

EDEN BENDER

ARTIST STATEMENT / BIO

Eden Bender is an established Toronto-based sculptor and painter, combining the conceptual and figurative in both mediums.

Growing up in rural Ontario, Bender was enamoured by the “treasures” of neighbouring farms and junkyards, and collected found materials for sculptures even as a child. Her sculptural work, mostly built from paper clay and glazed, draw the observer into a surreal world of transformation and metamorphosis. Juxtaposing the static with the dynamic, representations of figures, fulcrums, ladders, and hoops. These and many other symbolic shapes form this playful yet sombre environment. Eden’s experimental glaze work imbues the sculptures with the intriguing patina of some rediscovered ancient artefact. Eden will often introduce non-traditional ceramic glazes and the use of metal and cement, as well as other found objects, into her sculptures.

Eden’s paintings utilize a minimalist colour palette to amplify their densely textured surfaces. At first glance, her monochromatic paintings appear subdued and placid, but upon closer inspection, visions of softly-focused memories shift shape into surreal and unsettling territory. Her imagery is open-ended: a boat, a man with the features of a rabbit, an empty field with a group of seated figures. All of these elements refuse to settle into any prescribed meaning, instead creating a nascent and intuitive narrative.

Eden’s extensive involvement in her community has always been a great source of inspiration and education. Through her volunteer commitments with various non-profit organizations, Eden’s work has been influenced by the adversity of the human condition. In Bender’s own words,

“The primary focus of recent works are the human effects on the environment and our social emotional responses. I often camouflage the somber mood with iridescent colours that provide a blinding palette... the psychological aspects of a driven, overstimulated generation that compels me to search out an inner calmness and a sense of self-fulfillment.”

Eden studied at George Brown and at York University. In 1990 she graduated with a Bachelor of Fine arts with honours. Her sculptures have been exhibited several times at the Gardiner Museum and her work is in the permanent collection at The Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery. She has received numerous awards including the L.L. Odette Sculpture Award, the Ontario Arts Council Award, the Toronto Potters Award of Excellence, Tuckers Award of Expression, the Pottery Supply House Award of Excellence and the Ontario Craft Council Award for Best Design. Eden is currently living and working in Toronto.