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ART DOLL

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Winter Snow Flower*

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*Magical
Holiday Dolls:
Santas, Elves,
Angels & More*

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Ming Origami Gypsy
by Adele Sciortino

ODACA: Behind the Scenes PART 4

by Lillian Alberti

In this, our fourth and final look behind the scenes of the Original Doll Artist Council of America (ODACA) and our talented and eclectic artists, we will be looking at the art of some of our longtime and knowledgeable members.

Adele Sciortino

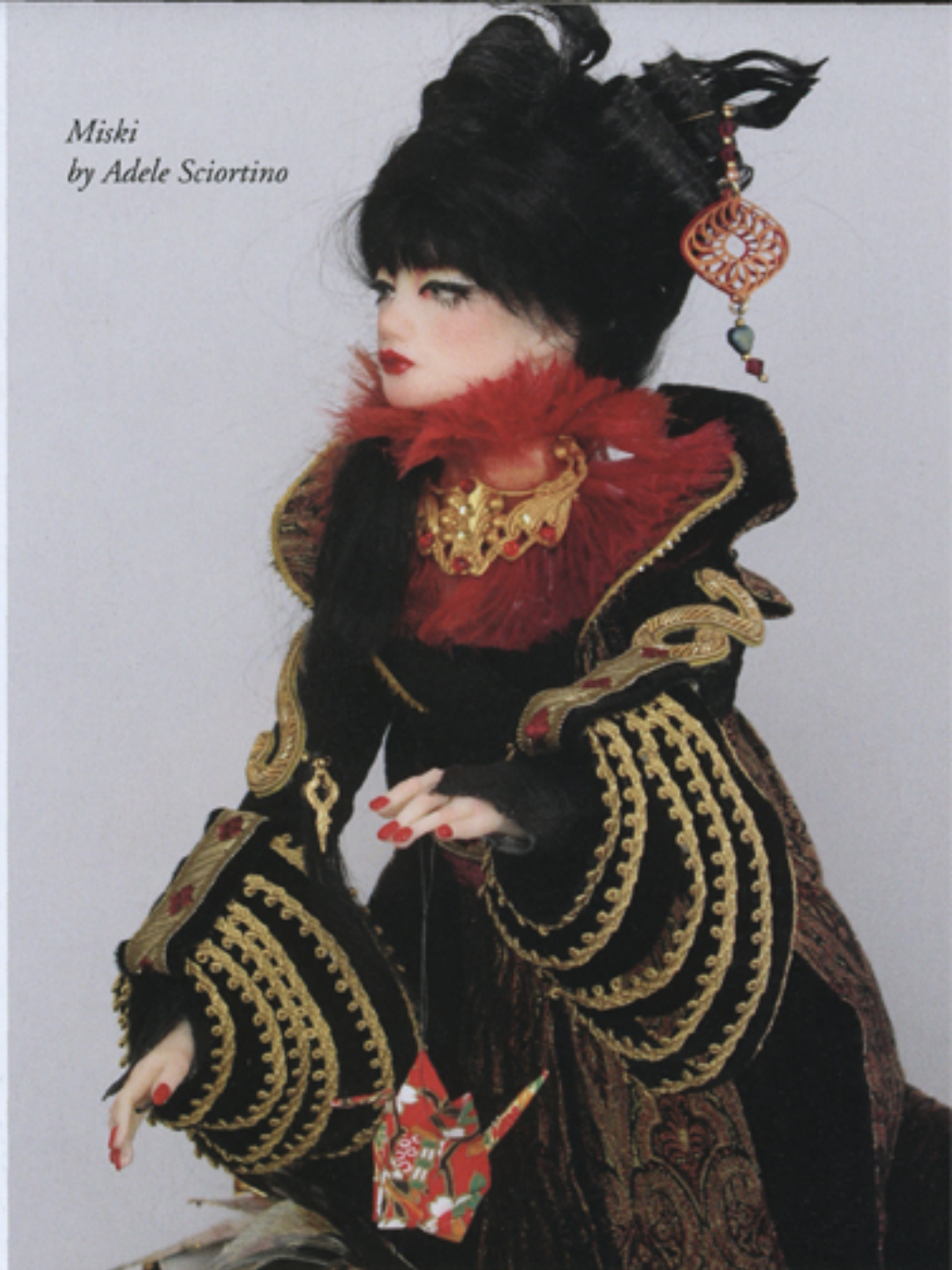
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Although she now resides in Canada, Adele Sciortino was born in New Orleans into a long and creative lineage. Her ancestors include tailors, quilt makers, and music teachers who, no doubt, passed their artistic talents down to her.

