

# EVA STUBBS

GALLERY 1.1.1.  
School of Art  
The University of Manitoba

October 28 - November 21, 1984







Fig. 1



As is the case for most artists, the early life of Eva Stubbs had a profound, though indirect effect on her development as an artist. She was born in Hungary and, in her teen years, emigrated with her parents and brother, to Canada. By this time in her life, however, she had already lived in Spain, Hungary, Italy, and Tangiers, North Africa through the turbulent period of the Spanish Civil War and the beginnings of World War II. Although one must always be careful not to attribute aesthetic qualities too directly to personal experiences, there can be little doubt that the buffeting by outside forces of Stubbs' youth is in some degree responsible for the emphasis upon restriction and confinement in so much of her work.

The work of Eva Stubbs dating up to 1982 is characterized by monolithic form contrasted with incised lines and flowing planes folded over a massive internal volume. Sources can be traced to the work of Alexander Archipenko, Constantin Brancusi, and the influence of an early teacher, the late Cecil Richards. Her *Seated Figure* (fig. 1) of 1976 is in some ways a compendium of Stubbs' early influences, yet the work possesses a personality that keeps it from being merely eclectic, and the elegance of the form, together with the echoes of the human condition in the protected, yet confined figure within the form, make this work a passionate, though restrained recognition of a universal truth.

The works of this period are consistently monumental, conveying a sense of permanence through immobility and a feeling of the spirit imprisoned within the constraints of form. The bronze commissioned work *Wisdom* (fig. 2), though completed in 1983, contains many of the elements which are dominant in her earlier work due to the nature of the medium and the commission. The garment and arms wrap around the figure like the embrace of a bronze cocoon, the eyes and hands defined only by incised lines scratched in the original plaster. The three elements, the monolithic form, the intersecting planes, and the definitive line which, in her other works are beginning to each take on an independent character, are in this work welded into a unified statement of timelessness and strength.

Yet there is also a strong personal direction growing in the works of the late 1970's, a direction that retains contact with the figurative formalism of Stubbs' early influences, but is synthesizing other qualities; qualities that grow out of her knowledge of the work of contemporary artists such as Frank Gallo and Peter Voulkous and, more importantly, her direct explorations in the medium of clay and colourants. A series of terra cotta portraits of decidedly formal character completed in 1979 and 1980, for example *Alter Ego*, 1980 (fig. 5) contrast strong formal concerns reminiscent of Ancient Greek busts with a surface treatment which simultaneously call to mind the work of

the American sculptor Gallo and fragments of sculpture discovered in some mythical archeological excavation. These works, in their intertwined interior-exterior message, are the substance from which Eva Stubbs has built the foundation for her most recent work.

In the early 1980's the line and plane used on the surface of the earlier works begins to assert itself and to become the dominant element in several series of works. The first work in this direction, *Rock Lady* (fig. 3), completed in 1982, is considered by the artist to be a breakthrough piece. In this work, a new interest in drawing begins to assert itself, and the experimentation with oxides and colourants on the surface of the clay results in overlays of surface tone and colour contrasted and complemented by increasingly powerful incised line which dynamically defines the form to which the brush drawing alludes.

Out of this exploratory work comes the series of boxed figures first exhibited in 1982, in which the figure is treated as a flat, single plane within the shallow confines of a clay box. In these works, for example, *Silent Voices* (fig. 4) the containment characteristic of *Seated Figure* (fig. 1) has shifted from within to without, and by so doing, has freed both line and plane to function independently, each carrying its respective message without being bound by the other, yet each relying on the other for support and fulfillment. The strong two dimensional brush drawing on the figure echoes the geometry of the enclosing box, emphasizing the confinement by becoming a barrier to the figure's emergence, while the strong gestural quality of the figure itself and of the incised line drawing on that figure speak of the life within, and the movement to be free.

Two directions follow from these explorations, paralleled by a vigorous and productive involvement in drawing on paper. It is these three groups of works which are the subject of this exhibition. One group is a series of incised clay drawings. In these, bold slashes of line drawn in the leather-hard clay are complemented by equally strong brush drawing on the surface, interacting to make a single statement, separating to speak of form and detail in their respective languages — a dialogue that is at once interwoven and separate.

