

## Reaching out for creativity

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The theme of Rita Blitt's recent exhibition in Singapore was "Reaching Out From Within." That characterizes her approach to art – creating from within – which she explained at a recent workshop with 20 Singapore American high school art students. In an understated manner, Blitt stressed the importance of being free to express.

"I am here to inspire them to create, to be free and spontaneous," says the American sculptor, who is open and eager to share her life and work with others. "It takes a lot of courage to create and a lot of desire."

Blitt showed a video documenting the progression of her move from painting and drawing to sculpting. To encourage students to find that creative space, she then gave them 20 minutes to draw uninhibitedly to background music. SAS Superintendent Don Bergman joined in the workshop to try his hand at being more artistic. He enjoyed the session, saying that he had always wanted to take an art class.

The only influence in her early childhood years that shaped Blitt's artistic sensibilities was her grandfather. He "designed little flowers, and shared with me his ideas through letters. When I saw those flowers, I was very intrigued by them."

"I have so much joy in creating that I want others to create too. I feel lucky that I feel so free to create and I want to impart this to others," says the sculptor. She feels that everyone has the capacity to produce artistic works and that each person's "voice" is legitimate.

While she since has found wide public acceptance of her sculpture, she started out as the struggling artist. In trying to find a public audience, she "had to beg and knock on doors to find exhibition space. It was very demeaning, it was a struggle. It's a joy to create, but then you have to go out and find an audience."

Now an established artist, she finds less time for creating and is busy with exhibitions and traveling. She would rather be in her suburban Kansas City studio, drawing the shapes and forms from which she constructs huge sculptures ranging from seven to 26 feet in height.

Her primary shape is the line, which she manipulates in such materials as steel, brass and bronze to form themes of movement and dance. What is perhaps unique about Blitt is that she draws with two hands at the same time. She first started doing this ambidextrous act quite by accident and felt that she "was dancing, because in dancing you are using both of your hands."

When asked to "perform" by drawing with two hands in front of the students, Blitt agreed but admitted that she felt self-conscious and could not create freely with others watching. "I do my best work in the mornings and I cannot work with others around." She also feels that the shape of the things must seem right to her and will spend years trying to find shapes that

are "true."

With her were her husband, her daughter Cherla and niece Linda White. Cherla feels very proud to have a mother like Blitt. "It is good to have a mom who is strong in her own right, who is doing something in the world, something of herself."

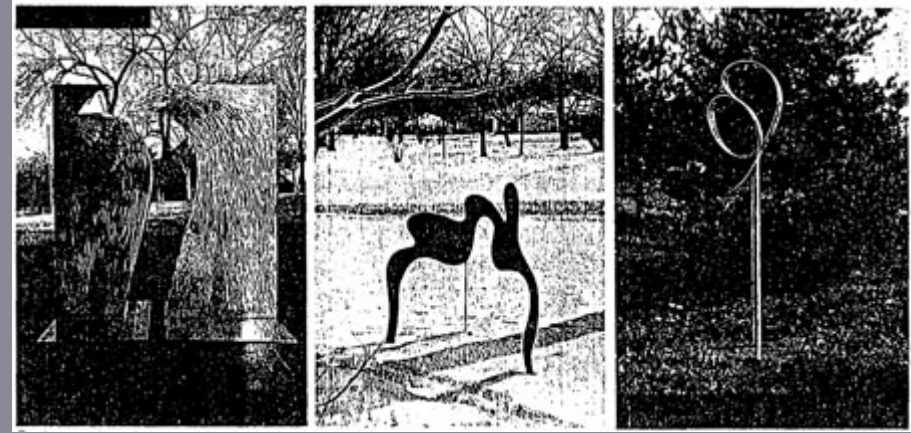
Blitt's trip and exhibition at the National Museum were partly sponsored by the American Business Council.



Blitt demonstrates drawing with two hands



SAS Superintendent Don Bergman showing off hidden talents  
*Photos by Jeannie Koh*



Sculptures by Rita Blitt, l to r: "Fleeting Passion or True Love," "Reality?" and "Harmony"  
*Photos courtesy Rita Blitt*