

JOAN MATEY ARTIST STATEMENT

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One of the most important parts of artistic endeavor for me is emotional connection. Since childhood, I have escaped from reality's harshness through my art. I strive to convey serious issues under the guise of a humorous setting. I have made art pertaining to mental health issues ("Bye-bye Bi-polar Bears") suicide, bad bosses at work, the passing of my husband to cancer and many issues that any person can relate to. I often make dioramas depicting social behavior. I often offer viewers a means to participate in the artwork in a way that helps them to share their feelings. I enjoy manipulating words in my art pieces, which often have double entendres. The creative process of experimenting with different materials, and the connection to life is very therapeutic for me.

On the Gulf Coast, I was inspired to create a humorous nautical performance piece to add to the annual town festival. I've named it the FISHY FASHION SHOW, and I have produced many costumes and miscellaneous nautical debris. My models come from my local community and they are often humorous characters, like the *Red Tide She Devil*, the *Good Fryer* and *Marine Antoinette*. Although the show is a reminder of how to keep our coastline safe and sustainable, my main objective is to remind adults to have fun. Like my artwork, the show dialogue is full of puns and plenty of locally targeted comedy.

I often teach new artists how to interpret their own thoughts and feelings to produce a tangible, expressive artwork that reflects what's important to them. I have a presentation about art as an emotional response, entitled "ART AS AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE." I also have a short documentary about the making of the art piece on mental health: "Bye-bye Bi-polar Bears or the Tundra Conundrum" which was purchased by Dr. Patch Adams for the free hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia.

I received my degree in art from Florida State University where I was glad to have had the freedom of Directing for the last two years, when experimentation was welcomed and a passionate compulsion to make art was encouraged.