



SCULPTURE

Cynthia Ebin

Statement

My concern is to expose the metaphysical aspects of humanity through an expressive evolution of the figure: energy as visual reality, which the viewer can relate to in an emotional, spiritual and conceptual manner.

My approach is an archaeological exploration using experiential processes that excavate and create from a spiritual perspective. This is a deep unearthing of the journey of the soul.

This is a mystical journey where I am continually digging in the catacombs of the mind. My work is a vehicle in which I seek to uncover and unlock prior existence and thus give meaning to the here and now.

My focus is the human spirit from which I draw my energy. Elements of the human form, animals and nature all play a synergistic role in this unveiling of the great mystery.

Cynthia Ebin 2021



Memoir - Woman (detail)

1985; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Memoir - Woman

1985; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Memoir - Child

1984; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Memoir - Young Girl

1984; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Memoir - Young Girl (detail)

1984; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Three Figures

1983-85; lifesize; clay, smoke fired, welded interior



Agona (detail)

1991; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Agona

1991; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Emergence (detail)

1990; lifesize; clay, terra cotta, smoke fired, welded interior



Emergence

1990; lifesize; clay, terra cotta, smoke fired, welded interior



Fetal (back view)

1990; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Fetal (front view)

1990; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Sorrow (front view)

1994; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Sorrow (rear view)

1994; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Two Figure (rear view)

1987-88; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Two Figure (front view)

1987-88; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Backthrough Woman

1990; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior
Holocaust survivor – Jenny Scovis



Synergy

1992; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Synergy (detail)

1992; lifesize; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Backthrough Mother

2013; lifesize; clay, smoke fired, welded interior



Backthrough Mother (detail)

2013; lifesize; clay, smoke fired, welded interior



Chest - Man

2013; 18" x 17" x 8"; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Chest - Man (left side view)

2013; 18" x 17" x 8"; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Child - Back

2013; 16" x 24" x 6"; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Child - Chest

2013; 24" x 13" x 4"; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Back - Young Girl

2013; 14" x 13" x 4"; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Man - Back

2013; 19" x 18" x 3"; clay, smoke-fired, welded interior



Concentration Camp

Leo Ebin, ca.1948-52; 20' x 24'; oil on stretched canvas, framed



Leo Ebin

1978 – lifesize, hydrastone by Cynthia Ebin
One of a series of 7 primal sculptures

CURRICULUM VITAE

CYNTHIA EBIN

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EDUCATION

- 2001** University of California Los Angeles, L.A., CA (Creative Arts Teaching Credential)
1989 California State University, Long Beach, L.B., CA (M.F.A., Sculpture)
1983 California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA (M.A., Sculpture)
1981 California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA (B.A., Sculpture)
1964 - 67 Studied with Irving Marantz group "10", Greenwich Village, N.Y.
1960 - 63 Boston University - Fine Arts, Boston, MA

PROFESSIONAL AND RELATED EXPERIENCE

- 2001 - 03** Los Angeles Unified School District Creative Arts Instructor
2001 Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA, Painting - Adjunct Professor
1997 - 00 Pierce College, Woodland Hills, CA - Painting and Drawing Instructor
1990 - 01 Studio, Woodland Hills, CA - Private and Group Instructor
1992 Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA, Sculpture - Adjunct Professor
1989 California State Summer School for the Arts - Cal Arts - Lecturer and Workshop Instructor
1983 California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA - Adjunct Professor
1978 - 79 Glendale Art Forum, Glendale, CA, Artist in Residence

MUSEUMS

- 2023** Sasse Museum of Art, Pomona, CA – Solo Retrospective
2022 Sasse Museum of Art, Pomona, CA – Art & Stories (invitational group exhibition)
2013 U.S. Holocaust Museum, Washington D.C. - Archives
1999 - 01 Los Angeles County Museum Rental, Sales and Exhibition Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
1993 The Jewish Community Museum "Purim Mask Invitational," San Francisco, CA
1991 Downey Museum, Downey, LA, Invitational, Director, Scott Ward
1991 The Jewish Community Museum "Purim Mask Invitational," San Francisco, CA
1989 The Jewish Community Museum "Purim Mask Invitational," San Francisco, CA
1984 Craft & Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA
1984 University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach, CA
1984 Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA
1984 Laguna Beach Museum, Laguna Beach, CA

SOLO & TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2016** The Lantern House, Venice, CA (Invitational solo)
2010 Tracy Park Gallery, Mailbu, CA (Invitational solo) painting and sculpture
2003 Upstairs Gallery, Ventura, CA (Invitational)
1991 JCC, Tenafly, N.J. Holocaust Exhibition (Invitational)
1991 Brand Library Art Gallery, Glendale, CA (Invitational)
1990 14 Sculptor's Gallery, SoHo, New York (Invitational)
1988 Finegood Art Gallery, West Hills, CA (Invitational)
1988 The Platt Gallery, University of Judaism, Los Angeles, CA (Invitational)
1988 OverReact Gallery, Long Beach, CA (Invitational)
1988 California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA
1987 Warner Center Art Gallery, Woodland Hills, CA (Invitational)
1984 Udinotti Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ (Invitational)

FILM CREDITS

- 2000-03** ER, West Wing, Twilight Zone, General Hospital, Crossing Jordan, Days of Our Lives, Friends, CSI, Passions, Spiderman the movie

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (Partial List)

- 2008 - 10** Orlando Gallery, Reseda, CA (Invitational)
2006 The Founders Award 3rd Annual Art Exhibition, Hollywood, CA
2006 - 07 Moda Rouge Contemporary Art Gallery, Black Rock, Australia
2005 - 06 Joseph Wahl Art Gallery, Woodland Hills, CA
2004 Channel Islands Art Exhibition, Camarillo, CA
2003 Finegood Gallery, West Hills, CA
2002 - 07 Mats Bergman Gallery, Stockholm/Karlstad, Sweden
2002 - 04 Cultural Affairs Studio Tour, Woodland Hills, CA – Pierce College – Madrid Theatre, Woodland Hills, CA
2001 Sulkin-Secant Gallery at Bergamont Station, Santa Monica, CA
2000-01 Mats Bergman Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden
2000 Carnegie Art Museum, Oxnard Ca
1992 Pierce College Art Dept., Woodland Hills, CA, Installation, ARTIFACTS "Ancient Offering"
1990 Los Angeles City Hall Bridge Gallery and Rotunda, LA, CA "Images and Origins – Reflections of Women Artists"
1990 Momentum Gallery, Ventura, CA "Convocation of Spirits" (Invitational)

- 1989 Long Beach Art Gallery - "Reality - Not Just another Pretty Picture," Homeless Benefit, Long Beach, CA, Curator, Heather Green (Invitational)
- 1989 Artworks Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA (Invitational)
- 1989 Gallery of Functional Art, Santa Monica, CA (Invitational)
- 1989 Orlando Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (Invitational)
- 1988 The New Ash Grove Gallery/Annex, "Reality - Not Just Another Pretty Picture," Homeless Benefit, Hollywood, CA (Invitational)
- 1988 Loyola Law School "Taking Liberties" - SCWCA, Los Angeles, CA
- 1987-88 The Finegood Gallery, An Art Awakening, West Hills, CA
- 1987 Brand Library Gallery, Artist's Equity, Glendale, CA
- 1986-87 Artists' Society International Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 1986 Eilat Gordin Gallery, "Artists for the Homeless" West Hollywood, CA (Invitational)
- 1986 Century Gallery, "Animal Magnetism", Sylmar, CA (Invitational)
- 1985 SPARC, Venice, CA 40th Commemoration of Hiroshima (Invitational)
- 1985 Thinking Eye Gallery, Los Angeles, CA 40th Commemoration of Hiroshima (Invitational)
- 1984 Baxter Art Gallery, Cal Tech, Pasadena, CA
- 1984 California State College, San Bernardino, CA
- 1984 Udinotti Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ (Invitational)
- 1984 Cal Poly, Pomona, CA
- 1984 Brand Library Art Galleries, Glendale, CA (Invitational)
- 1984 Roy Boyd Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1984 Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, CA
- 1983 Udinotti Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ (Invitational)
- 1981 California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA

LECTURES

- 1990 Parsons School of Design, N.Y., NY, Fig. Sculpture, Arch. Design Depts.
- 1990 Rider College, Lawrenceville, N.J., HOLOCAUST Resource Center, Art History Dept., Bachelor Honors Program
- 1989 California State Summer School for the Arts, Cal Arts, Valencia, CA
- 1989 U.C.L.A. "The Art of Collecting Art" Mumsey Nimeroff, Los Angeles, CA
- 1988 Stephen Weiss Temple, Jewish Singles, Los Angeles, CA
- 1988 California State University, Long Beach, CA, Painting
- 1987 Hadassah, Jewish Federation Council of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
- 1987 American Association of University Women, Warner Center, Los Angeles, CA
- 1987 West Valley Jewish Community Ctr., Senior Adult Div., Woodland Hills, CA

BIBLIOGRAPHY (Partial List)

