

Fall 09

Hollins

Art Exhibitions and Events

ELEANOR D. WILSON MUSEUM

Betty Branch



Richard Boyd

Through the Crow's Eye: a Retrospective

September 17 - November 21, 2009

The Eleanor D. Wilson Museum is pleased to curate and present the first major retrospective of internationally recognized Roanoke artist Betty Branch. This exhibition honors one of the most respected sculptors in the southeast region. Her work has been exhibited worldwide and is presented in an exhibition showcasing decades of artistic experimentation.

"Branch has culled visual references from ancient matriarchal civilizations to current cultural events, from Greece to the foothills of the Blue Ridge," writes Amy G. Moorefield, museum director and exhibition curator. "Her media is diverse; she sculpts with marble, clay, bronze, stone, porcelain, terra cotta, earthenware, and straw. Displayed in a non-chronological format, this exhibition calls attention to Branch's fluidity throughout her artistic career between naturalistic and abstract modes of expression." The exhibition utilizes all three spaces of the museum and includes an outdoor sculpture component. It focuses on over thirty of Branch's most significant works, including several on loan from private collections around the country, video documentation of her performance art presented alongside her poetry, and several outdoor sculptures including a new site specific landwork.

Branch earned both her Bachelor of Arts in studio art and her Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from Hollins University. Proficient in both painting and sculpture, she received excellent

academic training and served as an apprentice to acquire technical skills with Miles and Generalis Sculpture Services in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She embarked on periods of independent study to expand and reinforce her knowledge of art history and art techniques, including travel to Greece, Italy, and the Bahamas. One such independent study earned Branch a Citation Report from Hollins University for her interdisciplinary research on the image of women in ancient Greece. She has spent a portion of many years working at Nicoli Studios in Carrara, Italy. Notably, she was the only American exhibitor invited to the first *Salon International de la Sculpture Contemporaine* in Paris in 1990.

Over a thirty-year period, Branch has focused on the human body and has defined rites of passage in both traditional and unorthodox media. Art historian Deborah McLeod notes that these themes "continued to emerge from within the stone as the artist improvised on a variety of art historical styles through the figure. In seeking new forms of truth from the mysteries of human and particularly feminine beauty, Branch instilled in her sculpture a silent glimpse into the omniscience that hides inside art; perhaps this is her own argument for the complex evidence of temptation, labor, purpose, faith and design."

Her award-winning art has been exhibited internationally and has been the subject of television documentaries.

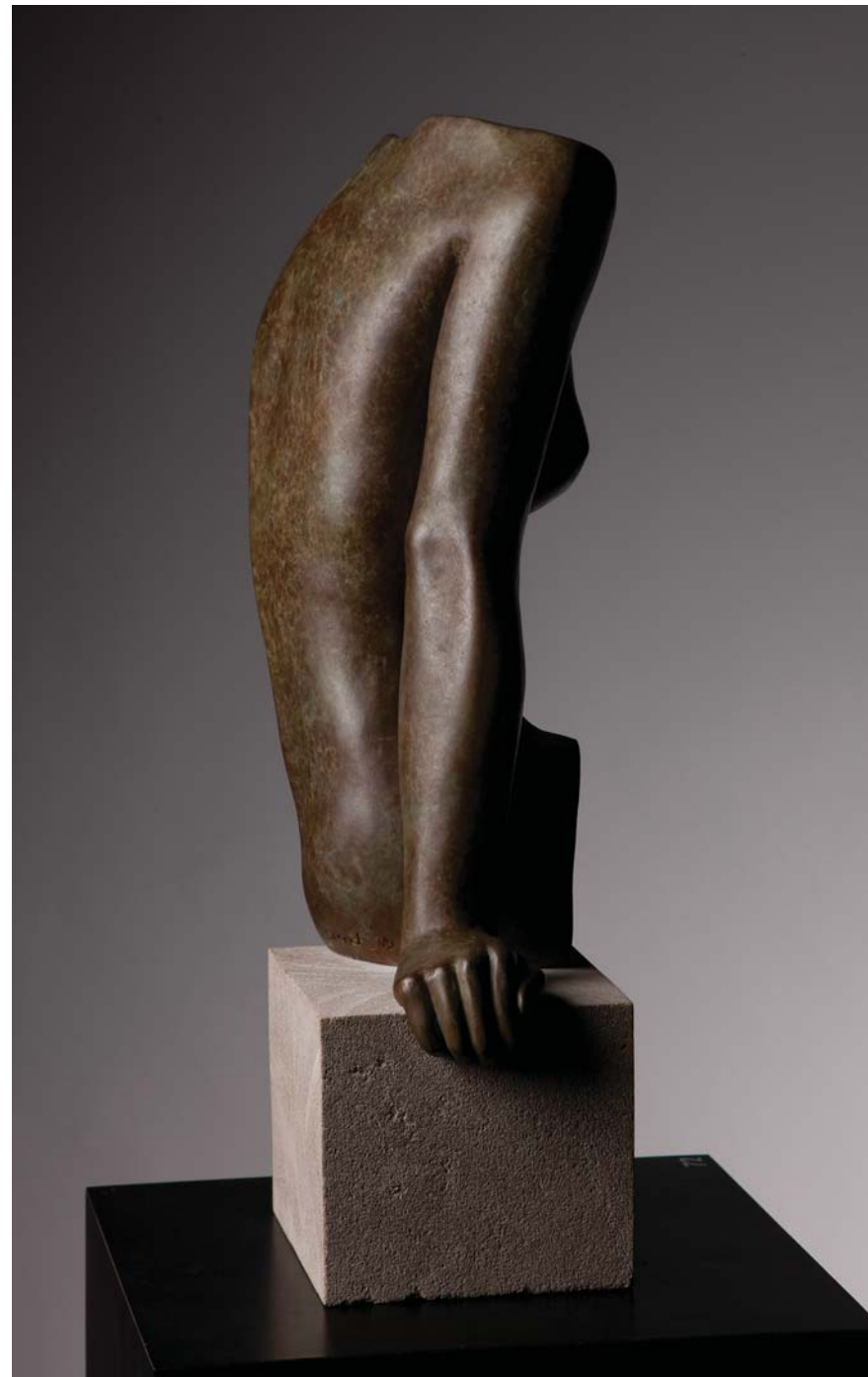
Her works, from small to monumental, are in many private, corporate, university, and museum collections. Branch has produced a number of commissioned works, has had solo and group exhibitions, operates her own studio and gallery, and has been included in many national and international publications including most recently *Sculpture Review* and *National Sculpture Society*. Her art has been included in prestigious exhibitions including New York's Annual International Art Exposition, and the Brookgreen Gardens Invitational, South Carolina.

