



25

Growing Together

By Paula Diane Relf

Artist Statement: A tree of faces built from discarded timbers and old shovels and other rusted material, this piece attempts to show how a community is built if allows desperate elements to come together as a unit of diverse, often disparaged, parts to work together.

Artist Biography: Much of my art is about finding discarded objects and manipulating them to explore their potential; then combining these new objects into statements of appreciation of the mundane. It questions the validity of a throwaway society, the value of always needing new, and the perfection of machinery precision. It celebrates the daily detritus that has lost its meaning and gives it a new opportunity to open eyes and minds.

My art is based on my experience with and love of the natural environment. As such, it is never perfect, incorporating rough edge and unbalanced lines into its symmetry in acknowledgement of the broken beauty of nature.

Working with Rust I have long had a love affair with rust and much of my work explores rust's potential in creative expression in many forms: wood and rust sculpture; rust dyed and printed textiles and paper; wearable art; metal masks; altered art tiles; photography; and digital graphic "collages".

Bio Born and raised poor in Texas, I learned young to play with discarded items and appreciate the value of things that most people found useless. A career in academia had demands that derailed me from playing with art. But since retirement several years ago, I have continuously created and recreated my art.