Adele is adept at transforming fabric and clay from their most simple forms into creations of distinction. Each of her figures has its own unique quality and is made with the greatest of care. Adele has worked hard to hone her creative process and has recently made a successful transition from her usual cloth to sculpting in polymer clay in order to achieve a more realistic look in her characters.

"Each figurative sculpture is as important to me as the next," she explains. "Each with their own souls and personalities, I try capture the enlightenment and spirit of true fine art in the figurative sculpture medium." →

*Miski
by Adele Sciortino*



Back detail



Lydia
by Sonja Bryer



Marie Antoinette
by Sonja Bryer

Sonja Bryer

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Sonja Bryer was inducted into ODACA in its early days of inception. Already an accomplished ceramic artist at the time, Sonja soon discovered a passion for porcelain and began specializing in it. She is highly regarded for her porcelain beauties that possess an "old time" quality. Each is uniquely crafted and is highly sought after by collectors.

Her long and successful career started with traveling throughout the country to various doll venues and shows year-round. "I was soon selling so many dolls that I had to get dressmakers and mold makers to help finish the orders," she recalls. Then one year she attended Toy Fair in New York City where she made some excellent contacts. "That allowed me to stay home and make dolls — I no longer needed to travel!"

Sonja now sells to well-known companies such as Ashton Drake and Franklin Mint. Additionally, she has a lucrative contract from Marie Osmond. Working with these companies, which market dolls worldwide, means a great deal to her. "I feel blessed to be able to do what I love!" she says.

Brenda Gehl

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An ODACA member since 2006, Brenda Gehl considers working as a professional artist rewarding. Although she, like many artists, is aware that the artistic life has its share of financial uncertainties and creative disappointments, she does not let this get in the way of her passion. "With every new day, the beauty that unfolds is original in its creation, filled with lessons and treasures just waiting to be discovered. My artwork is a humble attempt to re-create this beauty. I recognize that I am not yet where it is that I am going, so I continue on my journey, eager to discover what it is that I do not yet know."

Though she effortlessly mixes wood, clay, metal, and glass into her sculptures, Brenda considers herself a figurative sculptor who works primarily with fibers. "I am inspired by the limitations of cloth. In my efforts to capture the essence of what it means to be human, it seems natural to work with fibers and fabric." It is her intention to convey feeling without facial expression. "I rely on formal composition and color theory to tell the story. My figures do not attempt to communicate with the viewer. They are content in their silent worlds and keep the secrets and stories of their maker." And she achieves this masterfully! →



