



Blue Goose

Gallery of Artists



Presents

Gayle Bower - Papier-Mâché

Most of my life I have been very interested in the arts, taking any number of courses that were available to me. When time allowed I would dabble in weaving, wood carving, wood turning, watercolors, pottery, stained and mosaic glass. Additionally, since the age of 12, I have been a knitter. Everyone in my immediate and extended family have over the years received sweaters, hats, gloves, sox and blankets.....whether they wanted them or not.

Papier mache is a French word literally meaning chewing waste paper. When this occurs, the paper becomes malleable, and when you add glue to this "goo" it is enough to begin to form into any shape one might wish.

As with many things, Papier mache originated in China. Some of the glue's that were available at that time were very strong, and the waste paper easily obtained. The result of this paper and glue made vessels that were lightweight and strong. The Persians and East Indians picked up the Chinese ideas and refined them creating beautiful platters, bowls, fancy plates and boxes. These were ornately painted. The English saw a good thing and took the papier mache ideas even further, opening factories that mass produced kitchen items, moldings for house trim, and created doors for carriages.

Working with papier mache is an adult way to play with "goo." "Goo" is paper, newspaper, coffee filters, typewriter paper to \$10.00 per sheet handmade paper, (or more if you are really daring) and a "binder" which is glue or wallpaper paste. You then have a gooey mess than one can form over a frame, whether it be a balloon, or chicken wire sculpture. The torn, wetted paper is laid over the mold. Layers and layers and layers is the rule, the more the merrier and the stronger the object.

Much of my art is organic, with different shapes and unusual colors side by side. African papers are big with me. I also use fabric; silk, wool, knitted pieces, and other textiles. Papier mache is for me being a kid in a candy store. The possibilities to me are endless and I truly feel I have found a medium in which I will never want for ideas. Adding fabric, wood, metal, and sometimes rocks takes papier mache into the realm of mixed media, which is something I have just begun to play with. Some of my pieces you will see are bowls, boxes, vases, clocks, platters, mirrors, both large and small. Some are mixed media and some are pure papier mache.

I hope you enjoy this "adult" papier mache art, and it gets your creative juices going.