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And Mary Alit in Postmodernity

Melanie Weaver's Small Marian Sculptures in Mixed Media

February 1, 2010—April 9, 2010

Some titles speak for themselves. A short explanation of the title for this exhibit may be in order. The reference to Postmodernity is frequently used to set a counter-point. Postmodernity opposes, some may say corrects the unilateralism of Modernity, its very linear and in the end sometimes minimalist tendencies. Modernity is desperate for the purity of form but allows for the celebration of the naked self. Postmodernity, on the contrary, is gregarious to the point of embracing everything and its contrary. It is an attempt to seek openings, secret connections, forgotten pathways to the worlds of yesterday, and the broken-down barriers in the order of things and beings. Postmodern art is suggestive art. It is experimental art, experimental with a heart. It may have in mind the symphonic recreation of all things alive but in fact excels in smothering all things alive in and with an over flowing sympathy and the deep craving for unity beyond and in spite of separation. Therefore, the title of this exhibit: *Mary Alit in Postmodernity* - bonding with ballerina and lion, flower pots and baby showers. And then, of course, there is the red thread. The beads which show up in each one of these challenging mini-sculptures. The rosary as a symbol of the link between all things alive? The rosary as a roadmap leading in and out of the intricacies of Postmodernity. --Fr. Roten

The Artist

Melanie Weaver, MFA, has worked as a professional artist for over fifteen years. Her scholarship includes installations that address social issues. Weaver is currently a professor of art at Azusa Pacific University in Azusa, California. Her love of teaching is communicated through classes that focus on community as well as the course topic. Many of her classes

include a service learning component, where students teach art to foster teens who are living in group homes.

Weaver has found that artistic expression can be a healing process. She understands art as ministry and art as a universal form of international expression. She has presented her art and art as healing in various exhibitions and venues such as the national convention of Christians in the Visual Arts in 2005. She is well versed in feminist art criticism and particularly studies women artists. Weaver is known for her work with fibers and embroidered prints. Her expertise has been called upon for techniques concerning Installation Art and the management of collaborative art installations.

Her teaching has included courses such as Sculptural Objects and Functional Art (ART 311), Women in Art (ART 359), Multicultural Art (ART 403), Sculptural Objects and Functional Art Processes (ART 411), Special Topics in Art (ART 495), and Humans and the Arts (HDEV 403)

Artist's Statement

Content and Concept:

The objects I use in my assemblage work definitely reference childhood and domestic life. I use objects such as plastic army men, dolls, plastic flowers, gardening tools, jewelry boxes, and cake decorations. The juxtaposition of these various objects creates narratives that encompass childhood, war, domestic violence, trauma, healing, spirituality, and blessing.

In the early years of this work (2001-2004), I definitely used the work to find healing. The earliest pieces, from 2003-2004, have a strong military presence. Pieces created in 2006 reference the army men as nests, incubating life.

Interestingly enough, towards the end of 2009, as I made the work for

this show, I found that most of the pieces were blessings, dealing with potential, gifting, and worth. The day-to-day activities of life have become meaningful as representations of our purpose on earth. And covering each person and activity is the blessing presence of Mary. She brings peace to trauma, and meaning to mundane daily life. Her presence is a significant part of the transformation of both my life and my art.

As I look at the representations of celebration, study, community, family, and dedication, I find my own search for meaning and reason. As a professor, professional artist, daughter, sister, aunt, and follower of Christ (in reverse order of importance), I know that I have found satisfaction in life, and its everyday rhythms. My hope for you is that you would also enjoy the celebration.

Melanie Weaver Artwork

Technique

I had been making assemblage art for over ten years when I developed my assemblage technique using texture paste. I was working in my studio on an assemblage piece in August 2001. I was experimenting with texture paste as an adhesive agent. As I worked, I began to cover the pieces I was assembling in the texture paste. When it dried, I realized that the texture paste not only created wonderful surface texture, but was also a very strong adhesive.

The texture paste molded around each found object, and encased it in a plastic shell. The texture paste I used that August was a translucent white, and to further unify the objects, I painted everything black. I added layers of painted highlights to complete the piece. Later, I realized that my source for the texture paste has a black version, and that is what I now use. I took one of my pieces to the manufacturer of texture paste in Los Angeles, to show them my application of their product. It was very satisfying to be able to thank them in person for the quality of their product, which has given me such a gratifying studio process.

The highlights I added in 2001/2002 were acrylic paint, applied in monochromatic layers, from dark to light. The work completed after 2003 is finished with layers of spray paint. That choice was definitely influenced by where I live—in San Bernardino, California. I had worked with both taggers and graffiti artists, trying to help them connect with the potential of their work—potential far beyond vandalism, and with a longer life expectancy. In the end, I think that they influenced me more than I influenced them, because I integrated spray paint into my studio practice.



Baby
12" x 4" x 6"
Mixed Media,
2009



Birthday Party
8.5" x 10/5" x 2.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Community
13" x 13" x 1.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Confession
15" x 5.5" x 4.5"
Mixed Media,
2004



Dancers
13.5" x 6" x 3.5"
Mixed Media,
2004



Devotion I
17.5" x 7.5" x 6.5"
Mixed Media,
2006



Devotion II
16" x 7.5" x 7.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Freedom II
13" x 8.5" x 2.5"
Mixed Media,
2004



Freedom I
15.5" x 6.5" x 7"
Mixed Media,
2006



Full Dressers
15" x 5" x 3.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Garden
10.5" x 11" x 2"
Mixed Media,
2009



Gardener
13" x 8" x 4.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



House Blessing
14" x 6.5" x 9"
Mixed Media,
2009



Incubation
10.5" x 4.5" x 4.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Inspiration
18" x 8.5" x 4.5"
Mixed Media,
2006



Madonna I
42" x 7" x 3"
Mixed Media,
2003, 2009



Madonna II
41" x 7" x 4"
Mixed Media,
2003, 2009



Madonna III
51" x 9" x 3"
Mixed Media,
2003, 2009



Prom
13.5" x 3.5" x 5"
Mixed Media,
2004



Play
10" x 6" x 4"
Mixed Media,
2004



New Start
10.5" x 12" x 7"
Mixed Media,
2009



Music
13.5" x 5.5" x 5.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Merry-Go-Round
11.5" x 5" x 4.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Protection
13" x 8" x 2.5"
Mixed Media,
2003, 2009



Wardrobe
15.5" x 5.5" x 6"
Mixed Media,
2009



Study
15" x 9" x 3.5"
Mixed Media,
2009



Self Worth
13" x 7.5" x 3.5"
Mixed Media,
2004



Rest
12" x 5.5" x 4"
Mixed Media,
2009



Wedding
13" x 5.5" x 5.5"
Mixed Media,
2009