

THE CREATIVE FRAMEWORK OF

# EMILY JACKSON

WATCHING THE BEAT

BY K.D. SELF



Photo by K.D. Self

*A creator in multiple genres, WFHB Board of Directors President and long-time drummer Emily Jackson has an art exhibit (along with Paul Smedberg), which opened at the Thomas Gallery on November 2. Here are snippets from a recent interview about her creative life.*

**EMILY:** In the late 1970s, I went to Hanover College, but a lot of my friends from Hanover moved to Bloomington after graduation. In 1981, after completing an English degree, I also moved to Bloomington, and I loved it. Along with Fred Ross and my boyfriend Doug Rogers, I began playing music. I had never played drums before, didn't really have a musical background, but I like being in the middle of music--was always drawn to it. I took some lessons but not a lot, mostly I learned by doing.

When I think of my life, music and radio are this framework of meaning. My first drum set was plastic tubs with a piece of round sheet metal. Then I got an old used drum set. In the early 1980s, we did one gig as the Dilettantes, at Second Story, on the same bill with Red Square. Then the Dilettantes fell apart. Next, I was in the band Go Dog Go with Brian Kearney and other great people. When they broke up, I got a knock on my door from two women—Chris Dickinson and Cyn Hammond Jenkins, and we started Sally's Dream. For the next several years, we really enjoyed playing in Bloomington; we

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played a lot at Second Story and did opening gigs at Jakes. In 1987, we got the hot idea to move to Boston together. We played Boston clubs and did a little recording but, as things go, Sally's Dream also disbanded. I kept playing, had some great experiences in many different kinds of bands. Then, I decided I wanted to come back to Indiana. In 2005, I returned. Over the past couple of years, I have been playing drums with Rick Nagy and the Blue Diesel Ramblers (a country band). We don't play a lot, but we have a once a month gig at Player's Pub.

Both music and radio are huge in my life. Radio is magical--it enlivens me. When I lived in Bloomington before, I did shows

at WQAX, cable radio. In 1986, I was involved in early stages of planning WFHB. I have always been addicted to radio. Riding the school bus, AM radio was king, then FM came with long-playing songs. When I moved to Boston, there was a wonderful radio landscape; the universities had radio stations that were college-based but with a community radio flavor. When I returned to Bloomington, I volunteered as a desk jockey at WFHB until a DJ slot came open. I have been in the same slot, 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. every other Friday, ever since. I play almost exclusively new music. I really like that. Because it's early morning, usually it's folk, Americana, roots music. I was on WFHB's Board of Directors from 2010 to 2013, then returned to the board within the past couple of years. Around that time, I also became board President. I love community radio so much. Throughout my workday, I listen to radio all day long.

Bloomington is a wonderful, creative place to be. My own interests are brought out because other people do creative things; what gives my life meaning is creativity. In addition to music and radio, photographic work has long been a part of my life's framework. When I was in college, I got a camera and shot mostly black and white. I was into making photos at night with long exposures, but also took pictures of nature and theatre productions in Hanover and Bloomington. I set up a little dark room when I was in Hanover. Once in Boston, I didn't do much photography, since I was working full time and playing in multiple bands. Next thing you know, the digital age came along. Since returning to Bloomington, I have been having a lot of fun with digital photography. For the Thomas Gallery exhibit, which is coordinated by the Arts Alliance of Greater Bloomington, the pieces I am showing are mostly images from nature, captured with telephoto. Like, I enjoy shooting ice crystals on windows, at sunrise. And, since I kayak a lot, I find light on water makes interesting reflections. Capturing all these is a matter of light and luck.

Contact K.D. Self at [ChoosingActiveCompassion@gmail.com](mailto:ChoosingActiveCompassion@gmail.com)