

# JENNIFER VANDERPOOL

October 25 - December 6, 2008 at [Bandini Art](#), Culver City

by *Rebecca Niederlander*



"Hysterical Paradise," 2008,  
mixed media, size variable.

Jennifer Vanderpool's handcrafted works are made of burlap, bubble wrap, yarn, duct tape, and lots of other things she calls rubbish. She adoringly mingles these materials with her used possessions to create room-sized installations that amalgamate reuse with an examination of compulsion, personal history, memory, and finality.

In a full-room installation entitled "*Hysterical Paradise*" a seemingly infinite collection of handmade floral elements are splayed and hung all about the gallery with sound and animation elements ensconced within. There will be water elements and the gallery walls will be many colors. One encounters much textile, much glitter and much hot glue. Vanderpool says many of the elements are "bedazzled"--and one can easily see why she likes this word. The frothy meringue of sculptural confections she concocts is certainly designed to both impress and discomfit.

Any viewer will be awed with the amount of labor invested in this installation. Clearly, many painstaking hours have been spent hand crafting each of the myriad elements in the garden. What is most discomfiting is the same labor because all of this rubbish is commingled with many loved bits and pieces of Vanderpool's past that she has been carting around for many years.

Most of us have huge boxes of photographs, closets full of clothes and possibly even an attic full of boxes that need sorting. This is mostly because, realistically, sorting means the elimination of most of that stuff. Letting go of all that once had some meaning for us is akin to admitting that we will have to eventually depart this mortal life to another condition in which material possessions are meaningless. Vanderpool takes this stuff, the stuff we haven't had the courage to deal with, and translates it into something that she believes will have significance for the rest of us.

This is a heartfelt effort. She is clearly creating this other-worldly space into which she invites us, and then asks us to please validate her life. It is an extremely vulnerable place for the artist to put herself. This profoundly personal sort of work is experienced by the viewer almost covertly--like unearthing your roommate's diary and reading it greedily.

Putting this work into the gallery context adds an intriguing layer. When such work is presented in a museum or other non-profit space, without the burden of a price list, there is no focus on the capitalistic aspect of art-making in favor of its theatricality. When presented at a gallery, there is the inevitable element of consumerism placed back into it. Now these richly embellished, deeply personal elements insist on being considered not just in terms of personal experience, but whether or not the desire felt by viewers is a lustful one or one of acquiring and ownership.