



**DETAILS + MATERIALS**

**Works by Claudine Granthem**

**August 24 - October 1, 2023**



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# LAVISH IN ITS EMBRACE

Marya Osucha, Exhibition Curator

When Claudine Granthem's work was first brought to my attention, she was introduced to me as a living treasure among our county's artistic wealth. She was described as primarily a sculptor, whose work was collected by prominent local families, and I was eager to visit her studio to view her body of work. I saw her as someone who'd been established in the region for decades, who had been a central figure in Placerville's thriving creative culture, but whose work hadn't been on view in many years. It's important to draw throughlines between generations, giving each generation an opportunity to find inspiration in the others.

A mutual friend arranged for me to meet Claudine in her home studio in Camino. What I didn't know, was that this would be a guided tour of a secret, lush hollow and a private studio packed floor to ceiling with astounding, impactful works of art. The first works that caught my eye were small bronze sculptures, bearing the artful asymmetry of the mid-century aesthetic I love so much, but with earthy textures that don't deny works' materiality. I was smitten. Here was a trove felt viscerally, at once architectural and deeply human.

Granthem's use of materials is lavish in its embrace; she doesn't try to transform or disguise the innate properties of the material itself, rather she leans into it, exploring its boundaries and possibilities. Moving through her studio, the most striking works are wall sculptures made up of found materials, recalling vaguely human forms. Wood scraps, burlap, handmade paper, metal sheeting – the discarded flesh and bones of rural life – somehow combining to scratch at human experience. It's as if the intense materiality of her work parallels the same intense materiality of human truth: the flesh and bones of which *we* are made bear their own possibilities and limitations.

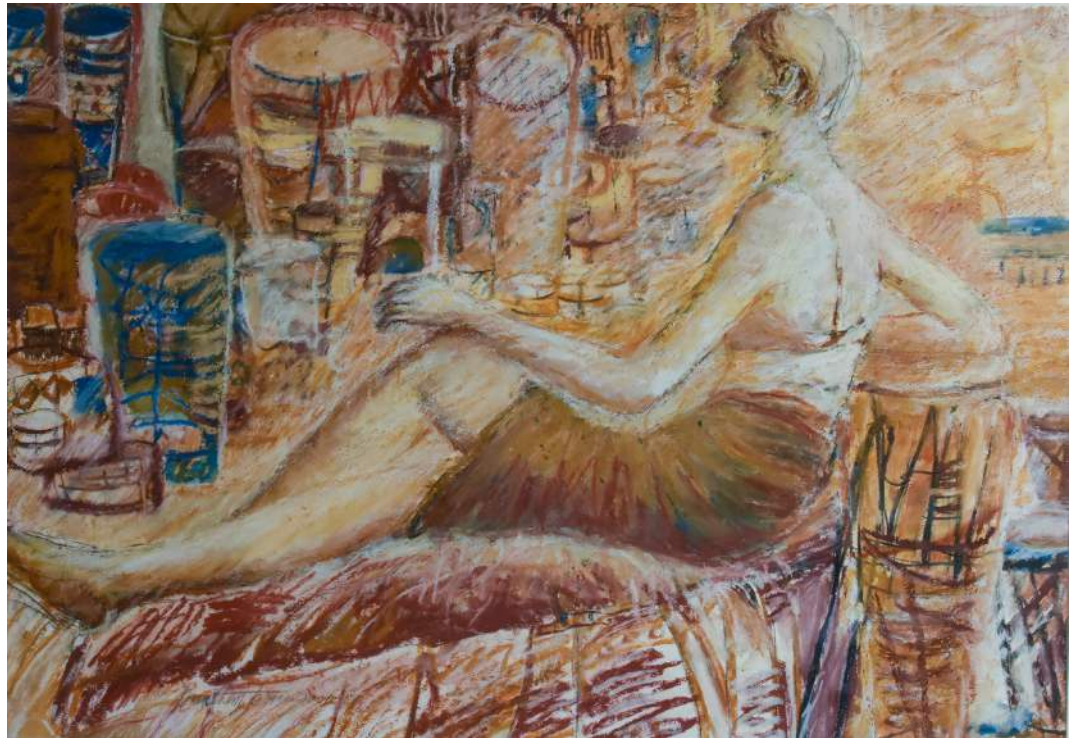
Each of her works is a world unto itself, concealing and revealing in its own way. A viewer can get lost in them, taking the time to notice each minor detail, pulling you further along into each work's reality. But the subject matter of the work itself is far from overtly narrative. Predominantly steeped in abstraction, each work is meant to be *felt* rather than read as a story. While you're moving through the gallery, check in with yourself: What sensations does each work provoke in you? How does your body feel when you take in these works? What details draw your attention? Where is your eye inclined to roam? Settling into your own perception, your own embodiment, is the core of Granthem's extensive oeuvre.



