

SNAPSHOT

SUSANNAH MONTAGUE



1 WHAT DOES ART MEAN TO YOU?

Art provides meaning in this thoroughly confused world. It is the only thing that gives me solace aside from family and friends. It is the human spirit, the amalgam of feelings, like whacky dreams, life experiences, stories, sadness, visions, revelations, joy, fear genuine and unseen, all extracted to make real a knowing and an unspeakable energy pushed through one's body and out into the world. It is a force riding the blood coursing through your veins. It is intuitive and you feel it in your heart, soul and mind, it's like a dopamine hit. It's a chemical reaction but it's also intellectual, it reflects our historical continuum and everything we live for in life, combined into one beautiful aesthetic manifestation which is ultimately indescribable.



2 IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF BEING AN ARTIST?

With ceramic sculpture, trying something new is the best feeling in the world, but it's also the most trouble. Despite clay's volatile nature, the massive opportunities offered with clay - that ability to create nearly any object imaginable, outweighs its baggage. Failures happen all the time, it's just learning to accept and try again. There is such a thrill in opening a kiln after a work has been fired. There is so much hope and so much wonder. The material has the final say over who you are as an artist. It can be both humbling and humiliating. Anyone working with ceramics requires a wealth of knowledge, patience and painstaking skills, but also the ability to cope with failure - using it to grow as artists.

3 WHAT DOES SUCCESS AS AN ARTIST LOOK LIKE FOR YOU PERSONALLY?

When I step back from the sculpting process and I can feel something emerge. I sense a physical charge, I can feel when a piece has that indescribable energy. When I'm toiling away with the dark angels of doubt and fear and sleeplessness, and all of a sudden I step back and look at the work and I'm like "what the....?" oh ya, now I get it, I now know how I need to proceed. The struggle shows with this paradoxical nature to creating, just as there is to living. Art mirrors life and Life is a struggle and though sometimes tormenting, we need these challenges to disrupt and force us to test our limits.



4 HOW DO YOU DEVELOP YOUR IMAGINATION AS AN ARTIST?

Meditation experiences have honed my imagination and inspired my artwork. I started meditating a couple of years ago, so I am very aware of every aspect of energy. For me, meditation develops one's sense of self and trains my mind. In a certain way, I flow into all of my art pieces. There is no difference between me, the work, and the world. They are all connected. After the events of this year, I want to reduce sentiment to bare our frail mortal condition and tap into the compassion for the frailty of us. I am drawn to a scepticism about the very nature of the self. My imagination tiptoes towards this truth as ugly and beautiful as it is, the rawness of the human.

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top left
The Masked Madonna, 2019
Ceramic, glaze, gold, mother of pearl lustre and wood, 29" x 16" x 12"

bottom left
Covid Kiss, 2020
Ceramic, glaze and gold lustre, 30" x 13" x 11"

right
For When I'm Weak I'm Strong & Droplets, 2020
Ceramic, glaze and gold lustre, 16" x 8" x 8"

opposite page, left
Artemis, 2019
Porcelain, glaze, decals, gold and mother of pearl lustre, 18" x 9" x 6"

opposite page, middle
The Golden Fleece, 2019
Ceramic, glaze, gold, mother of pearl lustre and decals, 23" x 13" x 14"

opposite page, top right
I Think I Had It Wrong All Along, 2018
Ceramic, glaze, decals, gold and pearl lustre 15" x 8" x 5"

opposite page, bottom right
And The Devil Makes Three, 2018
Ceramic, glaze, gold and pearl lustre, 20" x 11" x 8"