

PIONEER IMAGES OF UTAH

ARTIST: Laura Lee Stay Bradshaw (1958-) Provo

TITLE: Martha Hughes Cannon 1996

MEDIA: Bronze

SIZE: 8 feet high

COLLECTION: Utah State Capitol Rotunda

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Laura Lee Stay Bradshaw is described by Dave Gagon in the *Deseret News* as a woman who sees herself as an individual who can accomplish anything she sets her mind to. It doesn't matter that she's a woman. "I am a sculptor, not a woman sculptor." And she has no patience with women who complain about their feminine lot. "Get in and work" is her solution.

Born and raised in Orange County, California, she came to Utah at the age of 19 to attend Brigham Young University. Her initial interest in art was inspired by her fifth-grade teacher when Laura Lee was 11. Her parents fostered this interest by enrolling her in private lessons. Attending BYU on a painting scholarship, she was introduced to a new mediumó sculpture. This new medium was a challenge, but she loved it and never looked back. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) from BYU in 1985 and a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in 1990. She still resides in Utah.

Laura Lee's large-scale works can be seen at the University of Utah Medical School in Salt Lake City, the School for the Deaf and Blind in Ogden, Heritage Park in Parowan, the town square in Monroe, Louisiana, and the Utah State Capitol Building in Salt Lake City.

Smaller pieces are located at the Phillips Gallery in Salt Lake City, the Springville Museum of Art, the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City, and in the Utah Arts Council collection.

Examples of her recent work can currently be seen at the Museum of Church History and Art as part of the **Images of Women in Art** exhibition. In March 1998, she will be part of a five-person show at the Kimball Art Center in Park City, Utah.

Laura Lee is quoted as follows in the dedication ceremony program for her bronze sculpture of Martha Hughes Cannon, which is in the Utah State Capitol building in Salt Lake City:

"As an artist, I have always felt that commemorative sculpture is not just about honoring a person but is about humanity. That these people we honor in sculptural form are of the best of humanity, representing the core of every person's individual striving. Through commemorative sculpture we, the viewers, are able to glimpse at our true nature and remember our sense of real being." Martha Hughes Cannon indeed represents the best of humanity. As she stated in her letter to the Statue Commission, Laura Lee Stay Bradshaw chose to depict Martha Hughes Cannon as "a woman of inner resolve. . . . Proving nothing she stands alone. She holds no symbols such as books or scales. It is by her regal gesture that the viewer knows she is at peace and self assured."

Martha Hughes Cannon was a remarkable woman. Among her accomplishments are being the first member of the state board of health which she also helped create, founding the first nursing school in Utah Territory, and being the first woman elected to a state senate in the United States. She was also a pioneer, a medical doctor, a prominent suffragist, the author of Utah's sanitation laws, and a successful mother. Her primary interest always was in public health issues. This interest was her motivation for the study of medicine and for her political career. Her concern began in childhood, when she was deeply disturbed by seeing how many mothers and their babies died each year.

In 1880 on her 23rd birthday, Cannon received her medical degree from the University of Michigan. Feeling the need for further study, she continued studying medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Looking to the future, she enrolled at the National School of Elocution and Oratory at the same time, to improve her public speaking skills so she could lecture on public health.

Upon her return to Utah, Martha Hughes Cannon worked as a medical doctor and later ran for the state senate and won. During her first month in office, she sponsored three public health bills, one of which created the State Board of Health and defined its duties. Cannon was selected as one of the first members of this new Board. Martha spent the last

years of her life near her children in Los Angeles, working at the Graves Clinic and the General Hospital.

Martha Hughes Cannon is described by Jean Bickmore White in the book Sister Saints, as a woman ". . . caught in conflicts between the romantic side of her nature and the hard realities of her life. She appears to have suffered some of the conflicts faced by women today, wanting to be loved and protected in the classic role of women and yet to express herself in a life and career of her own."

Laura Lee Stay Bradshaw's sculpture of Martha Hughes Cannon was dedicated on July 24, 1996, in the Utah State Capitol Rotunda in Salt Lake City. In this work, we can see the ability of Laura Lee "to capture the spirit of life in her subjects."

