

Reina Mia Brill



In 2008 Reina Mia Brill's work was featured in a stunning new book entitled: *KNITTING ART: 150 Innovative works from 18 Contemporary Artists* by Karen Searle. Her work is displayed on 8 colorful pages including the back cover. She also was featured for the first time in a Japanese publication. *Mainichi Weekly* did an article on her work entitled: *Creatures of Imagination* by Yo Shina.

Born in New York City, Brill studied Accessory Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology. She relocated to the West Coast to study Art at San Diego State University where she received her MFA in 1997. During Brill's three-year MFA program, she spent six months in Dundee, Scotland where she first started knitting with wire three-dimensionally.

Brill has received 2 major awards. In 2007 she was awarded a \$2,500 BRIO Award from the Bronx Council on the Arts for career advancement. In 2001, she was awarded a \$7,000 fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

In 2007 she debuted her two figure installation entitled "Surprise", the largest of her career, at the 12th International Triennial of Tapestry in Lodz, Poland. Out of 150 International artists, only six Americans were selected to participate. Brill was the representative emerging artist of the group made up of mid and late career artists.

Brill's work can be viewed at galleries and exhibitions nationwide. Currently her work is on view at The Ecclectic Collector in Katonah, NY. In 2008, she exhibited in "Contemporary Repetition," at the LBI Arts Foundation in NJ, as well as "Contemporary Crafts," at the JRB Gallery in Oklahoma City. In 2007, Brill's sculpture "Divalia" was shown at the prestigious Fiberart International. This exhibition, accompanied by a catalog, traveled for 2 years. In 2006 her work was exhibited in two major exhibitions with catalogs. "Needle Culture" in Flagstaff, AZ as well "Twist & Shout: The New Needle Arts," which opened at Florida Craftsmen and traveled to museums across the country through 2008. In 2005, Brill's "Two-Faced Queen" toured in "Chess," an international exhibition of contemporary chess pieces. In 2004 her sculptures were in two fiber exhibitions: "Digital Origins" at Eyedrum Gallery in Atlanta, GA and "Stranded" a four person show in Highland, NY. Brill's work has also been exhibited at the Snyderman/ Works Gallery in Philadelphia, PA; Mobilia Gallery in Cambridge, MA; OXOXO Gallery in Baltimore, MD; Facere Art in Seattle, WA; Sienna Gallery in Lenox, MA and Sculpture to Wear in Santa Monica, CA. as well as SOFA Expo in both New York and Chicago.

In 2006 Brill became a full-time studio artist and started selling her work through high-end craft shows. These shows include: ACC Baltimore, Craft Boston, and The Washington Craft Show.

Brill's work continues to be published. Her work has appeared in a variety of magazines including: FIBERARTS, SURFACE DESIGN JOURNAL, ART DOLL QUARTERLY, as well as THE BRONX TIMES REPORTER. Selected Books include: 500 Handmade Dolls, Artwear: Fashion and Anti-Fashion, 500 Brooches, Teapots: Makers & Collectors, Fiberarts Design Book 7, Art Jewelry Today, Textile Techniques in Metal, and Color on Metal.

Reina Mia Brill currently lives and works in a remote section of the Bronx called City Island where the nature-filled surroundings are inspiring a new generation of creatures.

For more information visit her website at www.reinamiabrill.com.

Jodi & Richard Creager



Richard and Jodi's work is a collaboration of artistic visions- two separate and different visions with one common thread. This thread is then woven into a collaborative concept of two minds ... and a design is born.

After designing the piece ... work begins. Jodi sculpts and paints the heads and hands while Richard sculpts the torso and legs. When finished with these steps, the doll is joined together in an animated pose. Finishing touches such as costuming, shoes, wiggling, and other needed accessories are created and added to complete the Doll.

All work is entirely original and created exclusively by the Creagers for each piece. When the doll is complete a special base is designed to suit each doll's personality and needs. The doll is then photographed by Richard. Each Creager Art Doll is a true collaborative effort.

Richard and Jodi have been designing dolls together since 1977. Their appreciation and love of studying the customs and traditions of the world's varied ethnic groups, have given the Creagers a rich palette of characters from which to create. Much of their work is sold through private commissions.

In 1991 Richard and Jodi were elected into the membership of NIADA (National Institute of American Doll Artists). Their work is in the private collections of well-known celebrities and in the permanent displays and collections of museums throughout the world.

