

Muriel Buck®



Laurel was a self-taught painter. She saw herself as a folk artist, telling stories. “In our fast-paced, changing world,” she said, “we need symbols that are a reminder of the ongoing world of the spirit.” On some level, her work was always about bringing different cultures together, and about our connection with the earth and all living things, ideas that have only increased in relevance today. Laurel was always incredibly prolific. Her art will forever convey a sense of joy and passion and lightness. There is an inner strength in her figures, with their bold lines and sinuous curves, and something irrepressible in the explosion of her colors.

She created brilliantly coloured, vibrant and moving themes with paint and paper, exquisitely embellished with gold and silver.

The universe of her imagination was fertile, burgeoning, uplifting, egalitarian, a place where every flower and dragonfly was transformed into something...magical and beautiful.

Her Life:

The number of moving stories about the giving, receiving and sharing of Laurel Burch art are a reflection not only of the woman herself, but of all the collectors who are drawn by her spirit as well as her art. Many of them know and have been deeply touched by her life story. At the age of 14, Laurel Burch left her tumultuous home life in Southern California with nothing more than a paper bag of clothing and the rare bone disease, osteopetrosis, with which she was born. Cooking, cleaning, and babysitting for her room and board, she embarked on a search for some stable ground to support her fragile body. Homes changed as often as the years, and at the age of 19, she migrated north, with hair straight to her waist, skirts to her ankles, and a baby daughter on her back. With no job, no money, and no dreams, Laurel Burch reached the Golden Gate of San Francisco.

It was 1965 and the Haight-Ashbury district of the city was filled with strange and colorful people. You could be yourself, do your own thing, and wear flowers in your hair. Lost souls found a home, and Laurel was among them.

Part of Laurel's search for connectedness was evidenced in the jewelry she began to make for herself and wear – old coins, bones, and beads arranged into earrings and necklaces. Wearing them gave her a sense of belonging, if only to an exotic world of her own making. Fascinated by her otherworldly adornments, people on the street began to ask her where she got them, and this artistic validation gave Laurel the sense of self-worth she had long been missing. Her creations became bridges to friendships and patrons.

Still challenged by the frequency of broken bones caused by her illness, at the age of 23, Laurel gave birth to her second child. Passion and perseverance eventually prevailed, and by the 1970's, a small business blossomed. Hiring friends, neighbors, and people off the street, Laurel created original pieces of jewelry and taught others how to duplicate them. She sold her designs to shopkeepers up and down the coast of California and came back home when her boxes and baskets were empty.

In 1972, she was invited to the People's Republic of China where she explored the possibility of manufacturing her jewelry designs in cloisonné. For Laurel, the day the artisans unveiled the first twelve pairs of her earrings was an epiphany. The idea that these little treasures from her personal world could be translated so beautifully, and that she could now share the images in her head with so many more people, felt tremendously exciting and seemed like another door opening in her life.

Her designs started appearing in Vogue and Bazaar. Soon, she branched out from jewelry to handbags, ceramics and apparel. Always wanting to keep a balance between the manufactured pieces and original hand-crafted works, Laurel continued to produce one-of-a-kind art objects in her studio, and began making trips to Bali, where she worked with traditional woodcarvers to create masks and statues from her fantastical designs. By the mid-1980's, the former flower child was the CEO of a multi-million dollar business. Forbes ran a profile of her. Every Macy's store in the country had an entire Laurel Burch section. The Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco named her "Entrepreneur of the Year."

Laurel Burch was always incredibly prolific. Even during her long periods of convalescence, when she was forced to paint from a bed or wheelchair, she seldom put her brushes down. The

Laurel Burch design archive holds many thousands of images. Chronicle Books published a coffee table book of her cat designs alone. The sheer variety of her work is a great attraction to her collectors.

Laurel performed hundreds of speaking engagements around the country. For obvious reasons, the subject of healing was always close to her heart, and many of her talks dealt with the use of art and creativity in the curative process. “Being physically vulnerable is, in a lot of ways, a tremendous advantage in terms of human wisdom. My bone disease was my gift,” she said. Laurel always lent her talents to a long list of charitable causes, designing book covers, posters, and murals around the issues that were of special concern to her. She received numerous awards, including the Eleanor Roosevelt Award from the United Nations, and the Living Legacy Award from the Women’s International Center, an award given to “women of excellence who are benefiting mankind.”

“My paintings are the most intimate portrayals of all that is precious to me, and my greatest joy is to offer them in forms that enhance and brighten the everyday lives of my collectors and kindred spirits around the world.”

-Laurel Burch 1945-2007

Decades later, the universe of Laurel Burch continues to bring enjoyment to friends, collectors, and kindred spirits around the world, creating a sense that however distant we are in time and location, and however distinct our experiences, we are all from the same tribe.

Laurel Burch's commitments have won her many Awards:

- Shambala Preserve A non-profit California charitable organization dedicated to the protection and care of Wildlife.

