

CASA Magazine

The Figure & The Fish

By Kerry Methner / CASA

WHEN BARBARA BAKER MCINTYRE brought in a copy of *The Hook 'em & Cook*

'em Book, one of the streams of energy that flowed into the creation of her exhibit *The Figure & The Fish!*, that is on display at CASA Magazine through May, became clear. She loves angling. Mostly, it seems, she angles for bits and pieces, fish in any color or shape, and a real human connection with her work and play.

You see, McIntyre grew up fishing with her grandfather. As a little kid she'd fish off Stearns Wharf. "I enjoyed being outside and having something pulling my line... You never knew what it was going to be," she related.

Today the things pulling her line are both figurative and literal. She still goes fishing a couple times a month. It's how she unwinds and gets away from her art to clear her head. But she describes working with her materials much as she does fishing. Something grabs her attention and she reels it in.

"I have a basic background in fine art, and am trained with traditional materials," she explained. "But found objects have grown to be collections of



Barbara McIntyre

buttons, seashells, keys, things that are vintage, that have a patina, a feel, or some kind of resonance. Once I've collected these things that I'm attracted to, I put them out and create whatever. The meaning is within the form of the structure and the components as well."

The Figure & Fish was born of the practical and imaginative. McIntyre had several trout studies and fish pieces and several figures so she decided to see what they'd be grouped together in a show. As the exhibit developed, other pieces were created that combined the themes.

In one of the new pieces, *Serena Loves the Sea*, McIntyre allows a Chinese checker board she hooked several years ago to don fins and shell buttons to become Serena's hips.

In another piece, *Whale of Bound Objects*, wood, rusty metal, wire, watch bits, and more swim on a pedestal.

The artist's sense of reaching out to use the bits around her was fostered from an early age, "My mother was a paper mache artist - she taught me. We always had materials around." Those materials included paints and charcoal, as well as balloons, wire, paper, and paste for paper mache, to name a few. "Not a lot of kids parents thought of providing those kinds

of materials," she noted.

"I had a strong feeling for art in Jr. High and kept taking art classes. I felt very comfortable in art class but didn't feel like a strong artist."

It wasn't a surprise then, that McIntyre didn't begin college as an art major. She started as an English major. But, at the start of her third year, she said, "I'm an artist" and finished with a BA in fine art. Then she went into advertising in her family's business for 12 years.

"It was a personal growth thing to finally come to the realization that I'm an artist," she shared warmly of her decision to pursue art full-time. "It's what I do. It's how I express myself. It's what I consider work and what I consider play."

McIntyre takes her work seriously, explaining, "I make things visual, that's the way I think. It's the same thing for writers, people who sign, people who act. They express the stuff that we all feel. In my case, I do it visually... That's the point of being an artist, it's a reflection of life and all its aspects." And she added, "I have a good time."

That *good time* has paid off with awards and recognition over the decades



Serena Loves the Ocean, 60"x72"x4" by Barbara McIntyre

that McIntyre has been creating. She has been accepted into international shows and won a 1st award at the 2006 Collage Artists of America Juried Open, an exhibit juried by George Herms, among many.

This is a busy stretch for this creative angler. This month her work is also on display at Montecito Frame in Summerland and she is working on an all assemblage show for July. "I wanted something unique in each place," she noted. Her wide range in skills, mediums, and creativity have made that possible.

CASA Magazine is located at 23 E. Canon Perdido St and is open 9 to 5:30 weekdays. For information call 965-6448.