ABOUT JODI

Jodi was born in Burbank, California in March of 1951. Coming from a family of musicians, actors, scenic artists and writers, art seemed like a natural born direction for Jodi to head in....and head she did! She began drawing at a very early age -- drawing faces on anything that held still long enough (her mother still has many of the books to prove that drawing inside the covers was one of her favorite 'sketch spots'). At the age of 15, she began painting in oils and soon realized that portraiture painting would be her main interest. At 17, she was fully involved with commissioned portrait work and taught oil painting. Jodi is a self taught artist with no formal art training ... her passion for all that life has to offer is all that she needs to create. Jodi's direction of art changed forever when at 23, she met and married Richard ...her true artistic 'soul mate' and love of her life and soon their combined skills and artistic interests lead them both to a career in fine art doll making.

ABOUT RICHARD

Richard was born in November 1944 in Las Vegas, Nevada. His strong family roots of a railroad engineer father and an artistically creative mother seemed to guide Richard in the direction and love of all things mechanical. This need to know 'How Things Work'... lead him to develop the technical skills to 'make things work'. Art, too, was a very early interest for Richard. He graduated from 'Brooks Institute of Photography' in 1971, majoring in Industrial Photography. His love of painting, drawing, design and various mechanical hobbies are all part of what would soon be a direction totally unexpected to Richard....creating art dolls! His skills in many media would help in shoe making, pattern drafting, accessory design, armature building, prop construction, sculpting, as well as the photographing of each doll. From the creation of life-size to miniature dolls ...Richard enjoys each new challenge presented to him in the ever changing world of art dolls.

For more information visit their website at www.creagers.com

Gail Lackey



Gail is basically a self-taught artist, and loved creating things all her life.

In the 1970's she attended Boise State College where she studied art, mostly oil and watercolor paintings. She was discouraged with the lack of encouragement to be an individual so she began to teach herself through experimenting and studying on her own. She researched everything about art that inspired her to "Do her own thing".

She fell into illustration. She wrote a children's book and was going to illustrate it with pen and ink and watercolor drawings of her own little fantasy creatures. She sold her drawings and designed her own handpainted greeting cards at that time. She became obsessed with the idea of creating a 3 dimensional "doll" of her little fantasy creature that she uses in her drawings. This was the start of her great obsession for creating her one-of-a-kind figures.

She started in 1983 experimenting with soft sculpture, designed her own doll pattern and started to create. By word of mouth, she ended up making and selling 300 soft sculptured dolls over a period of about 2 years. At this point she felt she could not improve on this doll which started to become very boring. After that she took porcelain doll classes. She was frowned upon because she kept trying to dress the dolls as fairies.

Still having this great urge to create "little people" but not knowing out of what material, she kept searching for the right medium. In 1989 she discovered Pimo, at a miniature show. She was so excited! This was what she was looking for! Through experimenting she developed her own look.

She was inspired by the new doll artists in the doll magazines and desperately wanted to be among them. So in 1992, she quit her job to become a doll artist! She signed up for the 1993 IDEX where she sold her doll and won an award for "Best Resin Doll". In 1994 she won two awards, Best Fantasy and Best Costume.

Now she does several gallery shows a year and her work has been featured in CDM Dolls Magazine and several recent books. She did a line of collectible dolls with Richard Simmons & the LL Knickerbocker Co. that was released in 2000. It's called "Enchanted Forest".

She makes 35 dolls a year and works with a wide variety of subject matter, anything from elves, goblins and fairies to pretty girls. Her work is in the collection of several celebrities and Disney animators. Richard Simmons, Demi Moore, Anne Rice and Ray Liotta are among them.

She loves using vintage and antique materials, especially fabric with an ethnic look. She is always looking for unusual trims and findings to use in her work. If she can't find it, she makes it, often dying and distressing fabrics and items to get the look she wants.

She loves to do work that makes peoples smile and feel good, to create pieces with a mood that will take the viewer, if only for a moment, to a magical place in time, to a land of wonder and enchantment.

For more information visit her website at www.gaillackey.blogspot.mx.

Olga Roehl



Olga Roehl was born in Daugavpils (Latvia) in 1967. She finished the Rezekne School of Applied Arts, received a Certificate of Artist-Doll-maker at the Moscow School of Design (Tatiana Baeva) and completed the Arts Department of the Daugavpils University with final examination.