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

TITLE: *Martha Hughes Cannon* 1996
MEDIA: Bronze
SIZE: 8 feet high
COLLECTION: Utah State Capitol Rotunda

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING (History, aesthetics, criticism)

What clues tell you when the subject of this work lived? What does the stance of the figure suggest about her personality? What kind of person was she? Was this woman from a wealthy background? Was she educated? What was the artist trying to tell you about this subject? What is the purpose of this work of art?

Pretend you are the sculpture, what do you see around you? What do the houses look like? What kind of transportation is available? How do people cook their food? What is your favorite possession?

How does this art work make you feel? What mood does this work convey? How does the medium used affect the work? Is movement suggested by this work? How is the

feeling of movement created? How does your eye progress through the composition? What area provides dominance for the piece? Would you say this is a successful work? Why? (because of craftsmanship, design quality, expressiveness, personal response, originality, or comparison)

ACTIVITIES

Art

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the use of art to honor an individual by planning or by creating an artwork that honors someone whom they admire.

Discuss with your students some of the uses of art, such as bringing honor to the person depicted, promoting philosophy or religion, utility (use), documentation (history), ornamentation (decoration), and self-expression.

Discuss medium as a factor in fulfilling the intention of the artist.

Review with students the statements in the biographical section of sculptor Laura Lee Stay Bradshaw concerning her intent in creating the sculpture of Martha Hughes Cannon. Generate a discussion as to whether the artist does indeed live up to her intention with the work. Students should be able to cite the elements and principles of art that support their statements.

Students should then be given the task of selecting a person they wish to honor, selecting a medium, and executing (or planning) the piece. Medium used, method of depicting the person, and all other elements of the piece should work together in honoring the person selected. Students will be asked to defend all elements of the work in this light. The work need not be representational, but the student must be able to defend his or her nonrepresentational depiction of the subject.

Section 27 entitled "Quiet Moments, Sculptures of People" in *Adventures in Art (6)* by Laura H. Chapman shows several images which could be used to discuss purpose and meaning. In addition, many of the past Educator Evening packets contain slides of sculptures honoring people, especially **Who is Cyrus E. Dallin**, Nov. 13, 1996.

Art

Objective: The student will be able to demonstrate the ability to evaluate artistic style by writing a short essay comparing and contrasting two works of art by the same sculptor.

First discuss the elements of artistic style with students, focusing on such areas as artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes. Select several pairs or groups of works that can be compared and contrasted.

The article, "I Dream a World" in Arts & Activities magazine of March 1991, contains several images of black women which could be used to compare and contrast using the above categories. Also, Scholastic Art, November, 1996, focusing on "Women Painters," contains many different images of women which could be used to compare and contrast.

Using these elements of artistic style, students will compare the two works by Laura Lee Stay Bradshaw or the sculptor you have chosen.

Social Studies

Objective: Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the contributions of women to Utah's history by selecting one woman and writing a biography detailing her life, her accomplishments, and her contributions to Utah's history.

Using Martha Hughes Cannon as a starting point, discuss how women have contributed to Utah's history. The book Sister Saints by Vicky Burgess-Olson contains biographies of many Utah women. Students should be allowed to choose a historical figure, one of their own female ancestors, or a contemporary figure. The biography should include details of the woman's life, her specific accomplishments and how those accomplishments are contributing or have contributed to life in Utah.

The biography need not be limited to the traditional biographical format. A journal, a poem, or other format could be used.

Responsible Healthy Lifestyles:

Objective: Students will demonstrate an understanding of their own local public health agencies by taking a public health issue, researching what agencies are concerned with this issue, what services these agencies provide, where service might be improved, and how the student as an individual might help improve public health services offered in the community. This activity can be a group project.

Select one current public health issue such as AIDS, teen pregnancy, immunizations, water quality, etc. Discuss with students the impact of the issue on the general public, what services are available in the community for the public health problem, and ways that service might be improved.

Discuss ways in which an individual might improve the public health services in the community.

Each group will be assigned one public health issue. Individual group members will be responsible for researching the different aspects of the issue using the AIDS (or other) issue given in class as an example. Arrange for the group to visit the public health agency if possible, or ask a representative of the agency selected to talk to the group. The group will then compile the information they have gathered into a meaningful report and present its findings to the class.

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