*Untitled*  
1995-1997  
Mixed Media



*Inset*, 1988  
Metal



*Anna of the Drums*, 2000  
Paintstick on paper



*Fancy*, 2010  
Mixed media

# ABOUT THE ARTIST

California artist Claudine Granthem earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from California State University, Sacramento. Throughout her time as a prolific artist, she has shown in over 30 different locations, and has received more than two dozen awards for her works.

Granthem says her need to deal with human figures in her work evolved into an abstract style - "the figure may not be recognizable as such, but references to human states of being are there."

Primarily, her sculptures consist of wall reliefs which Claudine states "reveal masking, shielding and restraining attitudes as a result of various materials being manipulated and layered, concealing parts of the pieces while leaving others exposed."

Granthem's work confronts relationships - the relationship of the figure with its immediate spatial and structural environment, and the secretive relationship it holds within its cloak of material.

Granthem wants people to understand that the intentionally sharp contrasts of the artworks against flat surfaces, as well as the close values and limited color usage, create a shallow space. That this constricting space and the portrayal of the figure confined by its materials, or enmeshed with supporting structures, reveal the restrictions and vulnerabilities of human existence.

*"I have always felt the need to create the human figure in my artwork, which has evolved from drawings and paintings into abstract wall sculptures and collages. Notions of human involvement with life are expressed through the manipulation of various materials like wood, cloth, twine, metal, paint and handmade paper. I also incorporate two-dimensional artworks like etchings, paintings, and monoprints that I have previously created. With these materials I build the sculptures from the inside out, layering, wrapping, tying and gluing all the parts together. These methods allow the artwork to exist on more than one level, containing both internal and external parts. The resulting shapes symbolically represent life's processes and states of being through their subtle references to human forms."*

-Claudine Granthem





*Chine*, c. 2005  
Mixed media



*Signs of Life*, c. 1997  
Painted cloth on wood



*Ana Revisited*, c. 2001, Mixed media



*Venus, 2010*  
Mixed media



*Twisted, 2002*  
Acrylic on canvas



*Jewel, 2009, Mixed media*



*Eternal Eye, 2006*  
Mixed media



*String Fold, 2008*  
Mixed media



*With Red Passage*  
1986  
Mixed media



*Reclining Heather*  
1998, Oil paintstick on paper





*Unboxed*, 1999  
Metal



*Armed*, 1991  
Painted cloth, metal on wood

*Self Portrait*  
1998, Watercolor



*Reaper*, 1998  
Painted cloth, metal on wood



*Metamorphic*, c. 1985  
Paintstick on paper

*Harmony*, 2003  
Bronze



*Solo*, 2002, Acrylic on canvas



*With Reflection*, 1987, Metal



*Stilted*, 2010  
Painted cloth, metal on wood



*Metalsome*, c. 1990s, Metal

*More Bits*, 2001  
Paint on cloth



*Triangles*, 2001  
Paint on cloth



*Fandango*, 2010  
Mixed media



*Contour*, 1986  
Bronze



*Apex*, 1986  
Bronze



*Beside*, 1986  
Bronze



*Through*, 1986  
Bronze



*Within*, 1986, Bronze



*Reveal*, 1986  
Bronze



*Along*, 1986  
Bronze



*Next To*, 1986  
Bronze



*Abstract Symphony*, 1987  
Acrylic on canvas



*Doublet*, 1999  
Mixed media



*Hooked*, 2003  
Painted cloth, metal on wood



*Frou Frou*, 1992  
Mixed media



*Fit to be Tied*, c. 1991  
Mixed media



*Gathering*, 2000  
Acrylic paint





*Cracked*, 2006  
Mixed media



*Fate and Muses 1*, 1999  
Block print on paper



*Impressions*, 1990  
Mixed media



*Combinations*, 1998  
Painted cloth, metal on wood



*Window Dressing*  
1999  
Mixed media



*Bits & Pieces*, 1997  
Bronze



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## SPECIAL THANKS

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Paul Granthem

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