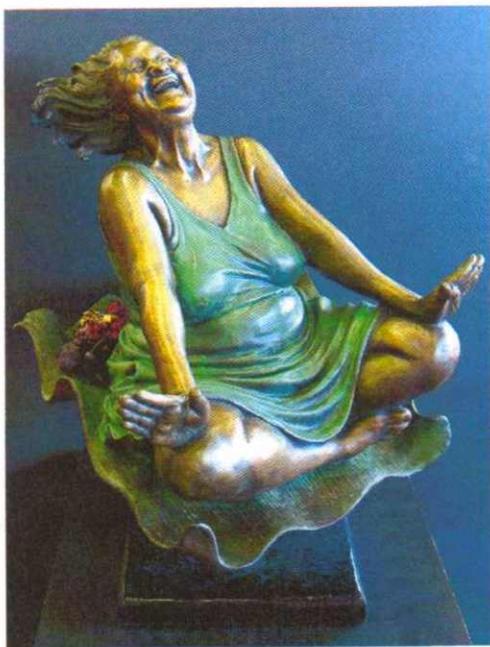


Shelley Buonaiuto

I began to sculpt in clay in 1972, at the pottery at Chardavogne Barn, a group devoted to the study of Gurdjieff, a Greek Caucasian spiritual master. My husband Michael joined me there and we have worked together since 1975. He produced a body of work for a number of years, did casting and molding, but at present I am doing most of the sculpting. We have collaborated on some of the resin pieces.



I try to capture a quality of presence. At first the figures were stylized, meditative, and single, but over the years became more natural and relaxed, and I began to sculpt two or more figures in relationship. The figures laugh, talk with friends, dance, commune with a lover. I find sculpting the elderly most interesting, for the character in the expressions, the naturalness of the bodies, the sagging skin of aging, the caring expressed in the faces. People who view the work often find themselves and their friends in it.

I also have done many dancers, experimenting with movement and the expression of abandon, and several sculptures of women with mastectomies, exploring different attitudes toward the experience. Some pieces are explorations of states of being, combining human and animal forms attempting to represent the interdependence of nature and consciousness. Most recently, I've been experimenting with fountains, wanting to include water as an element of the sculpture. I have also experimented with fire as an element, and combinations of fire and water.

The creative process is spontaneous and intuitive, relationships revealed as I work, always informed, limited, guided and inspired by the quality of clay and the demands of the technical process. Most of the clay work is a combination of different colors of stoneware and porcelain and is fired to cone 10, making it very hard and durable. There is some patina and glaze used, and also at times a bronze patina is applied.

My husband and I began to produce resin figures in 1996, to create a body of work that was consistent and affordable. I created a diverse community of male and female figures that could be interchanged, allowing different expressions of relationship. Since I sculpt these figures in a non-hardening oil-based clay and the piece is cast, I am able to work for several months on a piece to capture exactly the expression that speaks to me. These pieces are hand-painted.

We also do a small number of bronzes. We have half life-size bronzes in parks in Loveland, CO and Little Rock, AR. These are in the Alternative Energy series, Sun, Wind and Water. There is a portrait of two friends of mine in the Santa Fe, NM Capitol Building and several bronzes are in private collections. The latest series is a smaller version of the Alternative Energy series, and I've added Earth, emphasizing compassion and mutual support.