See Me catalog, 2022

Who's Who of American Women, 2004-2016; Who's Who of American Artists, 2008-2016; IBC-England-invitational inclusion, 2014

Gallery Guide, West Coast, Sept. 2004; Collector's Edition, Sept. 2004

Interview, NBC Broadcast - Hong Kong, El Monte, CA, Anchor, Jim Lam, 1990

Caffyn Kelly, "Cynthia Ebin" Gallery, Women Artists, Number 8, Vol.II, April, 1990, p.35

"Images and Origins - Reflections of Women Artists" Catalogue, Los Angeles City Hall Bridge Gallery & Rotunda, March 1990

CBS Affiliate, KFMB TV 8 - San Diego, CA, Anchor, Sue Roesgen 4 minute cover story on Homeless 1990

M. Davidson, "Women's History Honored with Convocation," ArtSpeak, Ventura, CA, Vol. 2, Feb-Mar. 1990, pp.3-4

Cathy Viksho, "Exhibits" The Times- Trenton Metro, Sunday, Mar.25,1990, Sec. cc4

The Sculpture Magazine, Washington D.C. May - Jun. issue, 1990, p. 100

M. VanDeventer, "Cynthia Ebin" Art Gallery International, Feature, Dec. 1989, pp. 12-16

Shauna Snow "Painting the Reality of Homelessness," L.A. Times Calendar, 1989, fp5

Peggy Isaak Gluck, "Show Uses Theatrical Technique," The L.A. Times - Calendar, Sep. 12. 1989, p. front,5

Cable T.V. Women in contemporary Art Interview Cable A.M. Systems T.V., 1989

Vern Perry, "Two-Artists Exhibit Gets All Fired Up" The Orange County Register, May 5, 1988, p. K2

Dinah Berland, "Volcano-Inspired Expressionism" Press-Telegram, L.B., CA, May 1988

Suvan Geer, "Journey of the Soul," Artweek, Jun. 4, 1988, Vol. 19, Num. 22, p. Exhibitions 4

Gail Fremel, "Art News," Grunion Gazette, May 26,1988, p.10

Southern California Women's Caucus for Art, "Exhibitions, Catalogue Taking Liberties - Beyond Baroque," 1988, p. 30

Stephen London, "Art From the Ashes" Lifestyle, Feb.1987, p.10

Lionel Rolfe, "A Testimony to the Holocaust" B'nai B'rith Messenger, Mar. 11, 1987, p.4

Jill Schwartz, "New Gallery to Showcase Works of Artists in Valley" Daily News, Neighbors, Nov.1,1987, pp. 2-6

C. Steinberg, "Sculptor in Valley Art Exhibition" B'nai B'rith Mess., Nov. 1987, Fp

Leo Noonan "Artist Explores Our Darker Side" Jewish Journal, Nov. 20, 1987, p.7

Cheri Senders, "Shadow of Holocaust Prods Sculptor to Create Memorial to Victims" LA Times, Nov. 26, 1987, VIEW F/Part V-B, 5

Donald Karr, "Art Achievement Awards" Artists' Soc. International, Dec. 1986, p.64

Kelly Walton, "An Udinotti Opening and a Beautiful Book" City Life, Nov. 22,1984,p.16

COLLECTORS (Partial List)

Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum, Robert F. Ebin, Esq., Meg Lewis, Esq., Fern Topas Salka, Esq., Larry Israel, Esq., Barry Schwartz, Esq., Dr. Michael Platt, Dr. Donald Bain, Dr. Ronald Rothman, Dr. Leon Sharp, Dr Charles Young, Lois Lambert, GFA., Dr. S. Unterhailer, H. Katersky, N.Yuval - Israel, David Kronen, A. Matsuda - Japan, G. Loiseaux, French Consulate, Avignon - France, Marika Svalstedt, Karlstad - Sweden, TietoEnator Art Club - Sweden, L.Padilla - Arch., Isserow, Cape Town - South Africa, H. Zakson, Esq., L.A., Lindberg - Sweden, U.S. Holocaust Museum, Washington D.C.





2010

Tracy Park Gallery, Mailbu, CA (Invitational solo) painting and sculpture



2010

Tracy Park Gallery, Malibu, CA (Invitational solo) painting and sculpture

ART GALLERY INTERNATIONAL

THE CONTEMPORARY COLLECTOR'S MAGAZINE

DECEMBER

CYNTHIA EBIN

by M.J. Van Deventer



*An Archeological Discovery.
Detail.*

Cynthia Ebin's sculptural images are powerful in their fragmentation, but convincingly figurative. Archaic in appearance, they suggest a birthright in ancient civilizations that have been eroded or erased by time. These are sculptures inspired by natural holocausts and Ebin's angst for humankind.

They have been called "art from the ashes" and "volcano-inspired expressionism." Her work explores and profiles the darker side of the human condition, one critic claimed.

The Los Angeles artist seems to straddle two cultures. Her sculptures, life-size or larger, look as if they were unearthed from an excavation site in ancient Rome. Instead, they are the product of a contemporary mind that is creating sculptures with contemporary materials and processes.

Ebin is also an artist with a social message. And she is passionate about her causes and her art. The genesis of her commentary often has its roots of protest in man's inhumanity to his fellow man, and his inhumanity to nature's creatures.

She attributes the philosophical viewpoints that now inspire her sculpture to a childhood that included family recollections of the genocide that occurred under Hitler's regime in Germany in the 1940s.

"My parents lost many of their family members in that atrocity," she recalls. "And because my mother's mother lived with us, there were many conversations about that holocaust when I was growing up in Massachusetts. I'm very influenced by socio-political history. But I know the Jewish Holocaust has been extremely influential on my work. I feel I was there. And the fact that a whole society was being decimated during World War II by inhuman horror has greatly affected my sculpture.

"My father escaped from Germany before the atrocities. But he used his artistic talent to chronicle what happened. He wasn't an artist by profession. But he was much more than a Sunday painter and had mastered charcoal. He was very prolific and he did many graphic paintings and sketches of the concentration camps. I grew up with a sense of that horror . . . He was still working on a piece of art six months before he died in 1985."

The Holocaust and the impact it had on Ebin's childhood, were catalysts for the sculpture she would eventually create.

"I realize there are many holocausts," she says, quickly citing outrages in Biafra and Cambodia, as well as offenses against nature and offenses in Africa against elephants, gorillas and numerous endangered species.

Her social stance on inhumane issues has propelled Ebin on a mission that is both personal and emotional, universal and archeological. "I am always trying to link the past with the present," she says. "But not in a fossil-like way. I like to

think my work is really a spiritual link with the past. I believe all men are connected. I'm very concerned with the humanity of man and ultimately the inhumanity of man to man."

The result of Ebin's beliefs is best witnessed in her numerous series. Each is devoted to a particular theme. Each is dramatically compelling in its portrayal of a civilization or genre of species that has come to the brink of disaster. Her sculpture portrays those frozen moments in time.

Initially, it was the disintegration of a series of self portraits in clay, created from 1979 to 1981, that nudged Ebin toward the strong archeological theme that has become her artistic hallmark.

"I had started this series," she recalls. "And then I moved. The first piece dried and cracked. I thought, 'This is interesting.' The pieces in the series represented a time line of about six months and in that period I had made five latex and mother molds from one piece. One looked African. Another seemed to go back to primate. For me it was like watching the movie, *Altered States*."

"About the same time I had done a bust of my father. He looked like Einstein. I let the clay dry over six months and break down. During this period, the clay seemed to take his bust back to primate. It seemed to me that something spiritual was going on, something that was leading me in a direction for my sculpture."

During that same time frame, Ebin was preparing for her one woman master show as a student at California State University and was struggling with a concept that would give the exhibition a cohesive theme. Her dreams came to her aid.

"I saw images of faces floating, of a hide and a totem pole," she relates. The totem pole was particularly significant. "Man has used totems for protection and documentation for centuries," she says. "And it seemed to me that a totem pole and a hide were appropriate symbols for that show."

"I pressed clay into those primate-like mother molds, raked each one individually — about one hundred twenty — and placed them on either side of the totem. It looked very German expressionistic," she says in retrospect.

Numerous works in raku followed. And those experimentations deepened her compulsion to profile man in various states and to experiment with sculptural processes.

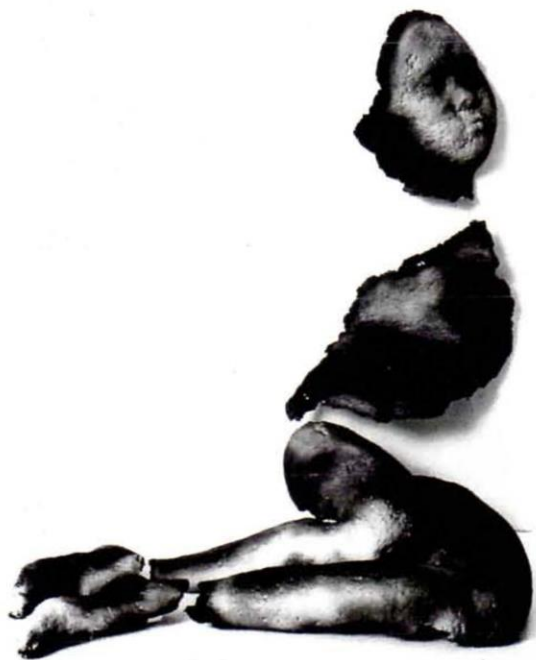
"I'm not tied into formal beliefs," Ebin contends. "Most of my ideas come from abstract thoughts. I have a concept and I just let it work itself through the creative process. I let the idea come and flow through me. The masks that I used on the totems were the forms that were developed from clay breaking down."

