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I Just Play for Fun, 1995

Judy Onofrio, 1939 -

American (lives in Rochester, Minnesota)

Media mixed media, concrete, glass, resin, ferrous metal, shell, plastic, mirror

Dimensions 15' 9" x 13' 9"

Method Cast concrete, epoxied objects

Detail

"I Just Play for Fun is a continuation of the garden behind my home in Minnesota. The garden for me is a place to celebrate, to constantly plan and create new spaces and new ideas. When I came to Laumeier and looked at the sculpture park I immediately responded to the stone wall that separates the upper and lower gardens. The proposal is to build an archway that would both serve to welcome you to the lower garden and invite you to come back up to the museum." -- from artist's statement, 1995

Physical description

An arch and two bollards that ornament the steps between the upper and lower terraces outside the museum gallery. The bollards, arch and piers are ornately encrusted with molded concrete, multi-colored shards of glass, ceramic and shells of many sizes. The column bases are decorated with bowling balls.

Information

Judy Onofrio was born in New London, Connecticut in 1939. Her father, an officer in the United States Navy, traveled extensively throughout the world, always returning home with rare and exotic treasures. From her parents, Judy learned the power of objects to record experiences, travels and memories. In 1968, Judy established her first studio in Rochester, Minnesota and became involved with the Rochester Art Center both as a teacher and later as Acting Director for a year. She began exhibiting her early clay and mixed media works in 1972. In 1989, while recovering from back surgery, Judy began to make jewelry out of her private treasure stash and in 1991 expanded her creations into jewel-encrusted architecture.

Judy describes her work: "For over thirty years I have been involved in making art using a variety of materials and processes in the area of sculpture and installation/performance art. Primarily self taught, my background expands a wide range of interest from formal art issues to the works of naive and visionary artists. As a child, my mentor and role model was my Great Aunt Trude, an eccentric "outsider artist" who worked her entire life outside the accepted mainstream of the art world following a personal vision that drove her to make art until she died at the age of ninety. Trude's influence

started me on a lifetime search for grottos, homemade Watts Tower-like finds, and those artists whose personal visions clearly stand alone. This exploration has and continues to have a profound influence on my work. I have been a fanatic collector of objects all my life. I have been stockpiling junk, images and ideas for years, but only recently has it all come together in a totality: my art, environment and life have merged as one.

My most recent works are constructed of wood, paint and collected found objects. Jeweled crabs, rubber knives, serpents, Abe Lincoln, forbidden fruits, see-hear-speak-no evil monkeys, pearl-girl deer and the garden of Eden form layers of ideas, images and thoughts. The obvious meaning of the familiar object is transformed into a new context. I Just Play For Fun is a continuation of the garden behind my home in Minnesota. The garden for me is a place to celebrate, to constantly plan and create new spaces and new ideas. When I came to Laumeier and looked at the sculpture park I immediately responded to the stone wall that separates the upper and lower gardens. The proposal is to build an archway that would both serve to welcome you to the lower garden and invite you to come back up to the museum. It is my hope that the archway will invite people to enjoy the feeling of celebration presented by the garden archway." -- artist's statement 1995.

I Just Play For Fun is one of seventeen site-specific works (a sculpture designed specifically for its location) on exhibition in the park.

Miscellaneous notes

Original title was Garden Memories. The title was changed by the artist, 5/13/95. Exhibition support for Judyland provided by the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis, Famous-Barr, the Missouri Arts Council and the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis.

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