

Cathy McClure

Artist Statement

Uprooted from Texas as an infant, my Arkansas childhood unfolded against a backdrop of impermanence. A fractured family structure was bolstered by the unwavering support of a multigenerational Southern family, a dynamic that shaped my early years. Even amidst nature's destructive power, a force I encountered firsthand when a tornado demolished our home, the outdoors offered solace. It was here, in the face of both beauty and devastation, that art-making emerged as a grounding force amidst the constant upheaval.

Molded by this enduring connection to nature, I developed a deep respect for our environment and a keen awareness of both humanity's fragility and its lasting impact. This concern for our ecological footprint resonates strongly in my anti-disciplinarian artistic practice, particularly within the "Bots" and "Mutants" series. In these works, abandoned toys become metaphors for our throw-away culture.

Compelled by my vexation with consumerism and its effect on our world; along with my relentlessly curious nature, I take motor-driven robotic plush toys and transform them. Hands wielding scissors, I massacre these discarded products, eviscerating them through a Geppetto-like taxidermy until I get down into the guts of the piece. Skinning these stuffed animals to the bone, all that remains are their various articulated plastic limbs and bodily armature (that were never intended to be seen), which contains the preserved mechanisms that gave these once-cuddly stuffed possessions their life-like movement and sound.

After disassembling the remains, I cast some of the pieces in bronze and sterling silver. Next, I engage in a Frankensteinian re-assembly of the new parts, which involves re-fittings and manipulations and, at times, re-installation of original circuit boards, batteries, gears, and voice boxes.

The resulting reincarnations through metamorphosis have aged, even wizened. Some are silent, static statuesque figures. These "Mutants" are a testament to their cherished past, while others that I call "Bots," retain a flicker of life. Reanimated with their original mechanisms, they become kinetic beings, with hollow voices and awkward, geriatric movements – a result of their evolved, hardened armatures, echoing their forgotten history. This evolution propels both incarnations out of the private toy chest and into public spaces for contemplation.

Now, part historical/figural sculpture, part archaeological artifact, they each become a Trojan Horse, the cavity filled with a Pandora's Box of memories. Despite bursting with bubbly personalities, these

anthropomorphic creatures tell a story about our societal penchant for instant gratification, over-production, and chronic excessive consumption. Newly risen one-of-a-kind beasts are now vessels holding a multitude of messages, each one carrying a hidden history, a complicated present and a reimagined future.

By unearthing the hidden value within the things we casually discard and disregard, my artwork creates something that lasts, a testament to resilience against the odds, that asks viewers to consider the impact we have on each other and on the world in which we co-exist.