The works in the series range from free-form tablets with painted and incised figure forms on the surface to cut out figure forms. The latter group echoes in two dimensions a second direction of the 1981-82 period, one in which the incised lined is drawn, not on a single surface, but on multiple planes that become simplified figure forms, inseparably wedding the two dimensional to the three dimensional.

Stubbs' most recent large scale works are the fruitful synthesis of the strengths of the portrait heads of the late 1970's and the surface and drawing explorations of the first

few years of the 1980's. In works like *Standing Figures. 1983-84* (fig. 6), the surfaces have been developed to the point of becoming three dimensional drawings that enfold the massive form of the figure, a form which is rooted to the spot where it stands, held immobile by a massive base and the painted lines on the surfaces which embrace the figure gently, yet seem to bind like chains. Always, though, the gesture of the pose and the life imparted by the drawing within the form keep the figure on the threshold of action, while the fragmentation of parts speak of a human fragility that is in stark contrast to the massiveness and solidity of the form.

This is the essence of the recent work of Eva Stubbs. The figure is the basis of all these works, for the figure is the strongest carrier of the message of three dimensional form available to the artist. A plane, a line, a surface colour, so long as it has a hint of human form, carries with it the power of the volumes it describes. Stubbs' sculpture lives in the delicate balance between the expressive power of pure line and two dimensional form, while retaining the echoes of three dimensional weight of the human body. It speaks of motion and emotion through the powerful language of form, line, and volume, and of humanity through the spirit of the human form.

*Dale Amundson*

## SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

### BORN:

Budapest, Hungary; Canadian citizen

### RESIDES:

Winnipeg, Canada

### EDUCATION:

1954-57 School of Art, University of Manitoba,  
Diploma of Fine Art

### FURTHER STUDIES

- 1982 International Sculpture Conference,  
Oakland Calif.
- 1978 International Sculpture Conference,  
Toronto
- 1977 Six months extensive travel and  
study in Europe
- 1963 Banff School of Art, summer
- 1957 University of Minnesota, summer
- 1955 Cranbrook Academy of Art,  
Michigan, summer
- 1954 Cranbrook Academy of Art,  
Michigan, summer

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 Gallery 1.1.1., School of Art,  
University of Manitoba
- 1983 Leonard Marcoe Studio Gallery,  
drawings
- 1982 Fleet Galleries
- 1976 The Upstairs Gallery

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1982 Art in Winnipeg 1955-59, Gallery  
1.1.1., School of Art,  
University of Manitoba
- 1981 Winnipeg Art Gallery  
Corporate Night
- 1979 "Dimensions of the Spiritual" Janet  
Ian Cameron Gallery, University of  
Manitoba
- 1978-82 Leonard Marcoe Studio Gallery,  
Winnipeg
- 1978 Designer's Showcase, Winnipeg
- 1968 Faculty Club, University of Manitoba
- 1958-76 Manitoba Society of Artists
- 1959 Winnipeg Show
- 1958 Montreal Spring Show
- 1958 Sculpture Society of Canada
- 1957 Royal Canadian Academy

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation

Mount Carmel Clinic

Robson Hall, University of Manitoba,  
Commissioned Portraits in Bronze  
of Chief Justice Freedman and  
Dean C.H.C. Edwards

Commission for Bronze Panels for  
the entrance door of the New Law  
Courts Building in Winnipeg.  
Awarded 1983.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1984 *Woman Artists News* Vol. 9 no. 3,  
Spring, 1984, Midmarch Associates,  
New York, "Four Manitoba Artists",  
Marian Yoe
- 1982 Manitoba Department of Education  
"Visions and Views, Manitoba Women  
in the Visual Arts: Text and slide kit
- 1982 Marilyn Baker, "Eva Stubbs at the  
Fleet Gallery", *Artmagazine* 60,  
Sept.-Oct. 1982 p. 42-43.
- 1982 Andrea Lang, "A Renaissance Eva  
Stubbs at Fleet", *Artwest*, February.  
Vol. 7 No. 2, Feb. 1982 p. 23, repro  
p. 20, 22.





