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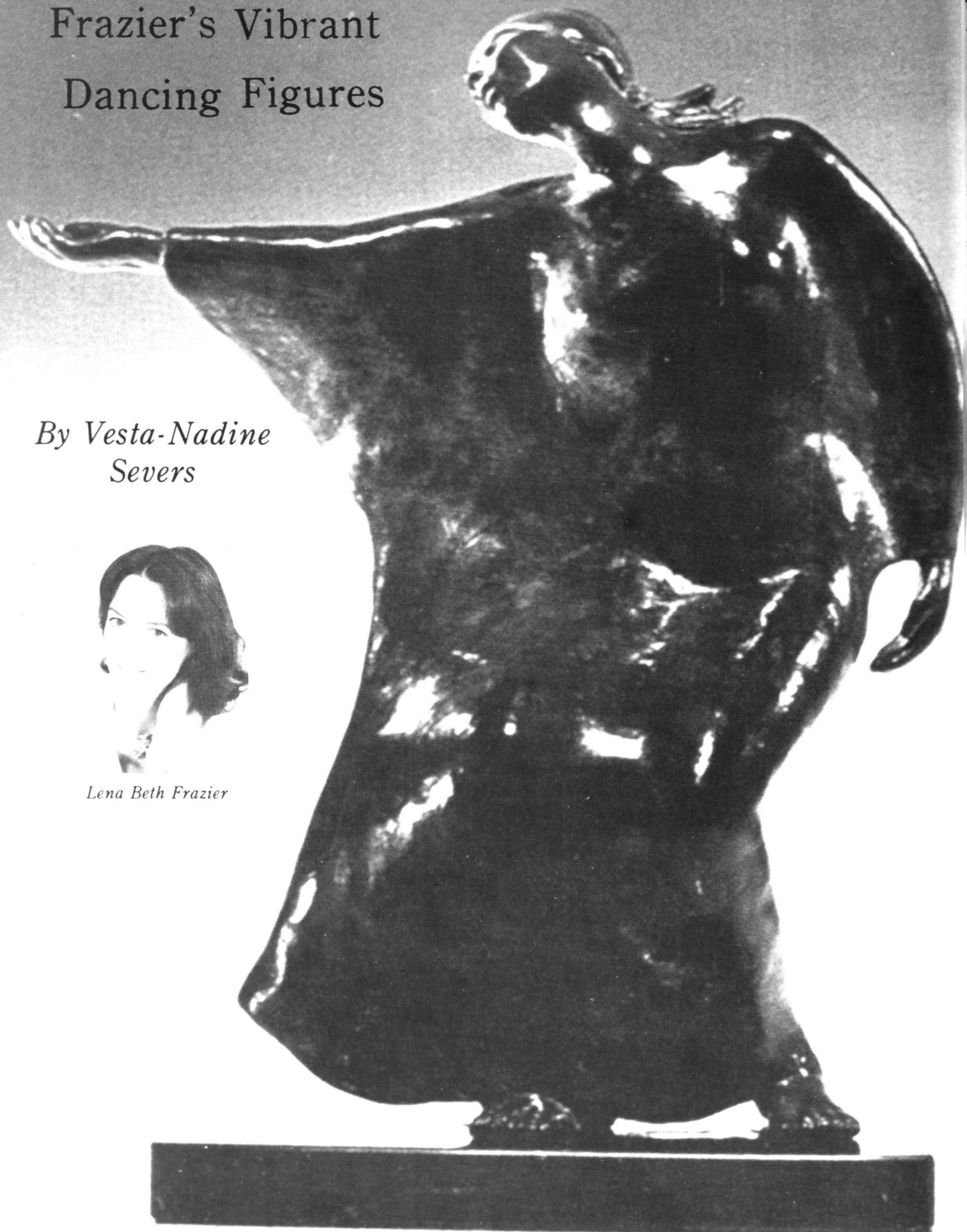


Frazier's Vibrant Dancing Figures

*By Vesta-Nadine
Severs*



Lena Beth Frazier



"Invitation", bronze, 12" high.

