

TOUCHSTONE GALLERY

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June 1 – June 26, 2011

Grieving, Grooving and Growing

Janathel Shaw

Opening reception: Friday, June 3, 6-8:30pm



Change requires sacrifice and flexibility. Change is the crucial ingredient in all three stages. This exhibit examines the stages of personal evolution as a mature individual. Janathel Shaw's latest sculptures reveal a deep introspection, emotional gravitas, and heightened creative expression. She has experienced the loss of a job and the fear, shame and questioning of identity resulting in the loss. The loss of friends to cancer and heart attack has required her to limit their voices to echoes in her memories. Like many of her role models, she also learned the fine art of placing one foot in front of the other, strengthening her resolve and smiling through it all.

Grief represents the loss of love, of materials, excess baggage and unrealized expectations. **Grooving** is a state of mind and a lifestyle choice. It requires personal acceptance and an active pursuit of joy/peace when challenges seem insurmountable. Janathel's path requires a spiritual outlook. The act of **Growing** is circular and continuous like a root. It is assumed that wisdom, also, is strengthened by age. In reality both require nourishment, warmth, watering and pruning. Otherwise, the end result is a muddled product resulting in death.

The body of work in this exhibit is personal, sometimes raw and expressive and layered. Although most of the work is inspired by private experiences, there are works that are born of larger universal concerns (natural disasters and the human condition and genocide or despots). For example, Solace was inspired by the current plight of Haitians. It centers on the loss of family, wavering hope and the indomitable spirit of a people.

Janathel Shaw's ceramic sculptures have usually centered on universal and social themes. She has always been intrigued by provocative and historical scenarios regarding the human condition. Janathel has drawn from her experience as a parent and educator to enlighten her audience. An interesting marriage of clay, glazes and oil paints are used in this series. Emphasis is placed on form, surface and color.

She is a transplanted Floridian that was raised in Washington, DC. Her family held onto its small town sensibilities that included a strong belief in education, faith, a strong work ethic and community service. Janathel received a M.F.A. from George Washington University, B.S. from George Washington University and an A.A. from Prince George's Community College.

This is her second solo show at Touchstone Gallery. She has shown at the Jazz Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, Baltimore Clayworks, Baltimore, The National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC, Rock Creek Gallery, Washington, DC, Montpelier Arts Center, Laurel Maryland, and The Eclipse Gallery in Arlington, Virginia.

Images: "Fulfillment" and "Solace", Ceramic stoneware and oils and glazes, by Janathel Shaw.

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