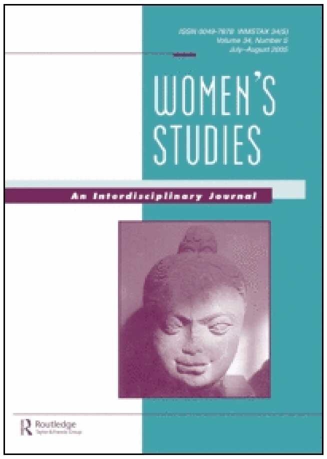
This article was downloaded by:[Vose, Sarah]
[CDL Journals Account]
On: 13 March 2008
Access Details: [subscription number 785022369]
Publisher: Taylor & Francis
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954
Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Women's Studies

An inter-disciplinary journal

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713654228

Steel Magnolia: Interview with Kati Casida

Margret Schaefer [a]
[a] UC Berkeley, Berkeley, California, USA

Online Publication Date: 01 December 2007
To cite this Article: Schaefer, Margret (2007) 'Steel Magnolia: Interview with Kati Casida', Women's Studies, 36:8, 639 - 654
To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/00497870701683928
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497870701683928

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf

This article maybe used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Women's Studies, 36:639–654, 2007
Copyright © Taylor & Francis Group, LLC
ISSN: 0049-7878 print / 1547-7045 online
DOI: 10.1080/00497870701683928

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

STEEL MAGNOLIA: INTERVIEW WITH KATI CASIDA

MARGRET SCHAEFER
UC Berkeley, Berkeley, California, USA

When I went to talk to Kati Casida in her North Berkeley home a few months after her "Sensuality and Survival: New Nordic Designs 2006" show in San Francisco, she was raking leaves at the far side of what I thought was the garage but was actually her studio. If I hadn't met her before but had only seen her brightly painted metal sculptures at the public sites where they can be found in the Bay Area—in urban plazas, museums, large office buildings, and parks—I would have expected to meet a big and brawny Rosie the Riveter rather than the petite, soft-looking, and graciously smiling blonde woman in front of me. "With all this rain, it's going to take days just to rake all the gunk out of the garden," she said, putting her rake aside and ushering me into her studio. Like most artists' studios, it was filled to the rafters with an assortment of her work and works in progress. Large metal sculptures in bright primary colors, smaller ones in gray and white, twisting tubes of bright neon light, prints, woodcuts, and collages leaned up against all available upright surfaces. Entering, I almost tripped over a large and hard-edged bright orange metal sculpture that looked like a twisting staircase with one railing missing, intertwined with a string of bright neon lights.

MS: This isn't like your other works, Kati—it's much more angular and has flat, jagged looking planes. What is it?

KC: A sculpture I did last year. It's called "Do, Re, Mi" and it's my vision of jazz, of the energy of jazz.

MS: Oh, right, I remember it now from your show at the Berkeley Jazz Club. But it's a little unusual for you, isn't it? I associate your works with sweeping, sinuous curves, not this kind of rectangular angularity.

Address correspondence to Margret Schaefer, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, USA. E-mail: mschaefer@cal.berkeley.edu

KC: Yes, true. I do a lot of waves usually—rolling waves, breaking waves, curling waves. But actually I'm interested in energy, energy of all kinds—when I do sculpture I am trying to get the feel of energy, to feel the freedom of movement. My "Flame," for example—the one at the Oakland Museum–is about swinging upward, being free, letting loose with a burst of energy. One of my favorite sculptures—later I'll show you a version of it that's now in my garden —is "Pin Curl," in which I tried to get the feel of springing, sassy curves. And "Do Re Mi" is also about energy and movement. But it's a crescendo instead of a wave. I attached these neon lights to it because I wanted to introduce the hotness of jazz into the crescendo of the music. Remember my sculpture "Red Jazz?"

MS: The one in the atrium at 901 Market St. in San Francisco?

