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## Local architectural engineer is an artist and writer

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BY AMANDA CREASEY ON AUGUST 21, 2018

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**ABOVE:** An example of Nikki Foreman's paintings.

Nikki Foreman isn't particularly forward about her creative side. In fact, the architectural engineer is reluctant to even call herself an artist or writer, despite having completed countless works of art and written rough drafts for two novels.

"I feel like such a fraud saying I am a writer, since I have never been published. I will never consider myself a writer until I actually finish something," she explained. As far as her identity as an artist goes, Foreman experiences a lot of "insecurity at wondering if I am actually good at what I do," though she has been drawing for as long as she can remember.

When she and her sister were younger, they shared an adoration for Disney and X-Men comic books.

"We would constantly be drawing whatever we could get our hands on related to those two subject matters. One of the first things I ever wanted to be was an animator for Disney," Foreman said. "We even figured out how to make our own 'animation cels' using transparent projector film and permanent marker. If we generated enough static electricity by rubbing them on the carpet, they would stick to the walls and we could create our own storyboards."

So how did an aspiring Disney animator become an engineer? Foreman graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in mechanical engineering.

"I actually started out majoring in industrial design, a compromise between my parents and me – as art school was not an option," she said.

Foreman thought industrial design would be “a good way to use my artist skills, but also give me an education and a degree that would keep me out of the ‘starving artist’ existence.”

She loved her first two years in the program, “as it was mostly all just free-hand drawing and designing. Then by my third year, they sat me behind a computer and said, ‘Now you have to learn to design and draw on this,’ the dreaded AutoCAD. It didn’t translate well, and I hated it. It felt so wrong I decided to switch majors to mechanical engineer. The joke is on me, though, because I use AutoCAD every day now in my ‘real’ job,” she said, “and I still hate it.”

Although Foreman feels her love for art and writing rarely factors into her day job, her literary and creative mind is still at work when she describes what she does for a living.

“I like to explain my job as ‘putting the bones’ into a house,” she said. The same talents that make her a skilled artist are probably the same ones that make her skilled at her job.

“I see most things in shapes and lines and color. I try to explain to anyone who says that they can’t draw, that they could if they just looked at something a little differently,” she said. “Everything is just a line that makes a shape, and light and dark that creates color.”

Even when given full creative license, Foreman describes her artistic style as realism.

“I don’t consider myself creatively abstract,” she said. “I like to make things look as they should for the most part, with maybe just a touch of whimsy,” which is why her favorite subject for artwork is animals. “There is both freedom to splurge a bit creatively with them — in fur, feathers, etc. — but still enough detail required for them to look like themselves.”

Although she writes and draws, Foreman’s most natural form of self-expression is art.

Foreman’s dreams of working as a Disney animator may now seem like the stuff of a child’s fantasy, but she still harbors aspirations for her creative side. “I would love to have a successful art business. I hope to start selling original artwork on Etsy and in local businesses, as well as taking on commission work for pet portraits,” she said.

As far as her writing plans go, she would like to get something published.

“I would love to quit my day job eventually and do what I really love, but that is wishful thinking right now,” she said.

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AMANDA CREASEY

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#### 1 COMMENT

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BOB ANSERVITZ on AUGUST 27, 2018 5:24 PM · EDIT

Go for it, Nikki. What I have been privileged to see of your work is astronomically fresh and wonderful and glorious. The pencil drawing of the fox, alone, should put your work up there with the very best. And, I say this as one with a lifelong interest in art. I look forward to saying "I knew you when...." and that's before the world discovers you through your art — which I hope is really soon.

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