KQED TV San Francisco Bay Area Public Television Station.

Friends of Oscar Produced Annual events to benefit local AIDS agencies and Project Open Hand.

San Jose Cleveland Ballet.

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Annual fundraiser at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

The Center for Living with Dying Annual fundraiser.

Children's Day Around the Bay Lucille Salter Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University.

A Celebration of Courage The Timpany Center Honoring outstanding disabled individuals.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of San Francisco Annual fund raising event.

The Chairman's Council for Conservation International, Washington D.C.
First U.S. Economic delegation to Fijian Province, China.

Entrepreneur of the Year Award San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

Ray of Hope Award Institute for the Advancement of Health.

Women of Vision Award International Women's Foundation.

Imagination Award Champion International Design Award.

Fascinating Faces Chosen as one of ten most fascinating faces in the Bay Area.

Gifted Woman Bay Area women for the Gifted Women Project.

AD Artist's Award The Institute for Aesthetic Development.

Ground Breakers Dream Makers Award

One of five recipients presented by the Women's Foundation.

United Nations Association of San Diego Acknowledgement for her many contributions to society and women.

Living Legacy Award Women's International Center.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award Presented by United Nations Association, San Diego.

Marin Women's Hall of Fame Acknowledgement for her many contributions to the arts.

A stylized, flowing signature of 'Laurel Burch' in a golden-yellow color. The signature is written in a cursive, handwritten style. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the end of the signature, near the bottom right of the 'h'.

laurel burch artworks

Laurel Burch's vivid and vibrantly colored images of people, cats, horses, butterflies, birds, blossoms and fish are both whimsical and timeless. Beautifully rendered artifacts from a mythical world of her own creation.