Fig. 2





Fig. 3





Fig. 4





Fig. 5



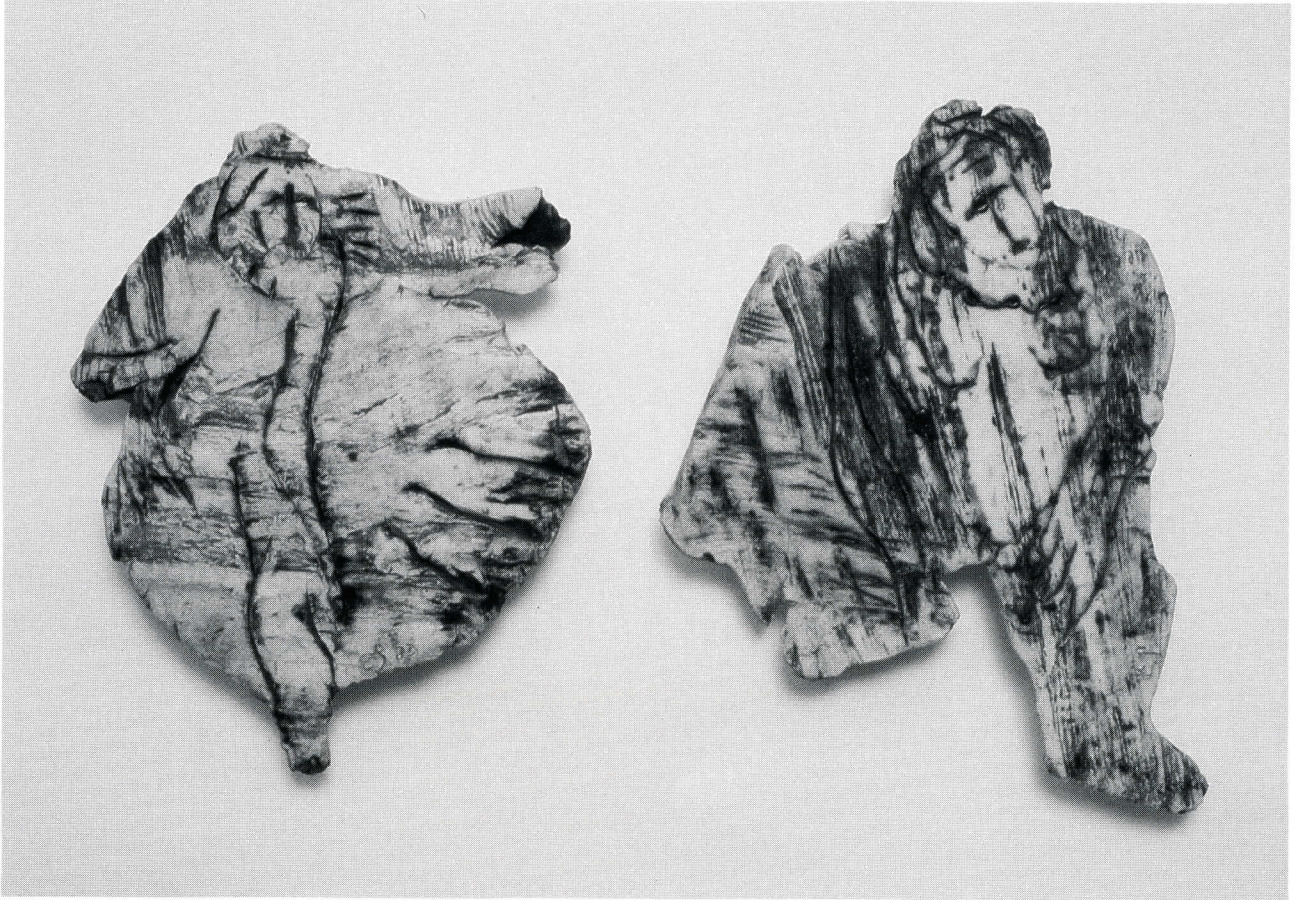


Fig. 8





Fig. 7





Fig. 6





Fig. 9





Fig. 10



## CATALOGUE REPRODUCTIONS

Cover: Photo in studio

*Leonard Schlichting*

\* Fig. 1. Seated Bronze Figure, 1976

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

\* Fig. 2. Wisdom 1982

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

\* Fig. 3. Rock Lady, 1982

*Photo Credit: Jim Voronuk*

\* Fig. 4. Silent Voices #35

*Photo Credit: Jim Voronuk*

\* Fig. 5. Alter Ego, 1980

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

\* Fig. 6. Standing Figures, 1983-84

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

Fig. 7. Figure No. 6, 1984 (Drawing)

