

## **Karen Koch**

### *Temple of Hopes and Dreams*

This piece is inspired by childhood memories and a love of the materials we get to use as artists. The structure is informed by memory jugs, a Victorian folk art tradition of encrusting vessels with small sentimental objects.

Around the center are paint caps and nozzles from empty tubes. I have been saving them because I love their shape.

Paint tubes are loaded with associations of hopes, dreams, new beginnings. Each tube is an exciting possibility: perhaps the next painting will be a masterwork, a breakthrough, a gem. Some colors are old standbys, like good friends we rely on day in and day out. New colors are like first dates: uncertain, hopeful, untried. So much optimism in a fresh tube of paint.

The monopoly houses jumbled at the top are supported by the paint tubes, by the work. Is the work enough to support the home?

This support for this structure is a nondescript glass florist's vase inverted over a ceramic bubble jar given to me by an artist in California many years ago. The base is made from marble trophy bases that a friend earned at her early gymnastics competitions.

The end of the bubble wand is the spire at the top. Bubbles bring out the kid in all of us.

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### *Pen Fetish*

A thousand years from now, when archaeologists unearth my home, they will be mystified by the great number of pens they find: in every drawer, between couch cushions, in jacket pockets. Ones that still write, others that are dried up. Broken ones. Cherished sentimental ones. They are everywhere!

I think of it as the grownup version of the crayon box – that obsessive need to write or draw at any moment.

My purse right now contains at least 10 pens, and that's only because I'm traveling light. I can't imagine less. They are my security totem.

The structure is informed by memory jugs, a Victorian folk art tradition of encrusting vessels with small sentimental objects.

I have adhered old pens and pencils to the outside of a glass jar with mortar and then painted the entire structure. I want the effect to resemble an ancient urn to elevate these simple utilitarian objects into something almost mythic.