

Sullivan Goss: An American Gallery

Ken Bortolazzo: *Equipoise*

By **Kerry Methner**, PhD / CASA

ABREATH OF AIR AND THE ROOM IS MOVING as *Equipoise*, Ken Bortolazzo's fifth solo show at Sullivan Goss: An American Gallery, is energized and begins to dance.

On view through September 30th, the sculptures of *Equipoise* offer some of Bortolazzo's most recent work. Well known in the 3-D echelons of California and the U.S.A. as a colleague of George Rickey, his new work embodies warm living curves and floating movement in the cold formal world of stainless steel.

"Ken has a great imagination. It makes me want to see what he'll do with it. And he can pull off what he imagines... His recent work is a juxtaposition of stainless steel and lightness that defies gravity. I think that appeals to a lot of people, whether they realize it or not," shared Susan Bush, Curator of Contemporary Art at Sullivan Goss.

This work seems to embody a sense of the feminine. "For a lot of this movement, I was thinking about a simple line, a curved line – that's where the femininity comes from. It's almost like dancing," Bortolazzo commented in a telephone interview. "The metal dictated the form. I did a few things, then I'd incorporate a curve... That meant that a lot was dictated by the material. I was playing with the material."

And what play. The sculptor explained, "I'd set up the situation and the material dictated. Getting the balance right, was getting the curve right. It was a nice choreography. I'd listen to the material; it was more of a dialogue."

Considering his near amazing technical abilities to work metal, Bortolazzo is a grounded person. He learned basic welding in a high school art class. Then he got a chance to expand his tools and skills set when he worked at a furniture shop as a "burner." "They had this gigantic torch," Bortolazzo explained. "The owner of the shop had welding equipment... and had ideas about a line of metal wall sculpture. That job enabled me to get my own equipment to work on my own."

Then he learned of a teacher at Santa Barbara City College. "One of my first teachers, Julio Agostini, was a cool mentor... He never really dictated what I should be doing in my own art. I admired him for his technique. He taught me a lot of metalwork," he explained. "After he was my teacher at SBCC I moved in next door to him. He'd come over to see what I was working on and I'd go over to see what he was working on... It was a fun education. It was more than past pupil and teacher."

This sense of shared explorations carried over into Bortolazzo's relationship with other sculptors along the way, including George Rickey. During their twelve year working relationship, Bortolazzo evolved from studio assistant to Rickey's acknowledged colleague. He remains a conservator of Rickey's work for the estate.

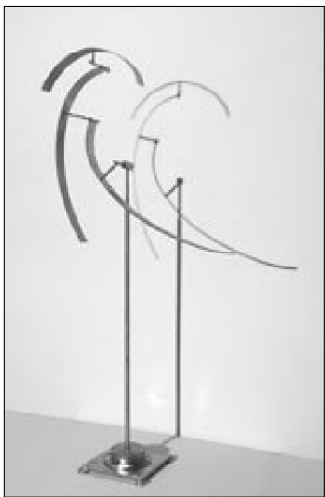
One of the Bortolazzo's favorite moments in the entire process is when a piece is first finished. "I get to see what it does, and how it works, and whether it does what I started from," he shared. "Along the way there are frustrating moments when I don't know how I'm going to do something, and then I figure it out. Those moments are really cool... They're not to do with how the sculpture looks, but a sense of 'Wow, I figured something out.'"

This fifth solo exhibit is made of twelve sculptures placed inside the contemporary art gallery and two larger pieces which have taken residence in the outside entry of the 7 E. Anapamu gallery.

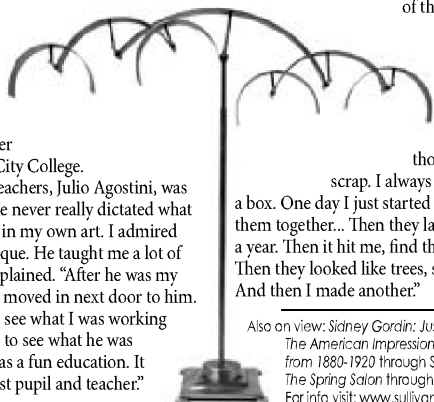
"The greater function of art in the world varies with every individual," Bortolazzo explained of his work and goals. "I'm not creating art that will change the world. I create art that pleases me. I find joy creating and exploring materials... Hopefully people are exploring themselves when they look at it. When they [the sculptures] are moving they are contemplative. That's a state of mind that is meditative. Hopefully viewers get a sense of a meditative state, enlightenment. I'm not trying to shock anyone. I'd like to make something that 100 years from now people will say, 'Hey, that's pretty cool.'"

When the artist began thinking about this new series of work he also began looking for a title for the exhibit. "I found the word, 'Equipoise,' then found that Longfellow uses the word in a poem. It means perfect balance. That's how all the pieces work - they have to be in balance," he related. And so, he had a title and a theme of sorts. Several of the smaller, tabletop pieces might seem to be a departure for the artist from series. But he explained, "All those little pieces are scrap. I always just throw them in a box. One day I just started tacking/welding them together... Then they laid around for over a year. Then it hit me, find the balance point. Then they looked like trees, so I played with it. And then I made another."

Also on view: Sidney Gordin: *Just Put it Together* and *The American Impressionists: Selected Work from 1880-1920* through September 2nd; and *The Spring Salon* through July 29th. For info visit: www.sullivanogoss.com



Above: *Ola Mar* by Ken Bortolazzo
Below: *Stein* by Ken Bortolazzo



Around Town...