The breakdown of the clay has become a signal in the evolution of Ebin's development as a sculptress. While other artists might merely toss the fragments of a decaying sculpture, Ebin studies them. She finds in that gradual disintegration of shape and form a creative phoenix, a *raison d'être* for a new artistic statement to exist.

The totem with its multiple masks was the centerpiece of her master's show. The backdrop, however, was a hide, stretched ten feet high and twenty-eight feet across a wall.



Backthrough Woman, 1988.
Lifesize, clay, smokefired,
welded interior.
Photo credit George T. Bennett



It had a concave and convex side, lit by framing lights from behind.

That interpretation of art was dramatic enough. But during the same time period, Ebin read a magazine article about the disaster at Herculaneum that occurred August 24-25, A.D. 79, when Mt. Vesuvius erupted, burying the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

An archeological crew had gone to the excavation sites expecting to unearth ancient pottery. Instead they found the remains of that city's populous; bodies captured by the violence of nature in all states of repose and disaster. Their volcanic graves were mute testimony to lives that had been swiftly and violently cut short.

Ebin recalls, "When I read the archeologists' accounts of their tragic discovery, I felt destined to erect a testimony to the city. I worked for the next two years on a Memoriam to Herculaneum. Researching the way the people perished, I proceeded to select models who would best represent a cross section of their society. I had students, a psychiatrist, my artist friends posing every Sunday afternoon for two years," she relates.

The experience would ultimately alter her views on man's relationship to nature and the fragile balance of life.

She recalls, "I wanted to create a time capsule of a moment in history, a very stoic, but proud reflection of how the people met their fate."

The series was as much a historical adventure for Ebin as it

was a journey into new sculptural processes. Although she now frequently wraps bodies in gauze and creates body casts, the Herculaneum series was the first time she had experimented with this method of sculpture.

"I knew I wanted to recreate the figures as fragile, organic, vibrant, emotional, full of dignity, respect, love and innocence, spiritually and psychologically aware," she says. "So I proceeded to plaster body cast my models and after six months ended up with more than one hundred thirty plaster separate sections."

Over the next nine months, Ebin pressed raku clay into all the separate body segments allowing them to slowly dry in a damp environment. When the clay had reached a leather-hard quality, she released them from their molds and had them bisque fired. When they came out of their first firing, they were a pink, virgin state, without any of the demarcations that glazes or color would impart.

From there, Ebin decided to recreate the affect of hot ashes dropping out of the heavens as the people in Herculaneum must have thought was happening. She used a combination of hard wood sawdust, motor oil, greens and compost, layering the sculptures between this mixture and letting them smoke for three days in fifty-five gallon metal drums.

When she retrieved the pieces from the smoke, the resulting subtle colorations of blacks, browns and grays had imparted qualities of antiquity and uniqueness within and about the negative and positive surfaces.

The gradation of textures, together with the spontaneous, symbolic gestures of the figures called forth the internal and external realization of impending doom.

Some of the pieces broke in the firing process. But this did not deter Ebin. She linked the body sections by using quarter inch steel rods and a cement mixture to adhere to the fragments — a reverse process for traditional sculpture methods.

The pieces can be assembled like a puzzle for exhibition purposes, Ebin explains. And she says, "The negative spaces that occurred between each body shape became as important as the pieces themselves. These areas suggested the exposed intrigue and mystery of people with private pasts that are now depicted in a semi-visible confronting state."

The dramatic sculptures were first presented at a show at the Udinotti Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona, and have since been featured at more than thirty galleries and museums.

Benno Fisher, a Holocaust survivor and the architect for Martyrs Memorial Museum in Los Angeles, was quoted in a *Los Angeles Times* review as saying of Ebin's body of work: "Ebin's figures are shot through, disjointed, with burnt hands, legs and torso — perfect for depiction of Holocaust survivors. The material that Ebin's figures are made of isn't polished. It's rough, like life."

"Penetrating," one reviewer called her work. "Visceral and moving" claimed another.

Ebin's "Herculeum Series" was more than an artist's chronicle of a tragic incident in the chain of human development. It became for her a way to deal with death; specifically the deaths of her parents, which occurred six months apart.

"I had a lot of anger, sorrow and frustration about their deaths," she relates. "But I wanted to present death in a very loving way. Each piece was very emotional for me. I wanted to create a surrealist impression. I suppose the series was therapy for me. Now, I realize that I am tied emotionally to every sculpture I create."

"Primal" was a series of life size clay figures tracing the human from its fetus until its death. Two of the pieces in that series were labeled *Two Figures* and Ebin says they reflect the universality of love. Another piece in the series, a lifesize figure of a man half buried in rock, is compelling in its size and abstraction. *Primal Sorrow* is a disjointed figure, stooped in sorrow. Its symbolic message is both archeological and spiritual and conveys the weight of humanity on its shoulders.

"Armour, Armour," was a series of twelve pieces that depicted the paradox that lives within the chests of man. "Man always has worn shields as a form of protection for his chest. Yet the chest is the metaphorical seat of love," she notes.

She achieved a new level of acclaim in 1988 with a series titled "An Archeological Journey." The twenty-eight sculptures in handmade paper using pulp made from cotton linters, depicts an archeological discovery, Ebin says. "I call them the hieroglyphic documentation of the spiritual past of man. All figures are metaphors representing the family unit, surrealism, one's past, present and future in one

cohesive gesture." They will be featured in an exhibition to be held in March, 1990, at the 14 Sculptors Gallery in Soho in New York City and later at the Orlando Gallery in Sherman Oaks, California.

The figures are fragmented, some patinaed, some repetitious. All are lifesize or larger, ranging in size from a small child to a man more than eight feet in height, which Ebin says was created to represent "a ghost-like image of his past." Each section hangs alone with no visible connecting structure. All other sections are placed on the walls, including *Back and Legs*, which Ebin says "represents the basics of all human-kind — a spiritual shouldering of universal cares."

Backthrough Woman is one of Ebin's favorite pieces in this series. Her back faces the viewer, her feet are disconnected from her body and her slightly cowering shape appears caught in prayer, or perhaps crouched for escape. It is also a symbolic commentary on our collective turning of our backs to life's horrors. *Backthrough Woman* also symbolized a personal crossroads for Ebin.

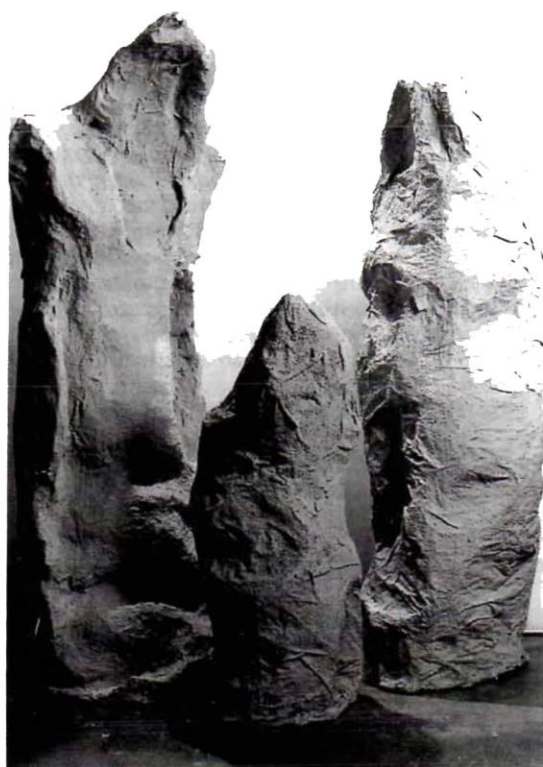
"I had reached a time in my life, both personally and professionally, when I wanted to get minimal. I wanted to get rid of all the connections. I was feeling encumbered. I wanted to become more free. I began working more in handmade paper. I could deal with the fragments of life in sections."

Ebin contends that man is "very fragmented. By using fragments in my art — whether in stone or paper, I am trying

Primal-Two Figures, 1987.
Lifesize, clay, smokefired,
welded interior.
Photo credit Jesse Silver



*Hooded Sentries. 1989.
Mixed media. 3 of 17. 6' x 70" x 44"
Photo credit George T. Bennett*



Although Ebin is continually experimenting with new processes, the seventeen "Hooded Sentries" are in keeping with her affinity for surfaces that resemble antiquity. "I'm not at all moved or attracted by smooth, plastic surfaces. I much prefer to create sculptures that are organic," she says.

