

## A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS AN OLD(ER) WOMAN

29 minutes © 2007

### **Log line:**

Three octogenarian women artists whose art informs their identity, share their vision and experiences to give us insight into creative energy and vitality that is not hampered by age.

### **Short Synopsis:**

Margaret K. Johnson, Hava mehutan and Hanna Eshel are artists in their 80s. These creative and outspoken women still paint, photograph, chisel away at marble and make print-work. The film intersects the timeless passions of the artist and the social demands felt by mid-twentieth century women. We are given an insight into creative energy and vitality that is not hampered by age.

### **Synopsis:**

*"I never feel age ...*

*If you have creative work, you don't have age or time."*

Louise Nevelson.

Three octogenarian women artists – Margaret K. Johnson, Printmaker, Hanna Eshel, sculptor and Hava Mehutan, sculptor -- whose art inform their identity, share their insights into a creative energy force that is not hampered by age. On-camera interviews are woven together with archival films, home movies and images of their work, to tell their story of life wrapped around art.

The three artists were born and raised in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an era that did not provide support for women to pursue their career choices. Nevertheless, these women radiate with energy, a vibrant strength of spirit, passion, and commitment to the pursuit of Art. Through childhood, marriage and raising a family – art has been their vehicle to maintain vitality.

## **A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS AN OLD(ER) WOMAN**

### **Festivals Screening:**

National Museum of Women in the Arts' Festival of Film, Washington, D.C

MOSAIC Film Festival, Bloomington, Indiana

Tank Film / New Docs, 2008, New York City,

2008 Women in Film Festival, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

New Jersey Film Festival at Cape May.

EYE AM, Women Behind the Lens, New York City

XXI Pärnu International Film Festival, Estonia

### **Television Broadcast:**

TV30, Princeton, NJ

KCPT-19 Kansas City, MO

PBS affiliate stations:

UNC-ED Durham, NC

KCET Los Angeles

OPB Portland OR

WLAE, New Orleans

TN Network 1 Knoxville, TN

KVIE-2 Sacramento

KMBH-60 Brownsville, TX

KQED-L San Francisco

KWBU-TV Waco, TX

KHET-11 Honolulu

KUEN-DT Salt Lake City, UT

WHYY Philadelphia

KUHT-2, Houston, TX

KCTS Seattle WA

City-12 Rochester NY

WNPB Morgantown WV

FL Network 2 Ft. Meyers - Naples,  
FL

## **Director statement:**

My foray into filmmaking has grown naturally out of my work as a visual artist, a sculptor.

In making A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS AN OLD(ER) WOMAN I wanted to offer an insight into the core necessity of art making, a practice that is not defined by the market place or by age but by a strong life long commitment.

The documentary weaves together three stories of octogenarian women artists that in spite lack of recognition by the major art institutions, kept on making art not as a diversion or recreation but as the central focus in their lives. Selection of the artists was unrelated to their fame - it is not notoriety or the economics that has been driving them. What is central to their lives is the persistent urge to create and express oneself in a visual language.

In a youth oriented culture I wanted to pay tribute to old(er) women. They are not “artistic” women that took on a craft as a way to combat old age – they are artists who have practiced from early age. Art for them has been a forceful ingredient that accompanied them through out their lives and in the process became a vehicle to maintain vitality.

## **Tova Beck-Friedman's Filmography:**

**Lilian,** Work in Progress about the life of Lilian Brown.

**Don't Ask,** 2008

A short film on language and identity  
Immigrants' conflict between internal and external interpretations of identity.

**A portrait of The Artist as an old(er) Woman,** 2007

Three octogenarian women artists share their insights into the creative energy and vitality that is not hampered by age.

**At the Altar of Her Memories.** 2005

Through a mix of puppetry and story telling Bracha Ghilai, who spent her adolescent years in concentration camps, unlocks chapters from her painful past.

**Passages,** 2004

A collaboration between Tova Beck-Friedman, visual artist and Dana Brewer-Plazinic, dancer / choreographer with music by Laura Andel.

**Reflections,** 2005

Fairy tail; parabel; magic; myth; reflections.....

**Shadow Walk,** 2004

Dance video exploring the psychology of memory.

**Bio:**

Tova Beck-Friedman is a multi media artist. After receiving a B.A from Purdue University, and an MA from Goddard College, she was awarded in 1982 a graduate student research studies at Tama University of Art, Tokyo, Japan.

Recipient of several grants and artistic residencies, her work has been shown internationally in festivals, galleries and on television.

Her work has been exhibited at international venues notably: The International Artists' Museum, at the 50th Venice Biennale; The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC; New Jersey State Museum; The Newark Museum, NJ; Yeshiva University Museum in New York; The Tokyo American Cultural Center, Japan; The Jerusalem Cinematheque; The Athens Video Art Festival, Athens, Greece; The In Flux Video Art Festival. Thessaloniki, Greece; The Francisco Women Film Festival and Cinematic Film and experimental film & video art, Paris, France. Her films were broadcast on Israeli Television and on PBS.



