

For Immediate Release  
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Media Contact  
Heather Wagner Reed  
[heather@juiceconsulting.com](mailto:heather@juiceconsulting.com)  
713 208 3891



## **ARTIST WENDY WAGNER OPENS AT WOMEN & THEIR WORK WITH SOLO EXHIBITION *LOOK TO THE LEFT***

*Opening Reception: Thursday, January 24 6-8 p.m.  
Exhibition on view January 24 – March 14, 2013*

**(AUSTIN, TX December 2012; source: Juice Consulting) – Women & Their Work** is pleased to present “LOOK TO THE LEFT,” a solo exhibition by Houston-based artist **Wendy Wagner** from January 24 to March 14, 2013. The opening reception will take place on **Thursday, January 24 from 6 to 8 p.m.** Women & Their Work is located at 1710 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701. Gallery hours are Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday Noon to 5 p.m.

Wendy Wagner embraces youthful innocence and creates a distinctive make-believe world using painting, drawing, ceramic, soft sculpture and animation. Working with themes inspired by childhood, pets, family and fantasy, Wagner extracts the enchantment from everyday life and infuses it in her art. Images made of graphite, colored pencil, tinted gesso, acrylic paint, and oil paint are transformed to create an intimate and surreal vocabulary infused with personal nostalgia and dreaminess.

Wagner was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM) in May of this year, right before her 45th birthday. She has had five brain surgeries since then and is currently undergoing a clinical trial treatment at MD Anderson. She has suffered a complete left sight deficit due to the removal of the tumor. As a result of the removal of the tumor, she has lost peripheral vision on the left side of both eyes, thus the show’s title, “*Look to the Left*”. She began working on the show in early 2012, unaware that she had a tumor. After the surgeries, her work increasingly reflected this void.

“I have this black hole in my brain where I lose things... art supplies, etc.,” she jokingly states. “Yet the challenges have been beneficial to my therapy and my artistic language.

Even though I have lost my peripheral vision, I haven't lost my artistic vision. I've been bursting with ideas - It is a new version of my work." The show at W&TW will be an intimate portrayal into her experience and the first public viewing of her work since her diagnosis.

Wagner has focused on her art making while making great strides in healing from her surgeries earlier this summer. This current body of work shows the emergence of a bubble shape frame, like a "pow" in a cartoon panel. This shape represents a portal or vignette for portraits, other dimensions, or childhood memories. With a crisp, decorative edge, it pays homage to Wagner's graphic design background and interest in children's cartoons. These works explore individual personalities and reference endearing and funny moments from family photographs as well. Wagner poetically combines a balance of unflinching realism, abstraction, and humor. With bold bright patterns and by sewing and installing soft sculpture interpretations of certain elements in her paintings, ceramics and animations, she creates an entire "Wendy World."

Also at the opening, Wagner will debut two new soft sculptures of her design from her **Qwerkys** collection, the much anticipated "*Tootie*" and "*Flying Snouts*." Designed by Wagner, hand-sewn and made with microfiber and felt, these actual "characters" originated in her paintings. Along with other Qwerkys in the current collection ("*Miss Pretty*" in green and pink, "*Froggee*" and "*Mr. Look at Me*") the limited edition soft sculptures will be available for sale, as will "Fun Face," a limited edition print. Wagner will be available at the opening reception to sign purchased items.

### **About Wendy Wagner:**

A full-time artist working in painting, sculpture and animation, Wagner reinvents her childhood, dreams, family and Maltese dog's toys as characters that live in a whimsical world she created, "O-poppida." Growing up in Austin, Texas, she moved to Houston to attend the Art Institute of Houston in 1990. Graduating in 1992 with Honors, Wagner immediately started a career as a graphic designer that spanned 10 years. During this period she became strongly aware of her desire to return to painting and drawing which she had always done as a child. She exhibited an early talent for art that was recognized throughout her childhood. Her work now as an adult has captured and still possesses her charming childlike perspective. In 2000, Wagner focused solely on working in painting. In 2004, she then began recreating her 2D imagery into 3D ceramic sculpture. The next natural progression was animation and most recently soft sculpture versions of the characters she calls Qwerkys. Self-taught in ceramics and animation, she designs the patterns and hand crafts her soft sculptures, always looking for new ways to express herself. Curiosity and storytelling are the motivations of her paintings and work. Wagner loves to embellish autobiographical stories that leave the viewer to incorporate their own. Wagner was awarded the prestigious Hunting Art Prize in May 2008 for her painting "I Hope I'm Dreaming." She has exhibited her artwork internationally as well as in Houston, Texas for over fifteen years and has a loyal following of adults and children. Wagner has enjoyed teaching High School students through the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston as well as cartoon character building classes

with Writers in the Schools. Wagner lives and works in Houston, Texas. For more information, please see [womenandtheirwork.org](http://womenandtheirwork.org) or [www.wendywagner.com](http://www.wendywagner.com).

Venue:

Women & Their Work

1710 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701

512-477-1064, free admission

Mon. – Fri. 10 – 6 & Sat. 12-5

@WTWGallery

<http://www.womenandtheirwork.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/WomenAndTheirWorkGallery>

<http://www.youtube.com/WTWGallery>

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For media inquiries, please contact the team at Juice Consulting:

**Amber LaFrance**

**469 877 1533**

**[amber@juiceconsulting.net](mailto:amber@juiceconsulting.net)**

**Heather Wagner Reed**

**713 208 3891**

**[heather@juiceconsulting.com](mailto:heather@juiceconsulting.com)**

or at Women & Their Work:

**Rachel Koper**

**512 477 1064**

**[koper@womenandtheirwork.org](mailto:koper@womenandtheirwork.org)**