



FUNKTIONAL FOLK ART

"I guess it's accurate to call me a folk artist, but I'm a funky folk artist," says Fay Sciarra, 51, of Lawrenceville. Her work is sophisticated yet naive, traditional yet contemporary, whimsical yet contemplative. Painting the places and things that she loves or that move her, she finds the extraordinary in the ordinary, the divine in the mundane.

Sciarra's work has evolved from painting on canvas and found objects to reverse painting on glass, mixed media, assemblage and collage. The self-taught artist started painting in her bedroom in 1994 at a time in her life when she was struggling with personal loss and the demands of an infant. Thus began a healing journey that has produced a substantive body of work that makes people smile. "I want to inspire people and comfort them with my work," she says, "bringing them beauty, humor and the wonder of the moment."

While the majority of Sciarra's work on functional items like antique frames and ironing boards are meant to be art, at times the line blurs. A collector used one of her reverse paintings on a window as a room divider. Antique mirrors become works of art when adorned with buttons, sailor knots and porcelain flowers, perfect for a shore house powder room. "It's form and function and it's also about how to make a living," she says.

Sciarra would like to see her commission work, creating personal family iconography on canvas, translate into doing one-of-a-kind mirrors, doors, freestanding screens and cupboard doors for home renovations and new construction.

View Sciarra's work at Go for Baroque in Princeton, where on Oct. 19, from 5 to 8 p.m., the shop will host a Fall Soiree featuring her art. Her work can also be seen at Riverbank Arts in Stockton, North End Triology in Barnegat Light and on her Web site, www.faysciarra.com.