"For me, the most exciting part of creating a sculpture is coming up with the idea for a series. Producing the work may take six months to a year and once I get the first piece done, there is an initial euphoria that carries me along. In many ways, the excitement and the realization of an idea is almost as good as having a finished piece."

Ebin believes that her concepts, rooted like tightly-wrapped mummies in archeological inspirations, her rough organic surfaces and her manipulation of the concepts and processes help her achieve her ultimate artistic goal.

"I am always trying to capture some kind of human emotion, or trying to elicit an emotion in an organic way," she says. "I always see new and different things in each one of my sculptures," she relates. "I like how the light hits a piece of work . . . or how I might see something again and have a new concept or feeling about the work."

"But as a sculptor who tries to express sociological and political ideas in my work, I am also forever searching for a new personification of the human figure, man frozen in time in all of his various stages of human emotion." ▲

M.J. VanDeventer is a freelance writer specializing in articles on art and interior design. She has contributed to Southwest Art, Ornament Magazine and is a regular contributing writer for Art Gallery International.

to make a statement about life."

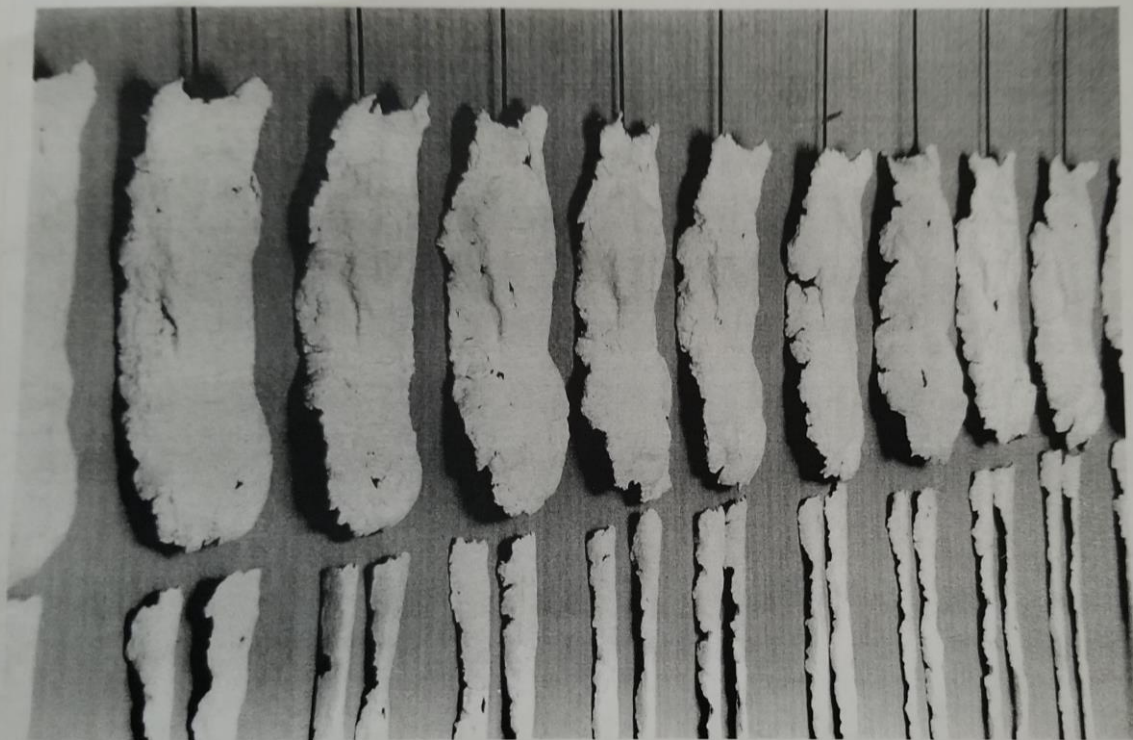
Her latest series, "Hooded Sentries," is seventeen abstract sculptural forms developed from an image of large rock formations that resemble man in humble and stoic positions. They range in height from two and a half to more than eight feet high and one to four feet in diameter. They are organic human shapes suggestive of the earth's composition. All figures are in a pose of humility, head bowed as if in prayer. Yet they are confined souls trying to emerge from their silent wrappings, Ebin says.

While Ebin is as comfortable working with stone as she is handmade paper, this work is mixed media, each comprised of a welded steel armature secured on a wooden base, covered in mesh wire that is bent and shaped to give the feeling of trapped human beings.

The wire is covered completely with paper and a hardening paste and then acrylic resin with silica sand and pigment is applied to give the final feeling of stone, thus creating a sculpture where the environment and man become as one.

*Primal Sorrow. 1987.
Lifesize. clay, smokefired,
welded interior.
Photo credit George T. Bennett*





Gynthia Bain — Since you couldn't see the show yourself, at least here
is a photo of your work in the TCC on the Palisades. This series
especially was very powerful, good luck for future.

Michael R. R.

5/1991



CYNTHIA R. EBIN

DOWNEY MUSEUM OF ART
10419 RIVES AVENUE
DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA 90241
213-861-0489

JANUARY 17, 1991



Governor Deukmejian hosting fundraiser for
US Holocaust museum Washington DC 1990

Shadow of Holocaust Prods Sculptor to Create Memorial to Victims

By CHERRISENDERS

Cynthia Ebin grew up surrounded by the Holocaust. Although her parents had immigrated to the United States long before Hitler's rise to power, they had left most of their family behind in Europe. Born at height of World War II, Ebin lost much of her family to the horrors of Hitler's "final solution."

In addition, she was affected deeply by her father's graphic paint and charcoal pictures of the concentration camps. As a result, says the Woodland Hills sculptor, she has always been drawn to cataclysmic events. "I've always felt spiritually connected to them," Ebin said. As a child, she explained, she had recurring dreams of being one of the victims locked in a synagogue and burned.

Her fascination with monumental disasters has led to her latest passion—a



"I feel compelled to record the Holocaust. I don't have a choice. My whole life, my destiny was leading to this point. . . . It's become the focal point of my energy."

Cynthia Ebin

proposed memorial to the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust, using four life-size figures to represent a family captured in a moment of defiance.

Ebin, who has had shows at more than 30 galleries and museums, uses clay figures made from actual plaster body

casts to capture humanity in the extremes of emotional experience. Her art is highly charged, unsettling and even disturbing. She freezes catastrophic moments in history such as the volcanic burial of Herculaneum, the city destroyed by Mt. Vesuvius the day after Pompeii in AD 79.

"I feel compelled to record the Holocaust," said Ebin, her own raw energy bubbling over in her mannerisms as she repeatedly pushed her hair off her face. "I don't have a choice. My whole life, my destiny, was leading to this point, as if everything up to now was preparing me and my techniques and abilities for my Holocaust piece. It's become the focal point of my energy."

She has read everything she could get her hands on about the Holocaust. "Everyone talks about lambs to the slaughter, but the Jews didn't fight. It wasn't true," she insisted. To counteract the myth, Ebin says, she designed an angry and defiant piece of sculpture where the main figure, a willowy 6-foot, 4-inch man, is standing strong and erect.

"I have to cry out for the people who can't," she said. "I want to make a powerful, unforgettable statement about

the family unit being torn asunder by the acts of madmen. Those people may have perished, but their souls live on."

Benno Fischer, a Holocaust survivor and the architect for Martin Memorial Museum in Los Angeles, noted in a recent telephone interview that Ebin's figures "are shot through disjointed, with burnt hands, legs and torsos—perfect for depiction of Holocaust survivors." The material

al that Ebin's figures are made of isn't polished. "It's rough like life," he said. Carl Schenker, a private art dealer and president of the sculpture garden at the University of Judaism, describes her work as "very powerful, tough, gutsy and penetrating. It has such an immediate impact."

"My work is very confrontational for people," Ebin said. "I'm showing people's emotions—birth, pain, sorrow and

Please see SCULPTURE, Page 2

SCULPTURE: A Memorial to Victims

Continued from Page 1

against—in sculptural form. And, often, people are uncomfortable."

"On a tour of her studio/garage, Ebin explains how she creates her sculptures. Each figure takes about six months.

"She begins by wrapping models in plaster bandages that harden into a mold. Ebin displays her hundreds of body pieces—chest, forearms, thighs, feet—and shows how she places the clay into the curves and crevices of the hardened-bandage mold, how she fires the clay in a kiln, then smoke-fires it in metal drums to create its subtle brown, gray, black and pale pink shadings. The clay is cemented to a welded steel-rod skeleton.

