



DIVA Members' Gallery – Rogena Degge – Works: Present to Past

Preface:

This is my first one-person show since undergraduate school. Five years ago I retired from teaching at the University of Oregon, and rested. Soon, I began sitting in bookstores, reading; in coffee shops alone or meeting friends. I was looking differently at art on coffee shop walls, going to more galleries, and talking to artists, gallery owners and managers. Then, two years ago, with encouragement of friends, I picked up a pencil to sketch a lilac blossom in Jani Hoberg's studio.

Three Considerations for viewing my work:

- My current art work began with delicate, tentative etchings inspired by a fallen leaf of a *Tilia Cordata* tree. This led to searches of images of this family of trees and to a series of other "tilia-inspired" etchings. My subsequent and most challenging etching, technically, was an image of a Tanzanian woman and her child whom I met and photographed during an African birding safari. This life-changing trip inspired bolder approaches to subjects--in watercolor, monoprints, and multimedia.
- I love color, and birds. My work here is a reflection of both the trip to Africa and my past. I realized only recently that my fascination with birds, and collection of bird images and objects, began in childhood--with our family parrot. His favorite saying was "Mama's a bad girl" while he pulled clothespins off the clothes as Mom patiently re-hung them.

- My re-emerging interest in photography is also demonstrated here. I find myself returning to past work, re-examining what I saw, created, and taught.

Personal Statement:

This show represents my re-engagement with art as an artist. It is difficult, frustrating, and constantly exhilarating. And, I am having a great time! I've become connected differently to the diverse and dedicated Eugene arts community, I've re-discovered the value of supportive artist friendships, and enjoyed the gift of having a great teacher.

Artist's Background:

With a bachelor's degree and certification in Art, my first teaching assignment was in Art, with mainly Mexican-American, middle school students. These 7 years of teaching were a personal and educational gift I could never have imagined! These years, plus the politics of the 1960s and following decades, fundamentally re-shaped my world-view and my subsequent profession in arts education. For 30 years I taught university courses based on multiple views of the cultural and political power of the arts.