

The Giants house

THE HAPPIEST GARDEN ON EARTH

**Sculpture, Mosaic Garden,
Contemporary Art Gallery**

Artist - Josie Martin



GARDEN OF INTERNATIONAL 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 the 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 Giants House for 26 years and been working on the concrete mosaic sculptures for 22 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 30 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 Giants 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 as 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 brought on her travels. She 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 building many big installations, to where it is today.

With help in construction by local craftsmen, the installations have evolved and grown. Josie designs and works on the forms of the sculptures, built when reinforcing steel and concrete. She then colors 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 theater of art that you see in the garden.

Thank you for visiting the Giants House

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

Open everyday except December 25th
11 am-4pm from 1st October to end April
11 am- 3pm from 1st May to 30th September

Website : www.thegiantshouse.co.nz
Telephone : (03) 304 7501
Email : thegiantshousesnz@gmail.com



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