## SCREENINGS:

National Museum of Women in the Arts' Festival of Film, Washington, D.C.  
PBS affiliate stations  
MOSAIC Film Festival, Bloomington, Indiana  
Israeli Television, Channel 10  
2008 Women in Film Festival, Vancouver, BC, Canada  
TankFilm/New Docs, New York City:  
The Jerusalem Cinematheque, Israel;  
New Jersey State Film Festival at Cape May  
EYE AM, Women Behind the Lens, New York City  
Hartford Jewish Films Festival.  
TV30, Princeton, NJ  
XXI Pärnu International Film Festival, Estonia  
The Center for Jewish History, New York, NY  
The 2nd Athens Video Art Festival, Athens, Greece, 2006  
Columbia Theater, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA  
PixelDance Video Art Festival 2005, Thessaloniki, Greece  
Detroit International Film & Video Festival 2005  
Cinematic Film; experimental film & video art, Paris, France  
Maison de la culture Plateau Mont-Royal, Montreal, Canada  
Holon Theater, Israel  
The San Francisco Women Film Festival, 2006  
Cathedral Arts Festival, Jersey City, NJ  
Columbia Theater, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA.  
Drew University, Madison, NJ  
Yeshiva University Museum, New York, NY

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2005	Yeshiva University Museum, New York, NY
2004	Clark Hall Gallery, Southeastern Louisiana University
2003	Photo-graphic Galley, New York, NY
2002	Monique Goldstrom Gallery, New York, NY
2001	Monique Goldstrom Gallery, New York, NY Project Room at the Phoenix Gallery, New York, NY
1999	Ben Shahn Gallery, William Paterson college, Wayne, NJ
1998	The Mitchell Museum, Mt. Vernon, IL Visual Arts Gallery, College of Morris, Randolph, NJ
1997	Bergen Museum of Art, Paramus, NJ

- 1996 Lisa Parker Gallery, New York, NY  
New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ (catalogue)
- 1993 Bill Bace Gallery, New York, NY
- 1992 Quietude Gallery, East Brunswick, NJ  
Schering-Plough Gallery, Madison, NJ
- 1991 The Newark Museum, NJ (catalogue)  
Bill Bace Gallery, New York, NY
- 1990 Herzliya Museum, Israel (catalogue)  
Visual Arts School Gallery, Be'er Sheva, Israel
- 1989 Michaelson & Orient Gallery, London, UK
- 1988 Amos Eno Gallery, New York, NY
- 1985 Amos Eno Gallery, New York, NY
- 1984 Gallery Q, Tokyo, Japan  
Tokyo American Cultural Center, Japan
- 1990 The Art Gallery at Lesley College, Cambridge, MA

**PUBLIC COLLECTIONS :**

New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ  
Jersey City Museum, NJ  
Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY  
Herzliya Museum, Herzliya, Israel  
Newark Museum, NJ  
Franconia Sculpture park, Shafer, NM  
Gan-Remez Park, Be'er Sheva, Israel  
Grounds For Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ  
Cedarhurst Sculpture Park, Mt. Vernon, IL  
National Institute Ossolinski's, Wroclaw, Poland  
Arizona State University Museum, Tempe, AZ  
Boleslawiec Museum, Poland  
Beit Ha'ribua Hakachol, Rosh Ha'ain, Israel  
Cesky Krumlov Cultural Foundation, Czech Republic  
Morning View, Gulgong, NSW Australia  
Be'er Sheva City Hall, Israel  
Colby College, Augusta, ME  
County College of Morris, Randolph, NJ  
Fukuoka Town Hall, Gifu-Ken, Japan  
Museum of Modern Art Library, New York, NY  
National Artist Library of Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK  
National Gallery of Library Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC  
Queensborough Museum, Queens, NY  
The National Museum of Women in the Arts Library, Washington DC  
Prudential Insurance Company, Newark, NJ  
The Noyes Museum, Oceanville, NJ  
Riker Hill Art Park, Livingston, NJ

Downtown Sumter, SC  
Schering-Plough Corporation, Madison, NJ  
William Paterson College, Wayne, NJ  
Zakłady Ceramiczne, Boleslawiec, Poland  
The Paterson museum, Paterson, NJ

