

WENDY MANDEL MCDANIEL - BIO AND ARTIST'S STATEMENT

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BIO

PUBLIC PROJECTS AND COMMISSIONS

2006

Map of Old Saint Augustine, mosaic design collaboration with Jan Tomlinson Master for the City of St. Augustine's Visitor Information Center, St. Augustine, FL

2004

Inspiration, Mosaic collaboration with Jan Tomlinson Master, Jacksonville Art in Public Places, Police Athletic League Building, Jacksonville, Florida

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2008

Museum of Florida Art, DeLand, FL - [Award of Excellence](#)

Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, FL

2007

Valdosta National, Valdosta State University Gallery, Valdosta, GA

2006

Structure Form and Meaning, Florida School of the Arts, Palatka, Florida

2003

Earth Elements, Society of American Mosaic Artists Conference, Centre Gallery, Miami Dade Community College, Miami, Florida

2003

Group Show, Heartworks Gallery, Jacksonville, Florida

2002

Mandel and Marsh, 39 Gallery, St. Augustine, Florida

EDUCATION Ithaca College

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

In describing the great artist, Joseph Cornell, it was said that he had a "hoarding mentality", but that he was a generous accumulator, sending much of it back out into the world through his art. Not to compare myself with Joseph Cornell, (who is one of my favorite artists), I would have to say that I, too, am afflicted with this "hoarding mentality" and I am a firm believer in recycling. I have been a maker of things and a conscientious recycler all my life.

Ever since I was a child, I've been collecting and "hoarding" everything. Like a raven building her nest, I was attracted to the twigs, the twine, and the shiny. I would save rusted sardine cans with the lids curled up, sole less shoes, dried wild mushrooms I found growing along the side of the house, buttons, pennies, acorns, sequins, even uneaten chocolate Easter bunnies with the foil wrapper intact. (I was drawn to the colorful foil - just as later on I was drawn to the technique of reverse painting on glass, popular in the 1930s, where they would use painted tin foil, bird feathers and butterfly wings to add color and depth to a painted scene. I not only incorporate actual pieces in my work, but create my own interpretations of this decorative style.

Soon, the everyday objects of my childhood implanted themselves in my psyche. The porcelain shepherd and shepherd girl figurines, coyly flirting with each other on my grandmother's lamp; the gold fringe on the green velvet sofa that sank in when you sat on it, tea cups and saucers in my mother's curio cabinet, all with different floral designs; the scrolling heart molding that enhanced the curio cabinet; the cookie jar with the ceramic apple on top, which just fit in the cup of your hand when you would lift the lid in order to sneak one of grandma's delicious sugar cookies; the wool crocheted toilet paper covers and coiled beaded flowers; the loud clacking noise the painted ivory mah-jongg pieces would make when the "ladies" played, which I would secretly play with for hours on end, stacking and matching the exotic designs of circle and dashes and bamboo and dragons; the fake waxed fruit in the bowl that never looked real, but that I was always tempted to bite; and the colorful artificial flowers in the vase on the table in the kitchen - the same ones we placed by the stone where we buried my best friend's pet mouse.

As an adult, triggered I suppose by these vivid memories, I scour thrift stores, yard sales, flea markets and junkyards... I think, searching for my lost inner child. I seek them all out: The rooster and pig salt and pepper shakers, the twirling ballerinas and flamenco dancers; the ceramic dogs with the eyes askew and the lopsided flower with the dripping glaze all lovingly molded by hand. The kidney shaped tables, cracked mirrors, the broken flower pots, the termite ravaged fireplace molding. These discarded possessions all have a past; part of someone's home, part of some person's life.

All of these objects are my paint and canvas. They all have sentiment. They contain beauty and humor and sadness. They have endurance. I am aware of their histories. Their haunting, playful presences are so much a part of the process of creation for me. And whether by their own insistence, or my own, I use them all to tell my story.

I draw inspiration from the natural world as well. The spiraling pattern of a million year old piece of ammonite; the chartreuse moss climbing the spotted bark of an oak branch; the faded splotchy color and crisp brittleness of an autumn leaf on the ground. These natural elements are the beginnings; they are the growth, and ultimate death, of all things. For me, their essence is vital to counter balance the artificial. In my pieces, it is sometimes difficult to tell one from the other - I find a strange irony in this organic interplay - it adds to the fantasy, quality and makes the telling much more interesting.

As I have my own memories associated with these objects, I hope the viewer, too, will be drawn into these pieces. The intent is to connect them with some special moments in their past. I have tried to set the stage where one can dream, play and escape.

Wendy Mandel McDaniel
2008