

Ask Kukshat what got her into welded sculpture and you'll get a surprising answer----"playing the trombone when I was 10 years old." She explains it like this, "Well, at that age it didn't seem like any big deal, but it got me totally comfortable doing



something a little different, and being the only girl in with a bunch of guys." That seems to have been Kukshat's modus operandi ever since. In college she trained in speech pathology and audiology but went to work as a project management specialist at the Trident submarine base in Washington. She worked at Sea-First bank as a technical writer and ended up as a senior executive at Bank of America. She restored and lived on an antique boat; she started riding motorcycles almost 40 years ago. Kukshat accidentally found herself in many non-traditional roles, often as one of the few females around. "I never set out to do anything unusual, I just do what I think will be fun."

When Kukshat was at the height of a corporate career at under 40 years of age, she decided it wasn't where she wanted to spend the next 25 years. She quit to start a business building moss gardens and floral displays for office spaces. "I'd been in one too many sterile corporate conference rooms" she says. Having no training didn't stop her; Kukshat notes wryly that she's never been qualified to do anything she's done, she just does it.

When faced with a client who wanted a floral display over 12 feet long and 7 feet high, Kukshat says she used a "chewing gum and bobby pin" approach and prayed it would hold together. Shortly thereafter, she enrolled in an automotive welding course to learn how to build support armatures and started creating sculptures out of cast off metal bits. A friend saw one of her sculptures and took it to a downtown San Francisco art gallery launching her on an art career that has been her full time passion for the last 15 years. Kukshat describes her art journey as magical. She loves the creativity and positive environment. "It's fabulous that so many people tell me they appreciate my work; that sure didn't happen as a corporate manager."

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Notable collectors include Princess Bernadotte of Sweden (who hosted a show and reception for her in Stockholm), the founder of the now iconic black and yellow guides "For Dummies", and the American Steel Institute.

Kuksht's work is exhibited and collected in Europe and throughout the United States; in Sacramento her work can frequently be seen at Solomon Dubnick Gallery (1017 25th St).