From the time of the earliest cave etchings, artists and art connoisseurs have been fascinated with the dancing human figure. Its vibrant movements epitomize the depths of human joy, sadness, spiritual strivings, and struggles with life. Repeatedly, artists turn to this motif, endeavoring to bring the living beauty of the dancing figure to their art mediums.

So it is not surprising to find Lena Beth Frazier, Norman sculptress, creating her own "Dance Series" in a purely contemporary art form. With barely any perceptible robe movement to accentuate the human form's lively expressions, Ms. Frazier uses simple flowing tunics on each figure. These bronzes have a turquoise patina.

Of the six dancing figures (MAN CAN FLY, CREATING SPACE I and II, INVITATION, COURAGE, and INSPIRATION), only one is of a male form—MAN CAN FLY. The young man—with elongated, aquiline face—appears to be taking a deep breath in expectancy of levitation. His Spartan ankle-length air-spun tunic is the only space suit required.

Ms. Frazier said, "When Elizabeth, my young daughter, saw MAN CAN FLY, she asked, 'Can woman fly too?' From that question I fashioned CREATING SPACE I."

Signifying woman's awakening consciousness of all encircling and restricting conditions, half-kneeling CREATING SPACE I is pushing aside every obstruction to create a breathing space. Victoriously, once she is upright in CREATING SPACE II, woman still holds restrictions in abeyance.

The suggestive stance of slightly bent legs and outstretched arm of the female form in INVITATION beckons the viewer provocatively.

"As my other figures express 'lift-off' and pushing aside all barriers which imprison self-expression, so INVITATION is the composite of 'Come to me; let's share communication in all its multi-forms,'" Frazier explained.

"I purposely molded the Spartan-type robes for these dance

figures with little movement in order not to detract from the body's expression. However, I may, in a future figure, have more folds in the robe. It all depends on what I'm endeavoring to express at the time."

Seeking to go beyond the physical form to communicate a depth of essential emotion from motion. . .

Ms. Frazier received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from OU, where she studied under a Lew Wentz Art Scholarship and finished two years of graduate study under the direction of Professor Joseph Taylor. Frazier stated, "I've known since the fourth grade that I wanted to be an artist. It was while studying at OU that the sculpting clicked for me and became my favorite avenue of artistic expression." Then for ten years she taught in the Artist-in-Residence program and in secondary

schools. Mrs. Frazier was one of the original seven sculptors who founded the Oklahoma Sculpture Society. She was elected the group's first president.

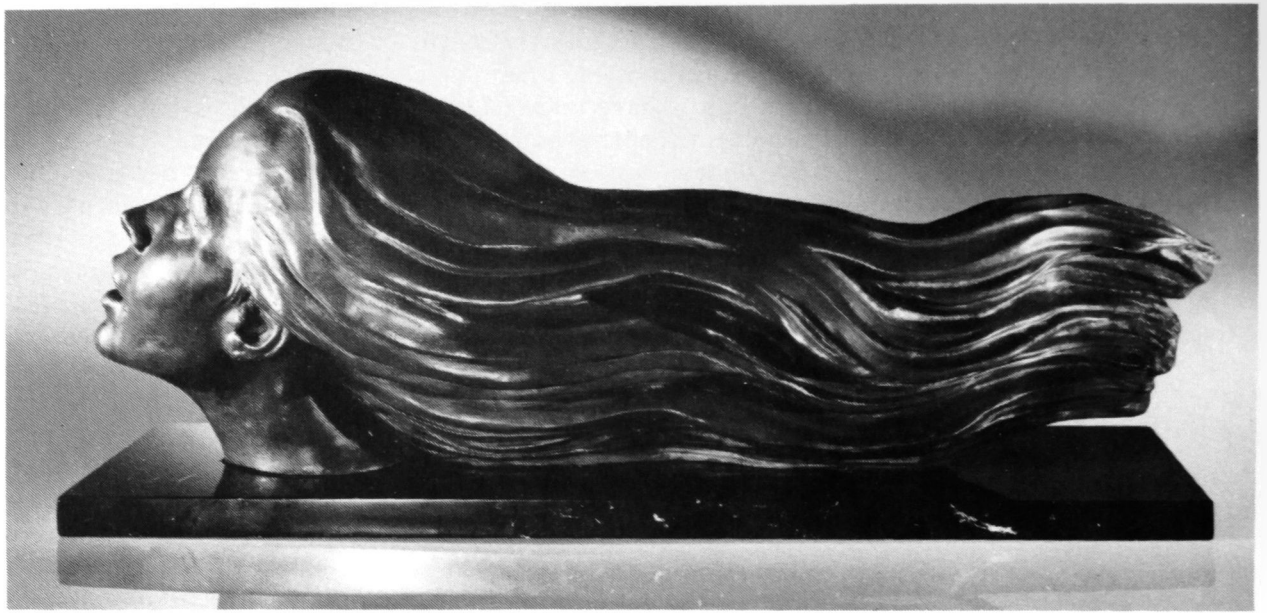
Seeking to go beyond the physical form to communicate a depth of essential emotion from motion, Ms. Frazier's rendition of the human form is sculpturally sound.