### RESIDENCIES, LECTURES & TEACHING:

- 2004 Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA / visiting artist  
TGD4 symposium; Tambacounda - Genève - Dakar, Senegal  
Boleslawiec International Ceramic Symposium, Poland
- 2003 Accessibility 2003 symposium - From the Outside In, Sumter, SC
- 2001 Artist in residence, mishkenot Ha'omanim, Hezeliya, Israel
- 1998 Sculptor in residence, Franconia Sculpture park, MN / Jerom Artist Grant
- 1999 Visiting artist, International Ceramic Biennial, Be'er Sheva, Israel
- 1996 Visiting artist, Boleslawiec International Symposium, Poland
- 1995 Master artist, Clay/Sculpt Gulgong Symposium, Australia
- 1994 Panelist, International Sculpture Conference in San Francisco, CA  
Lectured on American Ceramics, Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea  
Lectured, Pusan National University, Pusan, Korea  
Visiting artist, Environmental Sculpture Symposium, MuJu, Korea  
Presenter on The Artist and the Factory, panel at NCECA (National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts) Conference in New Orleans, LA.
- 1993 Lectured, American Cultural Center, Tel-Aviv, Israel  
Visiting artist, Be'er-Sheva'93 Ceramic Biennial, Israel
- 1990 Visiting artist, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY  
Visiting artist, The Center for Visual Arts, Be'er-Sheva, Israel
- 1988 Visiting artist, New Jersey Museum of Archaeology, Drew University, NJ  
Presented a paper on Large Scale Ceramic Sculpture, at the International Sculpture Conference in Dublin, Ireland.
- 1978-93 Adjunct Professor of Art, County College of Morris, NJ  
Panelist, Conference for Women in the Visual Arts, Cambridge, MA

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2007 *Amendicons*, Makor Gallery, New York, NY  
*Of Doors and Keys*, Norman and Sarah Brown Art Gallery, Baltimore, MD
- 2006 *At the Altar of Her Memories*, (with Bracha Ghilai) Yeshiva University  
*Group Dynamics*, Contemporary Art at The Mill, Lafayette, NJ
- 2005 Cinematic Film, Paris, France  
Detroit International Film & Video Festival 2005.
- 2004 *Drawing Conclusions II, Work by Artist-Writers*, NYArts Gallery, New York, NY
- 2003 *Wandering Library Project* of The International Artists' Museum, at the 50th Venice Biennale  
*Video-Spill festival*, Amsterdam, NL
- 2002 *Artists from the Collection*, The New Jersey State Museum



- 2001 *Markers II*, EAM gallery, Kassel, Germany  
The Exhibition of GeumGang Nature Art Project 2002, Korea  
*Markers*, The Artists Museum @ the Venice Biennale, Italy,  
*Earth/Line – Land/Scape*, The Gallery of South Orange, NJ  
*Paper Pots 3 benefit*, Elder Gallery, New York, NY  
*Art Project/Akerstein Industries*, Tel Aviv, Israel
- 2000 *Art/Nature/Nurture* Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, WI
- 1997 *Ancient emblems-Contemporary signifiers*, Jersey City Museum, NJ  
*Women Artists of the Collection*, New Jersey State Museum  
*Solo Esculturas* Galleria de Arte Florida, Caracas, Venezuela  
*Boleslawiec '96*, Galeria Sztuki, Jelenia Gora, Poland  
Cesky Krumlov Cultural Foundation, Czech Republic
- 1996 *A Woman's Place*, Manmouth Museum, NJ  
*Arts Annual*, Jersey City Museum, NJ
- 1995 *Internet Gallery Installation*, UN Conference on Women, Beijing, China  
Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ
- 1994 *Fine Art Annual*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ,  
*Icons*, The Newark Museum, NJ  
*The Definitive Decade Show*, Aljira Center for Contemporary Arts,  
Newark, NJ
- 1993 *Editions*, The Newark Museum, NJ  
*Benefit Drawing Exhibit*, Artists Space, New York, NY  
*Be'er Sheva Biennale*, A. Baron Gallery, Ben-Gurion University, Israel
- 1992 *Recent Acquisitions*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, NJ  
Sculpture Fields at Sagaponsack Close, Long Island, NY  
A.P. Tell Gallery, Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ  
*Large Scale Works*, Bill Bace Gallery, New York, NY
- 1991 *Reprise*, Phyllis Rothman Gallery, Fairleigh Dickinson University, NJ  
*Interiorscapes*, The Monmouth Museum, Lincroft, NJ
- 1991 *Sculpture*, Trenton City Museum, Trenton, NJ
- 1992 *Images of Devotion*, Bill Bace Gallery, New York, NY,  
*Women-Mother Earth*, Aljira Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ

#### EDUCATION:

- 1982-'84 Tama University of Art, Tokyo, Japan / Post Graduate Studies  
1976 Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont / MFA  
1974 Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana / BFA

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITER FOR:

New York Arts Magazine  
The New York Art World Magazine  
Ceramics; Art and Perception Magazine

