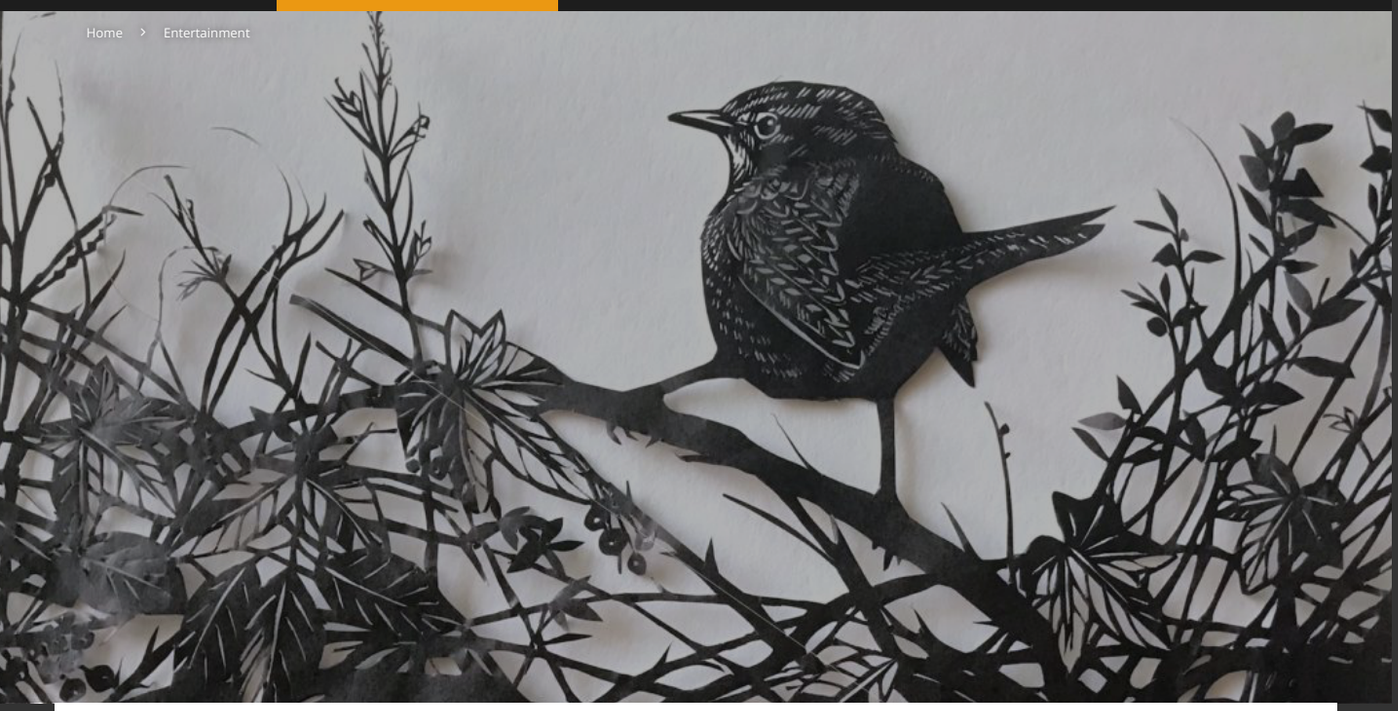
Destination Tampa Bay Visits Clearwater Taste Fest

ME CABO
Breakfast included at the exclusive Mamazzita restaurant



Chris Kuhn

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To better know your community, meet the local artists who make up its tapestry of design. Each month, DESTINATION TAMPA BAY introduces readers to these creative ambassadors in its monthly artist spotlight. This month, we introduce you to an artist whose papercutting talents are capturing the attention of the art world. The spotlight shines on Lucrezia Bieler.

LUCREZIA BIELER, PAPERCUTTING ARTIST

A love of animals and the grace of their movement drew Lucrezia Bieler to the art of papercutting. She was on a class trip to Circus Knie in Zurich to study the training of animals for scientific illustration when her teacher encouraged students to find a medium to help them capture animals in motion. “I tried once to capture the movements by cutting out quick silhouettes of the animals and fell in love with the medium,” she says.

According to Bieler, the art of papercutting is a popular folk art among European countries, including Switzerland, where farmers would often pick up papercutting to pass the time in winter using scissors, knives and sheep shears to create farm life motifs.