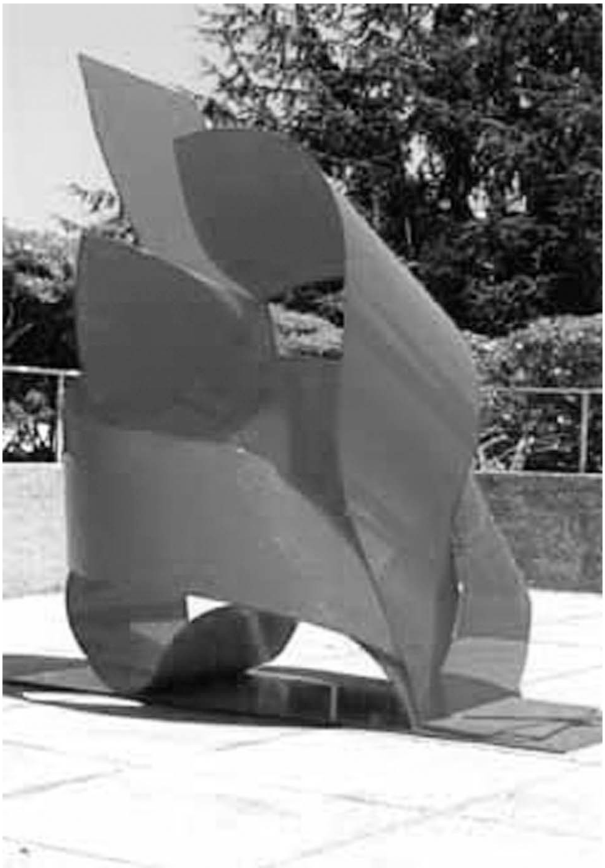


FIGURE 1 "Flame." Also available at <http://www.sculpture.org/portfolio/sculpture_info.php?sculpture_id=1005281>

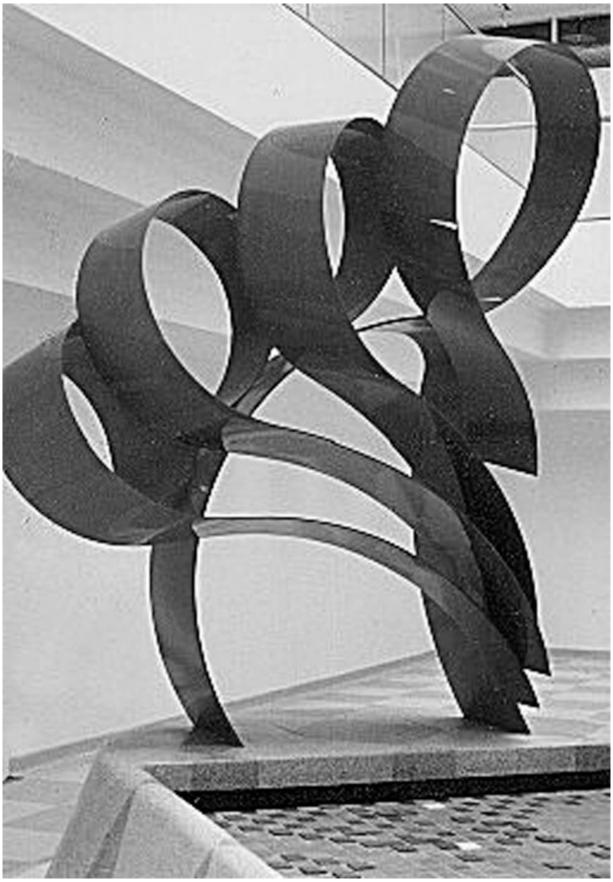


FIGURE 2 "Red Jazz." Also available at <http://members.aol.com/kcasida/Pages/Sculpture.html>

KC: Yes. There I tried to get the feeling of jazz by using a series of looping curves in increasing sizes instead of "steps" to indicate musical steps of the scale as I did here. But I hope "Do Re Mi" has the same feeling of motion and energy. I've long been interested in motion—and that includes motion in music and dance as well as in water, waves, wind, and other natural forms.

MS: Most of your sculptures are large ones, designed for public places. What got you interested in doing public sculpture?

KC: My interest in it goes way back. The idea first came to me long ago during summer school in Norway back in the fifties. I was invited to visit Ørnulf Bast, a famous artist, at his studio near Oslo and saw how he had heavy cranes pulling and lifting huge blocks of marble that he would then sculpt into huge, remarkable figures. I found it inspiring but at the time I could not imagine myself working with such massive forms. So for a while I did woodcuts instead—I felt I would be more comfortable digging into blocks of wood than making massive sculptures. But when I was in Rotterdam on my way to Germany in 1952, I got a new urge to try public sculpture when I walked into the center of the city and saw a round building called the Bouwcentrum in the middle of the bombed-out city. It was an amazing and dramatic place, full of photos, drawings and blueprints for the rebuilding of Rotterdam's city center.

MS: Sort of like the "Red Box" building they had in the center of Potsdammer Platz in Berlin in the late nineties? It presented the plans and models for rebuilding the center of Berlin, which had stayed empty for 50 years because of the wall.

KC: I didn't see the Red Box, but I wish I had. It sounds very similar. What I loved about the Bouwcentrum was that so many people of different professions worked together on it—architects and artists and city planners and sculptors. I saw how architecture and public sculpture related to each other and to the larger community. But at the time I didn't know how I could do a 13 by 10 by 15 foot sculpture. It wasn't until the early sixties when I was in London that I learned how the big name guys—Anthony Caro and Tony Craig and Phillip King—made their works. It turned out that they didn't fabricate them themselves—they made models and then took them to factories to have them fabricated by experts who rolled the metal and bolted it together and soldered it. And I thought, well, if they could do that—I could, too! What had stopped me originally from making this kind of sculpture is that I thought I had to do every single thing by myself. So London was a revelation to me. But it wasn't until after I had moved to Berkeley with John [her husband, a well-known research scientist at UC Berkeley] in the mid sixties that I began to really think about actually doing it myself. I remember sitting with John at the kitchen table one day and telling him I thought I could do public sculpture and that I needed money to do it. My last bambino, Eric, was finishing high school. I said I needed to have about $2000, no questions asked. I couldn't, after all, sell a sculpture if I didn't make it first. Well, John is Scotch-Irish—[laugh]—and was at first reluctant, and so I said, well, look, I really have to do this—I could go back and raise the money by going back to teaching, but that takes too much energy—I need you to support my work. This is my research—you do research, and I support it—I take care of your students, I entertain them and your visiting professors and your clients. So now I want your support. If you give it to me, I can prove I can do it. And he put the money into an account for me.

