

Faces Of New Bedford #79 – Dena Haden

Meet Dena Haden, 34-year-old Co-founder/Co-Owner of Groundwork and artist.



Dena had always been interested in art as she used it to communicate from an early age. As she got older and realized her passion, she decided to pursue it in college. Attending the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, she double majored in painting and illustration, in the hopes to have a feasible career drawing and using painting for her passion.

Upon her graduation, she moved to Boston, where she taught at Newbury College in Brookline. As an adjunct professor, she taught foundational art studio classes but wanted to get more out of her career in teaching. With that in mind, Dena went to Philadelphia, where she attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. She was challenged during this time because she felt that she could just draw or paint anything she wanted and felt stagnant, which is where Dena fell in love with sculpting.

Her plan was to move to New York and continue teaching and pursuing art, but due to an illness in her immediate family, she moved back to the area. She was teaching for a nonprofit

art program that serviced inner-city kids, while also attending an artist critique group in Boston, which helped her gain inspiration for her art at the time. This has led to her constant work and her recent installations at Haskell's Garden and Ropeworks.

While meeting with her life-long friend, Sarah Athanas, who had just moved back to the area and was telling Dena that she wishes there was a local group like the one she attended in Boston. That is where they came up with the idea for Groundwork, the creative co-working space on Purchase street in New Bedford. It is a place that is home to many local entrepreneurs and start up companies, including Pidalia, Eforall, Marion Institute, and many others.

Faces of New Bedford is a project by Colton Simmons. If you are interested in booking a shoot or getting prints from the series email all inquiries to colton@coltonsimmons.com

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