

“Outsider: The Art of Marjorie Jordan-Sauer”

From August 4th through October 20th The Arts Illiana Gallery in Terre Haute, Indiana, will devote its space to the self-taught artist Marjorie Jordan-Sauer (Born: Maysville, KY 1934/Died: Terre Haute, IN 2015).

“Outsider Art” is a catchall phrase that has evolved to include many kinds of mostly self-taught art. In the past, art historians have used such terms as “Art Brut”, “Marginal Art”, “Visionary Art”, “Naïve Art”, and “Folk Art” to categorize art made by artists who were outside of the academic, “insider” art culture; artists relatively untouched by the conditioning of art history, trends, training and rules.

Marjorie Jordan-Sauer’s art is a fascinating example of the pure, creative impulse to make art without formal training, outside of the official art culture. Living in the hill country of Kentucky, and not until into her fifties, Jordan-Sauer produced hundreds of mosaic pieces using broken dishes to piece together colorfully textured images of narrative scenes with landscapes and people. Jordan-Sauer embellished furniture, pottery, and glassware with elaborate mosaics, often coloring the grout to add to the complex patterns, making unique sculptural expressions. Her impulse to populate the world with art becomes quite clear when one sees the hundreds of three-dimensional papier-mâché, clay, and plaster human figures, animals, and objects that she created. Some of the figures are grouped together to illustrate stories from childhood, as well as nursery rhymes such as “The Three Little Pigs” and they are covered with an intricate texture made of thousands of tiny pieces of eggshells, broken dinnerware, or torn colored paper, a continuation of her mosaic technique.

In-between the abundant accumulation of mosaics and 3D figures, Jordan-Sauer also developed a personal style of narrative painting on paper, canvas, and board, including many woven paper pieces. She painted two similar, separate versions of a scene, on paper, then cut one into inch-wide strips horizontally and one into inch-wide strips vertically. Then she wove the two paintings together creating a unique version of the scene that mimics the pattern of mosaics in her other work.

The overall impression of seeing such a prolific output of raw creativity is to be amazed by the display of craftsmanship, skill, and the pure joy of art-making.

Jordan-Sauer’s daughter, Zella, lives in Terre Haute and has made this collection of astonishing art available to us to share with the world, hoping to have her mother recognized as a wonderfully creative artist.

We think that the art of Marjorie Jordan-Sauer deserves such recognition and that everyone who sees her art will be awestruck!