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HEATHER DONOHUE

It should come as no surprise that Heather Donohue spends much of the year in her south Minneapolis Santa's workshop handcrafting custom Christmas stockings. "I grew up with stockings from a kit that my mom made for our family, so they were four beautiful hand-cut and hand-beaded stockings," Donohue says. "That had a huge influence on me. That's what Christmas stockings are supposed to look like." Life is too short for ho-ho-hum stockings—especially for this crafter, known in the national makers-sphere for her bold, colorful wardrobe.

Some of Donohue's custom commissions include whimsical designs for the New York designer John Derian (a few years ago, Derian sold Donohue's designs in his eponymous shop) and former Minneapolis mayor Betsy Hodges.

Inspiration for her funky stockings springs from whimsical old patterns and craft kits from the '50s and '60s. Working with mostly felt, beads, and paint, Donohue invests many hours in turning out her one-of-a-kind stockings and tree skirts, some of which take more than 25 hours to create. When asked if she could pick her most memorable design, she says that's easy: the *Die Hard*-inspired stocking she made for former Mayor Hodges. Because nothing says happy holidays like Bruce Willis's "Yippee-ki-yay!" heatherdonohue.com ■ —Katie Swartzter



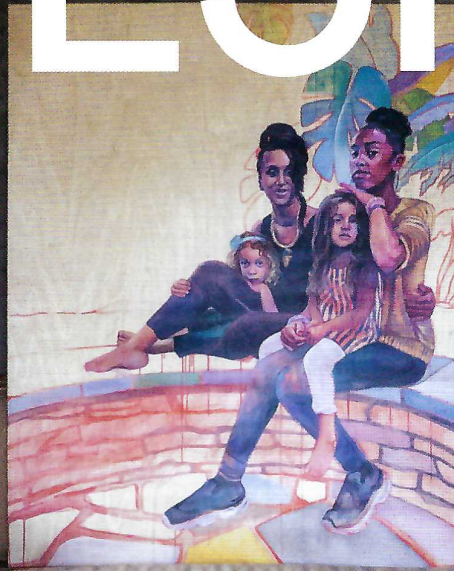
■ "I've never really felt like a 'grownup,'" Heather Donohue says. "I've always retained that childhood love of Christmas." She also crafts custom bottle-brush ornaments (above) that mirror the playfulness of her stockings.

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