Gerardo Ayala has been appointed as a 1st District Arts Commissioner by Supervisor Salud Carbajal to the 15 member Santa Barbara County Arts Commission. Born and raised in Santa Barbara, Ayala, spent 12 years working in social services, primarily with the homeless population, before moving to New York to pursue a career in the arts. Since 1999 he has worked in both visual and performance arts on both coasts. Ayala was the original coordinator for *Viva el Arte de Santa Barbara*, a free concert series of Latin American music at "The Luke," a joint venture between the Marjorie Luke Theatre and UCSB Arts and Lectures. Since 2008 his focus has been in concert production, and more recently, film. Ayala also has over 20 years of board experience serving on a variety of non-profit boards, including the Fund for Santa Barbara, The Children's Creative Project, and most recently The Marjorie Luke Theatre.



Gerardo Ayala

www.sbartsc.commission.org

Murray Ray has been elected President of the Rotary Club of Montecito for 2012 to 2013. The Club, which began in 1953, will celebrate its 60th anniversary on February 12th, 2013. Ray has been a member of Montecito Rotary for 13 years. He was formally a charter member of Glenhaven Rotary Club, in Sydney, Australia. He has served as a board member of both Montecito and Glenhaven clubs and is also a recipient of two Paul Harris Fellow Awards given by Rotary International. Ray has a degree in Mathematics and Statistics from the Univ. of Western Australia and completed advanced management programs at the Australian Management College, Mt Eliza, and the Univ of Hawaii. He has been employed by QAD Inc for 16 years where he is Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer.



Murray Ray

Also on the Board: John Gianvini, President-Elect; Rosslyn Roy, Secretary; Phil Palmquist, Treasurer; Carolyn Brown, Post-Pres.; and Aaron Clark, Mark Maggia, Robert Misiang, and Lynda Nahra. Rotary Club of Montecito meets Tues for lunch of the Montecito Country Club. For info call Les Esposito at 943-7339.

Juliana Lee has been hired as Director of Making Awesome Things Happen as part of the Santa Barbara-based nonprofit Notes for Notes's expansion to Nashville and Detroit. A Westmont College graduate with extensive experience in mentoring and social work, Lee will work full-time alongside Executive Director Philip Gilley to strengthen the long-term sustainability of Notes for Notes, which builds professional grade recording studios for youth called MusicBoxes and then offers free lessons and guidance on everything from basic instrument playing to mastering of an album. Previously Lee worked for Santa Barbara's Fighting Back Mentor Program under the Council for Alcohol and Drug Abuse, where she was proponent of Notes for Notes. Lee signed on in June, and has been pounding the pavements of Santa Barbara, Nashville, and Detroit, ever since. Lee will be encouraging adults to volunteer, finding chances for MusicBox musicians to perform live, and creatively partnering with organizations and companies to promote their services and products alongside Notes for Notes.



Juliana Lee

To get involved, or set up a studio visit contact Lee at 615-873-0290 or email juliana@notesfornotes.org

Kanami Fujita is the new Director of Sales & Marketing at the Kimpton's Canary Hotel. As a member of the hotel's management team, Fujita oversees all aspects of the hotel's sales, marketing, and public relations efforts. Fujita earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Commerce and Marketing from the University of Marketing & Distribution Sciences in Kobe, Japan and has been in the hotel industry for the last 12 years. Fujita started her career as a Sales Manager at the Grand Hyatt Taipei, Taiwan in 2000, and then moved in 2002 to the Grand Hyatt San Francisco, where she held the position of Individual Travel Sales Manager for four years. Fujita then joined Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village in 2006 as a member of the hotel's opening team, where she received a 2007 President's Club award, a company-wide recognition for the highest achievements in sales. Before returning to California, Fujita was based in Seattle, where she was the Associate Director of Sales for the Sorrento Hotel and then a Director of Sales & Marketing for the Westmont Hospitality Management Group.



Kanami Fujita

For info about Kimpton's Canary Hotel visit www.canarysantabarbara.com

Lions Sight and Hearing Center

Robert Mangus Named Volunteer of the Year

ROBERT MANGUS, Lions Sight and Hearing Center Board President and Volunteer, is newest recipient of the Jim Stanley Perpetual Memorial Award from the Lions Sight and Hearing Center (LSHC). The award was presented at the Lions Sight and Hearing Center's 8th Annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon recently.

This honor is given for outstanding service and dedication to the Lions Sight and Hearing Center of Santa Barbara and exemplifies the Lions' campaign for Sight. Mangus has served as president of the organization for 12 years and has been a Lions Club member since 1964.

The Lions Sight and Hearing Center was founded in 1963. The Jim Stanley Perpetual Memorial Award was established in memory of Lions Club member Jim Stanley who served as the president of the Lions Sight and Hearing Center for 24 years until his death in 2003.

The Lions Sight and Hearing Center offers free vision, hearing, and glaucoma screenings for adults and children in schools, and recycles used eyeglasses. The LSHC is made up of representatives of local Lions Clubs: Carpinteria, Santa Barbara East, and Goleta. Officers include: Robert Mangus, President; Bruce Evans, Vice President; Geoff Banks, Treasurer; Joan Logon, Secretary; and Jean Mangus, Executive Director.



Robert Mangus was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award by Chase Gregory at the Lions Sight & Hearing Center Recognition Luncheon

Photo by Pictoria@SantaBarbaraScene.com