

UCSD Present Polish Sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz's "Recent Work" to be shown from Jan 15 to Feb 27

December 22, 1993

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UCSD PRESENTS POLISH SCULPTOR MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ ' S "RECENT WORK"

Imagine a city avenue lined with 60 trees--huge trees--250feet high, 60 feet in diameter, and covered with mossy vegetation. Then, imagine people walking in and out of those trees, taking elevators up to their "arboreal" apartments or offices.

This conceptual architectural idea, titled "Vertical Green," was conceived by eastern European artist Magdalena Abakanowicz, as a proposal for a suburban expansion project in the La Defense area of Paris.

Drawings of "Vertical Green" will be among other works shown in an exhibition titled "Magdalena Abakanowicz: Recent Work," to be shown from Jan. 15 to Feb. 27, in the Mandeville Gallery at the University of California, San Diego.

Abakanowicz will lecture at 2 p.m., Jan. 15, on "Arboreal Architecture," at the Mandeville Recital Hall. The lecture, which is free and open to the public, will include slides and films of the "Vertical Green" project.

A reception for the artist will be held from 3-5 p.m. Jan. 15, at the Gallery. The public is invited to attend. Admission is free.

The exhibition also will feature several of Abakanowicz's large, sculptural "human" figures--often headless and limbless-- made of natural fibers such as sisal and burlap.

Abakanowicz was born in Poland in 1930, to an aristocratic family. During the first nine years of her life, she lived on an expansive country estate outside of Warsaw, where her interests turned to nature. When the Germans invaded Poland in 1939, Abakanowicz's existence was changed. Her family was forced to leave the estate and move to Warsaw, where they lived in poverty. She managed, however, to attend art school in Warsaw.

The experience of living in Warsaw during World War II left its mark on Abakanowicz. Much of her work acknowledges human suffering.

Her first artistic works came out of the medium of weaving, and eventually gave way to the making of huge sculptures made of natural fibers. These works, called "Abakans," laid the artistic foundation for much of her current sculptural works.

In recent years, Abakanowicz has done outdoor sculpture for a number of sites, including "Katarsis," in Tuscany, Italy. The work consists of 33 upright forms aligned within a cage of stone and barbed wire fences. The forms are eight-foot-tall bronze "figures of man-trees." Abakanowicz has incorporated the shapes or suggestions of vegetation in many of her works.

Some of the sculptures on view at the Mandeville Gallery will be "Caryatid II" (1992), of burlap, resin and wood; "Furgon" (1992), of burlap, resin and iron; "Figure on a Beam with Wheels" (1992), of burlap, resin and wood, and "Piccola" (1993), of bronze.

For more information, call the Mandeville Gallery at 5342864. Parking permits are required on the UCSD campus.

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