MS: So how did you go about it?

KC: Well, I began by making paper models. You know I've done a lot of work with hand-made paper and I like paper as a material. I never use the computer to make a model the way some artists do, because I can't visualize a sculpture that way. I need to see it and feel it in order to make it. It's a tactile thing. And paper is ideal for a model because stiff paper holds its form. So I used strips of paper that I cut and folded and twisted and bent into various shapes and then tacked down to a base—

MS: Do you use one continuous strip of paper?

KC: No, many strips. And I tack them to a base, if I'm using one. I don't always. And then when I finally had a model that I thought would look good enlarged in metal I went about looking for somebody to fabricate it. I went to various machine shops, and I found Johnny White of Bell Metal Fabricators here in Berkeley. When I first went to Johnny's factory, I was told, "we can't do this in metal." But I knew better. And I said, just try it—make me happy. I'll give you artistic freedom. If it doesn't turn out, we won't use it. Of course they wouldn't let me touch anything—I wasn't trained or licensed to work with the machines. But I knew they knew what they were doing. They had fabricated metal chairs for a sculptor from New York. And they kind of liked me—and this stuff wasn't anything like their pipes.

MS: Their pipes?

KC: Yes. Johnny's company at that time made steel pipes for Alaska. So I knew it would be fun for him to do an art project. We work together now—when I finish some models Johnny comes over and we talk about how they would look when large and whether he could do them in metal. He measures and plans out how to roll the curves, etc. I have to pay for the cost of the fabrication, and so it has to be right the first time. I've worked with Johnny now for a long time–since the 70s. But I also wanted to paint my sculptures, and Johnny doesn't do that. It occurred to me that automobile paint would be perfect. So I went to find a car-painting place. And they were terrific! As is Johnny. All the people I work with are terrific. Today, after Johnny fabricates the sculptures, they go to the Richmond Painting Company. I have them painted with a very tough polymer paint, Imron 5000 polyurethane. It has flex and bend in it and that's what I want—I want my sculptures to move, and so I need the paint to be stable and flexible. I hate the idea of paint peeling. You remember my blue sculpture that's down at the Berkeley Marina? I made that in 1984. [She is referring to her "Kata-Hydra Sky-Window" installed in Cesar Chavez Park at the waterfront in Berkeley]. Well, by last year the paint was flaking off—because of the salt water spray, which is really tough on paint—and I couldn't stand it. The City of Berkeley was supposed to keep it painted, but you know how it is. Last year they finally approved my request for funds to have it repainted. And now it looks terrific again.

MS: Yes. It looks great. And it's interactive—people go inside it and sit in it. When I saw it recently while taking a walk on the Marina there were a few kids sitting on the rock bench inside it that faces the Golden Gate. It looks a kind of like tent or shelter.

KC: Yes. "Kata" is a Sami word—Sami is the correct name for what used to be called "Laplanders," the reindeer people of Scandinavia, and it means "nomadic tent." That's one of my themes—sheltering enclosures.

MS: I take it these pieces here in paper are some of your models?