*Five Senses:
Hear by
Brenda Gehl*



*Five Senses: Smell
by Brenda Gehl*

Diane Troutman

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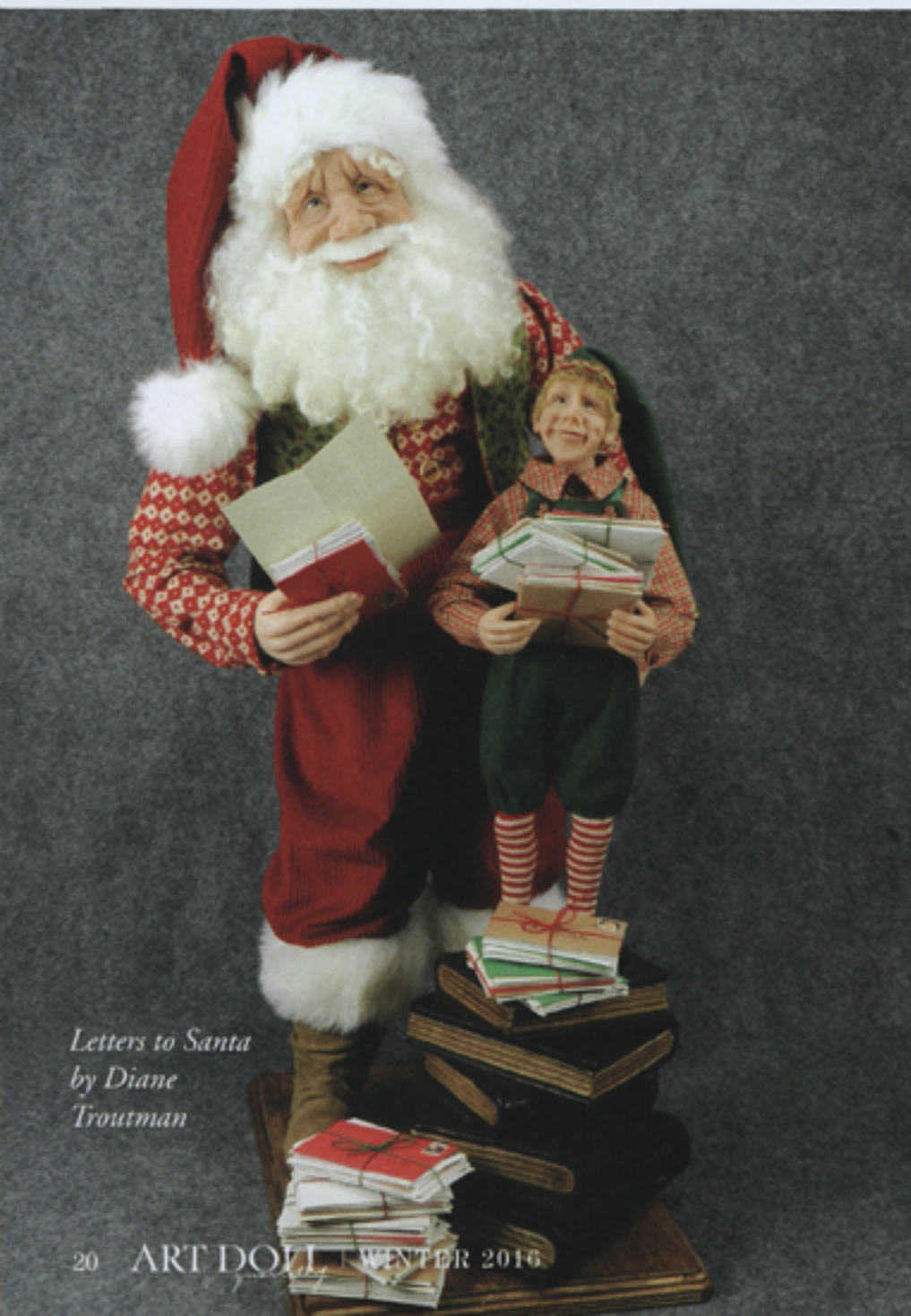
With Christmas just around the corner, I would be remiss if I did not include the work of Diane Troutman and her Santas. Diane has always had a fondness for Christmas, and in 1996 sculpted her first Santa. She's been on a roll ever since! Her work has been featured in many doll-related magazines, as well as in galleries throughout the country, and was even featured on a segment of "Home and Garden" on HGTV.

"My intrigue for the art form fueled my never-ending quest for knowledge. Through workshops and experience, I refined my sculpting and design techniques," she explains. Diane designs and creates her own costumes, and, at times, recycles real fur or leather from vintage coats. Beards and wigs are created from washed mohair and other natural fibers. All this ensures that her gentle Santas are truly unique and her style is recognizable.