Betty Branch: Through the Crow's Eye, a Retrospective is accompanied by a full color perfect bound catalogue that contains an essay by museum director and exhibition curator Amy G. Moorefield, a guest essay by art historian and critic Deborah McLeod, Branch's own poetry, and color plates of the artwork in the exhibition. The catalogue is available for purchase at the museum at a cost of \$15.



THE ELEANOR D. WILSON MUSEUM

HOLLINS
UNIVERSITY



Interlude, 1985, Bronze, 24 x 13 x 7 inches. Collection of Walter and Sally Rugaber



Events

Opening Lecture
Thursday, September 17, 2009
6:00 p.m.
Richard Wetherill Visual Arts Center
Frances J. Niederer Auditorium
Reception to immediately follow at
the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum

Please join us for the opening of this major retrospective. Along with the opportunity to tour the campus and view the six works located *in situ*, the three galleries of the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum will all be dedicated to showcasing this extraordinary body of work. Artist Betty Branch will present a lecture discussing her work and processes in the Richard Wetherill Visual Arts Center Auditorium, immediately followed by a reception. These events are free and open to the public.

Children's Sculpture Workshop
Saturday, October 24, 2009
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Richard Wetherill Visual Arts Center
Outdoor sculpture studio

Artist Betty Branch will lead a workshop for children ages 9-13 to introduce the basics in reductive (carving) and additive (clay) sculpture processes. The workshop will be held in the outdoor sculpture studio at the Richard Wetherill Visual Arts Center. Reservations are required. To register for this free workshop, please contact Laura Jane Ramsburg at LRamsburg@hollins.edu or 540.362.6081.

Citywide Tour of Branch's Public Works
Saturday, October 17, 2009
2:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Tour begins at the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum

Artist Betty Branch and museum director Amy G. Moorefield will give a tour of the exhibition before leading a citywide tour of Branch's public artworks. Downtown Roanoke locations include the Taubman Museum of Art, the Roanoke Public Library, and outside the Museum of Transportation. The artist will discuss the process of public commissioned artworks as well as insights into these specific monumental pieces. The tour will end at Branch's studio for a reception. This event is free and open to the public, but reservations are required. To register, please contact Laura Jane Ramsburg at LRamsburg@hollins.edu or 540.362.6081.



Above: *All Fall Down*, 1983, Grouping of six, various sizes, Low fired porcelain. Collection of the artist. Left: *Gift Bearer*, 1987, Hydrocal on steel, 94 x 36 x 32 inches. Collection of the artist. Top: *Passage*, 1994, India ink on tracing paper. Collection of the artist.