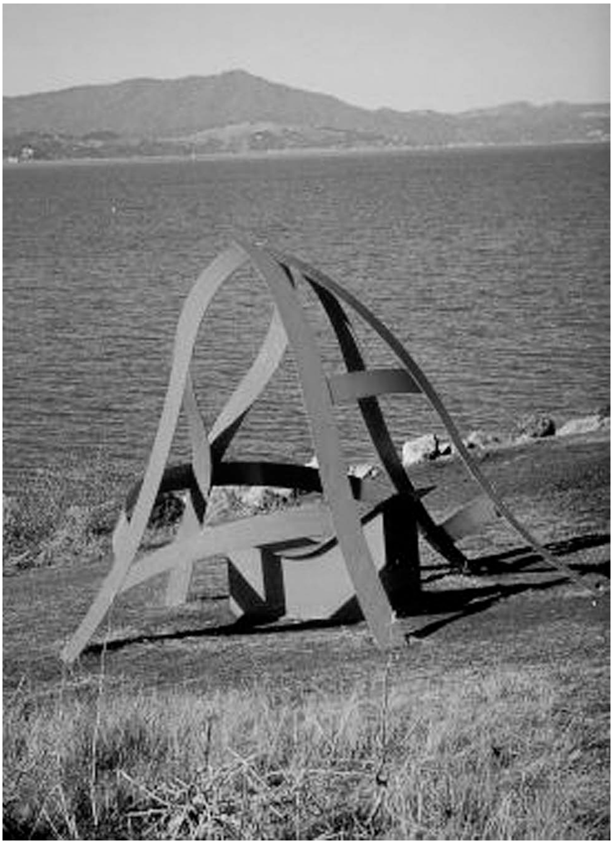


FIGURE 3 “Kata-Hyrda Sky-Window.” Also available at <http://members.aol.com/kcasida/Pages/Sculpture.html>

KC: Yes. I make many models. I make about a hundred of them before I get one that I think would look and feel good when enlarged. Then I discuss it with Johnny to see whether he thinks he could do it.

MS: You know, Kati, I’ve been thinking of your work as having a fascinating combination of male and female qualities—on the one hand, your sculpture has the size, the boldness, and the explosive, highly visible bold primary colors and hard metal that I, at least, tend to associate with male qualities; and on the other hand, it has the sweeping flowing sinuous curves which I associate with feminine forms. And also your material, your metal—it isn’t hard, immovable steel for the most part, but aluminum, which is light and moves, not rigid and hard. Your sculptures have a light and playful feeling, not a heavy and ponderous one. Do you consider your work in any way specifically female?

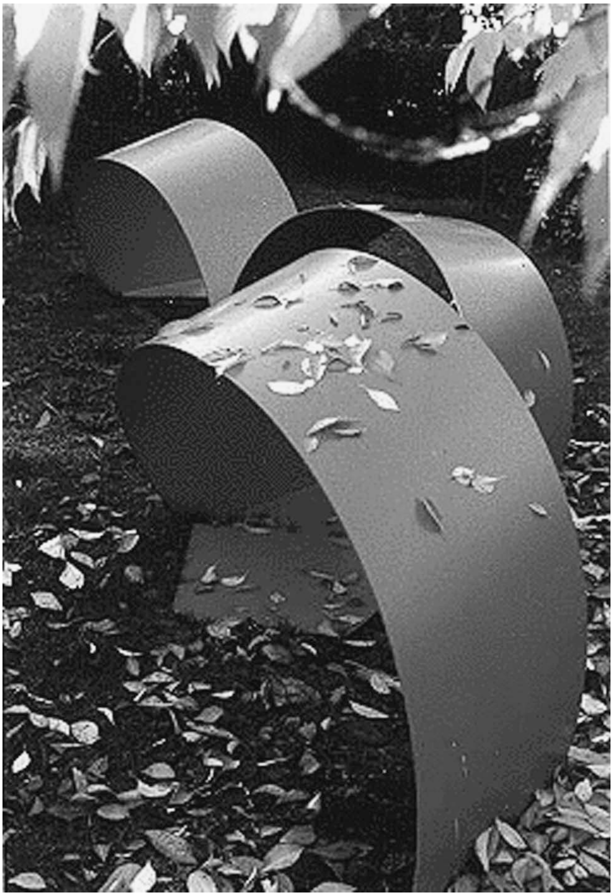


FIGURE 4 "Loop the Loop Red." Also available at <http://www.art.net/~prsg/html/members/casida.html>

KC: [Quickly] No, I don't. Don't forget that I was of a generation in which I had to compete with the boys. Our ideal was just excellence in art. When the feminist movement came along, of course I supported it and was glad to join the women's caucus and all that. But my father had two daughters and made us believe we could do anything in the world, be president of the United States, swim the English Channel, whatever—he never ever gave us the idea that we couldn't do anything and everything in the world. It's funny, because as a child I didn't do well in art. My first experience in art was in third grade when we had to make a basket to exact measurement and put flowers in it and take it home to mother. Well I HATED that. I did a pretty bad job, and I got a D in Art.

MS: That's pretty funny.

KC: And when that happened, my father came to school and he told that teacher that obviously she couldn't recognize an artist when she saw one and that I was very talented! I was SO embarrassed. But at the same time I was proud because here was my father defending me despite the fact that I knew I had done a bad job . . . [Laughs out loud.] So you see my parents were always very supportive of my artistic ambitions. My aunt tells me I drew pictures in the sand and was making houses for imaginary children to play in from a very young age. After the depression, we lived on a farm when I was three to five years old, and there were no children around to play with.

MS: Did you ever think about doing architecture?

