

# CHAR terBEEST KUDLA



CHAR terBEEST KUDLA

LEFT: CHAR IN THE STUDIO WITH SOME OF HER BEAUTIFUL, COLORFUL FABRICS AND COMPLETED HANDBAGS

## Just the Facts! Char terBeest Kudla - [Helen's Daughters Studio](#) - Baraboo

**Artist medium:** Fiber - Wearable

**Primary method of working:** I design handbags, draft the patterns, make the prototype, make changes and add them to my line of handbags.

**Favorite surface/technique**

**treatment:** Of course, I like talking about my work, but also listening too my audience. What are their needs. I make handbags people want to use. I make a few for fun arty ones for me. Which pushes my skills to make a

piece of art. Art you can wear and when not wearing put on the wall or dressing table. ART..

**Equipment used:** I use an old Viking sewing machine to sew most of the parts. It's just a basic machine...NO computers needed. Back and forward and zip zagging. That's all I need. I have a Mega Quilter Janome that sews all the parts together. A Jamone very basic Serger is used to finish the raw edges.

**Favorite Tools:** My favorite tool besides the seam ripper. Is my spring action shear. If I am cutting out parts for four hours, it gives my cutting hand a relief. The shears springs open by themselves. One less movement for my hands.

**Studio playlist:** I listen to Wisconsin Public Radio. If I'm listening to music it would be to WORT in the morning. Folk music.



PURSES AND BAGS ON DISPLAY



OUTSIDE THE STUDIO AT THE FALL ART TOUR LAST YEAR



WALL OF PURSES ON DISPLAY

# Artist Conversation!

## Let's Learn a Little More...

**Tell us a little bit about yourself and how you came to be living life the you are today?**

I have been sewing since I five years old. I loved sewing and was very active in 4-H. 4-H taught me how to be a leader and work with people. I always participated in the fashion shows and clothing projects. I wanted to be an county extension agent. I went to University of Wisconsin – Stout. Earned a degree in Home Economics. There just weren't enough opens for county agents so I taught school. Monroe, Brillion, Oshkosh North High School and finally Baraboo Junior High. This is where my heart landed and Baraboo holds my soul. I love it here. I taught school for 14 years and decided to become a full time Artisan instead of a part time summer street artisan. I first made

willow baskets, then collage wall work and finally back to my sewing machines and handbag making.

**How do you keep things fresh and your mind engaged?**

My job (Helen's Daughters Studio) is my life. I love each part of what I do. From the idea, making, marketing and selling. Each part gives me new challenges. It's never boring. I am married to another artist, Frank Kudla – Metalsmith. So we surround ourselves in an artful life. It surrounds us. When I need to come up with a new idea, I take a walk. By the time I get home, I have the concept worked out in my head, what to call it, who I will invite into it and how to market it. I've come up with a few good ideas in my 70 years of Midwest living.



STRIPED HANDBAG



RED HANDBAG



BLACK & WHITE HANDBAG

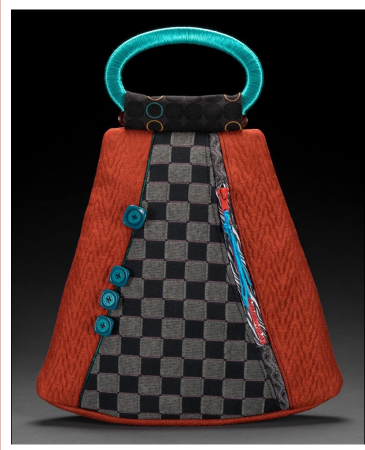


TEAL & GREEN HANDBAG



PURSES & FABRICS ON DISPLAY AT HELEN'S DAUGHTERS STUDIO

RIGHT: CHAR STANDING OUTSIDE OF HELEN'S DAUGHTERS STUDIO DURING THE FALL ART TOUR LAST YEAR



RED HANDBAG



MULTICOLORED HANDBAG



EARTHY COLORED OVER THE SHOULDER BAG



**Please tell us a little bit about your Studio!**

My studio is an updated garage, fully winterized. Light and cheery. I had the old garage rehabbed into my studio in 1986. Downstairs is my cutting area and fabric storage. During the tour, it gets emptied and is my shop. Climb the stair and all of my machinery is upstairs. Three sewing areas. Sewing parts area. Sewing parts together area and serging area. I have a table for hand sewing and beading. The studio is about 15 feet by 20 feet. Perfect for me.

**Where do you find your inspiration?**

I taught basket making and then handbag making, at Sievers School of Fiber Art for a couple decades. Walter

Schutz, the owner of the school, was one of my life mentors. If you can start a fiber school at age 75, it's never too late to create, have fun and feed your soul. His lust for life and creativity was inspiring to me. Of course my mother, Helen, was my biggest inspiration. Creative, reach for something better, leave a place better than you found it, love nature and gardening - work hard - were just a few of her valued life lessons. So many people helped get me here. Thanks to them all.

**Where can we find your work and learn more?**

I've always loved marketing! Just another creative part of the process. In the old days we did postcards, newspaper

and magazine stories and advertising. Digital marketing, computers, cell phones, social media. I think I waited my entire life, for this fascinating and challenging way to market an event or my own work. Love it. It's just another part of the creative process. I've done all 27 Fall Art Tours and will continue. When you engage your audience with how the "magic" happens and they can walk into your world, they value your work more. We love having touring guests in our studio, home and backyard. My husband, Frank Kudla (metalsmith) and Kristee Weber-Mickler (basketmaker) join our trio of artisans at our stop. We look forward to seeing you again in 2021.