

Tendrophia



2822 E. 17th Avenue
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August 5-21, 2022

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Opening reception Friday, August 5, 6-10pm

Bell Projects presents – **Tendrophia** – a solo exhibition by **Brenda Stumpf**. This exhibition opens Friday, August 5th and runs through August 21st, 2022. Please join us for an opening reception on August 5th from 6pm until 10pm.

I am nature, the universal mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen of the immortals, My nod governs the shining heights of heaven, the wholesome sea breezes, the lamentable silences of the world below. I know the cycles of growth and decay.

— Visions of Apuleius (Metamorphoses II)

Brenda Stumpf makes art that conjures the mysterious and enchanted — sometimes diving into the dark and hiding in the secretive. As she works, she is often feeling her way towards something that seems deep, ancient, and timeless by way of the abstract and symbolic.

In her latest exhibition *Tendrophia*, Stumpf presents four large scale assembled paintings, and a selection of found object sculpture alongside a new series of nine mixed media ink transfers.

Tendrophia is a portmanteau, or a blended word, that is derived from the phrase “tendrils of Sophia.” In the ancient Gnostic tradition Sophia is the feminine personification of wisdom - knowledge revealed to us intuitively and perceived as spiritually true. In contemporary terms, Carl Jung links the figure of Sophia to the highest archetype of the anima. “Nature mysticism” which was popular with Romantic writers such as Walt Whitman and William Wordsworth is described as an intense experience of the unification with nature or the cosmic totality.

Elaborate and dense, Stumpf’s large scale assemblages function as enchanted reliquaries and incorporates an array of elements such as childhood artifacts, plastic flowers, removed antique wallpaper, a rusted wheel barrel, broken antique chandelier pieces, a found run over book, jewelry, and a wasp. They are encapsulated in alternating layers of a thick gel medium containing micro glass beads and sand, making everything appear crystalline and calcified.

In her most recent series, the artist uses an ink transfer process with photos taken during her time in France as a foundation or starting point to the physicality of the pieces and as an invocation to the heart of the work. They are developed by building up and breaking down layers of paint, gel medium, sand, and rust by scratching and scraping the surfaces - a forced decay. In essence, these paintings are a meditation on the lushness of nostalgia and the passing of time.

Brenda Stumpf (American, b.1972) is a contemporary sculptor and painter. Stumpf is a self-taught artist and began exhibiting her work during the mid-1990s. She has been recognized for her intricate use of unorthodox materials such as the paper of steeped tea bags, unraveled rope, sand, plastic flowers, animal bones, salvaged wood, discarded metal, and scraped wallpaper to create sculptures and assembled paintings that have a baroque sensibility intertwined with evocative subject matter. Mythology, mysticism, poetry, and ancient history are deep wells for Stumpf. While deconstructing her materials and recreating anew with the fragments, she takes an almost shamanistic approach – a potent act akin to the cycle of death and rebirth.

Stumpf's paintings, sculpture, and works on paper have been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, The Butler Institute of American Art, The Littleton Museum, The Strohl Art Center, Pittsburgh Glass Center, and The Outsider Art Fair. The artist's work has been juried into numerous exhibits by the likes of Jerry Saltz, senior art critic and columnist for New York Magazine; Christoph Heinrich, Director of the Denver Art Museum; Jamie Sterns, writer and the curatorial director of Brooklyn's Interstate Projects; and Laura Almeida, Curatorial Fellow and Acting Head Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Denver Art Museum.

There are numerous online interviews, podcasts, and television appearances of the artist discussing her art, as well as printed features in newspapers and magazines including The Denver Post, The Plain Dealer, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Studio Visit Magazine, Atlanta Homes & Lifestyles, and recently Southwest Contemporary.

Designers, architects, institutions, and private clients have commissioned Stumpf to create signature works, and to date, her art resides in over 350 private collections throughout the United States and abroad. Originally from Parma, Ohio, the artist currently lives and works near Denver, Colorado.

Bell Projects seeks to support local artists and their work by curating and presenting exhibitions on a monthly basis in their gallery space located at 2822 E. 17th Avenue, Denver, Colorado 80206. All exhibitions are free to attend and are open to the public.

For more information, please email info.bellprojects@gmail.com or visit bell-projects.com



Coviage 1 (2016)

Mixed media (Removed antique wallpaper, plastic flowers, crocheted hats made by my mother, wood, gel medium, acrylic, sand, adhesive on wood panel.)

44 x 24 x 9 in

\$4,000



Secrace (2016)

Mixed media (Removed antique wallpaper, rusted wheel barrel, broken antique chandelier pieces, copper thread, styrofoam, wire, screws, gel medium, acrylic, sand, adhesive on wood panel.)

60 x 33 x 11 in

\$6,000



Coviage 2 (2016)

Mixed media (Removed antique wallpaper, plastic flowers, crocheted hats made by my mother, wood, gel medium, acrylic, sand, adhesive on wood panel.)

44 x 24 x 9 in

\$4,000



Tendrophia (2016)

Mixed media (Removed antique wallpaper, found run over book, manufactured plastic pieces, plastic flowers, costume jewelry, class ring, sapphire ring my mother gave me, found piece of a vintage boys shoe buried under our porch, wood type, wasp, wax, oil, gel medium, acrylic, sand, adhesive on wood panel.)

84 x 48 x 7 in

\$12,000