KC: Well, if I had had more confidence in math and in being able to make it in the man's world, I think I would have become an architect. But it wasn't a field women excelled in when I went to the University of Wisconsin. Mostly, what we did was fine art. So I started in painting. But it didn't fulfill me—I found print-making more exciting. Though I was very good at figure drawing in college, I'm more attracted by forms in space, by three-dimensionality. I started making woodcuts and then went to an MA program at Columbia in New York. Columbia was too academic for me—they wanted me to go to the Met and copy paintings!—and so I went to the New School for Social Research, where I continued in print-making and woodcarving with Antonio Fresconi. I liked woodcarving because it was three-dimensional. After that I got into hand-made paper for the same reason. My sculpture just takes three-dimensionality to the next level.

MS: And some time along the way, you moved to Berkeley.

KC: Yes. That was because of John. I had met him at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, but we didn't get married right away. He visited me often in New Jersey, where I was teaching art at a college, and even there I told him, look, you can be my lover, but I don't want to get married. He said, but I don't want that—I want a wife. Then I thought—oh God, just like all the other men. He wants a wife to take care of him. And I was busy, in and out of New York, having a good time—but John was very persuasive. And then he said if I wanted a family I would soon be too old.

MS: How old were you?

KC: Twenty four. And the funny thing is that finally I proposed to HIM, after I had taught for a year. I decided to accept his proposal, but I made it very clear what my conditions were: I wanted to continue to grow as an artist; I didn't want to repeat myself and become stagnant and become a housewife who was angry because she could never do what she wanted to do. I said I wanted to have time for my art work, and if I wanted to go somewhere, I didn't want any questions asked. I told him, "I have to have freedom to do what I need, and I want to have children right away so that I'll have that out of the way because I want to do a lot of things." If you don't clearly state at the beginning what you want, a man will set the pattern and you can't change it! You've got to be clear at the very beginning.

MS: And did you have children right away?

KC: Yes, we didn't wait too long. We had two wonderful boys.

MS: Did you continue to work on your art when you had children? Did having children influence your art?

KC: Well, the children took a lot of energy that I would have put into my art otherwise. But otherwise, except when they were sick with the measles, chicken pox, or the flu, whatever, I didn't stop doing my work ever. I worked when I could. You know, John is in his lab from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm every day, so I have every day until 7:00 pm to work. At least I do now.

MS: Tell me—what's this chair here?

KC: The white one with the painted flowers?

MS: Yes, the one with the neon sign on it saying "missing not forgotten."

KC: That's a chair I have left over from an installation commemorating missing persons. It was a commission from the city of Oakland. [She rummages in her folios and shows me some large photographs of the installation]. It was made up of an assembly of a hundred or more chairs piled on top of one another on a platform floating in a pond. I kept this one to remember it by and sold the rest, giving the proceeds to a local Boy Scout group who donated the money to the Kevin Collins Foundation for Missing Children.

MS: Missing children?

KC: Yes. You'd be surprised how many missing children there are in a city like Oakland—and the rest of the world. There are missing teenagers, mothers missing daughters, cousins missing cousins—so many missing . . . I wanted to commemorate all of the disappeared everywhere. I originally got the impetus for such a work from finding out about the disappeared in the Turkish—Greek confrontation in Cyprus in the '70s. It was from there that I got the idea of using empty chairs. Families of missing people in Cyprus keep setting a place for the missing person at the table and leave a chair empty for them at all times—keeping alive the hope that they could come back.

MS: Did you construct the chairs you used yourself?

KC: No. I like getting people involved in my art, and so I had the idea of using real chairs of actual missing people. I asked for chairs from families of missing people, and got them from people from Oakland and many other communities. I rejected the suggestion of painting the chairs because I wanted "used" chairs showing signs of where the missing person had been sitting. I had a platform constructed that could float in a pond of water. It was required that the sculpture be located in a public place where it could easily be seen by a lot of people. I found a spot that was located at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Oakland facing busy Lincoln Avenue, just off Highway 13, and began construction of the float with the help of Father Paris and his congregation, among others. I stacked the chairs up high on the platform, as high as I could without endangering anyone's safety. I would have liked to pile them higher and use more of them, but there was a danger they would blow away in the wind onto the highway or into someone. I tied them together with those plastic handcuffs that the police use. Of course that was symbolic, but it also had a practical consideration: it kept the chairs stable and safe from falling. You know, with public sculpture of any sort, there are a lot of legal and insurance requirements you have to worry about. It isn't so easy to find a place to put up a public sculpture. All sorts of people have to sign off on it—structural engineers to make sure that it doesn't fall or blow over and hurt anyone, lawyers to make sure it doesn't constitute an "attractive nuisance" for kids to climb on and hurt themselves, people to cover the cost of the million dollar liability insurance policies that have to be taken out, earthquake engineers to make sure it meets earthquake safety requirements, etc., etc.

MS: I never realized that it was so involved.

KC: Yes, and in the case of the chair sculpture, we had to make sure not only that the chairs wouldn't blow off, but that kids wouldn't wade into the pond and climb up on the chairs and fall and break a wrist—because anything like that is a million dollar lawsuit. And insurance costs a lot of money. Fortunately, between the Greek Orthodox Cathedral, the city of Oakland, and Senator Petris, we were able to get the money to insure the project, and I could do it. I wanted to do the whole thing in water—because water is life-giving. And you get the reflection of the chairs in water.

