

# **ONE PAGE FACT SHEET**

## **Research Committee Presentation**

**Date of Presentation: 10/6/14**

**Docent Presenting: Valerie Mittl**

**Artist's Name: Marilyn Anne Levine**

**Nationality: Canadian and American**

### **Facts about the artist's life:**

Born in Canada, Lived 1935-2005

Originally trained as a chemist in Canada

Moved to San Francisco in 1969 and pursued an MA and MFA in ceramics at UC, Berkeley

Worked for 35 years doing trompe-l'oeil versions of old leather bags, belts, jackets, and shoes---her work was unlike any other ceramicist of her generation

### **What influenced the artist's work?**

A gift of a pair of old boots, torn and burned through use in a foundry, redirected her interests; she saw old leather objects as metaphors for the passage of time and the scars of life; she thought of her work as timeless and not of a particular fashion

**Of her work, Marilyn said, "I want your visual sense to tell you something different from your tactile sense, and then experience the dilemma that that presents you with. "**

**Image of the work    2010.2083**

**Title of Work – Flea Market Bag (in "Beyond Craft" exhibit)**

**Date – 1971**

**Description – stoneware and string**



**Title of Work --Black School Bag (in Mint Collection)**

**Date-- 1980**

**Description - stoneware**

**Image of the work    1997.73.52**

**List three interesting facts about this artist or exhibit you think docents should know and which might be of interest in giving tours.**

**1. She experimented with fiberglass, nylon, and Dacron (new materials at the time) in her work to give her pieces increased tensile strength--her background as a chemist came in handy! She ultimately settled on using a stoneware body to which she added 1-2% chopped**



**nylon fiber; she built the pieces much like you would build a real leather suitcase or bag;**

**2. Her pieces took her weeks and months to finish. It was a meticulous process;**

**3. In her early years, she experimented in the California Funk style, however, she left it behind to do her own thing. Her work was initially much more accepted in America than it was in Canada.**

**List three questions you might ask children or adults about this artist or his work during a tour. For example: Why do you think David Gilhooly uses frogs in a number of his pieces?**

**1. What do you think this is? What is it made out of?**

**2. Do you think this could be passed off as the "real thing"? Why or why not?**

**3. If you were a ceramic artist, do you think you would get bored doing what she does?**

**List the resources that were most helpful in researching the artist and the art work:**

**Marilyn Anne Levine's website [www.marilynlevine.com](http://www.marilynlevine.com)**

**Marliyn Levine: A Decade of Ceramic Sculpture, January 13 to March 8, 1981, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1981), 4.**

**Her New York Times obituary dated April 10, 2005**

**An oral history interview with her in the "Archives of American Art"**