

Ferndale DIY Profile: Lindsey Harnish, Painter, Recycler and Devon Rex owner

As part of our DIY Project, we've asked Ferndale residents to tell us about what DIY means to them.

Posted by [Kelly Bennett](#), September 08, 2011 at 04:39 AM



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Lindsey Harnish's paintings have been exhibited all over Michigan, including Squirreled Away Books, The District VII Gallery and the Damned Art Show. Harnish can also be found at the circulation desk. Oh, and she also owns a Devon Rex (which is a cat if you didn't know).

And, as part of Ferndale Patch's DIY Project, we talk with Harnish about her work, what DIY means to her and how it fits Ferndale.

To learn more about our DIY Project and to participate, go [here](#).

1. Tell us a little about yourself.

I wanna make stuff every day. Most days, I will be painting or drawing. I'm an artist and I get lucky enough to have my work in exhibits and fairs.

Life seems a little richer if I'm trying to make the most of it, partly by making things with my hands. This is not to say that my efforts turn out well—I think my paintings are lovely, but other things I craft tend to be rather wonky. I roughly measure once and cut twice.

This month's obsession is growing and pickling cucumbers. When I have the time and the gumption, I make my own soy yogurt and kombucha.

I challenge myself to make the things I need and want, if I can't find them used or if I can't afford to buy it handmade. Part of this is an effort to be greener—making things means I get to use whatever materials I want and less packaging is involved. Buying handmade means that I'm supporting the people that love to make these things and make them gorgeously.

2. What does DIY mean to you?

The magical experience of taking the base materials-- fabric, sugar, wood, paint, whatever--and transforming it into this work of your hands that hopefully functions and suits your needs and wants. There's a certain resourcefulness and creativity that our parents and grandparents had that younger generations are rediscovering in our own clever way. We do it because we watched a lot of MacGyver and are convinced that, given a good Swiss army knife and some duct tape, we could make a better book case/hammock/vase than what we'd buy at Target.

As more and more things are being mass-produced and synthesized, we're finding that you really can't beat the real thing

and sometimes it's just better if you make it. Or *try* to make it while laughing really hard at how wonky it turns out.

3. Tell us about a DIY project (or projects) you have worked on and why it was DIY.

I recently curated an interactive exhibit called "The Tree of Wishes" on Belle Isle for FIGMENT. An evergreen was festooned with lines of ribbon and crepe paper. Participants were encouraged to write a wish on handmade paper embedded with Michigan wildflower seeds. Then, they pin it up. If someone wanted to have a sheet to plant, they had to select someone else's wish to take home with them.

For creating the project, we made over two hundred sheets of paper in my back yard. We shredded paper, we colored it. We made the screens to make the paper. We made the paper. I say we because I drug my darling husband and dear friends into as much of the project as possible.

You can find out more (with pictures!) on my blog [here](#).

4. Why does the DIY attitude fit Ferndale?

The folks in Ferndale are pretty stylish, but we do it our own way--which works hand in hand with DIY.

Handmade, handcrafted and independent seem to do well in this town. We've got so many great businesses that feature handcrafted goodness like Naka, Rustbelt, Valentine Vodka to name a few. DIY/Handmade Detroit events are a popular fixture. We've got a fantastic local music scene and I love that our library and our city events regularly have these folks playing.

5. Who is your favorite DIY artist/musician/human?

I can't pick a favorite. I am endlessly inspired by the folks who decide to make and remake as a part of their lifestyle--from my sister who unravels thrift store sweaters and uses the yarn to knit something else, to my friend Amy Hajec who creates adorable stuffed creatures from fabric scraps and Karen LaPage of OneGirl Circus, who designs posh children's clothing, to Angela Newsom of Detroit Evolution, who concocts delicious vegan creations, to my husband Jay who freelances designs out of our home, but also carves fantastic lino prints and crafts electronic music from sounds he's sampled from everywhere, including our radiators. Creativity and resourcefulness are attributes I fiercely respect.

If you'd like to participate in Ferndale Patch's DIY Project, email the editor at Terry.Parris@patch.com.

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Chris Best September 08, 2011 at 03:16 PM

Lindsey, you should think about selling your awesomness at The Rust Belt. We still have some spots available for the holidays.
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Lynz Harnish September 08, 2011 at 09:07 PM

Thanks, Chris--Rust Belt's pretty incredible and I'd love to someday have my stuff there. I'll be contacting you.
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