

## ABOUT

Carol Bruns (b. Des Moines, Iowa 1943) is an artist living in Brooklyn, New York, working in sculpture and drawing. She graduated NYU 1966 in Fine Arts, then attended the Art Students League, NYC and l'Academie de La Grande Chaumiere, Paris. She first exhibited in 1975 at OK Harris Gallery showing wall works made from found supports cloaked with cloth and thin, colored plaster. In 1980 she was guest artist at the Caraccio Etching Studio, Orion Editions published her prints, and in 2002 she received a printmaking fellowship at the Women's Studio Workshop. From 2000-2006 she was in four two-person exhibitions at the Tew Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia. Group exhibitions continued throughout this time as well as community organizing (Dumbo Open Studios), curating (*Persona, A New Look at Portraits* 1997; *Festival of Political Pleasure* 2017), publishing artist's books (*Pages*, with Robert Jacks), and stage décor (Bellerophon Dance Company). In 2013 she was interviewed by Gorky's Granddaughter, and in 2019 received a Tree of Life grant and an Artists' Fellowship grant. Her most recent exhibitions were at The Parlour Bushwick in 2015, Sculpture Space in Long Island City, SRO Gallery in Brooklyn in 2017-18, Zurcher Gallery 2022 and 2023 a solo at White Columns, NYC. She was awarded an artist's residency by the Saltonstall Foundation in 2023. Ms. Bruns also writes art essays and reviews exhibitions, two most recently published in d'Art International and artcritical.com.

## STATEMENT

*Any of us can dream, but when you seek a vision, you do this not only for yourself but that the people may live, that life might be better for all of us, not only for me but for all people.* Brooke Medicine Eagle, Nez Perce-Sioux.

My expression of the human figure is focused on its inner, subjective experiences accomplished by a process and vocabulary in continual development. It takes the form of a montage, constructed in a spirit of improvisation and risk despite the contradiction to sculptural processes that traditionally require planning, methodical procedures, and permanent, rigid armatures leaving little room for the unexpected and new. The sculptures are inspired from historical and prehistoric forms such as the totem (an aboriginal column featuring an animal), the mask (with its history in theater, religious dances, and rituals), and the portrait head (European and American cultures). These ancient, diverse borrowings appear in a new, contemporary guise and meaning.

While it might seem obvious to some people that human beings are part of nature, the contrary is true in the actions of industrial society. My present vocabulary dramatizes the largely unconscious dualistic foundation of our culture which has established attitudes toward the environment leading directly to the monumental crisis we face today, the alarming degradation of the biosphere, and would instigate new ways of construing the world and ourselves that conserve our habitat and our own lives.

The sculptures employ styrofoam packing materials from shipping discarded as junk, which contrast to nature-like, organic elements. By making visual the underlying metaphysical estrangement between industrial society and nature, I would like to suggest we find a more inclusive dimension of consciousness. I locate the styrofoam components in my apartment building trash room, while the contrasting nature element comes from a unique process of layering newspaper and rice paste into flexible laminated sheets which I can then shape into hollow, light forms. It looks organic because the wet paste and thin paper interact to wrinkle and warp, close as they are to their origins as plants and trees. The vocabulary adds plaster made from crushed limestone, bamboo stalks, and finishing paper. I leave them the white of the plaster, and sometimes apply neutral tones or the black of bitumen. The single, monochromatic color creates an imaginary unity from the contradictory elements, and by its starkness sets it apart from genres of visual entertainment. The use of forms from pre-historic cultures directs attention to their common belief that plants and animals are non-dual social partners of humans.