

B"H  
**Old City Jewish Art Center**  
A project of Jewish Heritage Programs

*A Tribute to Jewish Women*  
May 2 - 29, 2008  
*Biographies*

A mother, wife, sister, friend; a woman of valor is righteous, humble, giving and wise.

This very special art exhibition, "A Tribute to Jewish Women", is dedicated to Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, Mother of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, N" A, and to all Mothers here on earth and beyond...

## **Linda Elgart**

### **Artist Statement**

When viewing a drawing show I was struck by the way the viewer looked right through the glass at the drawing without even noticing the glass. My concept is to bring attention to the glass as well as the drawing beneath it. My subject matter is geology, echoing the molten layers of rock using molten glass, and later, using the human form, but referring to the history of mankind on the earth.

### **Biography**

I knew I would be an artist from my earliest days. I still have some of my best works hanging in my house, and they were done when my age was in single digits! My mother was always supportive of me in art, and I was lucky to go to Lower Merion High School when one was able to take a lot of art classes. I took fine art, "modern" art, jewelry, and art history. I followed my mother to Tyler School of Art. It was not my mother's Tyler. The style at the time was of non-representational or conceptual art, so it made sense for me to go into glass and ceramics. My ability to render from life wasn't valued at that time. And, I really enjoyed the physical aspect and materials of craft.

I continued in this vein at Southern Illinois University, but ultimately the glass and drawing wall pieces upon which I arrived were somewhere between what would be thought of as "craft" and "fine art". This made my work interesting, but not able to be pigeon-holed into one genre or the other, so I couldn't parlay it into a college teaching job. Instead, my husband John (we met while grad students) and I went back to Philadelphia to become caretakers on an estate, Idlewild Farm. Here, I had a studio and was able to show my work a lot. At the same time we pursued our serious hobby, bicycle racing. We had enough time to volunteer in such things as race promotion and administration of our bike club.

When Mrs. Saunders, our benefactor, gave her property to the Natural Lands Trust and went into a retirement home, we decided to turn our hobby into a business, and moved to California where John's mother lived, to go into the bicycle industry. After a few years of working in a bike shop we started our sales representative business, which we have to this day. Now, I use my art to help people design bicycle jerseys. We are still bicycle racing, too. I still draw from life, a talent that never left me and that I can enjoy.

## **Ruth C. Elgart**

### **Artist Statement**

Ruth C. Elgart is a prize winning sculptor who has exhibited nationally, including in New York City. She has a B.F.A. and a B.S. in Education from the Tyler School of Art. She has been teaching in local art centers her entire career as well as the QE 2. Her sculpture "Rejoice in Freedom" was selected to be featured in the Philadelphia Inquirer from the Philadelphia Artists' Equity Show at the Berman Gallery at Ursinus College. She was selected to be in Tyler's traveling show and accompanying book. She is currently teaching in her studio in Manayunk and the Tyme Gallery in Havertown.

### **Biography**

Wood is my love. To me, it is organic, living. I use very hard, dense woods, imported from Africa, South America, Haiti, and Central America, and many other parts of the world. There is an embargo in the rain forests at this time, so I have been using local woods such as walnut, cherry, sycamore, chestnut, etc.

Wood is the material to express my feelings, and the human figure is the vehicle. I wish to explore the human condition through themes of birth, fertility, family, love, and sorrow.

My carvings provoke moods of contemplation, quietness, and serenity. Wood is a sensual medium. There is a natural warmth. I emphasize the smooth round forms of bellies, breasts, and buttocks and the more angled planes in the head and face carvings.

Carving is a subtractive action, chiseling away from the mass. Each piece of wood has its unique character and/or problem to solve. There is the question of stability and balance, the handling of negative space, and dealing with flaws in the material in a positive way.

My sculpture is to afford thought and pleasure to the viewer. I would like to place PLEASE TOUCH signs on every pedestal. The biggest compliment I can receive is to see someone caress the wood. This is an impulsive reaction by a person who has been moved by what they see.

My second medium is portraiture in clay, to be cast in bronze. Portraiture is an additive act. One is working from the core outwards; each pellet of clay is building the form and character of the subject. In portraiture, I strive to capture the essence of my subject, rather than an exact likeness. Live sittings are an

integral component to the achievement of this goal. Communication and knowledge of the subject enhances my total comprehension of a portrait.

