

## *Gallery 35*

One of the many New York cultural events canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic was an art show at Congregation Beth Elohim that would have included work by three residents of 35, including **Roz Kochman (15B)**. Since we missed the chance to see her work at the show, we got in touch to take a look and talk to her about her art and her background.

“I began as a painter,” Roz said when we spoke on the phone. “After college, I took classes at the Brooklyn Museum, but stepped away from it while I went to law school. After law school, I began taking clay modeling at The New School, and that’s when I discovered my passion for sculpture.”

While at The New School, Roz met the sculptor Chaim Gross, who encouraged her to progress from clay to plaster, then casting, then stone. “He taught me something important,” Roz recalled. “He said not to worry if the stone cracks, because you can always figure out something to do with it. One time, a piece modeled on my left hand cracked, so now it’s my left fist.”

When Roz began to work full-time as a health care administrator she didn’t have time for sculpture, but after retiring she returned to it happily. “I took two trips to Pietrasanta in Italy to learn how to carve,” she said. “I worked with Carrara marble and learned how to use power tools, the air hammer, hand tools, and the diamond wheel grinder.”

Once home, she set up the first of several studios to work in and continued taking classes, including at the Marble Institute in Colorado, where she worked outdoors with the local stone.



***Triple Swirl. Italian alabaster***



***Italian Ice. Italian alabaster***

“I work in abstract forms, and I like to impart a sense of motion to the stone,” she said. “The creation of the piece is a dialog between me and the stone. Sometimes I start with an idea in mind, sometimes I let the stone tell me what it wants to be.”

She generally starts, she said, by drilling a hole in the raw stone with the diamond wheel to give the piece a sense of movement. Using the air hammer, with its various attachments, she gradually takes away stone until the shape emerges. The final step is polishing, a process that is quite time-consuming. “Also messy,” she added.

She works most often in marble or alabaster. “Marble is quarried in many places,” she said, “including Colorado, Vermont, and Italy, and each marble has different qualities that influence what the sculpture becomes.”

Alabaster is one of her favorite stones to work with. “It comes in many colors,” she pointed out, “including orange, blue, green, and coral. It’s a soft mineral and sometimes contains mud that gives the surface a fascinating appearance. Often it’s the mud that determines what form the piece will take.”



***Orange Twist. Utah alabaster***

Sculptors whom Roz admires include Brancusi, Modigliani, Chaim Gross, and Henry Moore.

Roz would be happy to show her work in her apartment, once it's okay to visit each other's apartments.

“Sculpture is a big challenge,” she concluded. “When you start working with a piece of stone, it’s like Forrest Gump’s box of chocolates—you never know what you’ve got until you bite into it.”