Engineering Feats

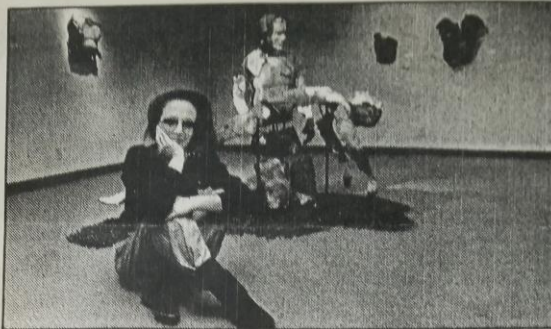
"She gets down on the ground to show off welds and linchpins that allow arms and legs to be removed so the pieces, some of which weight 200 pounds, can be more easily moved. "These are small engineering feats," she said with a smile.

"It's an expensive process. She must buy the materials, rent the kiln and pay a welder \$30 an hour. She flits from one project to another, showing pictures, pointing out pieces, offering hardened body bandages for inspection.

Her house is a gallery for her pieces by default, she says with a laugh. Everywhere are more sculptures. On the walls are her chest pieces, playfully called her "Armour-Amor series," on the floor sits "Sorrow," on the coffee table a life-size child from her Herculaneum series called "Memoria."

"My art is my own pain for these people's plight," she said while quietly fondling the sleeping 'Memoir.' There's a power in keeping that alive."

Ebin's pieces are on display at the newly opened Finegood Art Gallery at the Bernard Milken Jewish Community Campus in Canoga Park until Feb. 12. Call (818) 716-1100 for gallery hours.



JOEL P. LUGAVERE / Los Angeles Times

Cynthia Ebin creates sculptures in honor of Holocaust victims.

B'nai B'rith Messenger

FRIDAY, 21 Cheshvan, 5748, November 13, 1987/50¢

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Sculptor In Valley Art Exhibition

By CLAUDIA STEINBERG
City Editor

Cynthia Ebin, a Woodland Hills sculptor whose work has been shown in more than 30 museums and galleries throughout the Southwest, will display her life-size "Memoriam to Herculeum," and other works at "Valley Visions—An Art Awakening," this Sunday, Nov. 15, at the Finegood Gallery on the new multi-million dollar Bernard Milken Jewish Community campus.

The exhibit is sponsored by the Arts Council of the San Fernando Valley Region of Jewish Federation Council to honor Pauline Hirsch, long-time Jewish arts advocate, community activist and philanthropist. It also features the work of photo-realist Jesse Silver, mixed-media artist Hal Honigsberg and surrealist Robert Stoller.

For two years Ebin labored on "Memoriam to Herculeum," which gives powerful silent testimony to the lives swiftly and violently cut short in



LIFE-SIZE LOVERS—Cynthia Ebin's smoke-fired clay sculpture, "Primeval-Romeo & Juliet".

the natural holocaust at Herculeum, which perished along with Pompeii when Mt. Vesuvius erupted in 79 C.E., but which was discovered only 15 years ago. It is a

five-figure composition of a family bracing itself the volcanic onslaught about to devour them.

For the next two years, Ebin plans to devote her-

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Sculpture

From page 1

self to completing her work in progress, "Holocaust Memoriam," a sculptural testimony to the Six Million.

The Holocaust sculpture is a natural project for Ebin, she says, be-

cause of her father's artistic influence on her. She remains haunted by the images her father, a German born Jewish artist painted of European Holocaust victims. Most of Ebin's father's family died under the Nazi siege.

"I believe in the collective conscience of all Jews and of humanity," she said. "I am appealing to that conscience in my work," she explained, "so that nothing like this will ever happen again."

The ambitious work in progress, for which Ebin is still seeking financial support, will comprise a family of four life-size figures.

The exhibit at the Milken Jewish Community Campus, 22622 Vanowen St., Canoga Park, is free. An artists reception will be held from 3 to 6. For more information call 818/716-1100.

By Leo Noonan
Staff Writer

Artist Explores Our Darker Side

From the moment the front door of the Woodland Hills bungalow swings open, it is evident that Cynthia Ebin is somewhat apart from the ordinary, and she seems out of place in the West Valley. She is dressed in Eastern casual chic; the sleeves of her baggy wool sweater are shoved up, and the blue jeans and soft black boots match up well. She is a sculptress — how often do you ever meet one? — and she looks the part. She could be identified from any lineup of persons if only two clues were available: that she is driven by demonstrating and exploring the dark side of her fellow man.

Her appearance suggests an ascetic, from the very high forehead to the deep, wide-set eyes that mark her clear, olive-skinned face. Her brown hair hangs loosely. It keeps sneaking around her left ear, and she is constantly switching it back. Gradually, though, if you concentrate on what she is saying instead of watching her, the hair-switching won't bother you so much. She is in her middle 40's. Her bell-clear dialect saves her the trouble of announcing that she grew up in Boston. Only in the last decade have her sculpting skills — with a social message — been allowed to develop. If everyone has a passion, hers is an obsession with death, especially on a mass scale. It is evident in all of her work. She has done nine major pieces, and all deal with a form of death.

Several of Ms. Ebin's works recently began a two-month display at the Finegood Gallery of the new Bernard Milken Jewish Community Campus in Canoga Park. If you are looking for her work, you don't have to wade through the displays of other artists at the Finegood. Her principal sculptures are lying on the floor surrounded by pools of small chunks of coal.

Her definitive work up to now was a four-figure memorial to the townspeople of Heracleum who were wiped out in the year 79 when Mt. Vesuvius erupted and also destroyed

Pompeii. The work that she hopes will establish her reputation is a recently undertaken project, what she calls a "sculptural testimony" to the 6 million Jews who died in the Holocaust, providing that she can secure funding.

This is not a woman whose life revolves around the highest-rated television shows, or the outcome of everyday events. Her interest and her mind live elsewhere. Speaking of her career, she says, "My approach is an archaeological journey, continually digging in the catacombs of our minds." Her mission is to remind the rest of the world of its past and present wrongs. "As a sculptress, I feel a duty to mankind to verbalize through clay, to confront man, to make him question his own dark side. I would like to have some kind of say through my art, that the horrors man inflicts upon man must stop. I want to force people to think, to confront. You may not like my work, but you have to be confronted, you have to feel something."

Her father was an artist, a painter, and she grew up in a milieu that cultivated the ultra-sensitivity toward social justice that she says she was born with. "It drove me crazy to see men maligned. Look at the blacks in Ethiopia who are starving? Or the blacks who suffer in this country? For many years, I've felt a need to respond, and the only satisfactory way for me was in a visual, concrete way. This is my medium."

Ms. Ebin, who describes herself as a not-very-religious Jew, used to be a short-story writer, and she also penned poetry. She used to

be married to an Israeli from whom she long has been divorced. She has two sons, one in high school and one in college, a situation that allows her the freedom she craves to be a recluse, to be alone in her studio.

Her studio resembles a small barn, and when you enter you notice a series of clay busts of her dog on a two-tiered bench. She pulls out a hidden seat, sits down, crosses her legs and begins to open doors to her life.

The mystical side plainly fascinates her. She hosts a healing clinic once a month when she joins the audience and anxiously watches to see if the healer this time really can cure the curious who turn out.

She wants to talk about her childhood. "I was in awe of the group of artists around my dad, who actually was in real estate; but I can't remember a time that he wasn't at his easel or taking lessons, and I would go along. His contemporaries were people like Chaim Gross, Ruth Cobb, Irving Marantz, Moses Sawyer, Lawrence Kupferman, all painters. I was always surrounded by art. My parents had a large private collection, and one of my brothers is a major collector of contemporary art."

Ms. Ebin wears stylish, tinted, rimless glasses that are thick, and because they are, you notice as she takes them off and puts them on. Constantly.

She talks the way that some people just write. "I am constantly searching for a personification of energy through an expressive evolution of the figure where one can relate in an emotional, spiritual and conceptual manner."

If you close your eyes, you almost can hear spirits floating around the ceiling.

Where do her ideas emanate from? "They come in the form of abstract thoughts," Ms. Ebin says, and she throws her head back slightly. "Then I let the energy from those thoughts channel through me in a spiritual way. To say I have an idea that is concrete is not true. It's an idea that floats in, and I allow it to develop."

She deals in figures rather than esoteric.

Continued on Page 9



Memoir-Child, a sculpture by Cynthia R. Ebin.

Sculptress

Continued from Page 7

concepts because the figure is representative of all mankind. She employs clay because it is supple, organic, "close to the earth and me."

Her eyes wander around the darkened studio — a door to the outside has been opened to let in early morning light — and she seems to be counting the numerous clay pieces of all sizes and shapes. "I have no other life," she says. "This is my obsession; I can't talk about anything else."

Given her age and her concern for social justice, you can just imagine her out front when the demonstrations of the 60's were at their height. You did march, didn't you, Ms. Ebin? "No, I didn't," she says slowly. "I

hadn't come together with myself yet. I felt the pain (of the present injustice) too deeply to march. I was almost devastated by the wrongs that were going on."

A moment later she admits there might have been another reason she wasn't a demonstrator. Her father was a pacifist; and that, she hints, legislated against her going out to the front lines.

