

Calendar listing for exhibition

For Immediate Release: December 21, 2004

Euphrat Museum of Art

De Anza College, Cupertino, CA 95014

Art exhibition:

Shared Passions

February 14 – April 15, 2005

Closed President's Day, March 21, 2005

Closed spring break March 28 - 31, 2005

Museum Hours: M - Th, 10-4

Open to tour groups by appointment.

Reception: Tuesday, March 1, 6-8 pm with artist presentation

Artists shown:

Jody Alexander, Ali Dadgar, Bella Feldman, Penny Nii, Saïd Nuseibeh, Lisa Reinertson, Peng Peng Wang, Nanette Wylde

Artist co-curators and collaborators included Melissa Harmon, Kent Manske, Linda Mau, Nazanin Shenasa

Shared Passions is an exhibition derived from collaborating with four artists who work with art groups, whether organized or only loosely affiliated. We discussed directions and decided on different methods to focus on their particular area of interest. Three-dimensional art, photography, and painting/silkscreen will be on display. Highlights include a focus on book arts, a section highlighting and honoring sculptor Bella Feldman, another section for an artist working in large-scale ceramics and public art, and a section for two artists addressing their Middle Eastern heritage.

Working with Kent Manske from Bay Area Book Arts, we chose four artists whose work reflects a broad definition of book arts. **Hisako Penny Nii's** books offer a range of personal history and an interest in science. An eclipse book, built in two ways, presents history, science, and poetic interpretation. An accordion book about her travel to Jaisalmer, India, is based on an original short story, "The Golden City," and is illustrated with her photographs. Nii has a background in computer science and expertise in quilts, as a maker and as former owner of a contemporary quilt gallery. **Jody Alexander** creates sculptures from book binding techniques, calligraphy, and sometimes found

objects. The books are stuck closed or stuck in the box, presumably from age or neglect. They are minimal, formally beautiful, with the content all locked away. **Peng Peng Wang's** imagination is wide ranging. Clothing can be embroidered with words and turned into books that comment on Silicon Valley lifestyles. *Lose Weight Naturally* is a book with a wedge cut out of it, like a slice of pie. This wedge sits on a plate — presumably less calories than the real thing. **Nanette Wylde** exhibits her *Storyland* book on an iMac computer, using a musical interlude as a transition between stories. Randomly created narratives play with stereotypes and popular culture. The reader presses the "New story" button, and a story is created. *Storyland* mirrors aspects of contemporary cultural production: sampling, appropriation, hybrids, stock content, design templates.

Working with Linda Mau, member of several ceramics groups (including Association of Clay and Glass Artists of California, Orchard Valley Ceramics Guild), we decided to focus on large-scale ceramic sculpture and public art involvement, specifically the work of **Lisa Reinertson**. Reinertson has created life-size ceramic figures and also clay figures to be cast in bronze for public sculpture. These are sculpted in a realistic, sometimes classical style. When she makes a detailed clay original for a bronze casting, she will sometimes salvage the head after the molds are made — chopping it off, hollowing it out, and firing it. On exhibit are maquettes of public sculptures of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez. Reinertson's style includes bas-relief that adds to the narrative and history. In the case of King, it is incorporated into his robe. Reinertson is currently working on a proposed public sculpture for the City of San José that has a life-size Ohlone woman in a tule boat and sculpted water, with 10,000 years of history in bas-relief on the pedestal, coming up to today as someone looks up a timeline on a computer. Reinertson's personal art in ceramics is more intimate (mother and child) and sometimes more allusive. A dozing life-size woman is supported and transported miraculously by three sauntering cats.

Working with Melissa Harmon from the Northern Chapter of the Women's Caucus for the Arts, we chose to highlight and honor **Bella Feldman** for her art and for her contributions to the art world and the community. Feldman is known for her large sculptures in metal, glass, and a variety of other materials. Their weight, mass, volume, balance, and motion attract the viewer. Then they elicit associations, with the materials and forms taking on different meanings. Titles get you started in a direction — such as *Credo*, *Bullfinch's Cart*, and *Mood Swing*. Beauty may be tinged with elements of threat or irony. Feldman has taught art for years. She taught in Uganda (1968-1970), founded the sculpture program at Santa Rosa Jr. College (1972-75), and has served since 1975 at California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, as Graduate Director, Professor, and several times Chair of the Sculpture Department. She has been a Visiting Artist at universities across the country and internationally. She is widely

exhibited, has received numerous architectural commissions, and has an impressive resume in terms of publications, awards, reviews, and collections.

Nazanin Shenasa is curating an exhibition on Muslim artists. For the Euphrat we focused on two artists who offered cultural insights, food for thought as we face a critical time in the Middle East. **Ali Dadgar's** series *Recent Antiquities* is composed of works in acrylic and silkscreen on wood, which touch on Iranian history and culture and form a dialogue between East and West. *War Poet* alludes to Sadegh Hedayat, a legendary intellectual from 1930s Iran, who was exiled to Paris. He left a legacy in literacy, politics, social realism. *In Memory of a Warrior* is a reflection on Rostam, a hero of Iranian cultural identity from Ferdowsi's poem *Shahnameh (Book of Kings)* written in pure Farsi. *Profile* refers to racial profiling. With no details, it is a silhouette of nothing. An astrological schedule is part of the background. Dadgar was born and raised in Iran, immigrated to the U.S. in 1977, studied art in California, and has been active in the art community and the Berkeley-based Iranian theatre company Darvag. **Said Nuseibeh's** series of photographs of the Dome of the Rock takes us to a Muslim holy site with significance also to Christians and Jews. We see the golden dome as an imposing presence in Jerusalem — then as an interior space for worship, built around a barren rock. A man moves in prayer. In capturing the motion, Nuseibeh alludes to an internal spiritual space. Nuseibeh also employs motion in *Writing on the Wall*. This series is based on a viewer walking in front of a poem written larger than life across a gallery wall in Amman, Jordan. The poem, *al-Barzakh*, by Adonis, a contemporary Syrian poet, treats a boundary separating two things, "and by extension, purgatory." Manipulating his camera, Nuseibeh creates images with the viewer moving, fading out, and the calligraphy swirling. Each photograph is accompanied by words from William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), such as "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." Nuseibeh's poetic, non-literal, translation of the Adonis verse speaks to an "underlying humanity and spirituality beneath ethnic and religious diversity."

For events connected to the exhibition, call the number listed below.

Call Jan Rindfleisch 408-864-8836 for more information.