

Marian McEvoy's Inventive New Project

The onetime design editor makes a foray into art



McEvoy's Sculptures in glossy red and black.

"Winters are long and cold here," Marian McEvoy says, with a laugh, explaining "Corkillage," her star turn at New York City's Eerdmans Fine Art. The sale exhibition, which opens Tuesday, May 2, is the glamorous Hudson Valley resident's quixotic and highly seductive take on the American tramp art tradition, as encouraged by the gallery's creative forces, Emily Evans Eerdmans and Jane Stubbs.



One of the pieces in McEvoy's home.

Using literally thousands of acorns, pine cones, and corks that McEvoy sources on Etsy (“Some of the acorns come from Latvia; isn’t that romantic-sounding, Latvian acorns?”) and employing a deft hand with a glue gun and X-acto knife, she has produced 41 homemade extravaganzas that she makes in the sunlit studio of her superlatively chic riverside cottage in Wappinger’s Falls, New York. “They’re clumsy and amateurish, but they are decorative,” says the best-dressed former editor-in-chief of *House Beautiful* and *ELLE DÉCOR*, longtime Paris fashion editor for *WWD*, and author of *Glue Gun Decor* (Abrams, 2005) and *Bill Willis* (2011). “There’s a certain naiveté about them that’s heartfelt.”

Shapely picture and mirror frames are inlaid with thinly sliced, honey-toned corks and accented with deep brown acorns. A decorative panel bears elaborate encrustations of the same materials, radiating from a bodacious central medallion. An octagonal covered box is punctuated

with perky finials fashioned of small pine cones. There are tissue boxes, too, and obelisks and more. Some of McEvoy's creations are left in Mother Nature's loamy colors, while others are spray-painted in McEvoy's signature shades of red, black, and white. And if some of her more architectonic creations resemble medieval castles (full disclosure: I own one of those) or Shah Jahan's Jama Masjid mosque in Agra, so be it.



"It's not on purpose," McEvoy observes. "But if they do resemble a known building, all the better." As for her technique, it's rather straightforward. "You just find a shape, a rectangle or a cone, to start. Nothing is drawn out or measured, because I don't have the patience to do that," she explains. "It's more fun to jump in, glue the first piece, and you're off." McEvoy quickly cautions that what she does is craft not art: "I'm not an artist. I just love making things with my hands, like cooking. It's terribly satisfying." Need more proof? Follow her Instagram, @gustthepoodle, and get inspired by her table settings, flower arrangements, gardening, and, yes, all that corkillage.