□

For all that is different about Cynthia Ebin, she is traditional in the worst way; she is a starving artist. At length, she will quietly confess that she is poor, supporting herself and her family as an artist's representative. At first, she said it was disgusting; and on second thought, she called it painful. "There's a great deal of phoniness involved, and I don't like that because I deal in the real thing. My whole quest is to ex-

pose and confront."

And so this middle-aged idealist finds herself in need of funding, not to mention a display site, as she starts out on a two-year road to research and sculpt her memorial to the Holocaust. It is intended to be four lifesize figures, a 6-foot-4 man symbolizing anguish; a woman symbolizing sorrow; and two children, one representing fear, the other rejection. The man is standing, arms outstretched to the heavens, defiant yet searching for answers, while the woman has her back to him, isolated from him because he is powerless, while she holds and shields the Fear child with one arm and is able to touch the Rejection child with her outstretched other hand. How far the project goes depends on the funding, and, perhaps, too, on how impressed visitors to the Finegood Gallery are between now and Feb. 12. □

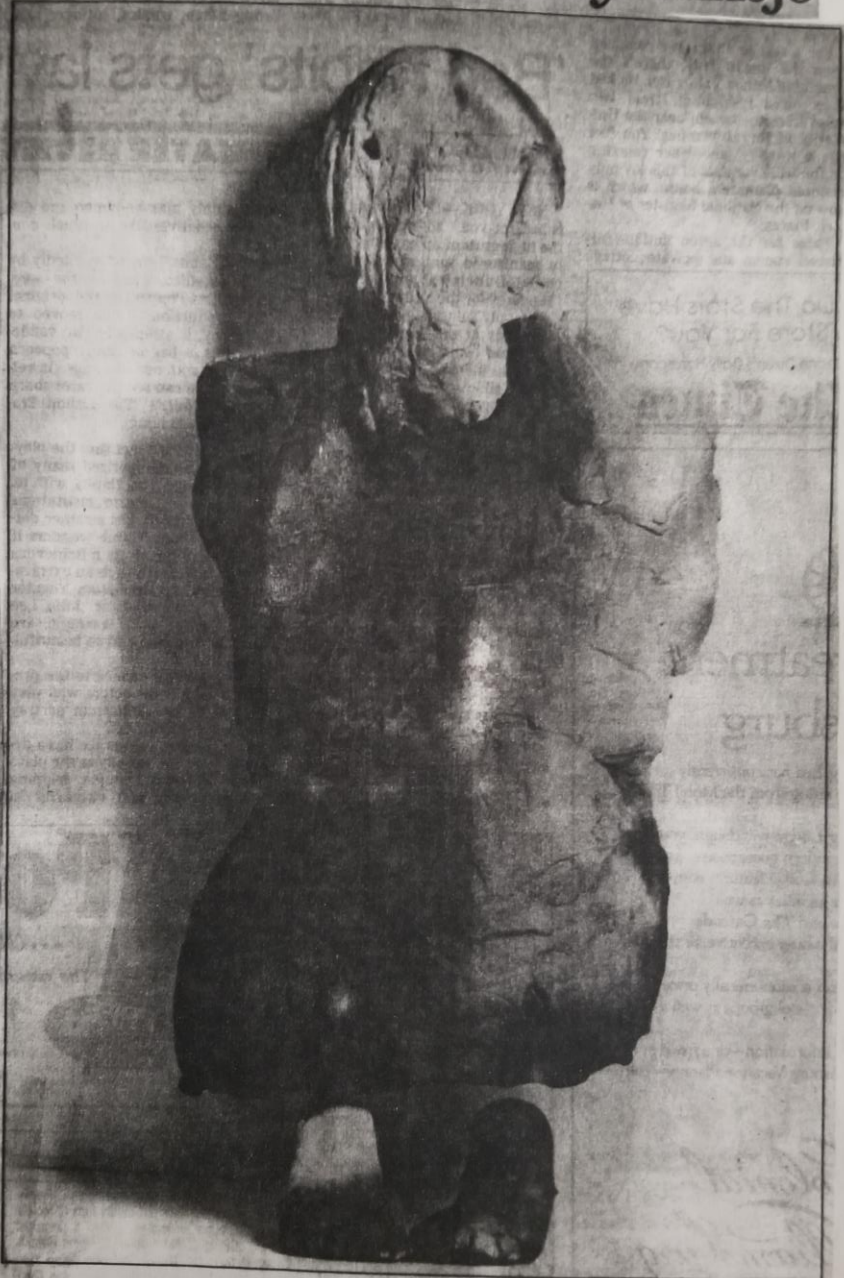
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EXHIBITS/Cathy Viksjo



West Coast sculptor Cynthia Ebin's 1988 life-size, smoke-fired clay sculpture, titled "Backthrough Woman," is included in an invitational showing at 14 Sculptors Gallery in New York's SoHo district, running through March 31.

CALABASAS lifestyle

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief
Madeline Williamson

FEBRUARY 1987

Vol. 2, No. 2



Cataclysmic events sometimes have a way of powerfully affecting people many miles and years away from where they occur. For Cynthia R.T. Ebin, a sculptress residing in Woodland Hills, one of the strongest influences on her art stems from the destruction of the city of Herculaneum when Mt. Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79. This infatuation has given fruit to fascinating sculptured forms.

"About 1982 I read an article in National Geographic about archaeological digs for artifacts from Herculaneum. They had thought everybody escaped, and were just looking for pottery and such things. Instead of just finding artifacts, they found the whole city had been destroyed," she relates. "From the moment I read that article, it was as though I was transfixed. I felt I had to do this series, a tribute to these people."

Ebin, whose work has been shown in over 30 galleries and museums, devoted 2½ years to the project. It consists of five life-sized figures frozen in poses evocative of the way some of the inhabitants of Herculaneum may have met their end. Despite the unusual way the figures are sculpted and assembled, partial forms held together with lengths of pipe and lynch pins, there is an unmistakable sense of real people captured in the clay. The 130 sections comprising the series are all body castings made by wrapping models in plaster bandages. The hardened bandages served as molds for raku clay, which was then fired, and the pipes then welded into place.

"Every Sunday for over two years I had a group of people come over to model, and they became very involved

in the whole process," says Ebin. The models, chosen to represent a cross-section of the doomed city's society, had to lend a hand to quite literally keep the project together. "The 130 pieces were an incredible puzzle," Ebin recalls. "I wanted large sections!" The sections were smoke-fired to produce a disturbing image of victims of a holocaust. "I wanted to recreate the effect of the ashes coming down from Mt. Vesuvius," she explains.

Ebin completed the series in time to show it at a Los Angeles art exhibit commemorating the 40th anniversary of an even more sudden apocalypse, the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atomic bombs. The exhibition carried some overtones closely linked to her own artistic motivations, she comments. "I'm trying to link up with the past and show we're ultimately connected." This sense of the history

hallmarks her major projects, Ebin is also adept at evoking a classical sense of tranquility. Her portraits are as personal and serene as the larger works are universal and intense. "People love to have their portraits done," notes Ebin, "and since I'm experienced at body castings, I came up with the idea of doing portraits of people by making plaster casts of their faces."

She makes her plaster molds by using an ancient face mask process involving a ten-minute posing session. The subject's countenance is then cast in clay, which is smoke fired in layers of treated charcoal elements to create multi-hued surfaces. The portraits appear both classical and contemporary.

In addition to her sculpture, Ebin makes her living by representing other artists, about 30 in all, as founder and co-partner in C-FAR, Contemporary Fine Artist Representatives and Consultants. She argues from personal experience that it is difficult to market your own art. "You're too subjective about it. And most artists don't have business acumen, because all they really want is to do their artwork."

"It's very hard to get started here," continues Ebin. "I had to do my first show in Scottsdale. It's like the old concept of 'you need a credit card to get a credit card' — you need to have been shown to be shown in L.A." Because of these obstacles, she feels, "It's very easy to get on a downhill track and not feel your own worth."

For those who have seen the moving sculptural statements of Cynthia Ebin, however, it is obvious these works have a very high value indeed. □

Art From The Ashes

By Stephen London

and even prehistory we all carry inside us comes across in many of Ebin's distinctive works.

For her masters' project at Cal State Northridge she created twin nine-foot totem poles, each adorned with 40 raku clay masks of animals, men and women. The faces, the products of latex molds made from 21 heads she sculpted, depict the evolution of modern man from primates. Called "Internal-External," the totems are intended to "trace the metamorphosis of our inner consciousness as guardians of our souls." For the past two years she has been involved in a related project, "Primeval Scream," a series of life-size clay figures tracing the human form from fetus up until death. Caught in strikingly dramatic but realistic poses, these forms are obviously not the type of sculpture you place in a bare corner for a decorative touch. Rather, they are visceral, highly emotive visions of humanity caught in the extremes of emotional experience.