MS: How long did all this take?

KC: I was totally involved in the project for about 6 months. It remained up for 3 months, and people from all over the world came to see it—people from as far away as Croatia. One of the chairs was for Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved 100,000 Jews in Hungary during World War II. I love involving people in that way. And I continue to be involved in the project now. I'll always be involved in it. For you know, I'm really a human rights activist.

MS: A human rights activist?

KS: Well, yes. You know, I was attracted to doing public sculpture because it combines my interest in forms and shapes in space with my interest in community—the public, right?—and in political action. That's what the Bouwcentrum did. When I went to Cyprus in 1989 the 70's, I was invited to join one of the first women's protest walks to cross over the so-called green line that divided Greek Cypriots from Turkish Cypriots. We had to run up a hill to cross the line, and we were being followed by Turks in a helicopter—and if we hadn't made it up the hill, we would have been seized by local Turkish settlers. . . . But we made it. At that time I was concerned about all the missing people in Cyprus, both Greeks and Turks and others, including Americans—like my son's friend Andreas Kassapis, whom knew in Wisconsin—who disappeared and were never heard from again. My boy Andreas was taken from his parents at gun point by Turkish Cypriots with his American passport in hand. His family was visiting from Michigan. He was seized in August after the illegal invasion of Cyprus by Turkey in July 1974, and became one of the many never heard from again. More than a third of the people missing at the time were unarmed civilians. The

American government wouldn't do anything about it then or now. Twenty years later I had the opportunity to confront the American ambassador to Cyprus, and it was obvious to me that it was common knowledge that Andreas had been killed by the Turks—and that our government just didn't want to do anything about it. Even now. See this?—she pointed to a paperweight enclosing a red cloth flower—I found this flower while running up that hill in Cyprus. It's a velvet rose from a dress. I had it made into this paperweight by the Nature Company and call it "The Rose of Cyprus." I look at it and I remember Andreas. He was only 17 . . . [She stops and silently muses for a while, then continues] . . . Well, I wanted to commemorate people like Andreas and all the others who are missing. There are so many missing . . . ! In Argentina, Peru, Viet Nam, Bosnia, Kosovar, Dafur, Rwanda, Israel, Palestine, and now Iraq and Afghanistan. . . . Last year I wrote an article about it.

MS: Did you go to Cyprus originally because of your interest in the missing people?

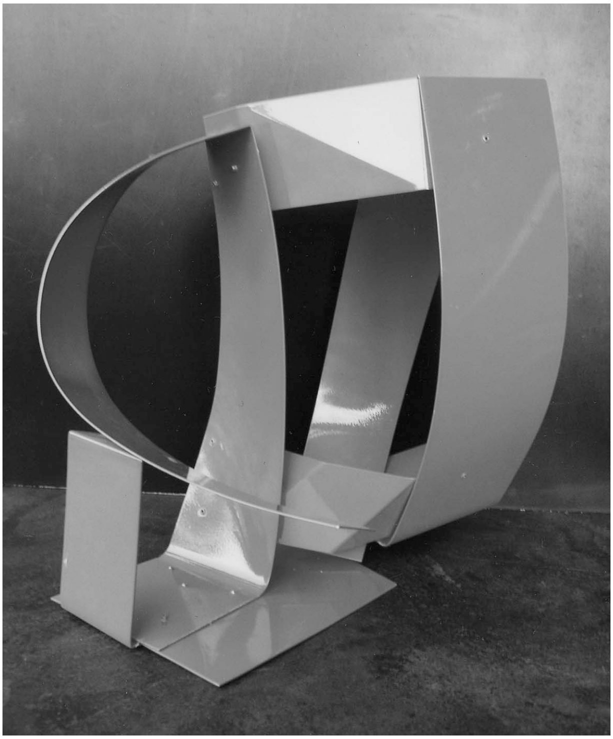


FIGURE 5 "Jazz Rythms".

KC: Yes, and also because of my love for Greek folk-dancing. I've been doing it now for 40 years.

MS: Greek folk dancing? What got you into that?

KC: Well, I fell in love with the Bouzouki in the '60s. When I first heard it played at the Minerva café in San Francisco, I tell you, the hair on my arms just stood up straight! I felt I was hearing the sound of the ancient world. Later I took some lessons from a dancer of the Dora Strata Greek dancing company that was teaching at Berkeley at that time, and I've been doing Greek dancing ever since. Every Wednesday morning, I go to a class at the Montclair Community Center—and I've been going there since 1972. I got John involved in Greek dancing, too. As you know, we had our 50th wedding anniversary on the island of Hydra in Greece in September.

MS: You've been married fifty years?

KC: Yes. Fifty years. Each wedding anniversary we have a gripe session.

MS: That's the only time?