"Santa speaks a magical language to all people," she believes. When creating, Diane finds herself deeply immersed in her Christmas memories. "Time stands still, and when I look at the finished figure, I can barely remember performing each step." Needless to say, Diane's endearing Santas bring as much joy to her as they do to her collectors!



*Belsnickle
by Diane
Troutman*



*Letters to Santa
by Diane
Troutman*





Verity
by Deanna Hogan

Deanna Hogan

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"I've always been at home with cloth, needle, and thread. I started using my mother's sewing machine at the age of 6, sewing clothes for my dollies. I'm drawn to color, fabric, and texture," says doll artist Deanna Hogan.

In the mid-1990s, after purchasing the book "Cloth Dolls: How to Make Them" (McGraw-Hill, 1991) by Miriam Gourley, Deanna's eyes were opened to the world of art dolls. "I couldn't wait to explore all the things that could be done with cloth," she says. She soon found herself designing and publishing her own doll patterns and selling them at local doll shows. Her wonderful dolls stood out and called for attention. It was at one of these shows where she met the then-president of ODACA, who encouraged her to apply for membership. She has been a member since 2006, and her work has been featured in numerous doll-related publications. As an emergency room nurse for nearly 30 years, Deanna has found doll making to be a creative outlet after a stressful day at work.

While her passion is in the area of all-cloth dolls, in order to grow, Deanna continues to explore new techniques and now and then creates mixed-media dolls. "I love challenging myself and keeping things interesting," she says. ➔



Amandine
by Deanna Hogan

Steampunk Parade
by Stevi T



Steampunk Flying Rat
by Stevi T



I hope you have enjoyed the behind the scenes looks at ODACA and its artists. Becoming a member of ODACA is a goal for many art doll artists. The application process is a great experience, as applicants are offered constructive criticism and valuable suggestions from a committee that can help them not only hone their skills, but also assist them in finding their own definable style, all of which may improve their chances for membership.

All our artists are generous and willing to share their doll-making knowledge through workshops and classes held at various art venues throughout the country. Feel free to contact them to find out where they'll be teaching next. Good luck! ❖

Lillian Alberti, an ODACA artist, is an art doll artist and workshop instructor living in New York's Hudson River Valley. You can see more of her work on her website at a-lil-whimsy.com and watch her doll-making process on her blog, cottagehill.wordpress.com.

Stevi T
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"I have been sculpting, be it with clay or soft sculpture, ever since I can remember," says Stevi T. "I knew years ago that creating art was in my future." An ODACA member since 1996, Stevi has been creating one-of-a-kind art dolls for nearly 35 years. "I'm inspired by nature's creatures, magical fairy tales, and all things that could be."

With several appearances on "Regis and Kathy Lee" to her credit, this award winner's career took off after relocating to the Pennsylvania countryside where she discovered a passion for needle felting. "I found alpaca fiber to be soft with no lanolin or grease," she says. "It was easy to wash and had highlights that enhanced the whimsy of the fairies and other creatures I create." Her new surroundings provided an endless supply of interesting critters that inspired her. This gave rise to her sweet, needle-felted mice, which range from 1-3 inches in size. Later, her menagerie grew to include chipmunks, squirrels, and raccoons.

"I love what I do and I believe that shows in the finished product," Stevi says. "As a person who creates, the greatest accomplishment one can achieve is to truly connect with another human being. If I can do that, I have succeeded in what I set out to do as an artist!"

ODACA Membership

Thinking of applying for ODACA membership? Here are a few tips that I hope will be helpful in achieving your goal:

- Take time to look at and study your work carefully; concentrate on trouble spots and work out any kinks.
- Join a doll-making club in your area. Being in the company of other doll makers is inspiring; you'll share new doll-making techniques and find friendship and encouragement.
- Join forces with a doll-making friend to apply for membership. Encourage each other throughout the application process and portfolio development.
- Constructive criticism is defined as "carefully considered suggestions meant to be helpful." In other words, don't take it personally.
- "If you at first you don't succeed, try, try again." This old adage still applies today!