

LIVING IN OAKLAND PARK

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Adam Dolle Studio: Art with a Conscience

Mark Gave | October 16, 2020 | 10:45am



Adam Dolle, of the Adam Dolle Studio on NE 12th Ave, might sum up his life in one word: serendipity. "I am grateful," he says, "for the people I have met. Chance encounter has changed the course of my life. My current work is a result of my diverse history and uncharted approach to life."

Adam Dolle: A Career in Four Chapters

Forty-five years ago, as a seminary graduate and monk, Adam made the decision to leave the monastery and pursue a career in interior design. Several years later, with a master's degree from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY, a chance meeting on an airplane resulted in his being hired by I.M. Pei, one of the world's leading architecture and design firms. These days, Adam splits his time between his own interior design business, which he operates from his home, and his studio, a spacious bay with an office up front and a cavernous space filled wall to wall and up to the ceiling with pieces large and small saved from his installations: cast-rubber guns, a coffee table, panels for seats, beanbag chairs, and segments of walls from environmental projects.



A third career stream is his co-ownership of a yoga retreat, Blue Osa, in Costa Rica. It reflects his lifelong interest in spirituality and is in itself another tale of serendipity. For several years, Adam made Costa Rica his home, traveling to work in China and New York.

A Refuge in Oakland Park

What prompted Adam Dolle to set up his studio in Oakland Park? After returning to the States, he was drawn to the location, and his instincts paid off. *“I really like this area, which is a bit undiscovered. It is a great community that feels home-grown, neighborly, accessible.”*

Adam’s goal in opening his studio was the intention to make art, sell it, and donate the proceeds to charitable organizations. These days, that’s where his heart mostly resides. It, too, got a significant helping hand from serendipity. A chance meeting with Congressman Ted Deutch led to a conversation about mass shooting tragedies and eventually a collaboration with musician Michael Franti and the group Ban Assault Weapons Now in a two-day festival in April 2019: the Flower in the Gun. The moral center for his work was established.





Of his work, he says, *“It holds a meaning beyond aesthetic considerations and challenges the viewer to be mindful of the unspoken, immutable, and moral truths that form the foundation of human society... It is part of a larger, multidisciplinary, movement based on the philosophy of Socialmoralism, which proposes to reach beyond visual imaging and social issues to speak to the personal, spiritual, ethical, life of the viewer and to effect change.”*

Adam works collaboratively across a variety of media, including sculpture, assemblage, photography, printmaking, furniture making, and interior design. To give you the full flavor of Adam’s artwork and mission, visit his website at adamdollestudio.com/ and watch his video.

The Creative Mind

An example of one of Adam’s works gives a peek into the creative process: Adam was researching toy guns on Amazon and saw an ad describing the sound one of the guns made as “rat-ta-tat-tat.” It immediately made him think of the sound that the great tap dancers of the movies of the 1930s and 1940s made, notably Ann Miller. He created a mixed-media piece featuring her.

For another project, he drew on the Sonny and Cher song from the 1960s “Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down).” In his “Bang, Bang, I Shot You,” he used the ordinariness of death and its long-lasting effects in our society as a jumping-off point. Adam says his art is not didactic but gives observers opportunities for conversations: If the purpose of art is to get people to stop and look and think, then he accomplished that purpose.



He has taken elements of this to Washington, DC, where he has gotten a range of reactions and interpretations from a variety of people. In Europe, people see his work in a broader context of history and view it with dismay over gun violence in the United States.



In November 2019, Adam had a show in West Palm Beach, “A Question of Morals,” that included a large piece with two fabricated guns mounted on the outside of a building and a variety of pieces inside, in several different media, that addressed broader themes as well as the moral life of the individual.

Putting it All Together in the Time of COVID

In his studio work, Adam combines materials and techniques from his nearly half-century of experience as an interior designer. He *“would love to have the opportunity to do residential installations based on social- and moral-justice issues to ignite thoughtful conversation with friends. I could see that for an office too, in a social-conscience-driven company. Good people need to step up more in the public forum, develop positivity, moral growth, and relationships that help us support each other in these times.”* Since the pandemic hit, the flow of money from the yoga retreat disappeared, although online marketing foresees promise. Adam had to let studio staff go. *“I have all kinds of projects on hold. With so many places closed, I’m not focused on contacting every venue to show my work. Nobody knows about me. I figure that if people hear about me and want to connect, I’ll be glad to. But I’m really happy to hibernate for a while.”*



Actually, Adam's idea of hibernation belies an active mind. He says he is living in *"a philosophically—morally—driven environment that brings me back to a lot of the things I thought about as a kid. I'm delighted with the way my life has developed. And now I have a platform to say what's on my mind."*

As more people learn about Adam and his mission, no doubt he will find new audiences to engage in the kinds of thoughtful discussions that he cherishes.

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