## NEWSPAPER & MAGAZINES:

- NY Arts Magazine, Film Review: *At the Altar of Her Memories*. Directed by Tova Beck-Friedman @ Yeshiva University Museum by Gulsen Calik  
*jewish-theatre.com* The Redemption of Innocence: Tova Beck-Friedman's "At the Altar of Her Memories" by Mark Daniel Cohen
- The State, *The State Giving outside artists Accessibility works beautifully*, by Jeffery Day, Oct. 03, 2003
- The Item, *Accessibility 2003;10 installation artists*, By Jane G. Collins, October 2003
- NY ARTS Magazine, *(un)related recollections; Tova Beck-Friedman*, by Doron Polak, April 2001
- Journal Sentinal, JS Online, *Artists' Vision Transform Nature*, by James Avec, September 2000
- City Pages, *The Nature of Things*, by Charles Patten, June 29, 2000
- Sculpture Magazine, *Rhythm and Metaphor:Tova Beck-Friedman* Summer '98, by Margaret Sheffield
- REVIEW, *Tova Beck-Friedman at the Bergen Museum*, Summer '97, By Margaret Sheffield
- The New York Times, *Sculpture with an Aura of Ritual & Myth*, Aug. 3 '97, by Barry Schwabsky
- The Star-Ledger, *Three by five: Contemporary Sculpture*, June 20 , 1997 by Dan Bischoff
- The New York Times, *Art Review, Jersey City*, July 18 '97 by Michael Kimmelman
- The Star Ledge, *New Meaning in 'A woman's Place'* Sept. 29 '96, by Eileen Watkins
- Cover Magazine, *Sentient Sentinels; Tova Beck-Friedman's Stelae* at Lisa Parker Gallery, November '96, by Steward Nicholson
- The New York Times, *Indoor and Outdoors, Sculpture in Bloom*, May 26,'96, by Barry Schwabsky
- Journal of NJ Poets, VOL XVII, Spring 1995, *Fault, a photograph*
- The Star Ledger, *Tova Beck-Friedman - Review*, May 17 '96, by Eileen Watkins
- The Trenton Times, *Am Essential Exhibit*, April 12 '96, by Janet Purcell
- Four by Five, Israel Art Magazine, *Sculpture parks in the New York Area*, Summer '95, by Rebecca Ross
- The Star Ledger, *New Jersey Arts Annual*, July 5 '94, by Eileen Watkins
- Art in America, *Tova Beck-Friedman - Review*, October '93, by Janet Koplos
- Ceramic Art Ane Perception # 15, *Ceramic Biennale- Be'er Sheva '93*, by y. Marks & M. Hephetz
- Sculpture Magazine, *Tova Beck-Friedman-Review*, Sept. '92 by Jude Shwendenwein
- Bernardsville News, *Primeval World of Sculptor*, May 14 '92 by Rachel Mullen
- The New Art Examiner, *Tova Beck-Friedman-review*, May '92 , by Jude Shwendenwein
- The Sunday Star Ledger, *Stony Enigma*, May 10 '92 by Eileen Watkins
- Daily Record, *Concept of Woman Inspires Art*, July 28 '91, by Marion Fuller
- The New York Times, *Pygmalion - review*, Jan. 28, '90, by Vivian Raynor
- The Jerusalem Post, *Sculptor Creates Personal Homage*, March 40, '90 by Tamar vital
- Ha'aretz, *Good, Very good, Excellent*, April 19, '90 by Ziona Shimshi
- Art Review, London, Feb. '89
- Women Artists Slide Library Journal, U.K. Sept. '88 by Terry Litchfield

Mainichi Daily News, Japan, June 21, 1984 by Amaury Saint-Gilles  
Riusei-Ha Magazine, Japan, July 1984

**CATALOGUES:**

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, WI, *Art/Nature/Nurture* catalogue, 2000, by  
Brooke Barrie

New Jersey State Museum Catalogue, 1996, Forward by Zoltan Buki,  
Essay *Notes*, by Beth Handler

Sculpture on Campus Catalogue William Paterson College, by Nancy Einreinhofer

Ceramic Biennale- Be'er Sheva '93, essay by Dr. Haim Finkelstein

The Newark Museum Catalogue Essay, '92 by Robert Mahoney

Herzliya Museum Catalogue Essay, 1990, *In the Circle*, by Shlomit Height

Paperworks, Catalogue, published by Lehigh University Art Council, 1981

**BOOKS:**

THE EXPRESSIVE EDGE: CONTOUR AND SPACE IN MODERN SCULPTURE,  
by Margaret Sheffield Richard Gallen and Company, Inc. 2000

LARGE-SCALE CERAMIC SCULPTURE, by Jim Robison, A&C Black, London, 1997

SCULPTING CLAY, by Leon Nigrosh, Davis Publications, Inc. Worcester, MA, 1991

THE ART OF PAPERMAKING, by Bernard Toale, Davis Publications, Inc. MA, 1983