THE GiANTS HOUSE
The happiest garden on earth
★ Akaroa, New Zealand ★

Sculpture, Mosaic Garden, Contemporary Art Gallery

Artist – Josie Martin

Garden of National Significance

"The Giant's House" was named by a small girl looking up at it from the valley below, who said it was so big it must be the house of a Giant.

The house was built in 1880 by the first BNZ Bank Manager in Akaroa, who came from Linton in England. It took 5 years to build the house using hardwoods of Totara and Kauri, milled from Banks Peninsula. The exception is the magnificent mahogany staircase that was imported from France and reassembled in the grand entrance hall. The house, now restored, is the home of artist Josie Martin. She has lived at 'The Giant's House' for 20+ years and been working on the concrete mosaic sculptures for 15+ years.

Josie is an established modern artist, painter and sculptor, who saw the opportunity of combining contemporary art while respecting the historic, and enhancing both by contrast. She has breathed new life into the old house. There are her original paintings throughout, besides many quirky and playful creative features. Josie bought the house because of its special warm feel and the wall space, so perfect for hanging paintings.

Trained in Horticulture and Art, Josie combines her two passions throughout her home and garden. She has been actively involved in the fine arts for 40 years, teaching art workshops, been the recipient of many awards and scholarships, and attended 20 art residencies in Italy, USA, France, Spain, Turkey, India, China and Mexico. She has exhibited widely and has had 29 solo exhibitions. Her work is in collections nationally and internationally. The new Contemporary Art Gallery Designed by Sir Miles Warren at 'The Giant's House', now showcases her work.

There was no garden at the "The Giant's House" in the beginning so there was an open canvas, Josie designed and created her garden, doing most of the work herself. Digging the garden, she found shards of lovely old china, buried because there was no rubbish collection in those early days. She saved it up, being too beautiful to throw away and she felt it belonged to the history of the old house. She decided to try her hand at mosaicing the front step area with the china, plus tiles she had bought on her travels. She then did the floor of the conservatory like a 'stone' carpet' and then moved on to transform and do a big interactive sculptural installation at the top of the drive now named – 'Place des Amis', and on it went...

With help in construction, by local craftsmen, the installations have evolved and grown. Josie designs and works on the forms of the sculptures, built with reinforcing steel and concrete. She then colours and mosaics the works. Tiles are mainly used with some broken china, glass, and mirrors etc.

Ever adventurous, Josie is mindful of the larger world and other ways of seeing. Josie's elegant abstract sculptures are seriously playful and a celebration of life. They are surreal, whimsical and flamboyant, organic and eccentric. Constantly changing metamorphosing forms refer to her interest in horticulture reflecting the zany balance of nature. Her work seems to pulse with a continually evolving sense of growth and development, with unpredictability and surprise in the final results. Josie travels overseas each year, living in different environments and having new experiences, which all culminate in the wonderful theatre of art that you see in the garden.

Bed & Breakfast, special events, functions, weddings and soirees, music, art workshops, tour groups (times by arrangement) and day visitors are all now part of the life at "The Giant's House".

Open: 12.00pm – 5.00pm Daily 26th Dec to the end of April, &   2-4pm 1st May - 24th Dec

Web Site: www.thegiantshouse.co.nz   Telephone: (03) 304 7501, Akaroa

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- **Photographs are permitted but must NOT be used for any commercial purposes.**
- **CHILDREN - please WALK, no RUNNING in the garden, gallery and NO climbing on the sculptures and ponds.**

Thank you for visiting The Giant's House.