



RITA BLITT:

ART AND KINDNESS

Internationally acclaimed artist Rita Blitt grew up in Kansas City and first came to Aspen with her husband, Irwin, in 1960. “We wanted to visit Colorado and had heard about the wonderful music festival and lectures in Aspen,” she recalls. “That, plus the love of nature, is what has made us return every year since then.”

Blitt says that she has created some of her most important pieces in Aspen, many while listening to the Aspen Music Festival.

During their fifty-plus years here, Rita and Irwin have become national council members for the Aspen Music Festival and School, Anderson Ranch, the Aspen Writers’ Foundation, Aspen/Santa Fe Ballet, and Theatre Aspen. They were original donors to the Aspen Art Museum and longtime members of the Society of Fellows of the Aspen Institute. All told, they are a powerhouse of support for the local arts and humanities.

When Rita was awarded the 2012 Red Brick Center for the Arts Artists Tribute, executive director Debra Muzikar said, “Rita’s entire life has been dedicated to art, rivaled only by her commitment to her family, her faith, and a genuine concern for the global community.”

“I grew up imbued with the desire to help because of the environment in which I lived,” Blitt says about being inspired by her mother’s volunteerism. “Many years ago in Aspen, my activist friend Beth Smith stopped me on a bridge and asked me to create something we could send all over the world to help make the world a better place in which to live.” Five years later, Blitt came up with the phrase, “Kindness is Contagious. Catch It!” She made a Kindness poster with those words and one of her signature free-flowing-lines designs (available online at ritablitt.com for free download). Blitt sent it to friends around

the world who could display the posters publicly, and eventually every member state of the United Nations, hoping to create a viral effect. The words led to the creation of a Kindness program that Blitt says “has encouraged kindness all over the world.”

Blitt has gifted the Aspen Institute with two outdoor sculptures that were part of her 1992 exhibition there: a six-foot-tall, white-painted aluminum ribbon and a three-part corten steel construction. She has also installed five sculptures at the Valley View Hospital in Glenwood Springs and is giving the Red Brick a sculpture in honor of Cindy and Bob Camp. And the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet recently received a suite of three of



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her works on paper, part of her foundation’s program of loaning art to nonprofit organizations.

Blitt has also given workshops in movement, dancing hands, sculpture, and kindness. Believing that everyone can create, she takes great pleasure in “inspiring people to let their hands dance on paper.”

Her own art has long focused on liquid-looking lines with deep connections to dance and music. Art and kindness flow together through Blitt’s life, much like those intertwined lines of her paintings and sculpture.



