

Arnie Zimmerman: Requiem Artist Statement

This body of work, commencing in 2015 and completed summer 2018, began as a celebration; a decision to try sculpting from the live model, a new expression for me, in a new studio and new location: Hudson NY. I was having fun with this challenge while bouncing around from project to project. On July 24, 2016, our daughter Izzy was killed by a reckless driver in Thailand, she was almost 24 years old. Whatever trajectory the work had toward celebration and wonder became a dirge. In a state of shock, I continued working and struggled to complete the large whale and figure sculptures already in progress. I've never had such difficulty making objects seen in my minds' eye. The clay cracked and broke, fell apart, I lost the cognitive ability to learn how to fire my new computerized kilns; it felt like I was a novice with the material and, truly a novice with realistic figure sculpture, I felt like an imposter. In short I lost almost all agency. The choice was to abandon this work: another loss. I could not; whales have been a touchstone for Izzy and me since she was little. The deep wound of her loss, my broken heart and life is somehow expressed in this work, I know that now. By making these sculptures I found one-way to stay connected to Izzy as she is now: Spirit. I feel her around me, my grief is an echo of our connection. We honor her life on earth and her abiding spirit by using this space to show my work and in the future, the work of others