KC: Well, it's sort of a turning point, an anniversary, isn't it? We keep things open. But every year we find we have less and less to complain about.

MS: Perhaps it's all that Greek dancing!

KC: It doesn't hurt. And you know, dance in general, and most especially Greek dance, is one of the major influences on my work. Dance is the fluid movement of forms through space—dance is a form of energy. And I want to express energy and motion in my work. My interest in dance and rhythm dates back a long time. As a student at the University of Wisconsin I took a class with Margaret H'Doubler, the amazing professor who ultimately made modern dance an academic major in many American institutions. She taught me how to leap, run, and plunge across the gym floor—that was when I realized what it meant to "cut through space." And that's what I try to do in my sculptures—cut through space. And capture the energy of that. And there is something about the rhythms of Greek dancing that particularly intrigues me.

MS: I wasn't aware that there is so much Greek influence in your work and that you're so influenced by dance. You've talked about the Scandinavian influence in your work and seem to identify as a Norwegian American, and have founded organizations like Nordic 5 Art for artists of Scandinavian origin. I thought the themes of water and waves and islands in your work were taken from your Scandinavian heritage.

KC: Well, seascapes, the changing seasons, the wind, the waves, rushing waterfalls, and islands—that's Greece as well as Norway, isn't it? Certainly, Norway, the land of my great-grandparents, is reflected in my work. But so is Greece. Actually, I get entranced by forms and shapes in all of nature. I might be turned on by a leaf, for example. One of my sculptures has to do with a blossom I saw literally popping out at me in the desert near Beersheba, Israel. We were walking at night with a group of John's scientific colleagues towards our hotel, when this flower suddenly burst open in front of me. I wanted to make a sculpture of this flower, and I made it with an outer shell of metal with neon tubes on the inside to represent the flower, because the flower only blooms at night. [She raises a window

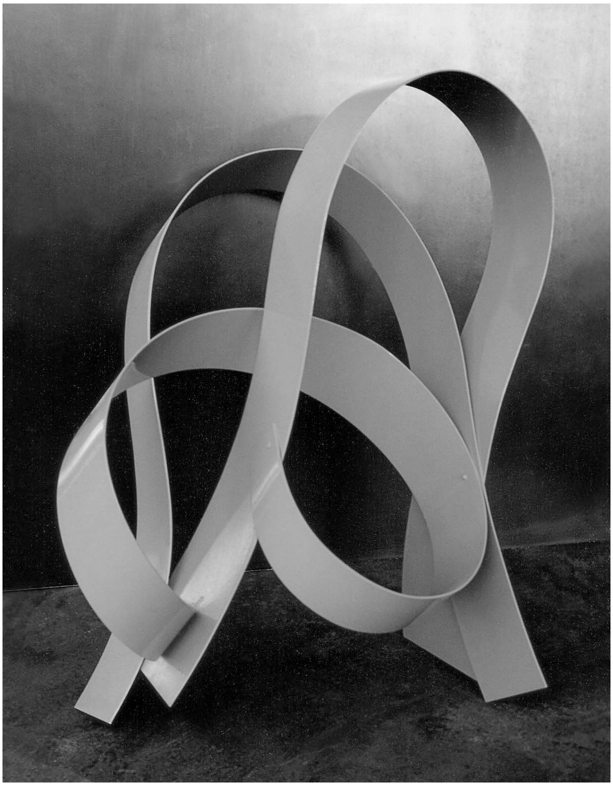


FIGURE 6 “Wind Wave.”

shade and shows me a sculpture on the other side of it, glowing with white and blue neon.] I still don’t know the mane of the flower. Design—shape and form—is what’s important to me. That’s why I organized the show of Scandinavian Design this year—we exhibited not only fine art, but designs of everyday functional survival objects such as tents, baby strollers, temporary houses, even a CPR machine. By the way, would you like some tea or coffee? Or maybe a glass of wine? We can go into the kitchen here and I can show you some of my other works and the sculptures outside on my patio.

MS: Sure. I’ll have some tea. Thanks.

We move into her kitchen through a door that leads directly from her studio. It’s a spacious, pure, and serene black and white space—white cabinets with black granite countertops—punctuated

