



Debra Kay Chronister

DRAWN TO CLAY

BIRDS OF ROCKPORT

April 14 - June 4, 2023
rockportartcenter.com

Artist Statement

I've been a bird geek since 7th grade; as a birder, a former bird rehabilitator, and trainer of native birds as education ambassadors. When invited to exhibit my bird sculptures in the Rockport Center for the Arts' Jeanie & Bill Wyatt Gallery, I knew I wanted to make a new set of work that responded specifically to this beautiful new space - remarkable to view from the outside and engaging to experience from the inside. The view from the outside suggested light-colored birds would be most visible, and the color pallet of the architecture suggested neutral hues with spikes of color. I wanted dynamic, sizable birds indigenous to the area for these life-size sculptures. I had plenty to choose from! Richard Schendel kindly offered a beautiful studio space for a residency right on the bay, so all the artwork was made right here in Rockport with many walks for inspiration.

As the concept began to gel, I sketched and measured study skins of ibis, egrets, wood storks and others at the Welder Wildlife Foundation... The species selection became clearer... The unifying idea of a walk on a pier floated up... the gray pilings providing an orderly setting for each species pair.

Of all the potential species, I locked onto the wood storks first because they are full of personality, visually interesting, and rare. Plus, I have an affinity for underdogs and they are a Threatened Species in Texas. I've seen them riding the thermals here and they are an exhilarating sight.

The white ibis are so whimsical! Watching them shopping in the wetlands clinched their place on the pilings.

I planned to have a pair of laughing gulls but noticed a splendid pair of royal terns among the gulls on a nearby spit. Their sassy posturing and dynamic coloration fit the "bill".

Seeing an osprey dive into the bay talons first and emerge with a mullet is a superb thrill. They are so charismatic! I visit their nest sites each year while at residency in Maryland. They are a conservation success story, their population rebounding after the banning of bird-killing pesticides.

The birds and pilings are unified both in their color palette and the raku firing process which creates the black crazing on the surface. Raku, a firing process originally from Japan and further developed in America, is a dynamic collaboration between the elements and the artwork. The clear glaze is melted onto the forms at 1845°F and removed from the kiln at that temperature so the Rockport breezes can compose the network of fine fissures on the surface. After a few minutes, the sculpture is placed into a can with paper which combusts, filling the minute fissures with black carbon. It is as exhilarating and unpredictable an experience as a great day of birding.



Osprey, #1
Raku-fired Ceramic
20" x 16" x 4" (bird)
24" x 10" x 10" (piling)

\$4,250 (bird + piling)
\$2,750 (just the bird)



Piling, #2
Raku-fired Ceramic
24" x 10" x 10"

\$1,500



Wood Stork, #3

Raku-fired Ceramic
27" x 12" x 5" (bird)
24" x 10" x 10" (piling)

\$4,500 (bird + piling)
\$3,000 (just the bird)



Wood Stork, #4

Raku-fired Ceramic
26" x 17" x 5" (bird)
24" x 10" x 10" (piling)

\$4,500 (bird + piling)
\$3,000 (just the bird)



Royal Tern, #5

Raku-fired Ceramic

16" x 13.5" x 3" (bird)

24" x 10" x 10" (piling)

\$4,000 (bird + piling)

\$2,500 (just the bird)



Royal Tern, #6

Raku-fired Ceramic

15" x 15.5" x 3" (bird)

24" x 10" x 10" (piling)

\$4,000 (bird + piling)

\$2,500 (just the bird)



Ibis, #7

Raku-fired Ceramic
21" x 17" x 6.5" (bird)
24" x 10" x 10" (piling)

\$4,250 (bird + piling)
\$2,750 (just the bird)
SOLD



Ibis, #8

Raku-fired Ceramic
23" x 23" x 7" (bird)
24" x 10" x 10" (piling)

\$4,250 (bird + piling)
\$2,750 (just the bird)

How to Acquire Art from the Catalog

To purchase work in the catalog please call Rockport Center for the Arts at (361) 729-5519, or stop by the Gallery during normal business hours (Tue-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-4). The Gallery is located at 204 S. Austin St. in Rockport, Texas.

Payment method options include cash, checks and major credit cards.

Prices listed are before taxes. During check-out, taxes will be added at the local tax rate of 8.25%.

To view the work in person Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM, and Sunday noon - 4 PM. To view the art outside of this time please call 361-729-5519 or email elena@rockportartcenter.com to make arrangements.

To have work shipped please make arrangements with the art handler of your choice. Shipping expenses are the responsibility of the buyer. Below are three companies we are familiar with who should be able to manage your art shipping needs. We strongly encourage you to insure your purchase.

- Ship & Crate, Attn: Chad Miller, 361-461-2416, chad@shipandcrate.com
- Postal Annex, Attn: Gayle Thomas, 361-992-9323, pa12004@postalannex.com
- UPS Store #6986, Attn: Zamir, 361-356-1032, store6986@theupsstore.com

For additional information or questions please call Elena Rodriguez at (361) 729-5519, or email elena@rockportartcenter.com.