

# An artist and a champion

Fay Chandler creates and tirelessly promotes art

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The name Fay Chandler rings a bell to many of us and for any number of reasons. Chandler is the founder of Art Connection, a nonprofit organization that expands public access to visual art through a unique art donation and placement program by working with artists and collectors who wish to donate artwork to public and nonprofit organizations. As a visual artist Chandler has had more than 30 solo exhibitions of her paintings and sculptures, and her work can be found in Massachusetts at the Danforth Museum, the DeCordova Museum, and at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Chandler also sits on various advisory councils for the arts, including those at MIT and Harvard. Her biography is large, but her solo exhibit, *Viewpoints*, at the Boston Center for the Arts is larger. Objects and canvases ranging from the minuscule to the magnificent and spanning 10 years currently fill the Cyclorama.

The exhibit's first impression is of a flea market. People swarm about tables and shelves filled with unusual objects, constructed of discarded parts. Unlike a flea market, however, the buttons, combs and children's shoes take on new life, assembled into old women, pets, or even, humorously, United Nations delegates. Each homespun object d'art exemplifies a certain patience, attention to minutiae and a spirit that unites the community of constructions. Despite the great freedoms Chandler takes in her range of media and subject matter there is something controlled and mastered in each work that makes them distinctly the artist's own. People made from shower brushes, dowels, razors or hinges share a similar playful innocence.

"Blind Date" is made from the receiver of an antiquated black phone that wears large, pink eyeglasses. The individual sits alone, somewhat sad or maybe apprehensive, holding a bouquet of plastic purple violets. "I Would, Wood You?" is a simple creature whose face is made from a circular slice of wood, his glued-on eyes presenting an almost pathetic curiosity, like that of a young child. By turning a plastic foot inward ever so slightly or placing a hand made from yarn on the head of some very worried looking character made from thread, pebbles and plastic, Chandler populates the room with endearing emotions and animates what were once the most lifeless of objects.

An experimental move from oil to latex enamel has made Fay Chandler's paintings even more unpredictable than her earlier works. The artist herself is often surprised by the results, lending a true freedom to both process and her finished products. Her many, many canvases are peopled terrains offering figurative reflections. While sometimes she paints solitary individuals, most often Chandler offers us canvases replete with forms and faces interlocking with each other in playful, psychological or brooding scenarios. "Rush Hour" features figures standing sandwiched side by side, filling the canvas from left to right. Her human forms are simple, cartoonish and seemingly unconcerned with their tight

confines. In "Who Me?" one such form feels singled out in the flowing, colorful mass of pressed together forms and turns to face us.

In many of her paintings human forms become so simple that they read like blocks of wood or the spines of a book. Chandler actually makes human forms out of book spines and blocks of wood in her three-dimensional creations. Regardless of medium, the human visage is everywhere recognizable. Colorful, languid bodies march beside larger faces, hands, flowers, the sun and moon.

In "Recollection" simplified forms accumulate upwards like colorful, crystallized shapes sizing each other up, staring back at the viewer or simply disappearing into the background. Often, in light, wet-looking pastel colors Chandler zooms in on a head

or face around which other forms linger. In other works the outlines of bodies gently spiral around the canvas, swirling into a nebulous whole. Her random samples of people appear in car mirrors or under magnifying lenses in more recent paintings, as if the artist is gaining over time a more precise perspective on her populations.

Whether you know Fay Chandler for her social action, her sprawling canvases or her meticulous objects, after time spent in the BCA's Cyclorama you will know her better. *Viewpoints* offers multiple perspectives on the human visage, objects often overlooked, and a decade worth of works by this influential local artist.

"Viewpoints" is at the BCA to April 27.



Fay Chandler's "Gloria," 1999, mixed media on canvas. Above, Fay Chandler at the opening of her retrospective show, "Viewpoints" at the Boston Center for the Arts Cyclorama on April 9.