

East Haddam Sculptor Uses Nature to Express Her Art

By ALICE C. STELZER
The Reminder

EAST HADDAM— Connie Pfeiffer's current exhibition at the Renana Gallery demonstrates how her sculptures express her love of nature.

From now until December 24, you have



Inspired by Nature. East Haddam artist, Connie Pfeiffer, holds two pieces of glass sculpture on which she is currently working. Pfeiffer says that in her art she tries "to address the common thread of people, meanings that transcend time and place. Photos by Alice C. Stelzer.

the opportunity to see the incredible nature-oriented sculptures of Pfeiffer at the gallery, located at 648 Main Street, Middletown.

"The works offers a visual interpretation of our understanding of life in the context of every day situations, birth, rebirth or death. These are a common threads that bonds us," Pfeiffer said.

Rather than have her art make a definite statement, Pfeiffer builds in ambiguity to allow the viewer to attach a meaning that is personal. "The way I use the materials in my pieces, I create ambiguity so it allows a larger audience to relate or ask questions about them," says Pfeiffer.

"I have a great appreciation for nature. I've been connected with nature my whole life," Pfeiffer said. "Through my art I'm providing a visual language for people to relate to— not just about nature itself but our connectedness to the earth, each other and the environment."

"I try to address the common thread of

ideas of appreciating nature and each other."

Pfeiffer completed her master's degree at Rochester Institute of Technology in 1995. In her career, Pfeiffer has been very busy teaching and creating sculptures.

She has been an instructor at the Creative Arts Workshop (CAW) in New Haven for the last five years, teaching the jewelry metals program. CAW is a non-profit arts organization offering classes for painting, sculpting, pottery, and bookbinding, among others.

Last March, Pfeiffer was featured in an exhibit at CAW entitled, "Inventing Nature," along with painter Paula Gabriel. "It's an amazing facility. I have been teaching there for five years," said Pfeiffer. She has also been teaching at the Wesleyan Potters for the last few years.

Other places she has exhibited include a show in Southport, CT; a wellness facility, Beyond Care; and City Gallery, a co-operative in New Haven. For the last six years, her studio has been in Chester.

Renana Gallery owner Renana Magee was impressed with Pfeiffer and her work from the first time

she met her.

"I met Connie when she was one of four Wesleyan potters who brought their stuff to show and sell in a trunk show. Connie brought jewelry and sculptures. I loved her stuff so we pretty much booked the show right then," Magee said.

"What makes her interesting as an artist is that she works in such varied sizes. Connie has a wide range of scale as a sculptor," Magee said.

"Typically sculptors produce either big or small sculptures but Connie does both and lots in between. She has huge ten feet high pieces hanging from the ceiling. Then she has tiny rings. She does everything but you can always tell it's a Pfeiffer," said Magee.

Some of sculptures you can expect to view during this exhibition include the "Protectress," which is comprised of leather, copper, paper, wood, and acrylic. The "Earth/Roots" sculpture is made of paper,

per. Two pieces in this show using copper are "Healing Souls," which also includes silver, paper, acrylic, and patina and "Spirit of Linda III, which, in addition to the copper, is comprised of paper, wood, and acrylic.

As an artist, Pfeiffer is constantly evolving. "My newest works are incorporating glass and stone a lot. I'm also working on an installation at City Gallery in collaboration with another artist, Sadie Bridger, which require building an environment in the entire gallery."

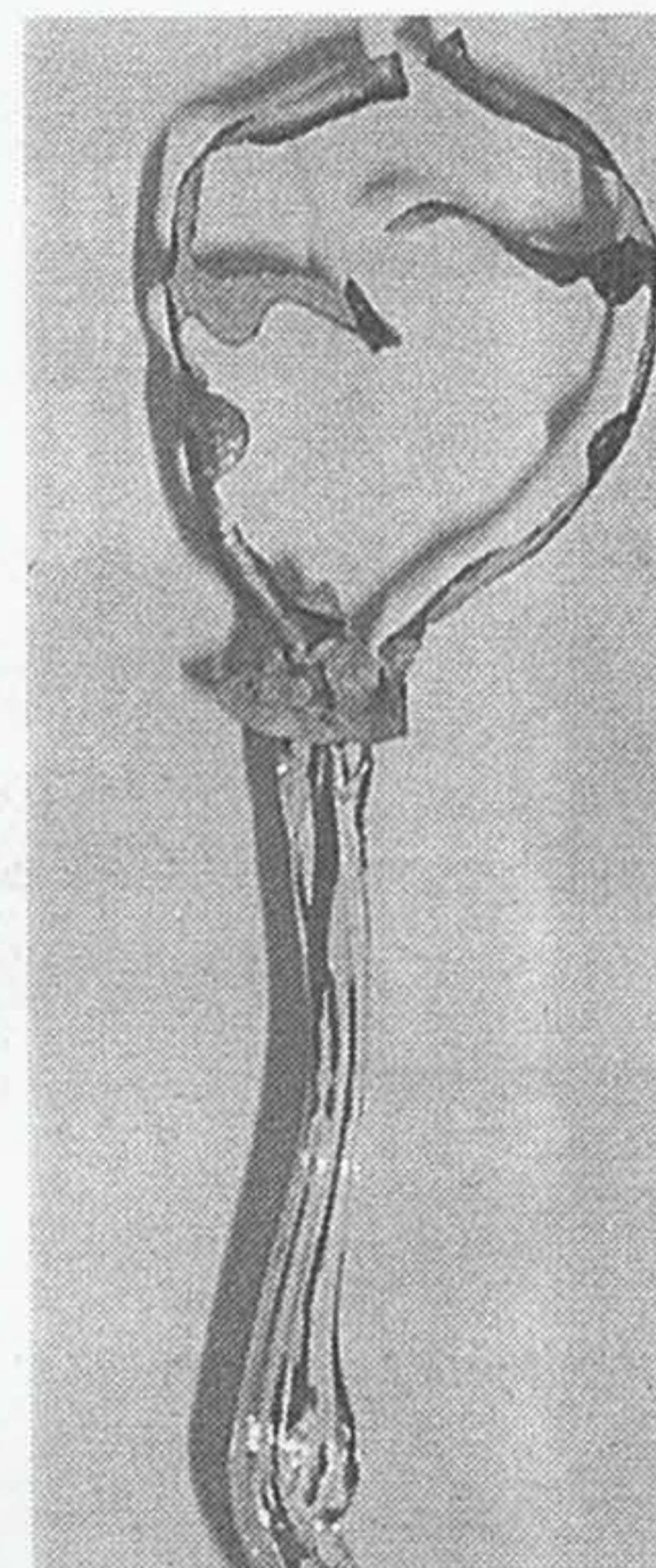
"I have never collaborated with anyone before so it will be a new experience and I'm looking forward to it," Pfeiffer said.

The Renana Gallery, which has been a showcase for Connecticut artists since its opening in October last year, is leaving the artists' cooperative building at 648 Main Street, at the end of the year. Magee has announced that Renana Gallery has given 90 days notice that she will no longer be at this location.

Since its opening, the gallery has been part of 10-member North End Artists Cooperative. "The bottom line is I want to just do the gallery. I don't want all the other stuff that involved with the cooperative. I'm trying to find a building I can buy," said Magee.

She hopes to have secured another site for the gallery before the first of the year but makes it very clear that her leaving will not endanger the cooperative that will continue at that address.

The gallery hours for viewing Pfeiffer's sculptures at the Renana Gallery are Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment. For more information about this exhibition call 344-1194.



Sculpture. This glass figure is one of East Haddam artist Connie Pfeiffer's new creations as she moves into using glass in her art.