Ruth C. Elgart

## **Dr. Doris Lambert Peltzman**

### **Biography**

#### My Biography in a Capsule

It's difficult for me to believe that I had a different life before my life as an artist. I was a School Principal and Administrator in the Philadelphia School District for over 30 plus years. But my real life had not begun until I discovered who I really was.....in addition to a career, being a wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and so on and so on.....I THINK I know who I really am now????

It all began when I retired and took a class at Samuel Fleisher Art Memorial.  
THAT WAS IT!!!!  
I WAS HOOKED!

From the beginning of my new found love I was committed to pursuing the world of the artist. I followed my passion and won an award to have a Solo Exhibit of my work at Fleisher. That was 2000.

Presently I am affiliated with several galleries in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. I have had several solo exhibits, group exhibitions, as well as had the opportunity to exhibit in many juried exhibitions in the tri-states. I have won numerous awards from 1999 up to 2008. I am affiliated with ArtistsHouse in Old City Philadelphia, Sheila in West Chester, P.A, Carspecken-Scott Gallery in Wilmington, Delaware, Northend Trilogy on Long Beach Island, East End Gallery in Margate, New Jersey, Wm. Ris Gallery in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. This year I have won awards from the Main Line Art Center, Montgomery County Guild of Professional Artists and 2 awards...back to back from the Philadelphia Plastic Club. My work can presently be seen at Main Line Art Center's LIVING WITH ART EXHIBIT, the Inquirer Building in Conshocken, P.A., Widener University Gallery in Chester, P.A. in June at the ArtistsHouse Gallery on 2<sup>nd</sup> street, in Philadelphia, P.A. and Newman Gallery on Chestnut Street in Philadelphia.

I am obsessed with learning all that I can about painting. I like to try different surfaces, palettes and immerse myself in the learning process. This means talking classes with talented teachers, painting with fellow gifted artists, painting in my studio, painting from life and painting almost every day and ALWAYS, ALWAYS RAISING MY HORIZONS.

The true worth of the artist ... is based on where the artist was... where the artist is going ...and taking the risks to get there.

I paint from life. The sense of the moment, the excitement of the visual stimulation, the passion and immediacy drives me. Sometimes I paint AL LA PRIMA (wet on wet) responding spontaneously to my first impression. Sometimes my paintings are sustained so I can arrive at the response I want for a particular visual image.

Finished paintings may have roughly treated areas, some areas allowing the under painting to show through. This may contrast with more detailed strokes on other objects. I may use glazes, thick impasto or simply allow that first stroke to dominate. I enjoy painting on a variety of surfaces: board, canvas, linen, vintage wallpaper, paper, mylar. The actual visual stimulation dictates the process.

And when a painting is complete, it is time to move on to new images and perceptions. For with every ending there exists a new beginning. This is true in art as it is in life.

March, 2008

## **Bobby Rosenstock**

### **Artist Statement**

These paintings were created while I was a resident at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, Vermont. Earlier that summer my brother was in a life threatening accident and I spent two months living out of the hospital as he slowly recovered. After he was able to go home I made the decision to go up to Vermont to release my built up energy and emotions through my art and take some time to reflect on what my family had just gone through. The paintings Scar and Rebirth are about struggle, survival, and support. I use the woman, barer of life, to represent a higher being looking over and nurturing us. Although these paintings were created during a dark and difficult period of my life, they represent the power of hope in times of despair and the ability for us to come together and overcome our hardships.

## **Bobby Rosenstock**

### **Biography 2007**

Bobby Rosenstock graduated from Alfred University in New York with a BAFA in painting and printmaking. After school he moved to Portland Oregon where he helped start a printmaking cooperative studio, worked as a commercial screen printer, and apprenticed under master printmaker Mark Mahaffey. Also during this time Bobby studied at the Tamarind Institute of Lithography in Mexico and was a resident artist at the Vermont Studio Center and the Contemporary Art in Massachusetts. He currently resides in Philadelphia where he is a graduate student at the University of the Arts studying printmaking and book arts.

## **Hinda Schuman**

### **Artist Statement 2008**

I am constantly amazed at the power of images to unleash feelings and insights about both the beauty and horror of REAL life. Photographs have the ability to bridge the many different worlds in which we live by speaking in an immediate and accessible language. I consider myself a visual storyteller. I use images – with and without words- to express my feelings about what I see.

### **Biography**

When John F. Kennedy was assassinated, I was stunned and confused. The photographic and TV images never left me.