"My goal is to achieve full self-expression. I want to express self totally and in every possible way. Why should I die with my potential intact? Naturally, because I am female, my work is inherently expressed through the female form," said Frazier.

"I've been commissioned to do hundreds of busts, both of private and public figures. Among these have been my children's heads in clay and bronze. Recently I was flown to Carmel, California and also to Texas in order to fill commissions. I find it's very easy for me to achieve a likeness of people—mainly, I think, because I've studied anatomy very thoroughly," Frazier indicated. "I build from the



"Inspiration", bronze, 12" high.



"Blowing in the Wind", bronze.

Photographs courtesy of Vesta-Nadine Severs

inside starting at the spinal column, filling in bones and muscles, until there's nothing more I can do to improve the piece from any angle. There's always the crucial point where the subject, tired and maybe a little bored with the sittings, feels there's nothing more to be done. Yet I must be the one who says it is or isn't completed. I know the work has reached the completion stage when it is the absolute best I can make it."

A viewer is immediately attracted by the aliveness and naturalness of these busts. No doubt one of the contributing factors is Ms. Frazier's method of doing the eyes. The eyeball is done in the usual manner; then the pupil is flattened, the lens made concave, and the iris incised with radiating lines. This rendition creates light and shadow in the eye. The overall effect is similar to the way a portrait artist would execute an eye in raw umber.

The viewer can almost feel the cool breeze and stinging spring rain gently pelting the woman's face and flowing hair in BLOWING IN THE WIND. The woman, with closed eyes, has her head slightly uplifted into the raw elements. There's a quiet contemplation to the piece, which is bronzed with a turquoise patina.

"I dreamed BLOWING IN THE

WIND prior to my opening at the Goddard Art Center in Ardmore. In the dream I was viewing all the pieces that I intended to have in the show. I came across this one piece of which I had no conscious knowledge. The dream remained so vivid after I awoke that I had to endeavor to sculpt it. It was ready in time for the show," Mrs. Frazier said.

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Frazier's work has received much recognition, including the 1977 Governor's Art Award, the Business in the Arts Award for 1983, and the Sylvan N. Goldman Sculpture Award in 1984. She has had one-woman shows in the following museums and galleries: Governor's Gallery (State Capitol), Firehouse Art Center (Norman), Mabee-Gerrer Museum (Shawnee), Goddard Art Center (Ardmore), Oklahoma Art Center, Downtown Extension (Oklahoma City), and Stiha Gallery (Santa Fe).

Her works have also been in group exhibitions, including the Oklahoma Museum of Art, Oklahoma Sculpture Society, Living Women-Living Art Exhibit, National Governors' Conference Art Exhibit International, and the Pen and Brush National sculpture Juried Exhibit in New York. Her works are also in both private and public collections.

"In our fast-paced society, everyone becomes emotionally exhausted at times and needs to refuel. We all need a time and place of seclusion," stated Ms. Frazier as she stood beside her bronze SECLUSION.

SECLUSION is a nude female bent with knees drawn up and her forehead resting on her left forearm and her right arm extended slightly forward. In this supplicating philosophical attitude, SECLUSION's long hair spreads outward over her upper arms.

After viewing her work, a person can't help but hope that Lena Beth Frazier continues to achieve her goal of "full self-expression" through the Dance Series and all other forms of our human experiences.

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