



Angel Flower Creations: Yvonne Santana

Written by Christina Romeo

Yvonne is a mind at work and has a keen eye for jewelry and mixed-media design. There is an abundance of merchandise to look at when you first enter, which allows you to carefully look at each design with great patience and care. She has a rich history behind her on why she does what she does and how she continues to be just as innovative when she first started in 1982.

She creates because it is “...in my blood, it’s what I know.” It was something she always did since she was a little girl. Her creativity is stemmed from her family background. She recalls, “Instead of my mom letting us go out, she made us make our own clothes, jewelry ...basically everything we wanted we had to make ourselves.” Her family was very conservative, in the sense that she wasn’t allowed to wear pants and didn’t have much of a social life— being at home was always “...very,very strict.” With this strict living environment, it helped blossom her inner creativity because it was the only way she could fully express herself.

Her favorite pieces to make now are her earrings and bracelets. She says that she has “...all these ideas in my head, and I can’t go to sleep until I produces a prototype.” She wakes up with these ideas, and she is convinced there is not enough hours in the day to bring them all to fruition. She states, “My head is so full, and there are not enough lifetimes to express it all.” But even with these ideas flowing through her head, when she is able to have one of them fully bloom—she is always impressed by how much better it came out.

Over the past few years, her clientele has grown significantly. She considers herself a “people person,” alongside being an artist. She always wants her customers to know the person behind the work, so she always makes an effort to talk to them and build a relationship. She also has a family to support, but she makes sure her prices are extraordinarily reasonable. She is increasingly proud of what her business has flourished into each year because even if a customer might not buy something—they remember her. She recalls some patrons always tapping her on the shoulder, and making sure they say, “Hi!” when they see her. Her customers also always tell her and remind her how much they genuinely care about her and love her merchandise. To Yvonne, meeting different people throughout this journey is just as rewarding as making a living through her art because she has “a family” in this business.

One of her other passions besides art is dancing. She is Greek and Puerto Rican, so growing up in this family dynamic sparked her love for it. She recalls when her “...parents would bring my sister and I, in our pajamas, to the nightclubs in Manhattan and we slept under the tables while they danced the night away.” Latin music, reggae and the like were always playing throughout the house even when doing chores. She says, “The music inspired us. Now...when I hear music...I just move.”

She always loves to sew and had her own bridal and boudoir collection in 1982. She had three showrooms in Manhattan and wholesaled to Fortunoff, Macy's and JCPenney. When she did the shows in Jacob Javits Convention Center she says, “Macy's would come and give me an order, then fifteen minutes later, JCPenney would double it. I would be biting my fingers thinking to myself ‘How am I going to do this?’” However, she knew “...when you want to do something, and it’s in your heart—you get it done.”

But, even with this deep-rooted conviction within her, she does recognize that people do take advantage. She says, “Even when I did wholesale, and my prices were low...they cut them even more,” and it was because “...if they paid ahead of time, they would cut the percentage.” As a creative person, rather than a mass-producer she didn’t know this then. She didn’t know that they would buy samples from her, and then copy her work. As she states, “It’s really cut throat in that business, or in any business for that matter.” She ended the interview expressing the concern of the same attitude surfacing with other art and craft vendors. She stated that, “In the end karma will come back around. If you are a creative person, then be one. But, don’t be creative at another artist’s expense.”

If interested in Yvonne’s work, email her at LittlePleasuresByYvonne@gmail.com or call her at (516) 650-0396.