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Park Slope artist Martha Walker's steel sculptor pieces in upcoming film 'The Art of Love'

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BY ELIZABETH LAZAROWITZ
 DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER
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Park Slope artist Martha Walker's work is poised to get its very own 15 minutes of fame.

Her metal sculptures, made out of meticulously dripped molten steel, are starring in an upcoming movie as the work of an artist played by Olympia Dukakis.

About seven of her pieces will dress up the set of "The Art of Love," a teen fantasy romance about three generations of women artists with secret magical powers, expected to hit theaters next fall.

"It's a huge honor," said Walker, 57, whose work has also appeared on "Gossip Girl" and in the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue. "Of course, it's nice to have high-end collectors focusing on your work, but I think [art] should be an accessible thing."



Martha Walker welds metal sculpture at her Gowanus studio. Her work is in... (Lanzilote for News)

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The movie's creators were looking for sculptures that would show off both the feminine side and the strength of Dukakis' character, said director Maggie Greenwald.

"The metal she works with is very heavy, so it seemed like it required some power to do the work," said Greenwald. "It's not what kids who don't know art might think an older woman would make. We're trying to break down some barriers."

Walker herself is a late bloomer when it comes to her art career. After graduating from Pratt Institute in 1976, she strayed from her artistic ambitions, working as a stockbroker, running a telemarketing firm and raising two children with her partner.

About 10 years ago, she returned to Pratt for her graduate degree. Since then she's been making up for lost time. "Once I started welding again, I never stopped," said Walker, who works mainly out of a studio in Gowanus.

Much of her work resembles dreamlike sea creatures, which she attributes to her love of scuba diving and to looking through microscopes in her physicist father's medical research lab.

Larger pieces, like the towering, mushroom cloud-shaped piece now at the Pratt Institute Sculpture Park, can take hundreds of hours to create. Wearing goggles and a heavy apron and wielding a blow torch, she melts steel onto a frame of metal bars to create a smooth, organic-looking surface.

"It's like molten lava," she said. "Working with something that's so beautiful lets me ignore the fact that I'm all sooty and hot." Several of Walker's pieces are on display at The Bell House, 149 Seventh St., until Dec. 30.

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