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

Fig. 8. Wall Figure No. 8 & 7, 1983

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

Fig. 9. Equilibrium, 1984

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

Fig. 10. Duality, 1984

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

Fig. 11. Clay Drawing No. 3

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

Fig. 12. Clay Drawing No. 5

*Photo Credit: Ernest Mayer*

\* mentioned in text

© Gallery 1.1.1. University of Man. 1984

## SHOW CATALOGUE

### Clay drawings

No. 1	1982	12"x10"
No. 2	1983	13"x11½"
No. 3	1983	17"x16"
No. 4	1983	17"x13"
No. 5	1983	27"x10"
No. 6	1983	15"x11½"
No. 7	1983	25"x13½"
No. 8	1983	17½"x16"

### Clay studies

No. 1	1983	12"x8"
No. 2	1983	12"x6"
No. 3	1983	10"x6"
No. 4	1983	10"x7"
No. 5	1983	12"x8½"
No. 6	1983	15"x7"
No. 7	1983	13"x9"
No. 8	1983	11"x8½"
No. 9	1983	13"x10"
No. 10	1984	10"x6"

Memories	1982	23"x14"x9"
Equilibrium	1983	23"x18"x9"
Duality	1984	22"x10"x10"
Reclining Figure	1983	4"x13"x6"
Seated Figure	1984	28"x12"x14"
Law Court Series	1983	24"x13"
Law Court Series	1983	27"x16"
Law Court Oak Frame	1983	27"x16"
Law Court Oak Frame	1983	26"x14½"
Standing Figures	1983-84	61"x16"x11" cedar platform: 12"x48"x48"

All clay works presented in this exhibition are treated with stains and oxides and are high fired. All sizes approximate.

### Drawings

1-7 Figures	1984	30"x22"
-------------	------	---------

All drawings presented are of ink, conte and charcoal on paper.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Manitoba Arts Council for their generous grant to produce this exhibition and catalogue.

It is always hard to assess one's own artistic expression; therefore it was a most gratifying experience to have Dale Amundson curate the show and write a critical essay. I thank him for his hard work, interest and sensitive insight into my work.

Sculpture, being a lengthy process, goes through several stages while being made. Some of it is technical and some physical. Many people were needed in order to accomplish my goal and I would like to thank them: Gordon Reeve for his technical advice and continuous support, Anna Arnadotter, Allan Shalla, Daniel Teichman, Marsha Wineman, Harvey Winks, Rod Sheels Ernest Mayer, Leo Simoens, Keewatin Ceramics and Eddy Oswald. Also many thanks to Grace Thompson, assistant director of Gallery 1.1.1. and Zared Mann, Technician of Gallery 1.1.1. Finally I would like to thank my husband Harold and son Christopher for their trust, patience and for their unstinting help.

*Eva Stubbs*

### WORKS ON LOAN:

**Marni & Grant Marshal**  
Clay Drawing No. 3

**C. Silverman**  
Reclining Figure 1983

**Aikens MacAulay Thorvaldson**  
**Law Firm**  
Clay Studies Nos. 5, 6, 8  
Law Court Series No. 3

### REPRODUCTIONS

**Seated Bronze Figure**  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Koves, Barbados

**Wisdom**  
Mr. Leo Kelekis

**Alter Ego**  
Private Collection

**Rock Lady**  
Private Collection

All other works are from the artist's collection.

## CREDITS

Exhibition curator: Dale Amundson  
Assistant curator: Grace Thompson  
Catalogue design: Leo Simoens  
Installation technician: Zared Mann





Fig. 11





Fig. 12