



## Judy Kensley McKie

Bronze Furniture

Excerpts from catalog by Michael Monroe

Over the past 30 years, Judy Kensley McKie has produced one of the richest and most significant bodies of work in contemporary furniture. In her fine art furniture, she has been exploring her response to nature through animal imagery – the relationship of form and spirit. Charged with a deep sense of primordial rhythm, lyrical movement and mystery, her furniture sculptures reflect our deep yearning to be at one with the forces of nature. Working as an *animalier*, McKie has distilled nature's infinite beauty and wisdom into a dense, deeply personal iconography. With a foot in both myth and allegory, her imagery finds an echoing response in audiences, who uncover in her furniture a richly layered, familiar desire. All those who trace their roots back to the earth can appreciate her work. It is at once serious and playful, elegant and magical. The pieces are stylized and primitive, yet sophisticated.

Traversing the gap that separates art from furniture, Judy McKie's work evokes a magical world in which fantasy and reality, man and animal, form and function, cease to exist in alienated realms. Her oeuvre is the result of a complex order of beauty caught in a perpetual state of interplay between two distinct, though related, forms. One finds expression in simple but elegant pieces featuring highly abstracted low relief surface carvings. The other is characterized by voluptuous curves and sinuous movements indicative of the animals that serve as her muse.

Trained as a painter, McKie often carved her early cabinets and chest in low relief that suggested drawings on wood, sometimes painted, sometimes not. It was natural that her initial departure from wood was to cast bronze. Now in her current work, McKie is experimenting with a greatly expanded palette of materials.

Her genius for animal sculpture is grafted to an unbending commitment to comfort and function. She is admired by her peers as much for her character as for her furniture. In June, 2006, the Furniture Society presented her with its award for lifetime achievement.

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