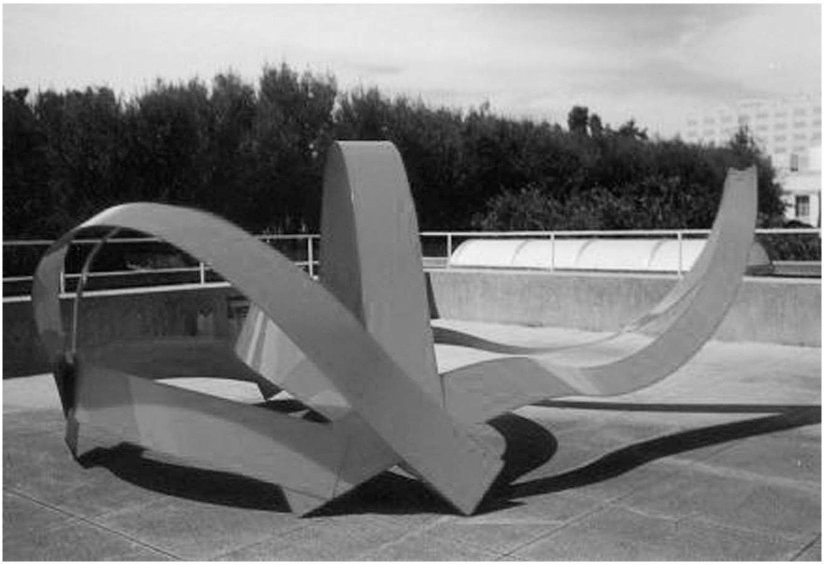


FIGURE 7 "Kata-Kyoto." Available at <http://members.aol.com/kcasida/Pages/Sculpture.html> and <http://www.sculpture.org/portfolio/sculpture_info.php?sculpture_id=1000798>

by a large, colored neon sculpture that winds its way across and around a large window over the kitchen sink. We sit at a little round table near a wall on which a bouzouki hangs and have some tea.

MS: Did you do this neon sculpture over the sink?

KC: Yes. And look [she turns on a switch]—it glows purple when it's cool, like right now, because I just turned it on, and then blue when it's hot. You'll see in a minute. It's called "Sliding Jazz."

MS: Ah, Jazz again. The sculpture is like a vine snaking across the window and down the frame. Adds quite a punch.

KC: I thought the kitchen needed a little enlivening.

MS: Yes, it's so unexpected in this rather classically pure space.

Before I leave, Kati takes me for a walk around the rest of her house. She takes me through her living and dining and family rooms, all of which line up in a row flanked on the left by a glass wall overlooking San Francisco Bay. Striking pre-Columbian artworks collected by her husband John stand in niches against the interior walls. Table-top size sculptures dot the rooms, and on

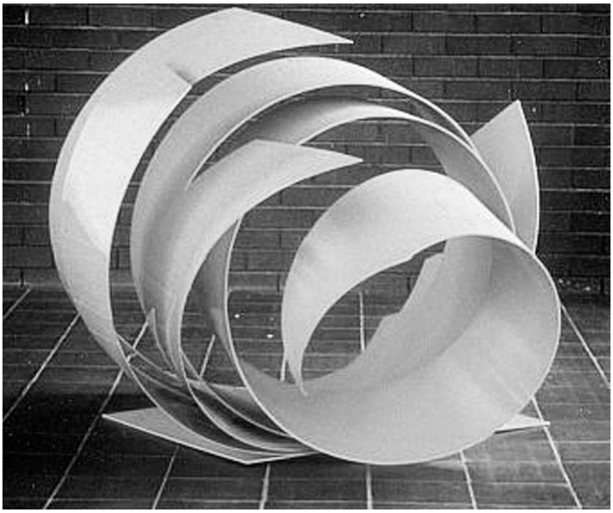


FIGURE 8 "Pin Curl." Available at <http://members.aol.com/kcasida/Pages/Sculpture.html>

her walls hang some of her prints and her hand-made paper works, which look like sculptures themselves. She shows me "Night Kata," one of the works in her "Velvet Night" series featuring Scandinavian themes that she did in Norway. "Night Kata" is a textured jet-black velour paper collage on a white background framed in a box. Yarn, threads, fabric, sticks, and pebbles emphasize the triangular black shape suggestive of a tent. Another one in the series, "New Snow—Ekely," is all different shades of white with a triangular soft red and yellow center. Outside the glass walls of the living room I can clearly see an assemblage of her signature large pubic sculptures. There is an enormous bright red one—called "Kata–Kyoto"—that has a feeling of a roomy and airy enclosed sled about to glide into the air, and a smaller one in bright yellow that looks, well, like an series of springy curls, appropriately called "Pin Curl" and two bright orange ones in more rectangular shapes.

Formerly on display at the Oakland Museum, they now add a vivid color punch to the natural beige stones of her patio and the greenery of the adjacent garden. I am tempted to touch the red bands of "Kata" to see what it's made of. It seems to be hard metal, but, it's amazingly light and it moves. "Pin Curl" has sassy yellow springy circles and is full of energy. I realize that Kati Casida, too, is full of energy—a buoyant energy, fluid and flowing, like that of a dancer.

After finishing my cup of tea back in her kitchen and looking at some more examples of her work, I thank her for the interview, and leave. As I'm lucky enough to own one of her table-top pieces, "White Wave" (1987), aluminum on a black granite base, I don't have to leave all this behind. I can enjoy her work at any time: "White Wave" is set on a pedestal in my kitchen patio. Every time I look at it, I feel buoyed by its flowing graceful forms, its waving white arms, its positive energy. It makes me feel good.