LAUREL BIRCH
FANTASTIC FELINES™







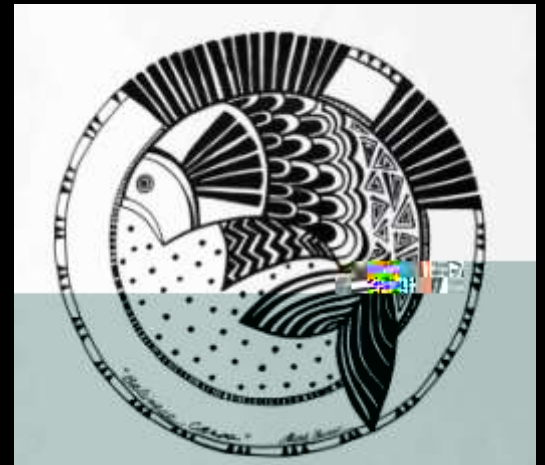
LAUREL BURCH
MYTHICAL HORSES™





LAUREL BURCH ocean songs™





DOGS



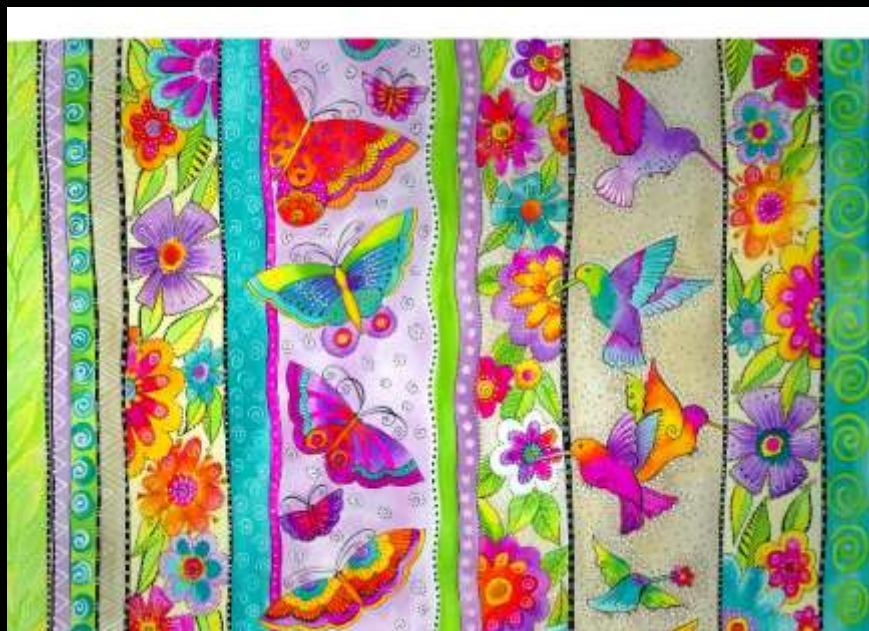
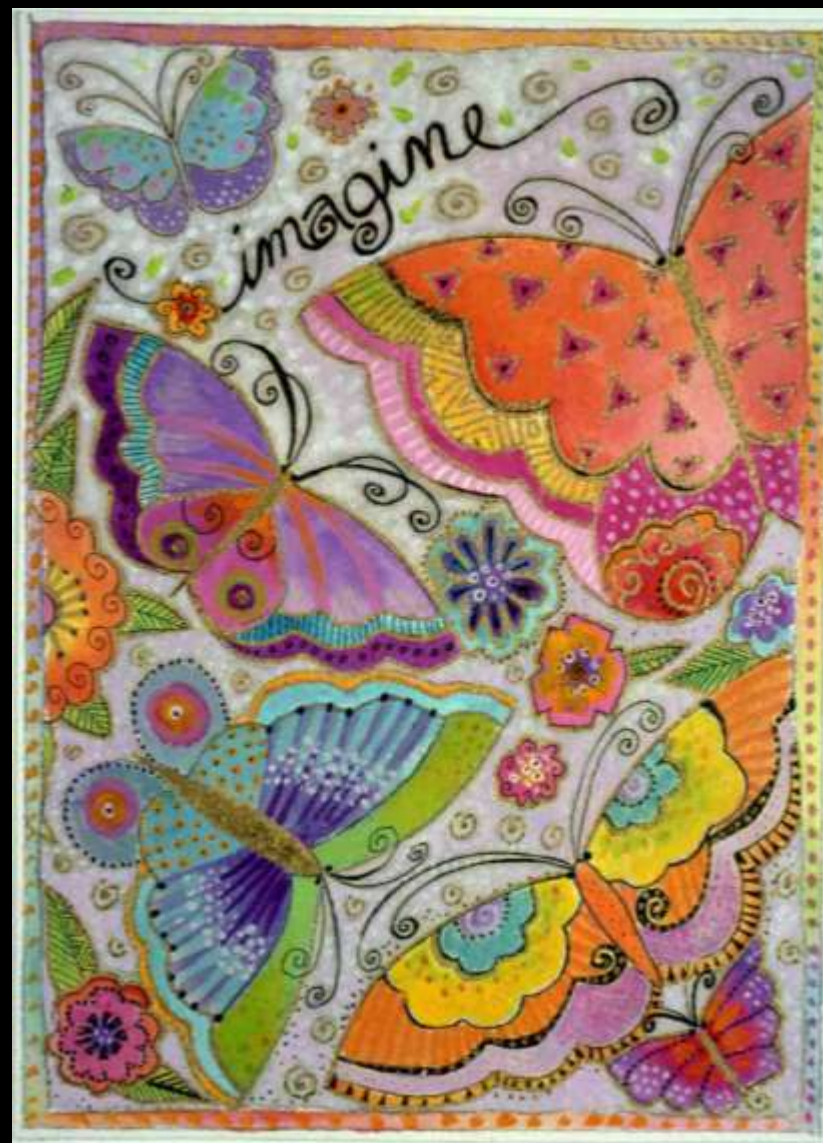


LAUREL BURCH
CELESTIAL CELEBRATIONS™



DRAGONFLIES





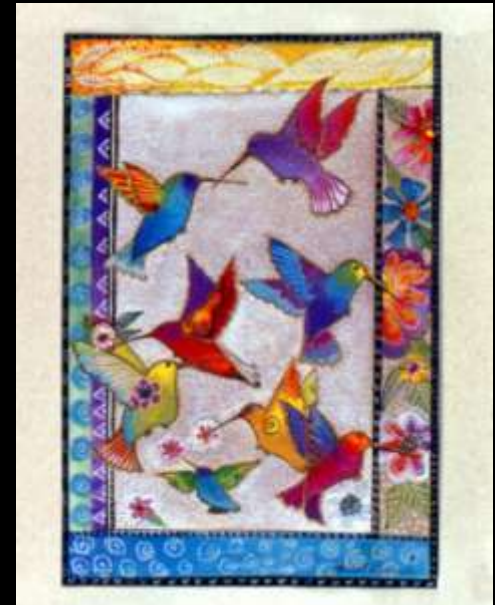
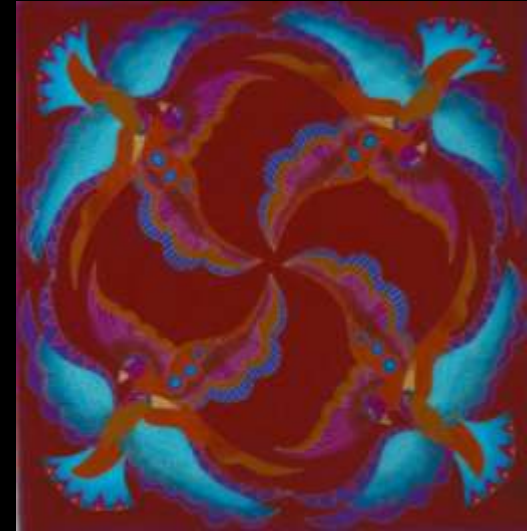


BLOSSOMS





ETHEREAL BIRDS







PEOPLE



