

ARTIST PROFILE

Dichotomy: The Work of Francis Beaty

by Marian Silliman

Francis Beaty's long-standing career in architectural design significantly influences her artistic approach—within her work, a functionality is present where the observation and manipulation of material becomes the gravitational pull inward. Stand-alone, her work refocuses attention on itself, restructures the perception of a given space and demands the viewer to play with new constructs for the materials used. The result is a quiet immersion into an alternate world representative of the artist's energy—a wordless, delicate beauty juxtaposed by use of heavy materials: paste, wood, metal and piping, with softer elements: cardboard, screen and mesh, that leaves one questioning preconceived notions.



Primordia 8, window screen and spray paint, public commission by the City of Allentown, 10' x 4' x 5', 2016

Beaty's artistic voice remains consistent in her nuanced play of hard and soft, light and shadow, positive and negative space; she plays with functionality in the elemental concepts of sculpture, balancing material and process, mass, scale and plane, site and context to create immersive sculptural installations as in *Portal* and *Portal 2*, a solo exhibition at the RE:Find Gallery in downtown Allentown, or *Primordia 8*, a 10' x 4' x 5' public commission by the City of Allentown recently displayed at the City's renovated Arts Walk.

Space no longer becomes an objective space but one inherently dependent on context; Beaty's installations and sculptures ignite a multi-sensory visual and tactile experience. At play are found objects, the surrounding environment and the viewer's interior landscape—to view Beaty's work is much like standing in nature. Found objects and industrial refuse become refined works of sculpture and textural painting with an organic presence of their own. Metal becomes weightless and cardboard paper an anchor, yet wordlessly this makes sense.



Stormy, modeling paste, acrylic, 12" x 12", 2017

Beaty practices the Asian philosophy of Wabi-Sabi, which plays heavily on the idea of imperfection and is derived from the Buddhist teaching of the marks of existence—

impermanence, suffering and emptiness, or the absence of self-nature. In essence, Beaty is allowing the viewer to interact with the work in its temporary, undone and organic form to play witness to its current state. The viewer is left to mentally finish it on his or her own, as in *Blue Wave*. Apropos in reference to materials, *Blue Wave* is made from Tex plumbing tubes and metal remesh used for repaving concrete sidewalks—the movement caught for the viewer to mentally envision the crashing of the wave.

Beaty's process is simple: discarded objects become material to incorporate and shape as she repurposes refuse into a wordless movement caught, a note in curvature, smooth brushstrokes over congealed texture, with the attention of a quiet aesthetic. Beaty is well versed in building materials, having established herself as an interior designer over twenty-five years ago. Design is inherent in her work; Beaty admits she is always conscious of the line, where the line takes the eye, where it breaks off, how it is intercepted. This attention to design is carefully articulated in her work and translates to the viewer her appreciation for movement. Ultimately, industrial waste becomes organic material of transcendent beauty, as for instance Beaty's use of paste to create terrain for her paintings. Something translucent as glue becomes heavy and dark when painted over by acrylic, and the very thing that is to mend and not be seen becomes prominently apparent, denoting a heaviness in its congealed mess.

Beaty redefines the materials she uses and prompts the viewer to play with new concepts for known materials. The result is an internal discordance, an incompatible subtlety that brings about an unexpected truth difficult to describe but centered on the Socratic oath "that which we think we know we do not". Beaty restructures the perception of a given space with demand that the viewer thoughtfully play with new concepts and constructs for the materials used. Incorporated into her work is a vision from within that usurps what is, i.e. materials used, with what is being seen, i.e. how the materials are being used; what we as the viewer are left with is an essence of familiarity in the foreignness and an introspective often wordless contemplation of that which immerses us.

Francis Beaty holds a BA in Education and French and an AAS in Interior Design and Architecture. She also attended the Baum School of Art in Allentown, PA. Her studio resides in Allentown. Francis Beaty's work will be on display at a solo exhibition at the Civic Theater in Allentown slated for late spring. Visit www.civictheatre.com for more information. To view Francis Beaty's work or to contact the artist, visit www.francisbeatypainterandsculptor.com.



WabiSabi, paste, straw, string, grass imprint, acrylic, 36" x 72", 2016



Blue Wave, metal remesh and Tex tubes, 8' x 5' x 4', 2016