

Post Independent

The art of healing

Aspen sculptor shares her creativity to help patients recover

April E. Clark
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GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo. - Rita Blitt stands near her sculpture "Dancing" on the Valley View Hospital grounds in Glenwood Springs.

She touches the warm metal as the sun shines on a blue-sky Colorado afternoon. The sculpture is a scaled-down version of the 26-foot piece featured in a mall in Kansas City, Mo.

Painted a teal-verdigris green color, "Dancing" has taken on a new persona.

"It has always been yellow," Blitt says. "To me, dancing has always been yellow."

Blitt doesn't mind the color change. The fluid lines of the piece could represent water, an observation from Becky Young, who works in community relations at VVH.

Art is subjective, after all.

"To me, water and dancing is all the same," Blitt says. "When I title things I try to be very vague so people can use their imaginations."

On this warm Friday afternoon, Blitt is seeing the sculpture's placement at the hospital for the first time. "Dancing" is one of four of her sculptures featured at VVH.

"The hospital has invested heavily in art and has become increasingly supportive of embracing the spirit of art and healing," Young says.

Blitt is honored to have her art displayed to help the healing process.

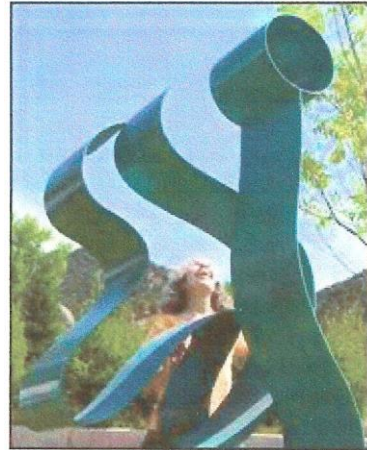
"People have said to me that my work makes them feel good, and that makes me happy," she says.

She knows firsthand how art heals.

Blitt continues to recover from a pelvic fracture received over the summer. During the tour to view her sculptures, a wheelchair comes in handy.

"Rita's work is so inspiring for people who are recovering," says Elaine Grossman, a consultant with the hospital and Blitt's friend. "It inspires a lot of Film Festival Sept.14D16

Artist Rita Blitt laughs as she looks up at her sculpture "Dancing," which is one of four of her sculptures displayed on the grounds of Valley View Hospital. **Post Independent/Kara K. Pearson**



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When dance and art collide

- Rita Blitt's 2003 film "Caught in Paint" has been chosen for more than 90 film festivals and is the winner of 11 awards

- The short film, made with photographer Lois Greenfield, features painting on four-by-eight-foot transparent surfaces while dancer David Parsons and members of the Parsons Dance Company are seen in mid-air imitating the dancing lines of Blitt's paint strokes.

- The film screens at the Estes Park

<http://www.postindependent.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070903NALLEYNEWS> ... 11/1312007

hope. Rita really felt these sculptures would speak to them."

- Source: www.ritablitt.com

Nature, music and dancing inspire the artist in her paintings and sculptures. Art has been a way for Blitt to express her thoughts, feelings and emotions since the 1970s.

"All my drawings come from deep within," she says. "I just let it out. I like to think it's a part of me."

Blitt's sculpture "Happy Days" - temporarily placed outside of the hospital's Critical Care Unit until it's moved to a renovated space with an atrium - grew from a sketch.

"When I made this drawing, I liked it really well, so much so I faxed it to my daughter," she says. "I sign all my letters, 'Happy day,' and I had signed it, 'Happy day, Mom.' When (the sculpture) came out, it lost the 'Mom.' It makes me feel happy."

Since 1975, Blitt estimates she has designed up to 50 monumental sculptures. They range in size from 5 to 60 feet and are displayed in eight states, China, Singapore and Israel.

"I want them to be where people can enjoy them," she says.

Blitt splits her time with her husband of 56 years and college sweetheart, Irwin, at their homes in Aspen, California and Kansas City, where she was raised. She supervises the steel fabrication of the sculptures when she's not sketching or painting.

"Today I am really creating sculpture on demand so I can spend more time painting," she says.

Her passion for art - and helping others heal through her work - grows strong, even at 75.

"That's the way I feel about everything," she says. "I feel it very deeply."

Contact April Clark: 945-8515, ext. 16601

aclark@postindependent.com

Post Independent, Glenwood Springs, Colorado CO

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