



## Treasures Abound

Owings Mills artist Gail Green transforms random items into works of art.

By Caryn R. Sagal

**Gail Green:**  
"I get a real kick out of people coming to my booth at shows and exclaiming 'Wow!' when they see my art." (Photo by Robyn Stevens Brody)

**T**he old adage "One man's trash is another man's treasure" is something that local artist Gail Green takes to heart. She spends upwards of 20 to 30 hours each week transforming discarded items into unique visions of art.

More recently sat down with Green, who lives in Owings Mills and previously worked in education, to discuss her new "full-time job" of covering garden statues, rubber toy crabs and rats, and other objects with vintage costume jewelry from the 1960s and 1970s.

Green's work can be regularly found at art shows and sales around the community.

**When did you start repurposing items to create artworks?** After I finished working as a preschool teacher at the Owings Mills JCC and Beth Tfiloh's day school at Glyndon, I took the toy dinosaurs from my classroom and covered them with jewelry. An old mannequin head from a thrift

shop became an ode to Queen Elizabeth.

My husband Murray — my college sweetheart who I've now been married to for 42 years — brought home old keys from his hardware store and I repurposed them into necklaces.

**When did this type of art become your passion?** I began selling items on eBay 20 years ago, starting with designer handbags and clothing, and later adding vintage costume jewelry. During the COVID pandemic when the vintage jewelry stopped selling, I wondered what I could do with it.

Inspired by the beauty of Goth-type art from fashion designer Alexander McQueen, I covered a skull bank I had on hand with jewelry. My children — Jennifer, Ryan and Gabrielle — insisted that I apply to the American Visionary Art Museum bazaar juried show, and I thought, "What do I have to lose?"

To my surprise, I was accepted to that show and many more since then, including juried shows at the Edward A. Myerberg Center, the Maryland Public Television Flea Market and Bazaar, the Hampden Holiday Market, the Winter Wonderland Market and the Black-Eyed Susan Juried Trunk Show.

**What do you most enjoy about this type of creating art?** At age 64, I have a new career that is wonderful and exciting! I love making art from items that were to be thrown away and repurposing them to bring joy to others and give a new life to both the repurposed items and the jewelry.

Not only do my customers purchase quite a lot of my art, but I have a lot of return customers, too. I get a real kick out of people coming to my booth at shows and exclaiming "Wow!" when they see my art.

**Fine, but why rats and skulls?**

I've always been attracted to edgy art and often wear clothing with skulls. I also love Baltimore and our tongue-in-cheek relationship with rats. So I created 'Baltimore Neighborhood Rats,' each wearing nametags with their Baltimore neighborhood and what they do there.

For example, 'Ryan the Rat' lives in Hampden and likes to stroll along The Avenue. I also created 'Maryland Love

Crabs,' each wearing nametags that include a description of their personality.

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**Any Judaica pieces?** In fact, I created the 'Maryland Chanukah Crabs,' each with a tiny dreidel, a 'Jewish Baltimore Neighborhood Rat' — with a tiny Israeli flag and evil eye pendant — and 'King David,' a statue from a male mannequin head with rhinestone eyes and hair of rhinestones, pearls and gold chains.

**Besides art, what other activities do you enjoy?** I love to cook and have my family over for the Jewish holidays and Shabbat dinners. My other hobby is



organic vegetable gardening. In addition to a 64-foot garden I grow all year, I have a winter garden with kale, spinach and garlic.

But I am always thinking about my art and have a few projects in mind for the future, including an enormous peacock made from a vegetable garden statue, a

line of owls and possibly a line of oysters.

And I look forward to participating in more shows, so stay tuned! 📞

For information or to purchase Gail Green's art, follow @baltimorejewels on Instagram.

Caryn R. Sagal is a Baltimore-based public relations consultant and freelance writer.



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