The artists headed training courses in doll making in Latvia and Lithuania, cooperated with the Riga Puppet Theatre, made performances. Olga Roehl is a director, actress, designer, choreographer and modeller.

Since 1998 she has been taking in exhibitions in Latvia and abroad. Her works are in private collections and galleries in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Netherlands, Russia, USA, Canada, Austria, Italy, etc.

The works of Olga Roehl are expressive, bursting with life and color. Her dolls are ladylike, erotic, amusing and mysterious. They are an expression of part of the artist's spiritual world, part of her ideas, emotions and world outlook.

For more information, visit her website at www.olga-roehl.de.

Shelly Thornton



BEGINNINGS

She was born, raised and educated in Lincoln, Nebraska. From the age of two, her major focus was art. Drawing, painting, and constructing things occupied most of her childhood. She has always been interested in sewing, dollmaking, toys, puppets, and animation.

She earned a BFA degree from the University of Nebraska in 1973. Her major areas of study were printmaking and graphic design.

WORK

She returned to the University of Nebraska to teach basic design, graphic design and illustration as a visiting instructor in 1975, and again to teach illustration in 1987-88. She worked as an illustrator and art director for an ad agency in 1977, and as a designer for Scholastic Magazines in New York in 1978, but the rest of her career has been as a self-directed, self-employed freelance artist.

During college she began doing illustration work, and continued in that career for more than 20 years. She also designed and made illustrated wooden toys, and created some film animation.

At age 28, she moved to New York City to pursue more opportunities in the field of illustration. There her client list grew to include Scholastic Magazines, Children's Television Workshop, Red Book, Rolling Stone Magazine, Parents' Magazine, Family Circle, Woman's Day, Ms. Magazine, Savvy, Ladies' Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, Bantam Books, Houghton Mifflin, Avon, Health Tex, Bloomingdale's, Macy's, and several New York ad agencies. She moved back to Nebraska after two and a half years, and continued to work for her clients in the city.

Her special interest became work for young children. For thirteen years she did monthly assignments for the Kindergarten magazine, "Let's Find Out," published by Scholastic in New York, and through them also illustrated six children's books, five of which were stories with paper dolls (now out of print). She has been published in the annual of the Society of Illustrators in New York.

DOLLMAKING

In 1992, after the birth of her second child, she became less active as an illustrator, and the following year became interested in pursuing the art of dollmaking, in part since it is a type of work she found a bit easier to accomplish while being a dedicated stay-at-home mom. She has crossed over into this new medium of expression with more relish and fascination than she has had for any previous pursuit. It feels as if many of the different skills and interests she has developed over the years in relation to other artistic activities, have come together to serve her in this endeavor.

For more information visit her website at www.forus.com/dollmaker.

Nancy Wiley



Nancy Wiley, the creator of the award-winning “Panniere” series of dolls has always thought of the doll as an art form. Her one-of-a-kind creations are shown in galleries and museums across the county. Nancy Wiley has always been fascinated by figurative art and recently has begun painting.

Nancy Wiley has been written about extensively. She has been featured in all the doll magazines and her work has been featured in *In Style*, *Mary Engelbreit’s Home Companion*, *American Style* and *George*. Her group benefit show in Soho and her theatrical dolls were critically acclaimed in the *New York Times*. Wiley was also invited to discuss her art at the Harvard Law School.

Her art studio was also featured in *WHERE WOMEN CREATE*.

Her work has been shown in many museums in America and abroad.

For more information visit her website at www.nancywiley.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Each of the artists profiled in the film came to doll making from different backgrounds and perspectives. What does this variety of experience say about the “path of an artist”? How much of an artist’s craft comes from their training and how much from their personal background and influences?
2. Artists find inspiration from many different sources. If you were to start making a doll, what places, people, art, etc would inspire you? How important is research when approaching a new work? If you had to create work inspired by another culture or time in history, what sources would you use?
3. How can a doll reflect/portray a specific point in history? Regarding the Creagers’ work with African-American dolls set in the early 20th century, what are they trying to say with them? How do dolls created during a certain point in history reflect their times? What can they convey to people interacting with them today?
4. Creating art can be a solitary endeavor, but artists who create in the same medium learn and grow from each other. What role does community play in dollmaking?
5. Many of the dolls shown in the film have their own “stories” created by the artist. Is it important for a person to know these stories in advance to better appreciate the doll or should they create their own “story” for a doll they encounter? How does narrative, created either by the artist or the viewer, enhance or inform a specific piece of art?

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