

"Whistles" at the Muscatine Art Center

Written by Lynn Bartenhagen
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The Muscatine Art Center is pleased to announce the opening of a new exhibit by Iowa City artist, Connie Roberts on June 17 with an artist's reception on Sunday, July 1 from 1 to 5pm in conjunction with the annual Ice Cream Social.

Connie Roberts call herself a "thing maker." In her work, she bridges the realms of fine art and folk art and tackles many subjects with sharp wit and unrestrained humor. Trained as a figurative painter, Roberts carves and then paints sculpture, which also happens to be whistles. "Every Piece has a whistle somewhere in it – like a signature. I love building sculptures out of wood and complicating the process by making them whistle, so that they become engaging toys as well as art."

Roberts incorporates a variety of wood in her work, occasionally using hardwoods for smaller, more fragile pieces. She uses power tools for major cutting, sanding, and drilling, and dremels for fine carving and finish work. Acrylic paints are then applied to her sculptures, with a final coat of shellac for a mellow patina. Her art is meant for the collector to handle, play with and blow into.

Roberts has had numerous exhibits at art galleries and museums across the nation and has been the subject of multiple publications and contributed artwork to several books.

Collectors of her work include: Jim Leach, Steven Spielberg, Alan Greenspan, Andrea Mitchell, Rudy Guillian, Whoopi Goldberg, Dick Cheney, John Williams, Penny Marshall, Letitia Baldrige, "The FONZ", Dr. Michael DeBakey, Carole Burnett, Carrie Fisher, Sonny & Gloria Kamm, Phillip Cooke, Erica Jong and more.

Roberts work is shown in the Stanley Gallery with *Pieced Elegance: Quilts by Clara Oleson* and will be on view through September 2, 2012.