



SAA ART LINE

FALL
2009

Raising Breast Cancer Awareness through the Power of the Visual Arts

The Somerset Art Association is hosting several events this October, during nationally recognized Breast Cancer Awareness Month, to raise awareness through the power of the visual arts about breast cancer which strikes 182,460 women annually.

"Image Early"

by

Marion Behr

October 4 – 31, 2009 • Artist Reception Sunday, Oct. 4, 2-4 p.m.

Generously Sponsored by Ortho-McNeil

Diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007, SAA member and artist Marion Behr was inspired by the Alpha Cradles which meld to a woman's torso to keep the body still during radiation, to create, using these forms, sculptural totems expressive of the myriad of emotions felt by cancer patients during their journey of treatment, hope and survival.

The artist explains,

"The radiation cradles were lined up on the shelves, one on top of another, shelf after shelf. I was lying on top of one of them on a sort of bed, waiting for my first treatment. Initially there was some anxiety but then my focus kept going back to the cradles and to all of the women who bravely laid here before me. 'What were their feelings during their cancer treatments?' In my mind the cradles took the form of sculptures representing other patients and their emotions, as well as mine. It was then that I decided to turn these blue plastic flat forms into abstract figures that would encourage others to get an early mammogram the same way my kids encouraged me."

The Alpha Cradles are bent and reshaped by Marion to create totems suggestive of the female torso to which she adds different textures, color and collage elements. Each sculpture stands on a plinth raising the height of the work to that of an average-size visitor making interaction with the pieces personal and direct. Some of the sculptures are grouped together as if in conversation inviting the viewer into their visual discourse while others stand apart in fiery defiance or silent meditation.

Intended to evoke feelings, the sculptures' titles are significant. In *Jumping for Joy*, the work's unpainted paper mache surface and playful pose are reminiscent of childhood innocence and the purity of gleeful emotion. In the work *Detox*, the sculpture is blanketed in a patchwork of color swatches; the lower torso edged with muddier tones while brighter hues spread across the upper portion. A bent "leg" protrudes from the base of the work as if the figure is about to stand and cast off the toxic film which has entrapped it. In *Pre-reconstruction*, the figure's breast is replaced with a rusted plumbing pipe while nails stitched together end to end form jagged pathways which scratch across the surface like fingernails against a chalk board. The image is disturbing, yet upon closer inspection, the vibrant blue fabric underpinning of the cradle peers through as if filling the pipe's circular cavity with a pool of "water" — a source of life and healing. Not all of the exhibited works, however, are as hopeful. Some appear withdrawn or struggling as if bound to the white plinths on which they are displayed. Another is riddled with cigarette wrappers while others have been joined together, united in their fight against breast cancer yet their "heavenly ascent" reminds viewers that the battle has yet to be won, a cure still and must be found.



"Smoke Gets in your Eyes"



"Pre-reconstruction"

(continued on page 2)

SAA ART LINE is published by the Somerset Art Association, a non-profit organization.

SAA HOURS: Monday through Thursday, 9:30 am-4:30 pm • Thursday evening 6:30-8 pm • Friday & Saturday, 9:30 am-1:00 pm.
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"Image Early" (continued from page 1)

The Alpha Cradle used by the artist during her treatment is also included in the show. Poignantly titled *My Cradle*, the artist defiantly battles with the instrument symbolic of her cancer by transforming it into a beautiful work of art. Bathed in shimmering layers of cool blues and greens, the figure stands erect in a welcoming posture triumphantly proclaiming its creator as an artist defined by her creativity and not by a diagnosis.

Marion Behr's work is intended to comfort, startle, celebrate, educate and ultimately encourage visitors to "Image Early" in the battle against breast cancer through early detection, good medical practices, caring doctors and necessary research.

About the Artist

A resident of North Branch Station, New Jersey, Marion Behr earned both a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Masters of Fine Arts from Syracuse University in New York. With her husband Marc Behr, she patented a new acid free, environmentally safe graphic etching process which was listed as the Patent of the Week by the New York Times, 5/02/92. Together they have traveled extensively throughout the United States and Canada, and countries abroad including Morocco and New Zealand lecturing about this break-through process. Her award-winning graphic work is in the collections of the Newark Public Library, United States Embassy in Germany, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Royal Thai Collection, Bangkok, Thailand and the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum among others. She was the recipient of the Charles E. Lindbergh Fund: Grantee for Arts and Humanities, 1993 and the featured artist of the month in August 2005 on the web-site www.jerseyarts.com administered by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. A fervent advocate for women and home-based businesses, Marion founded the National Alliance of Homebased Businesswomen, the first national professional organization for home workers in the United States, of which she served as both President from 1980 to 1982 and legislative chair from 1982-1985. Her advocacy efforts have been profiled in, among others, *McCalls*, *Vogue*, *Working Woman*, *Family Circle* and *Redbook* in addition to extensive radio and TV appearances including *Donahue*, *Good Morning America* and *Woman to Woman*.

Panel Discussion

Surviving Breast Cancer: Decades of Hope

Thursday, October 8 - 6:00-8:00 pm.

\$10 suggested donation

Women diagnosed with breast cancer in their 20s, 30s, 40s and 50-60s respectively will share their personal stories during a panel discussion, *Surviving Breast Cancer: Decades of Hope*, at SAA on Thursday, October 8 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Dr. Angela Lanfranchi, whose practice is devoted to the treatment of breast cancer and benign breast disease, and Dr. Kathleen Toomey, Medical Director, Steeplechase Cancer Center, Somerville, NJ, will also be present to discuss the reduction in the rate of breast cancer incidence through knowledge of prevention methods, the prognosis and cures of women whose cancers are found with early detection, and the long term survival of many women even with metastasis. Songwriter and guitarist Bob Filoramo will conclude the evening with a song he wrote in tribute to a close friend and breast cancer survivor. The presentation is open to the public with a suggested donation of \$10. Advanced registration is required by calling SAA at (908) 234-2345. Seating is limited.

"Image Early" Benefit

Friday, October 23 • 7:00-10:00 p.m.

at

The Somerset Art Association

Guest Performer Susan Speidel, whose sold-out cabaret shows and off-Broadway performances have entertained crowds for over two decades, will entertain guests with excerpts from her show, "The Best Of Times Is Now!" The show celebrates the zest for life of Jerry Herman, Broadway's most beloved showtime composer's larger-than-life characters including favorite songs from *Hello Dolly*, *Mame*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Mack and Mabel*, and many more! With arrangements by Nick DeGregorio, and accompaniment by Joseph P. Regan.

Tickets: \$75 per person

includes hors d'oeuvres, wine, champagne & refreshments.

**Funds will benefit the Somerset Art Association with a percentage of the proceeds donated to
The Susan G. Komen For The Cure Foundation**

To purchase ticket(s) call SAA by October 13 at (908) 234-2345. *Space is limited.*