1 ReadOut Literary Festival
Events February 10, 2023

2 City of Largo’s Annual Car Show and Largo Market
Events February 8, 2023

3 Blues on the Block
Events February 7, 2023

4 Gasparilla Festival of the Arts Returns This March
Events February 6, 2023

5 2023 “Derby at The Pier” Party
Uncategorized February 3, 2023

SALTROCK GRILL

Lucrezia Bieler donated her work "Home Sweet Home" for a benefit auction at the Smithsonian Virtual Craft Show in October 2020. (Also featured above)

Bieler was born in Switzerland and traveled to the U.S. with our spouse and two young daughters in 1994. Her spouse was completing post-doctoral work at the University of Washington in Seattle, where the family lived for nine years, before moving to Tallahassee in 2003 when he became a professor at the Florida State University. Throughout this time, she continued to explore her love of art, which had originated since she was a child.

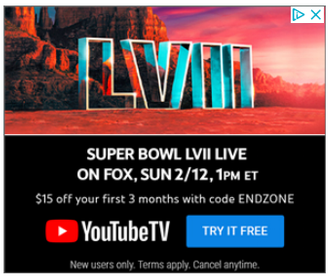
"I wanted to become an artist for as long as I can remember. My mother told me that I filled whole sketchbooks with drawings," she says. "My mother always entertained us with different craft projects and encouraged our love for the arts. For example, she would show us how to make color-pencil studies of flowers we saw on our hikes. We often went hiking in the mountains and attended bird-watching tours. I especially loved those. We would be meeting somewhere early in the morning, just before dawn. It was so amazing to hear the forest wake up and all the birds were singing in the early morning."

Her parents also befriended a well-known Swiss artist, Fritz Hug, and Bieler recalls an opportunity the family had to meet with Hug, a memory that opened her mind to the possibilities of pursuing art herself. "He invited us to his studio and spent a long time showing us his studio and talking about his artwork. This made my decision even clearer. I wanted to study art, and it was my dream to capture the spirit of animals as Fritz Hug could," she says. This love of nature continues to inspire her artwork today, including a new series she is working on focused on endangered animals and ecosystems.

Though Bieler hoped to study art in college, she knew how competitive it was to get into art school and was encouraged by her father to pursue a more traditional education route and she enrolled in business school, but says she never lost sight of her true love – the arts. When Bieler was 15, her mother died which left an indelible mark on the young woman.

> I know that she would have been sad if I had not followed my dream and at least tried to get into art school," she says. Bieler earned an art scholarship and got accepted into the art program at Hochschule der Künste in Zuerich. Art has filled her world ever since. "Art is food for the soul," she says.

Dine-In Hours Monday-Friday 4 -10pm, Saturday & Sunday 12-10pm



"Hang Out to Dry" by Bieler won the Vincent J. Nardone, President Emeritus Award in Collage and Mixed Media in November 2021.

While living in Seattle, Bieler volunteered often at her children's elementary school to lead in art projects with the students that would be auctioned and raise money for the school. She also discovered how some children who struggled with the curriculum would gain confidence and self-esteem as they discovered their creative talents and made beautiful artwork. "I will never forget the joy that art brought to all the children," she says. "It is very important that students have the possibility to explore the arts."

For Bieler, the art of papercutting is very meditative and one she often combines with music during the creative process. When she created the coral reef image "Invasive," she listened to *Echo* by Pink Floyd. She also found Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* inspiring when she created "The Thistle, The Bee, and the Fox." "I like to listen to music that matches the mood that I like the artwork to reflect," she says. "I like for art to have a positive impact and reflect the meditative feeling that I have when I make them."

"Invasive" by Bieler is on display until January 21, 2023, at Turtle Bay Exploration Park in Redding, CA.

For twenty years, Bieler has been participating in art shows all over the country and across the world, showcasing her work and interacting with other artists. In April 2022, she took part in the Smithsonian Craftshow in Washington, D.C., where she earned a silver award and in March 2022, she garnered a Best of Show nod at FLAUNT2022: Let's Play! in Thomasville, GA. Bieler takes part in the 2022 Plantation Wildlife Art Show in Thomasville, GA (Nov. 18-22, 2022) and has work on display as part of the "Birds in Art" exhibit at Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, WI (through Nov. 27, 2022), and as part of the 62nd Annual Exhibition of the Society of Animal Artists at Turtle Bay Exploration Park in Redding, CA (through Jan. 21, 2023), where her coral reef work "Invasive" is on display. She also appears at an international paper arts exhibition Typiquement Suisse! which runs December 1, 2022, through February 26, 2023, at the Musée du Vieux Pays-d'Enhaut in Château-d'Oex, Switzerland.

