

Growing up in Western Pennsylvania, along the Ohio River outside of Pittsburgh, artist Joan Bontempo found her creative voice in the rust belt towns and cities that offered steel mills, coal mines and glass factories. The cultures and the spirits of hard-working communities are echoed over and over in the scribblings, spray paint, colors, and cast offs - everywhere.

She finds a beauty there in broken tiles made for churches, the broken statues, the messages sprayed on the surfaces, the peeled sun-faded paint that revealed a splendid color underneath. These surfaces and remnants are captured by photograph and gathered over decades in the cities and towns in which she has lived, worked and traveled. The visual elements give life to the fragments that connect our past, purpose and the amalgam of our contemporary lives. The discarded becomes new again as a visual language.

Bontempo received her MFA in ceramics from Wayne State University, Detroit MI and her BFA from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame IN. Her work has been widely shown in regional and national juried exhibits, solo shows and invitationals since 1977. She was project coordinator for the Milwaukee County Percent for Art public art program, Milwaukee WI from 1998 - 2002. As professor of art and art history, she taught for many years in colleges in MI, WI, and MD, retiring from academia in 2020. Her home and studio are now in Knoxville, TN.

Bontempo's artist profile is featured in the registry for *locatearts.org*, spotlighting the contemporary statewide art scene in Tennessee. She is past member of NOMA Gallery, Frederick MD; MARN, Milwaukee WI, resident artist /represented by Pivot Point Gallery, Knoxville TN; resident artist/represented by Lakeside Studio, International Artists Program, Lakeside MI; and by Marin Price Galleries, Chevy Chase MD.