

## Technical Information

My sculptural “accumulations” of animals reflect the culture of acquisition and display of possessions, along with a conscious animal welfare subtext which comments on the care, use and detainment of animals. Each finished work can contain from fifty to two hundred individual animal pieces. These collections are housed within objects that reference childhood such as rusted strollers, carriages, wagons and doll’s trunks. I begin the slipcasting process of each individual animal by pouring purchased white earthenware slip into plaster animal molds. My collection of over 75 animal characters is comprised of both new commercially available molds and discarded, older molds. Some of the animal forms are realistic such as a farmyard pig, cow and turkey, while others are stylized or “Disneyfied” and resemble cartoon cats, dogs and rabbits from children’s books. Since the walls of the slipcast animals are thin and uniform, the pieces can be fired very quickly to Cone 06. Often I cast them and put them directly into the kiln to fire.

The use of vivid, remarkable colour has always been a primary part of my work. After the bisque, I use a brush to glaze each individual animal with three to four coats of commercial glaze. My glaze shelf holds over 100 colours from North American ceramic companies such as Duncan, Gare and Mayco. By using commercial glazes, I have access to hundreds of different tones and shades within each colour family. For example, currently there are 30 different hues of green and 25 hues of red glazes in my glaze palette.

After glaze firing the cast animals to Cone 06, I begin to assemble them inside a container such as a child’s toy box. Layer by layer, I build up the height by attaching each piece together with a few drops of epoxy glue. A North American company, Loctite, produces the industrial strength glue, E – 30 CL, which is specially formulated for adhering ceramics. Their website is <http://www.loctiteproducts.com/>. Masking tape holds the animals together while the glue dries. Since I want to simulate the appearance of the animals effortlessly resting on top of each other, I clean up any excess glue with a cotton swab. The epoxy takes four hours to dry and therefore, the assembly of one piece can take six or seven days of successive gluing to build up the necessary height and complexity of animals.