metal as an art form. At the age of eighteen she opened “Kelly’s Kustometal,” a welding and fabrication service which would provide means to support her metal sculpting hobby. Presently she is focusing on art as more of a full time aspect of her life than a hobby. “Art keeps me free,” she says “It allows me to communicate in ways words cannot express.” She is very passionate about what she does and holds her work to the highest standards. “I love creating beauty that is not only tangible but is also charismatic in so many other aspects.” Though she works with a variety of size, Kelly does enjoy working on larger scale pieces. Her pieces differ in shape from thin, wispy points that seem to float in mid air to pieces composed of smooth, sweeping curves that are bold in claiming their territory. The colors of her work also provide contrast from one another. Though a sophisticated presence is felt in all of Kelly’s pieces, they range from vibrant shades of red and blue to bare metal or a classic grey.

A creative person by nature, dabbling in many mediums I believe is necessity. I have felt especially compelled to create contemporary metal sculpture. The metal I use is primarily mild steel, but recently I have been branching out into aluminum and stainless steel also. I am compelled to use metal in part to the irony factor of having something that is as industrial and bland as steel to produce something that speaks of liveliness and beauty.

When I am working on a piece it is like I am gathering the thoughts in my head to formulate a conversation and instead of the conversation being in words, it is the piece of work itself, expressing that which words frequently can not. I try to recycle as much as possible. I often feel as if I am giving form to an existing energy to make a topic tangible and more readily understandable to all. Subjects of nature, relations, and the quirks of everyday life regularly inspire me.

I enjoy expressing my ideas in contemporary abstract form. I want my work to be interpreted without limitation and according to the viewer’s personal experiences. I would say a piece has turned out well when everything doesn’t go exactly as I had planned but rather comes to life and is capable of telling its own story. With contemporary abstract style it is up to the viewer as to which angle they choose to perceive the work. As are all things in life, a slightly different version of the story is derived from each perspective.

The Sherry Ann Edwards Memorial Sculpture Competition makes possible the sculpture program which is directed by the Watauga Arts Council. Sculptors

submit images of their work and the chosen artist is paid \$500 to display a piece of art on the lawn for a year.

For information on Kelly LaForte's artwork view her website at:

<http://www.kellyskustometal.2freedom.com/> For information about the sculpture program contact Watauga Arts Council at (828) 264 1789.