

Rebecca Gray Smith Biography

Born 1953 in Hinsdale IL, I have been an artist in the City of Chicago since 1973, with living residencies in Hawaii, California, London, and Mexico. Since the the age of three years, artwork has been my means of joy and survival. Banished from my family at the age of 17, I pursued my artwork relentlessly, during countless sleepless nights while working survival jobs for rent and food. Accepted into the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), at age 15, I studied drawing, anatomy, painting, and printmaking. Paula Gerard, Professor of Anatomy at SAIC and mentor, was a key influence. Using the architecture of humanity, the human skeleton; the bare bones in my work are the actors on the stage of time and trial, stripping away the prejudices of race, class, and society. Innovation of ideas is the driving force in my oeuvre: literature, in 2 and 3 dimensions. Printmaking, the most democratic medium of the visual arts, with its multiple images, is a core ingredient of my artist's arsenal.

Artist's Statement

Using the staccato contrast of black and white, the works are a percussive force. My current work, ***Alphabet & Numbers: The Pandemic Prints***, a suite of 67 etchings, looks at Death, the dilemma of the human condition. The Alphabet begun as a response to AIDS in 1988, subsequently evolved into an examination of Death in all forms using prints, through their power of reversal of images on the matrix of the plate, as a mirror to confront the Medusa. The ***Self Portraits*** are lithographs of my face under the lens of the trap of time. The final work in the exhibit, the multi media sculpture, the ***COVID Creatures***, is a 3-D life-size look at humanity's journey: from the first step out of Africa into the depths of the cosmos. COVID Creatures conceived in the turmoil of the crisis, examines the chronic nature of the human condition. The sculpture is a memorial to all of the lives lost in the pandemic, past, present, and future.

Rebecca Gray Smith

Resume

Solo Exhibitions

2021

Alphabet & Numbers: The Pandemic Prints, Completed Suite of 67 Etchings, etchings, plus sculpture and stone lithograph self-portraits, Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago, IL, USA

2016

The Alphabet, Completed Suite of 39 Etchings; Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL, USA

2014

The Alphabet, Completed Suite of 28 Etchings; Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL, USA

2012

The Alphabet, Partial Suite of 20 Etchings, University of Chicago, MLA Presentation

2003

Paintings, Prints, and Masks; DeCourtenay Galleries, Pontiac, MI, USA,

2002

Retrospective of 72 Prints, DeCourtenay Galleries, Mons, BELGIUM,

2000

Memorials to AIDS Victims, Paintings & Sculptured Masks; World AIDS Day, Oak Park, IL, USA

1978

Paintings and Drawings; Union Church, Hinsdale, Illinois, USA

1977

Paintings and Drawings; Alpha Gallery, Chicago, USA

1971

Paintings and Drawings; 5th Dimension Gallery, Honolulu, USA

Group Exhibitions

2019

The Affordable Art Fair, Bert Green Fine Art; New York, NY, USA

2017

Field Work III, Art Inspired by FMNH Collections; Chicago IL, USA

2014

The Alphabet, 28 Etchings, Dia de Los Muertos; El Gran Garage; Winslow AZ, USA

2011

University of Chicago Quadrangle Club, MLA Program

2009

Franciscan Festival of the Arts, Saint Peter's in the Loop, Chicago, USA

1997

Urban Views, Alumni Association of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA

1996

Urban USA Show, Seton Hall University, Orange, New Jersey, USA

Urban USA Show, Frederick Baker Gallery, Chicago, USA

Works on Paper Show, New York, NY, USA

1994

Prints Chicago Show, Chicago, Illinois, USA

1993

Prints Chicago Show, Chicago, Illinois, USA

1992

Chicago City Colleges, Harold Washington College; Chicago, USA

1991

Chicago City Colleges, Harold Washington College; Chicago, USA

1982

Illinois Art Association; Benefit Auction, Chicago, USA

1973

Wabash II Gallery, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA

1969

School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; USA: group show

Bibliography

New City, Arts Section; "Portrait of the Artist Rebecca Gray Smith," 29 May 2014

Marc Temmerman, Interview, Radio Judaïcia, FM 90.2, Brussels, Belgium, 4 Oct. 2002.

La Province, Newspaper interview and review with photograph of the artists, "Mons Exposition des oeuvres de Rebecca Gray Smith: La Double Vision de la Réalité," Mons, Belgium, 16 Oct. 2002, p. 27.

DiManche, Newspaper review with photograph of artwork. "Decourtenay-Galleries á Mons: Rebecca Gray Smith" Mons, Belgium, 30 Sept. 2002, p. 5.

SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) Community Life Magazine, Review "Exhibition of Works by Rebecca Gray Smith," Vol. 35, No. 17, Mons, Belgium, 26 Sept. 2002, p. 11.

Mons Info Tourism Magazine, Exhibition announcement with photograph of artwork, "Expositions à MONS: Rebecca Gray Smith – Herculean Adventures" Mons, Belgium, Sept. – Oct. 2002, p. 48.

Eileen Watkins, New Jersey Star Ledger, Exhibition review, "'Urban USA' at Seton Hall: Cityscapes Combine Elegance Violence," Newark, NJ, 4 October 1996, n.p.

Selected Collections

The Most Reverend and Rt. Hon. Dr. George L. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury; UK

Fr. Theodore Hesburg; President Emeritus, Univ. of Notre Dame, USA

Fr. Andrew Greeley; Theologian and Sociologist, University of Chicago, Chicago, USA

The Rt. Hon. Rev. Frank T. Griswold; Bishop Primate 1997 - 2005, Philadelphia, PA USA

Private Collections in the USA, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Japan, China, and India

Education

2012

A.M., Liberal Arts, University of Chicago

2003

Certificate, Writing in Business & Professions, University of Chicago

1996

Printmaking, Intaglio & Relief, Chicago City Colleges

1983-1985

Printmaking, Lithography, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

1971-1973

Painting and Anatomy, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

1968-1970

Painting and Drawing, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Teaching

2018 – 2020

Instructor, Printmaking, Alpes & San Javier School, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

2017

Instructor, Visual Arts, After School Matters Arts Program, Grissom School, Chicago, IL

Instructor, Printmaking, Alpes & San Javier School, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

2013 – 2014

Adjunct Faculty; University of Chicago Division of the Humanities Civic Knowledge Project;

Courses on the History and Process of Fine Arts Printmaking

1997 – 2002

Instructor, Continuing Education Fine Arts Printmaking; Chicago City Colleges

1995 – 1997

Instructor, Fine Arts; St. Gregory Episcopal School (3rd – 8th grades), Chicago

1991 – 1996

Artist in Residence & Teaching Assistant volunteer with Prof. Michael S. Parfenoff,

Fine Arts Printmaking Credit Courses, Chicago City Colleges Harold Washington College

1993 – 1994

City of Chicago, Department of Human Services Visual Arts Youth at Risk Program

1992

Instructor, Visual Arts, Apna Ghar Women's Shelter, Chicago

1985 – 1990

Instructor, Visual Arts: Children & Adult courses, Chicago Park District, Chicago