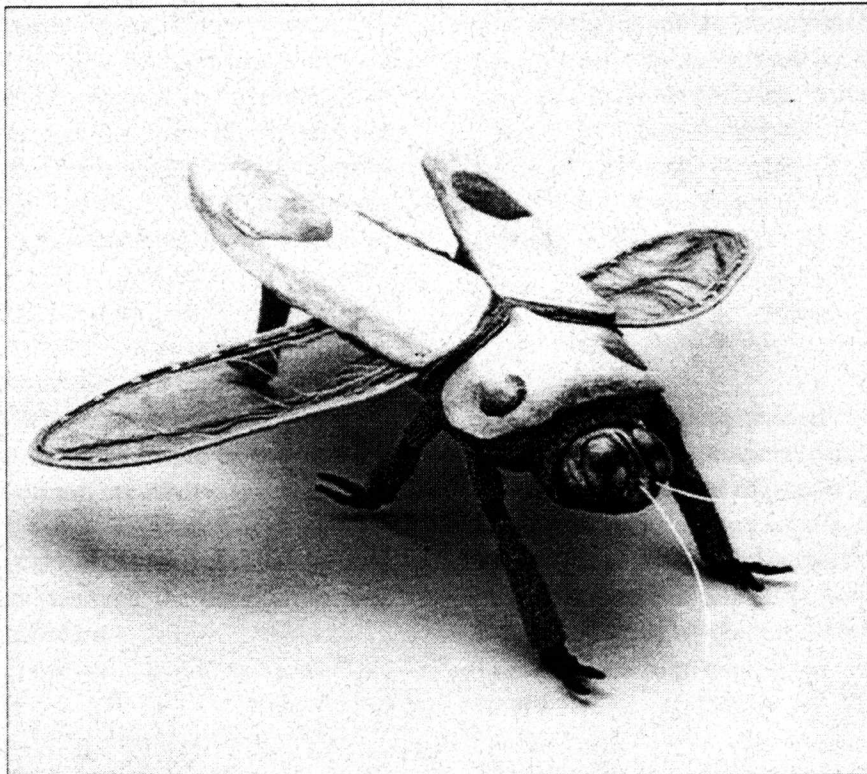


Land, Sea, & Air

Works by Andrea V. Uravitch

February 17 to July 1, 2001

Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature
University of Richmond Museums



Andrea V. Uravitch (American, born 1949). *The Beetle*, 2000, acrylic on clay, steel, fiber, and fabric, 5 1/2 x 18 x 19 inches. Collection of the artist. Image © 2000 Andrea V. Uravitch, photograph by Joe Devins.

My ideas come from seeing an insect, bird, fish, animal, or a natural phenomenon that inspires me. It can be as simple as looking at the patterning of an insect's wing or the face of a wild boar.

— Andrea V. Uravitch



Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature
University of Richmond Museums
Richmond, Virginia 23173 (804) 289-8276
www.richmond.edu/cultural/museums

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Virginia artist Andrea V. Uravitch has been creating mixed-media sculptures of animals for more than thirty years. Using clay, fiber, metal, paint, and other material, she makes larger-than-life constructions that present the dual nature of man's relationship to animals and insects – attraction and repulsion, fear and admiration. By selecting certain media, the artist evokes the patterns and body shapes of her subjects while also displaying a mastery of materials and design.

Following careful study of live specimens in her local environment and at zoos and researching in libraries, Uravitch constructs these works with particular settings in mind. Each of her groupings suggests a connection between the animals themselves as well as with the viewer, examining how we relate to each other in the setting of a museum or in nature, as suggested by the title of the exhibition which defines the realms where these animals exist.

Land, Sea, & Air is the first of many such exhibitions that will be organized by the Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature. Future presentations will also examine how the beauty and science of the natural world intersect with human creativity.

We would like to thank the artist for her collaboration on this project and her husband Joe Uravitch for his assistance in the installation.

N. Elizabeth Schlatter
Assistant Director
University of Richmond Museums

INTERVIEW WITH THE ARTIST

This conversation between the artist and the curator took place by telephone, e-mail, and in person from January 5 to February 12, 2001, and has been edited.

Elizabeth Schlatter: When we were thinking of possible artists whose work would fit within the mission of the Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature, you immediately came to mind. How do you see designs in nature and how do these play out in your artwork?

Andrea V. Uravitch: Design has always been an interest of mine. When I began art school I was a textile major, and I was very interested in patterning and texture. Over time my focus evolved towards three-dimensional work. I became a weaving major, but I still worked with texture; some of my first projects were crocheted landscapes.

From there the evolution continued. I made a wall hanging that incorporated a spider crab shell, to which I added fiber parts and small eyes. Then I started making animals, and I became interested in the patterning of spots on a dog, for example, or elaborate designs on lizards. I've even been inspired by such commonplace things as bananas, which have an evolution of color and pattern change as they ripen. Bananas in their many forms, shapes, and colors have been a favorite subject of mine for more than fifteen years, and I incorporate them with my insect work. Designs in nature are everywhere if you are just receptive to what you see.

ES: How long have you been creating these types of creatures?

AVU: I started doing animals in 1972. At first the sculptures had an imaginary quality about them but as I gained mastery of the materials they became more realistic. I was and am attracted to the anthropomorphic qualities, texture, color, movement, structure, pattern, and beauty of animals and nature. I take the study of these animals very seriously, and I avoid the cartoon quality that is sometimes assigned to animals.

ES: Do you see things in your environment that become part of your work?

AVU: I do. For example, in January 1996 we had a terrible winter storm in Washington. Everything was paralyzed for days. The only things that were moving were the crows. I watched them from a window and they were so beautiful against the white snow. I also liked how animated they were and how they seemed to talk to each other. I wanted to capture all of these qualities – both the physical beauty and the anthropomorphic dialogue that happens between the birds.

ES: Once you've decided on a subject, how do you determine your design and materials?