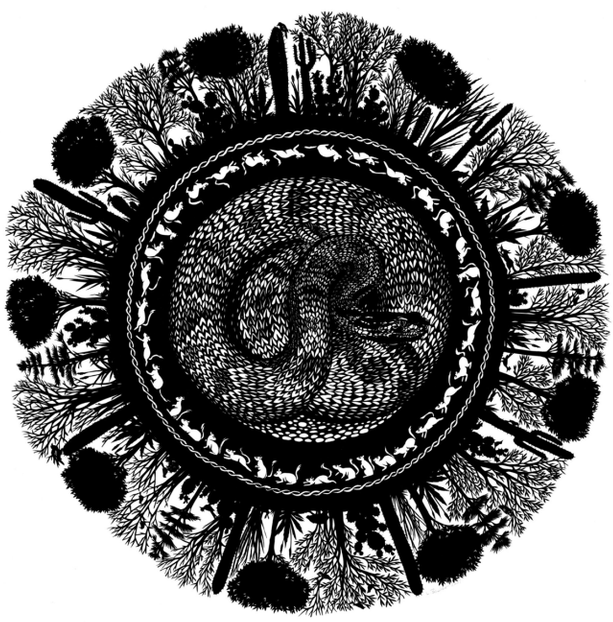
Lucrezia Bieler discusses her work with visitors at the Smithsonian Craft Show in Washington, D.C.

In 2022, Bieler was selected, along with eight other Florida artists, to participate in a unique, joint art exhibition, Clearly Collaborative. The program, guided by a creative partnership between Florida CraftArt and Duncan McClellan Gallery, allows each selected artist an opportunity to combine their chosen medium with the work of acclaimed glass artist Duncan McLellan. Final pieces from the collaboration will be displayed as part of a January 2023 exhibit. (Click here to learn more about the Clearly Collaborative multimedia art project.)

"It is such an honor to be part of such a wonderful group of artists and to be able to explore a new beautiful art medium," Bieler says.

Photo taken by David Ramsey on works towrd the Clearly Collaborative piece to be on display in January.

Bieler is currently working on a few new pieces focused on a hare running over a field of dandelions, a moorhen, hummingbirds, a bison, and a coral reef series. "I often work on several simultaneous pieces. I start them when I have an idea," she says. "Some images are very detailed and take a very long time, months, to finish. Others are small cuttings I can finish within a day to a week."



"Rattle Race" by Bieler became part of Sonora Desert Museum's art on display in September 2021.

As an artist, Bieler says she wants her work to reflect harmony, balance, and peace, and this means choosing a wide variety of subjects in nature to draw attention to endangered animals. One memorable example, "Rattle Race," resulted from a visit to the Sonoran Desert Visitor Center after she and the family relocated from Seattle to Tallahassee. A ranger informed the family that he had seen a rattlesnake taking a nap under a bush and showed them from a safe distance. "It was in Spring, the cacti were blooming, and a beautiful light shone onto the curled snake. It looked beautiful, so I decided to make a picture that showed that the snakes have their place in the ecosystem and that they are important for the balance of it," Bieler says. "I am very happy that this picture was exhibited at the Sonoran Desert Museum together with artwork by members of the Society of Animal Artists. And that someone that is living there purchased it, so now it found a perfect home."

For those interested in seeing more of Bieler's papercutting treasures, visit the artist's website by clicking here. To keep up with her latest news and events, visit her on Facebook and Instagram.

by Chris Kuhn written exclusively for Destination Tampa Bay™. *All photos are courtesy of artist Lucrezia Bieler taken by Katie Deits, unless otherwise noted for editorial purposes only–all right reserved.*

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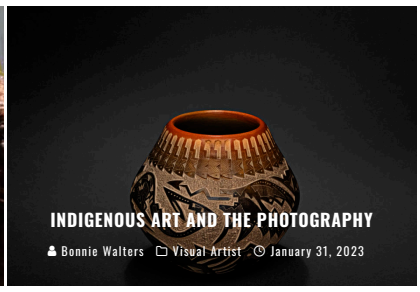

Destination TAMPA BAY

Welcome to Destination Tampa Bay. Destination Tampa Bay is the leading informational website that seeks to support Tampa Bay as the ideal destination for entertainment, sport, and other recreational activities. At Destination Tampa Bay, we aim to help all visitors and locals to the area get accurate information about the various events, sporting activities and tourist attractions that can be found in the area.

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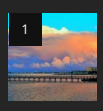
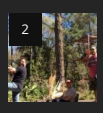


1 **Veterans Art Center Tampa Bay Heals Through Art**
Helping Hands March 23, 2017



2 **Get Your Camo On with Sporting Clay**
Helping Hands September 20, 2018

3 **Taste of the Beaches Kick-off**
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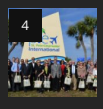

4 **St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport has Surpassed Two Million Passengers**
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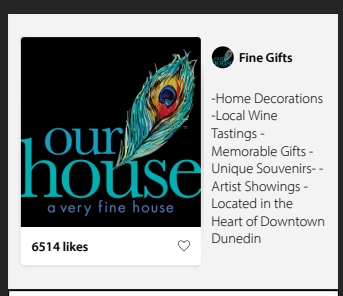

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