

Independent Study
Major: Visual and Public Art
Emphasis: Art Education and Studio Art
Spring 2001

Susan C. Mellender, Senior
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California State University Monterey Bay

PROJECT TITLE: Pillars of the Community

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

In an independent study through the Institute for Visual and Public Art (VPA) and the Reciprocal University for the Arts Project (RAUP), I intend to work with a group of youth at the YMCA on a weekly basis, exploring the assets of their community through the creation of life size plaster caryatids or people pillars. The classroom structure will be reciprocal: the students and I will learn, develop skills, and develop awareness as together. This will create a community of artistic expression within the community of the YMCA. Drawing, creative writing, and community research will be some of the processes that explored as we work towards the goal of creating life-size plaster caryatids or people pillars. Through the actions of community research and classroom brainstorming, these caryatids or pillars of the community will represent what the youth perceive are the integral aspects of their community and what is important to them as community members.

PROJECT OUTLINE:

The project will run for ten, two-hour sessions beginning on February 26th, 2001 and ending on April 30th, 2001. Every week I will instruct a two-hour meeting with the students working collaboratively to focus on community assets and foundations. I will divide the class into groups of two or three to create up to five of the life-size caryatids that exemplify their community assets. Each meeting will be a process of cultural and historical discovery fostered by the students' inquiries and needs. Different cultural and community subjects will arise to stimulate the students towards expression and critical thinking while they construct the plaster caryatids. We will also collaboratively work to write a press release, proposal for the installation sites, and a group artist statement. We intend to show the finished pieces within the community.

MECHANICS:

The caryatids are freestanding structures that can be displayed in or out doors. The inner structure will have a wood base and skeleton as the foundation or main support. Covering the inner structure will be molded chicken wire to define body shape, which is covered with four layers of plaster. Students will paint the structures with acrylic paint and a varnish with UV protectant.[☆]

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PROJECT SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE):

MEETING ONE FEBRUARY 26

Introduction to concepts for caryatids/people pillars, brainstorming of community assets, sketch ideas, outline of what will take place in the next nine meetings.

MEETING TWO MARCH 5

Begin community research on informal level (what is important to you?), sketches, begin wooden supports.

MEETING THREE MARCH 12

Finish wooden supports; begin chicken wire, community research for what the caryatids will represent.

MEETING FOUR MARCH 19

Finish chicken wire, discuss community exhibit space, discuss and outline the site proposal, press release, and artist statement.

- First draft of site proposal, press release, and artist statement.

MEETING FIVE MARCH 26

Begin plastering, finalize proposal/press release, continue work on artist statement.

- Final draft of site proposal and press release, second draft of artist statement.
- Send site proposal to sites within the community

MEETING SIX APRIL 2

Continue plastering, finalize artist statement.

- Third draft of artist statement
- Send out press release to community organizations and media.

MEETING SEVEN APRIL 9

Begin painting, polish artist statement.

- Finalize artist statement

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MEETING EIGHT APRIL 16
Continue painting.

MEETING NINE APRIL 23
Varnish, preparations for showing.

MEETING TEN APRIL 30
Art show, and gala.

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Enclosed you will find a proposed budget of the materials needed for the plaster caryatids.