

The Broad Side

Mara Superior's Vision of the Obama White House

Sarah Bittenwieser 7 Years Ago



Artist Mara Superior never thought of herself as a political woman. Her work has been exhibited in museums and galleries for decades, and is in museum collections and private collections, as well. Now, it's not as if she never had opinions or shied away from the news, but her art expressly was *not* about social commentary. She says, "I always wanted my work to be about beauty, to be idealized."

But then, her favorite president—our current President Barack Obama—was elected and Superior wanted to see him get to do his job. "I was so distressed that Mitch McConnell, the Republicans' leading Senator, showed such disrespect in the way he expressed his main goal to be the assurance that President Obama only serve one term. It felt like an obstruction of progress," Superior reflects.

Superior's admiration for the President only grew, as she observed "his coolness in the face of adversity." She notes that, "neither he nor his people reacted."

Superior, though, did react.

“I felt the impetus to do something respectful to accentuate what he’s done with his hands tied behind his back, given the Republicans’ complete unwillingness to compromise about anything.”

She did so in part by creating an Obama White House sculpture that remains in process. The porcelain White House has the President’s bust atop it (practically a nod to Mount Rushmore). Superior lists his accomplishments in her elegant, slightly funky scrawl. Tiny plates commemorate specific accomplishments President Obama has achieved during his tenure in office. Superior says, “He’s gotten quite a stack of plates. I will continue to add to the pile. I am also going to put tiny sculptures of Michelle, the girls and the dog on the White House lawn.”

Her longtime friend—owner of Ferrin Gallery and art dealer—Leslie Ferrin has brought the Obama White House sculpture and related political works including Obama’s Tea Party to shows in New York City and the Berkshires. The piece will be displayed in Northampton, Massachusetts in October. Superior has tried to interest stores and museum shops in displaying the political work during this election season—to no avail. She muses, “I had no idea what a brave move Leslie made with her willingness to represent and show this work. I believe in it so strongly, and what I’d love the most is for this piece to find its way into Obama’s White House, the one where he lives—and where I hope he’ll live for another four years.”

You can find guest contributor Sarah Bittenwieser on Twitter at @standshadows and at her blog, [Standing in the Shadows](#).

Image courtesy Mara Superior