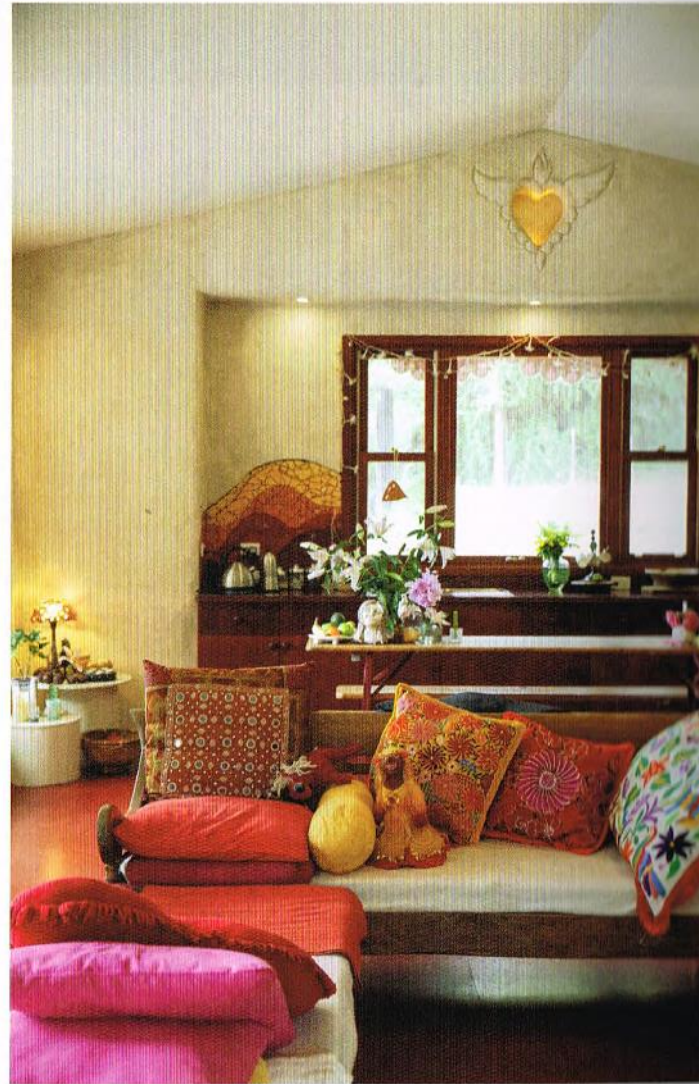
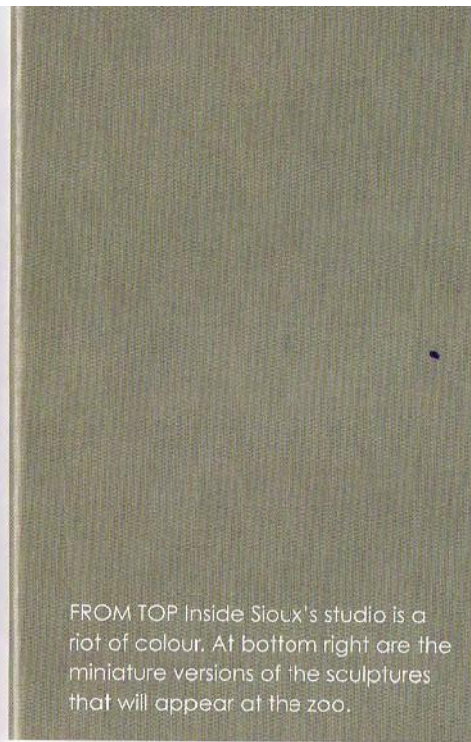


Heart Art



WARBURTON ARTIST SIOUX DOLLMAN HAS LEARNED TO FOLLOW HER HEART AND TO FIND MAGIC IN EVERY DAY LIFE.

WORDS Jill Fraser PHOTOGRAPHS Adele Van Es



FROM TOP Inside Sioux's studio is a riot of colour. At bottom right are the miniature versions of the sculptures that will appear at the zoo.



A tiny entrance hall in which shoes are discarded, prepares the uninitiated for the world beyond the roughly fashioned hexagonal arch that leads into the house. A violet light shines down from the apex of the arch on everyone who walks under it.

This is the Belief Gateway. People have to walk through this portal to get into the Land of Belief," Sioux laughed. "The loveliest thing Alwyn (Warburton architect Alwyn Williams of Soft Loud House Architects designed the house) said was, Sioux, you don't have to be a possum, your house is an extension of you. My imagination went crazy hearing that," Sioux chuckled.

Through the portal the lines between theatre, temple and playground blur. In the light-filled home brightly coloured furnishings contrast dramatically against stark white walls in which stars, lotus petals and a profusion of hearts (one wall features a floor to ceiling 'Tree of Life' dripping hearts from every limb) have been lovingly carved into the render.

Softly curved contours camouflage straight lines (a favourite quote of Sioux's is "a straight line is killing mankind" courtesy of Austrian architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser) and fantasy and fun underpin utilitarian.

"My gift is to be able to create magic. I love to teach and inspire. We're all creative. Imagination is more important than intelligence," she declared.

Sioux went to Warburton for a holiday around eight years ago, fell in love with the picturesque valley, returned to her apartment in St Kilda, knew she didn't belong there any longer, took "a leap of faith" and shifted to Warburton, initially renting while looking for land.

"I followed my heart," she declared. "There's a creative energy in Warburton. It's the nurturing energy of the valley. "I've always lived near the ocean. I couldn't live without water and because Warburton has the river I'm okay."

She describes Warby dwellers as "a bag of mixed lollies". "We're creating 'Famous in Warburton' T-shirts," she giggled. "Everyone is famous in Warburton. We have the most amazing people here. I wouldn't call us hippies but everyone is beautiful and everyone grows vegetables," she said. We've started calling it Edible Warburton! Art and vegies are everywhere."

Sioux is in the process of establishing her own vegie

patches and fruit tree orchards. She is planning an extensive chicken aviary, her desire being, "to live off my plot."

She maintains she was born an artist but had to wait many years to find her own style. "I went to Geelong Grammar School and used to hide in the art class. I left in 5th form and went to Prahran College (now Victoria College). I started a graphic design diploma and soon realised it wasn't for me. "The first painting that came from my heart was when I was 35. By that stage I'd lived, done a lot of healing and had a child," she said. "I had to find the magic inside me."

She holds art and crafts classes and workshops for all ages and insists, "everyone is an artist. It's about trusting and knowing you can do it."

Young children inspire her. Participants who "stiffen up" are met with an avalanche of infectious enthusiasm and encouragement. "I tell people that they can't do anything wrong. If someone accidentally puts a splodge on their canvas I tell them to work with it.

"One of my first students was a dancer and so terrified of messing up she couldn't put anything down on canvas. I told her, just pretend you're dancing on it. Dance on your canvas! That's all she needed to hear."

Her creative time is jealously guarded. She is one of a handful of people in Australia who does not have a mobile phone. Besides being concerned about electromagnetic radiation she does not want her artistic flow interrupted.

As for texting, "It's disgusting. Worse than smoking," she said.

Her willingness to embrace her individuality and listen to "the voice of my heart" is reflected in her success as both an artist and owner builder. Her attitude is, "jump into your fears".

"When I was building the house, I trusted. At that stage I didn't have money or a job. I had faith and used to envisage how it would look. I'd go to bed every night and feel and smell the walls. So when I started building it was already done in my mind.

"Earlier this year my work temporarily dried up so I did a lot of allowing and sitting, and then I started working on my garden and tried not to worry about the future. Everything has been magical ever since."

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