And then there followed the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. This was a powerful time for many of us and there were many responses to these tragedies-food banks, marches, demonstrations, and free schools. But I could not get away from the images in print and on TV. They were burned into my mind. I was changed forever: I wanted to make pictures that would grab people.

A voice inside of me mocked, “only someone who knows how to photograph can really take photographs. Clearly, at that time of my life I did not know how to take pictures, nor was I able to imagine that I could possibly ever learn.

Still hoping to change the world, I became a teacher. I discovered an unused darkroom at the Bellows Falls (VT) Middle School, and found a teacher who could show me a bit about black and white processing. I had my students photograph their lives, and write about what they saw.

As important as teaching had been to me, as deeply involved with my students as I was I could not resist the lure of the camera, and so I left teaching and set out to learn as much as I could about documentary photography. I took every photography class I could find, and supported myself, working in a bakery, a group home, and a dress shop.

I completed an MFA program at Tyler School of Art, with the goal to teach, which is where I started. I taught at art centers and as an adjunct in Philadelphia colleges. Yet I found that I wanted to be taking pictures more than I wanted to be creating assignments for others.

In 1988, I was hired to work in the suburban bureau of The Philadelphia Inquirer. For the Inquirer I photographed high school sports, murder scenes, fires, retired people who wrote their first novel, 84 year old dance teachers and nine year old discus throwers. I documented people whose lives fit into various and sundry categories: women's history month, or African-American history month, or Valentine's day, I spent a year with a woman who was the epitome of the "sandwich generation", caring for her two teenage sons, and her mother who had Alzheimer's. I hiked the Appalachian Trail with an Outward Bound group – twelve 7th and 8th grade boys from an inner city school. (I am not a big fan of camping-never was and, after four days of hiking and camping in pouring rain and terrifying lightning, probably never will be). I spent several days at a summer camp for children with HIV and AIDS. There were funerals, and weddings, graduations and garden parties. During election seasons there was an endless stream of politicians. Some would go on to become president, and some would bang the gavel at the council meeting.

In January of 2007 I left the Inquirer, thrilled with the possibilities of having time and energy to work on my own projects. I have been working on a visual memoir, and with co-photographer Linda Johnson, I have been deeply involved with The Pennsylvania Project -[www.thepennsylvaniaproject.com](http://www.thepennsylvaniaproject.com) – We are documenting each of the 67 counties of PA. We currently have an exhibit of selected works at YO! Darkroom in Philadelphia.

My version of Letters from Poland were completed in 1988. I used the translations of the letters, and photographs of the originals, along with whatever family photographs I could find.

My maternal grandfather, Alter Erbarem wrote the letters to his oldest son, Ephriam ( Frank ) from about 1922 until 1938. Alter was in Poland, and Frank, my mother, and two other brothers ( Samuel and Saul ) were sent to America to live with relatives.

My mother, Sonia, found the original letters wrapped up in Frank's basement in Fresno CA on a visit there in the early 1980s. She showed them to me as a curiosity. They were written in Yiddish. While my mother could speak Yiddish, whatever skills she had for reading and writing the language had long ago left her. However, her cousin Dina Baer, just a few years older was able to read and write Yiddish and undertook the translations at our request. My maternal grandmother had died during the flu epidemic in Poland in 1918, and Alter remarried in about 1921. The new wife was overwhelmed with the four small children, and so they were put on a boat with a relative – and headed for the

“new land”. In 1939 Alter, his current wife and three recent children were among those sent to concentration camps. They did not survive.

## **Libbie Soffer**

### **Artist Statement / Biography**

art as journey

my art making is an internal journey  
with external souvenirs

on my trip I carry a soup pot for serving up  
memories, sensations, and responses  
to the world around me

a few of my traveling companions are Leslie Dill, Anne Hamilton, Richard Tuttle,  
Eva Hesse, Leonard Cohen, Anne Truitt, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Philip Glass,  
and Jay DeFeo

you will always find in my suitcase:

family photo albums	bolt of muslin
sewing needles	carpet thread
scissors	bag of clay
brushes	Caran D'ache pencils
heavy sketch paper	Elmer's glue
oil sticks	x – acto knife
straight pins	6" ruler

with my suitcase, soup pot, travel companions, and public radio, I travel to  
incredible places...there's always room for guests on the journey

Libbie Soffer / 2008