

Lou Anne Colodny: Still Breaking New Ground

BY LEON M. RUBIN

When Lou Anne Colodny left her career as a museum director to pursue her personal interests as an artist 10 years ago, no one was more surprised at what happened next ... than Lou Anne Colodny.

"I immediately jumped into the media arts – and loved it. I was shocked at what was coming out," she says. "I was not aware I had grown so much. I found that I had become very contemporary in my art thinking."

When she worked as an artist earlier in her life, she had concentrated on stone and wood sculpture. But as she moved in new directions with video and photography, she began what she characterizes as a tremendous exploration. "I always thought I had a lot to say," she observes. "I've never really been a verbal communicator, but rather a written and visual communicator. I have always been very interested in the psychological makeup of human beings and what drives them. My work has taken on a whole ethos of psychological concepts."

Colodny's transformation wasn't all that surprising given the way she spent the years between her stints as an artist. A Miami-Dade County resident since 1966, she was the founding director of the Center of Contemporary Art (CoCA) in North Miami from 1981-96. Beginning in 1994, she spearheaded efforts to build MoCA – the Museum of Contemporary Art – in the city and served as its director for one year after its opening. During that time,



she received the Governor's Award for the Arts for the development of an art facility in a culturally deprived area.

"I enjoyed the 15 years of working alongside artists, seeing new things and subliminally learning from them," she says. "Going from being a museum director to an artist was a total transformation for me. It meant going from being a socially active, political person into the quiet, introspective seclusion of an artist. It's a challenge to change and a wonderful experience."

Colodny's second career as an artist has brought great success and acclaim. The four-year Broward County resident has exhibited throughout South Florida, winning "Best in Show" for her videos in the 2005 Boca Raton Museum of Art's 54th Annual All Florida exhibition. And she is preparing to open "442" – a one-person show in the Project Room at the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, on February 29 (with a preview the day before).

The exhibition title "is purposely kind of mysterious. It comes from one of the videos that's going to be

shown," Colodny notes. "I've taken to mirroring images. I did a video on hands in which the image is mirrored, and it takes on an unbelievable personality and form." The exhibition touches on subject matter ranging from stem cell research and cloning to natural disasters and the greenhouse effect. It will also mark the first time that Colodny's recent drawings will be shown.

When she isn't creating her own art, Colodny is active with Funding Arts Broward (FAB!) and as a member of the Broward Cultural Council's Public Art and Design Committee. "As a museum director, I always had to consider what the public reaction would be. I come to public art with a love of that process," she says. The county's Public Art and Design selection procedures, which mandate community involvement, promote "a wonderful integration of art with the community. Art can't exist in a vacuum. We're working with the clients to make sure their needs are met," she notes.

"I think all art is considered public art," she continues. "It's the sharing of imagery with the public and also reflects the human existence. If a disaster hits, sometimes the art still stands. Hundreds of years from now, our public art will become the archeological digs of tomorrow." ★

Leon M. Rubin is proud to have served as Editorial Director of Cultural Quarterly for more than half of its 20-year existence.