

Creating Realms of Magic and Expression

Laurel Molloy, assistant editor

Art is different for everyone. Fenella Belle, associate professor of art at PVCC, tries to make it accessible for all. She said there are countless ways to take reality and make something unique and beautiful from it. Belle has had art around her for most of her life.

Her mother was an artist and art teacher, and Belle found herself drawn to teaching art as well. She started teaching art over 30 years ago in Philadelphia. She said, “What I’ve found is that the urge to express or create is a human instinct, but many people either don’t allow themselves to try or ... know how to get started.” She tries to guide people of every profession and line of life to express their true selves through art.

This semester Belle is teaching ART 100 - Art Appreciation and ART 131 - Fundamentals of Design I both online and in person. Art Appreciation is a three-credit course about the history and different types of art like photography and sculptures. Fundamentals of Design is a four-credit class that features looking at color and 2D and 3D design.

Belle said that there is magic in art. It can touch people so deeply and meaningfully. For her, “art is fundamentally about creating something new, expressing ourselves, and connecting with others.”

Belle talked about how she takes inspiration from nature and the walks she goes on. Nature has boundless variety and beautiful patterns within it. She has tried a variety of art forms herself. She does light installations, fabric painting, and site-specific artwork. She does not have any big installations planned to come soon, but she has an itch, as she puts it, to create something.

Belle’s art can be seen on her online portfolio.

She does ethereal looking artworks with shadows and plants to colorful and bright pieces that embody the spirit of childhood. She has a studio at the McGuffey Art Center, which is near the Downtown Mall, and does workshops through the McGuffey Art Center as well as the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Many people, like Belle, find art important because it is so versatile, creative, and expressive of one’s true self. Belle lived in an old house when she was young that underwent many renovations and found that art can take many forms. The house was always having makeovers and things moved. She saw how creative architecture and carpentry was. Belle said, “I think because of this I’ve always considered ‘creativity’ to be something that can be practiced in many fields.” She said that art and expression can be practiced in any line of work or way of life.

Belle said that students must get to know themselves. She said, “Your voice is important. The world needs to hear from you just as much as you need to speak your truth.”



Photo courtesy of Fenella Belle