Despite the powerful aura which



Press-Telegram

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, MAY 15, 1988

Volcano-inspired expressionism

Ebin, Towgood in
'Primal Embers'
at OveReact gallery

By Dinah Berland

Fire and volcanic eruption are shared metaphors for sculptor Cynthia Ebin and painter Jean Towgood — thus, the title of their joint exhibition, "Primal Embers" currently at OveReact gallery.

Although both artists gravitate toward the elemental and both are expressionistic in attitude, the resemblance ends there. While Ebin's work is solemn and quietly affecting, Towgood's is filled with turbulence, mystery and playfulness.

Ebin's Raku sculptures, made from plaster casts of the human body and then fired at low temperature in special smoke-ovens, convey a sense of pathos and suffering. Composed of scorched fragments — parts of a torso, sections of an arm, a disembodied foot — each figure is held together by a metal armature, a core of indestructibility within each fragile body.

Ebin's figures are racked with pain for a reason. Although the artist was born in this country, and her parents had immigrated before World War II, many of her relatives remained in Europe and were killed in the Holocaust, leaving Ebin with an intense desire to memorialize those who did not survive Hitler's atrocities.

On another symbolic level, the figures that Ebin creates represent the fate of the men, women and children of Herculaneum who were buried alive along with the citizens of Pompeii in A.D. 79 when Mount Vesuvius erupted. Figures lie or crouch in postures of agony or resignation, forming a frozen community of suffering.

The technique and materials with which Ebin works are ideally suited to her expressive purpose. The fact that the figures are made of clay, that they are burned and cracked, also raises archeological associations. The body becomes a piece of pottery, a broken vessel for the life it once contained. Literally as well as figuratively.

One of the focal points of the exhibit is a *pieta*, of sorts — a kneeling figure holding the slumped body of another across its lap. The title "Romeo and Juliet," appears to romanticize death, but also individualizes its occurrence. Equally effecting is the small figure of a kneeling woman pressed up against a wall, the darkened bottoms of her feet exposed beneath a fleshy torso. This spare and intimate pose speaks much more eloquently of the heaviness of sorrow than do the more clichéd gestures of Ebin's reclining figures with their hands draped melodramatically across their brows.

While Ebin points to volcanic eruption as a symbol of destructive power, Towgood's colorful paintings incorporate volcanoes

as vibrant energy sources. On large canvases and within smaller drawings, Towgood sets surfaces vibrating with a hailstorm of strokes painted with oilstick. Images of human figures, palm trees and volcanoes erupt with the intensity of her mark-making.

Although Towgood's use of color and gesture is consistently rich and electric, the point of view in many of these works is less clear. Volcanoes bursting into swirls of bouquet-like embers are more exuberant than forboding. And, although skeletal figures and the fiery environments they inhabit seem at first to be emotionally charged, a too-cute cartoon cat with spikey claws keeps popping up to break the mood.

Most intriguing are pieces that maintain their mysterious atmosphere and allow the playful elements to dance. Towgood's strongest piece is a large, wildly gestural diptych titled "San Felipe Nights." In this painting, which recalls the mythic surrealism found in some Hispanic art, palm trees are transformed into crosses and red animal eyes burn in white-hot grass. The same

Art review

"Primal Embers." Raku sculpture by Cynthia Ebin and oilstick paintings by Jean Towgood. OveReact, 102 West Third St., Long Beach. Tues.-Fri. noon-7 p.m. Sat. noon-9 p.m. Sun. noon-4 p.m. 432-2291. Through June 19.



"Romeo and Juliet," life-size Raku sculpture by Cynthia Ebin.

sense of elemental power is present in "San Felipe Triptych," in which the figure of the cat springs out of a thicket of color.

Exemplifying Towgood's lighter side is the animated "Dragon Slaying Series." In this group of

monoprints, the ever-present cat comes into its own as a spring feline, taking on a lively and more transcendent personality that begins to unify the artist's penchant for whimsy with her sense of the surreal.

C Galleries

An Udinotti opening, and a beautiful book.



KELLY WALTON

Artist Cynthia Taub, disturbed that nothing had been made of the discovery of bodies at Herculaneum, set out to do something about it.

The result of her two-year project is *Memoriam to Herculaneum*, now on display at the Udinotti Gallery, 4215 N. Marshall Way, Scottsdale.

Herculaneum was destroyed along with Pompeii in A.D. 79 when Mount Vesuvius erupted, and Ms. Taub has constructed a sensitive, subtle sculptural memorial to these nameless people who died horrible deaths. Each piece rests on a bed of lava rocks, giving an eerie quality to the work as a whole.

"The discovery of these bodies moved me," Ms. Taub told me. "I believe in a spiritual way that I was chosen to do this."

Ms. Taub is a process-oriented artist, and the process by which she arrived at the figures in the Udinotti show is a fascinating one. Usually, an armature is made before any casting is done, but Ms. Taub did her sculptures in reverse. She constructed the body parts and then worked a way to connect them into the finished work. Now, these parts disassemble for ease of shipment and are reconstructed for the purposes of exhibition — much like a puzzle.

"I'm a sculptor who loves ceramic processes," Ms. Taub said. So, she applies the organic processes of ceramics to make her strong statements. The pieces are first bisque fired and then smoke fired, "which would allow the smoke to just drop down on them," she said.

She showed me slides she took of her work at a construction site in California, and it was like looking at an archaeological dig in Italy as the remains of these bodies were discovered. In a setting like that, the effect is amazing, but far less subtle than in a gallery or museum.

The figures are either lying down, as in sleep, or crouching. Of course, we in this century can only imagine what these unfortunate people experienced, but Ms. Taub declared, "I wanted them to die with dignity, or in their sleep."

"The negative space is as much a part of the piece as the rest of it," she stated.

Ms. Taub, a native of Boston, now lives in Woodland Hills, Calif., and she is working on her master of fine arts at Cal State Long Beach. *Memoriam to Herculaneum* also

includes several masks from a series of metamorphoses she has done — from which the *Memoriam* evolved. All these works may be seen at the gallery through Dec. 1.



ARTWEEK

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EXHIBITIONS

4 / ARTWEEK

JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

Long Beach / Susan Geer

In every age individuals have set out on spiritual journeys, on pilgrimages and personal quests. Sustained by delicate threads of hope and longing they are driven forward by private furies, ideals and pain to seek true peace and purpose. Such trials are epic in nature and fuel the dreams of poets, writers, philosophers and artists—individuals willing to endure, transcend and (most important) record their passage through the underworld.

That voyage through the dark night of the soul, with all its challenges, triumphs and reversals, is at the heart of Jean Towgood's paintings at OveReact Gallery. She describes her quest through an oddly familiar world with innumerable stabbing lines of Oilstik on paper or gigantic pieces of canvas. In her works the familiar world is alive and in active turmoil. Placid mountains are pockets of erupting violence, and plains are thick black grave-stone crosses or withered hands with skeletal wrists sinking into bulging piles of organic matter.

Although energetic line and color are the backbone of the images Towgood creates, it is the work's gut-level sense of urgency and openness that gives it its staying power. Each image is like a single entry in a diary. For this reason her paintings must not so much be considered as individual images as they are taken as a whole. Together they form an ongoing emotional narrative of suffering, change and triumph that is a kind of mirror to the contemporary existential reality. The figure, always alone in a strange world of writhing shadows, bulging floors and glowing windows, is a generic, faceless Everyman who falls and rises repeatedly, from image to image. This spectral figure, lit by

an internal fire in such pieces as *Night-shades*; *Threshold* or simply vibrating with the energy of the atmosphere that permeates all of Towgood's canvases, endures and survives. But in the end there seems to be more of the stoic than the crusader in its continuing martyrdom.

Towgood's symbols, (the cross, the palm tree/withered hand, the broken yellow line of the highway and the enigmatic, smiling cats with irradiated claws) form a complex but ultimately self-clarifying vocabulary. With them she references and cross-references humanity's battle against the emotional hostility and desolation of the current age.

Cynthia Ebin's concern is less with the present than the past. Her raku-fired figures of men, women and children suggest the plaster casts made several years ago when scientists uncovered impressions of bodies buried under tons of hot ash by the eruption of Vesuvius over Herculaneum in 79 A.D.

To achieve the death-mask accuracy of the Herculaneum figures, Ebin takes partial molds from live models, then pieces the fired fragments together over steel armatures in poses that suggest the painful vulnerability of those victims of an ancient disaster. The raku firing scars the ashy white pallor of the figures with soot black tongues of dead flame and strongly links the artist's process with the reality of the event.

The fragments of loosely joined clay are effective at capturing the poses of the dead or dying, yet curiously, the artist has chosen to leave the faces blank and unscathed by the ordeal. The impassive countenances have the odd effect of washing out the impact of the act of dying. Even the face of the kneeling man cradling the sprawling body of a woman in a death-vigil pieta weakly called *Romeo and Juliet* is empty—not the dull, pain-numbed face of unbearable loss, simply devoid of feeling and expression. Instead of real pain, Ebin gives us a dramatic and romantic notion of death, death without sting.

