

## **Artist's statement, Jeanne Aurel-Schneider-- the work of 2000 to present**

In 1998 our second son, third child, Fred, suffered a very serious accident which left him a quadriplegic; he since has learned to live and continue his work as a structural engineer--a very brave struggle that continues to give him many difficult challenges.

For almost two years afterwards, I could not paint. It was as though his paralysis was also mine; I fell into a deep depression, suffered from severe shingles on my face along the auditory nerve. I would try to paint or draw and nothing would happen.

Then I recalled a phrase "Thru a glass, darkly" and I tried to find the source. A good friend reminded me of St. Paul's speech to the Corinthians 13. In one translation the phrase "Thru a glass, darkly" appears; in another, "Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: fath, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love".

This got me going again. I decided to work on unstretched linen; my thinking was and still is, that the stretcher bars are not necessary; the essence is in the painting itself and the fabric on which it was painted. Fred's essence is his spirit, his brain, his personality, not his spine. I want the fabric of the painting to show and not be hidden by gesso. Most of the work I have done since that time has been on unstretched Belgian linen; the first few paintings I actually ironed the fabric after washing it; then I decided that the wrinkles that developed during washing gave me the texture I wanted and a third dimension. The work is hung like tapestries, with a support threaded through a sewn pocket at the top of the painting.

My inspiration comes from the area of France in which we are living six months of the year. The flora of the Forest de Gresigne; the vineyards, the seasons; but also our travels around the world--Australia, its Red Center, Venice, Singapore, Bangkok, Budapest,etc. My vegetable garden here in Ste. Cecile du Cayrou gives me produce for the kitchen; sometimes the seed packets travel upstairs to the studio to go into a collage. So I do have some pieces that are stretched and also some on paper; somehow I cannot totally abandon paper, which I love.

Last year when I was diagnosed with breast cancer I started working with a very delicate and textured mulberry paper; its fragility corresponded with my own physical and psychological state. Life is our best teacher. Proust says it well, "We do not receive wisdom, we must discover it for ourselves, after a journey through the wilderness which no one else can make for us, which no one can spare us, for our wisdom is the point of view from which we come at last to regard the world".

**Jeanne Aurel-Schneider, July 30, 2011**