

Vielbig to exhibit at Graves Museum of Art

January 27, 2022



Bernadette Vielbig was born and raised on a small self-sufficient farm in northern California. As a first generation American born of naturalized citizen parents, her informative years left an impression of usefulness in all things deep in her psyche.

Vielbig studied fine art and design throughout her youth and earned a BA in Studio Art from Humboldt State University and went on to earn a masters of fine art with studio concentrations in sculpture and design from Louisiana State University.

While attending LSU she taught three-dimensional design and drawing classes before earning her letters. During her career as an academic, she was a faculty specialist in new facilities, labs, building design and accomplished such tasks at the University of South Carolina Columbia, Central Michigan University where she was also awarded the Stephen F Barstow Artist in Residence before moving onto a tenure track role as the sole faculty in the sculpture area curriculum at Spokane Falls Community College in eastern Washington. Vielbig left her post and tenure in eastern WA to come back home to northern California. In spring 2017, she landed on the edge in Eureka where she plans to stay.

Her work has been featured nationally at gallery and museum venues including the Kohler Design Center, Chrysler Museum of Art, NOLA Contemporary Art Center, and the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture. She is represented in both public and private collections across the country as well.

Vielbig has received numerous grants and awards for her work and has held positions with several artist-in-residence programs nationally. Her media choices and skill set in fine art are vast, one could almost say limitless; she works with what she has, where she is. An accomplished fabricator, caster and builder she often starts with the found object as a launching point.

Her studio practice is prolific as she continues to explore new ways of communicating visually.

In essence, Vielbig is a force of nature.

The works in this exhibition span several decades of her studio practice, as well as recently produced pieces specifically for the Morris Graves Museum of Art. Utilizing all her tools in this selected grouping media choices include – but are not limited to–, cast lead, burn scar drawings, markers, slip cast ceramic, beeswax, found objects, custom hardware and brackets made from steel, copper and rusted nails. Her attraction to the found object starts with its’ original intent or function, she acknowledges the history of the object as well as its formal elements; shape, use, physical make up and ties these concepts to her content as she spins the work into a purely aesthetic function. In their most primary sense, her visual stories speak to our disposable culture which she was abhorred by in the 1970’s and watched that culture grow exponentially. Her content often finds its’ starting point there and weaves in and out of tangents about convenience, need vs want, food supply and production, and basic simplicity in what we prioritize to have a good life. Within all of that, her works takes the viewer on a ride through history and hysteria, knowing and learning, nostalgia and unknown futures. Bernadette does this with a sense of humor because she is aware that to acknowledge the problems one must also acknowledge their involvement in them.

Planned obsolescence may drive the marketplace but it also creates waste surplus in unmanageable magnitudes. By using would be garbage, Vielbig is commenting on our need to stop generating so much of it. She longs for the day such materials are not readily available to her.

The Morris Graves Museum of Art, located at 636 F Street, Eureka is open to the public from noon-5p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. Admission is \$5 for adults; \$2 for seniors (age 65 and over), military veterans, and students with ID; children 17 and under free; Families with an EBT Card and valid ID receive free admission through the Museums for All initiative, Museum members are free. Admission is always free for everyone on the first Saturday of every month, including First Saturday Night Arts Alive!, 6-9 p.m.

To ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers and visitors we ask that guests continue to wear masks inside the Morris Graves Museum of Art.