In this exhibit Ebin's strongest works are the handmade paper pieces, such as



Cynthia Ebin, *Back Through Mother Earth*, smoke-fired ceramic, life-size, at OveReact Gallery, Long Beach. Photo: Ken Pearson.

Backthrough—Earth, Mother and Armour Amour—Young Boy, in which the figurative fragments of back, feet, torso or head seem to emerge from the wall like delicate human phantoms. In these works we are caught by the vulnerable spirit and body of the woman and child and not distracted by theatrical death dramatics. If Ebin really wants us to share her journey into the underworld in search of the soul of a departed civilization, it is this kind of thoughtful and fragile imagery that will carry us there. Death may indeed be the great equalizer in the epic journey of life, but what touches us about human mortality is more the vulnerability of life than the brute finality of the grave. □



LOCAL ARTIST — Cynthia R. Ebin of Woodland Hills recently showed her sculpted works at Plaza One Gallery in Warner Center. She is shown with her depiction of death and sorrow, entitled "La Pieta." Plaza One Gallery is located at 21600 Oxnard Street, Woodland Hills.

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Women's History Honored With "Convocation"

A "Convocation of Spirits" at Momentum Gallery opens with a reception for the artists on Sunday, March 4 from 2 - 5 p.m. and continues through April 5. The sculpture by Cynthia Ebin (Thousand Oaks) and Linda Vallejo (Los Angeles), hologram by Sally Weber (Ventura), installation by Mary Beth Hanrahan and Michele Chapin (Ventura) and paintings by Bonita Helmer (Los Angeles/Ojai) were selected by curator Maureen Davidson.

Cynthia Ebin's "Hooded Sentries" suggest the human figure confined "in silent wrappings," of monolithic rocks. Constructed out of paper-covered metal and wood, the rock-trapped humans are humble and stoic. This fusing and confusing of the organic and the mineral has been explored by Ebin before in her critically acclaimed "Herculaneum Series." Ebin has exhibited in museums internationally and in galleries throughout the U.S.

Nature interacts with twentieth century human life in the sculpture of Linda Vallejo whose "Life Eternal," "Tres Mujeres" and other works exhibited in "Convocation" are selected from nature by the artist and altered in a conscious collaboration, using paper pulp and color to reveal the "spirits" within found pieces of wood. Vallejo has exhibited in museums and galleries on three continents and is a respected juror and teacher. Her work is imbued with Chicano/Mexicano cultural concepts: seeing human life as it relates to all of nature.

The quest that ends when the searcher follows his heart is the setting for "Parsifal's Request," a "shifting maze" where illusion shimmers and clarity is fleeting—a hologram by Sally Weber. A graduate of M.I.T.'s Center for Advanced Visual Studies, Weber's explorations in holographic public art have led to an international career—in 1989 she exhibited in Munich, Germany; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE); Los Angeles Museum of Science and Industry and Nagoya Museum, Japan.

Mary Beth Hanrahan and Michele Chapin's collaborative sculptural installations dominate Momentum Gallery's entrance and sculpture patio. A fertile, nurturing spirit is built ingeniously of living plants. "Artemis" is a warrior queen armored with the accouterments of the kitchen. A waxen mermaid constructed of Ventura beach trash angrily protects her living treasures. Chapin is a sculptor and clothing designer; Hanrahan is a sculptor/prop-maker/performance artist whose work has been exhibited in Art City Gallery and galleries in the Southwest.

Bonita Helmer's paintings are laden with fragments of earth, glass, rock, walls. As rich in meaning as in texture, her images are consciously Jungian. Momentum exhibits works from two series—"Dark Stages" which invite the onlooker into a point-of-view deep within the paintings—a disquieting perspective, and the "Plates Series" which uses plates as a symbol for the continuum of culture, whose fragments remain after civilizations perish. Helmer has been widely exhibited with critical success. She currently teaches at U.C.L.A. and at Ojai Art Center, a California Arts Council Artist-in-Residence.



*Hooded Sentries, 1989 by Cynthia Ebin
Photo: George T. Bennett*

Painting the Reality of Homelessness

By SHARON SNOW, Times Staff Writer

Like many of her struggling fellow artists, painter Patty Sue Jones for several years was stuck in a cheap loft in Inglewood. But while her environment might not have been the most desirable, it provided the subject for work of which she is now proud: a series of 15 paintings of homeless people.

"These people were my neighbors for five years," said Jones, who left that loft in 1987 and now lives in Highland Park. "To most people, street people are a part of the urban landscape. People drive by and don't see them. Living down there is pretty isolating, and I wanted to do something about it [by] doing the paintings."

Three of Jones' paintings are included in "Reality—Not Just Another Pretty Picture," an exhibition at the Long Beach Art Assn. Gallery of

more than 100 paintings, photographs, sculptures and installations depicting the homeless condition. The artists featured in the exhibition say they hope their work will break down stereotypes of the homeless—and help raise money to better their condition.

"I'd like people to look at these photos and paintings and not see filthy bums, but just people that are having a struggle," said photographer and cinematographer Stanley D. Newton, who has been taking pictures of the homeless for about two years. "Then I'd like them to see a bit of themselves, 'cause I don't care where they live—everybody has a bit of a struggle. We all pretty much live month-to-month, and we all can be brought down [by a financial tragedy]."

Curator and artist Heather Green, who mounted

the exhibition "to bring people together and care sincerely committed to humanity," said she believes art can be used "as a non-threatening tool" to bring in people who might either ignore or just not see the homeless issue otherwise.

"If you can touch their minds first, then you can touch their hearts," said Green, who put together a similar, but smaller-scale exhibition at the Ash Grove Gallery in Hollywood last year.

"Homelessness is just too strong of an issue to let go by, and in some way, this work has a much greater image when it's from all of us together."

The exhibition includes the work of 14 painters, sculptors, photographers and muralists. Also included are five films ("Addressless," "In the Wee Wee Hours," "Justiceville," "Lost Angeles"

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and "Street Sweep") on the homeless, which will be shown daily. In addition, a reception featuring performances by homeless musicians and poets will be held Sunday (at 2 p.m.), and a fund-raiser and public forum also featuring homeless musicians and poets will be held Sept. 18 (at 7 p.m.).

"I'm asking people to bring just whatever they can afford," said Green, noting that one homeless man has said he would bring a can of food so that he would feel that he was contributing and was therefore eligible to attend. "That I would be divided if we could raise \$1,000 to give to the [Second Harvest] Food Bank [of the Greater South Bay], which in recent months has been robbed of more than \$10,000 worth of equipment and supplies."

Green said that many services, including the gallery space and food for the reception, have already been donated for the exhibition, which has been funded in part by a National State-County Partnership grant. She added that several local service organizations, including Catholic Charities, Christian Outreach and the Salvation Army, have linked up with the exhibition, providing information for both the homeless and those who would like to help them. In addition, flyers inviting homeless people to the show, reception and public forum are being passed in various spots where the homeless are known to congregate.

"I'm full of a lot of angst and passion to what is happening," said sculptor Cynthia R. Ebin, who has six pieces in the show. "I'm just trying to touch somebody with my sculpture. I want to affect them—people need to realize that they have to do something."

Ebin's works show portions of men's and women's bodies, made of clay that is fired in ashes and soot, and chipped and cracked to show that "man is breaking." Her "Syn-

ergy," which represents "a composition of all men together," was created specifically for this exhibition and attempts to show "that we're all the same—we're all part of the same roots."

But in showing the common humanity of homeless people, the artists interviewed talked about varying aspects of that humanity that they were trying to depict.

"What I thought was so sad was the isolation [of the homeless],"

"Normally someone that's really poor doesn't feel like they should be walking in this gallery. Most homeless people aren't invited to things like this, but this time they're being sought out to come," Green said.

In addition to cash donations, Green is asking visitors to the gallery to bring items such as canned food, clothing, toys, toilet paper and laundry detergent. The artists themselves will donate 10% to 50% of proceeds from works that are sold during the show, although they say selling their art is not a primary focus this time around.

said Pat Berger, whose painting, "No Place to Go," shows two men who are sitting near each other in a park by City Hall but yet "not relating at all." Her other works depict scenes such as a lone, elderly man hanging his head, and a family trying to make a home in an "urban campground."

Stacy Howe, an anthropologist and photographer, uses her work to focus on the small, daily trials and triumphs of homeless people.

people in their attempt to feel better about their situation on the street. "I can't imagine how you could be peacefully sleeping on the street, but yet be really in, and be looking at the homeless and middle-aged man whom she passed near her former apartment, one night. The artist's work shows two homeless men playing a game of chess. "They're very contented and calm. Even though they're on the street, they're totally concentrated on the game of chess," she said.

There's a lot of creativity and imagination in the work of the homeless population," she said. "Things like washing your hair, bathing, going to the bathroom and eating come out of the imagination. They have to have that daily battle and have that take-up so much of their energy and creativity. They have to have a daily battle to survive. They care to the touch of daily life."

Painter Jones, who uses "hard of hearing" people as a subject, said that the homeless are "the most vulnerable people in the world."