

“Fluidity of Gender” art exhibit



ALEX GORE Staff Writer

The latest series of sculptures by New York artist Linda Stein are currently on campus in the Neil Britton Art Gallery.

This installation, called “The Fluidity of Gender”, features sculptures of female torsos crafted from unorthodox materials such as leather, metal and paper.

Stein carefully chose her materials for the connotations they would invoke in the audience. “Black leather has this great seductive quality.” Stein explains. “But it also suggests power and control. So you have these very feminine shapes and curves, but very masculine elements, too.”

With this exhibition, Stein explores gender in the modern world and how it is changing.

“I’ve always been interested in masculinity and femininity,” says Stein. “We’re seeing things change from the conservative view that a man is a man and a woman is a woman; that men shouldn’t cry and women shouldn’t be athletic.”

Stein remembers when gender roles were more clear-cut:

“I remember back in the ‘70s when Ed Muskie cried during the Democratic primaries. It ended up costing him the election.... And now John Boehner is speaker of the house. He cries openly,

and no one would even think to call him unmanly or a sissy or whatever.”

Stein’s art wasn’t always focused on gender issues.

“I had been doing abstract art up until 9/11,” she said. “Up until then, it had all been completely abstract.”

During the attacks of Sept. 11th, Stein’s studio in New York City was evacuated by the police. Stein was running through the streets of New York as the Twin Towers collapsed.

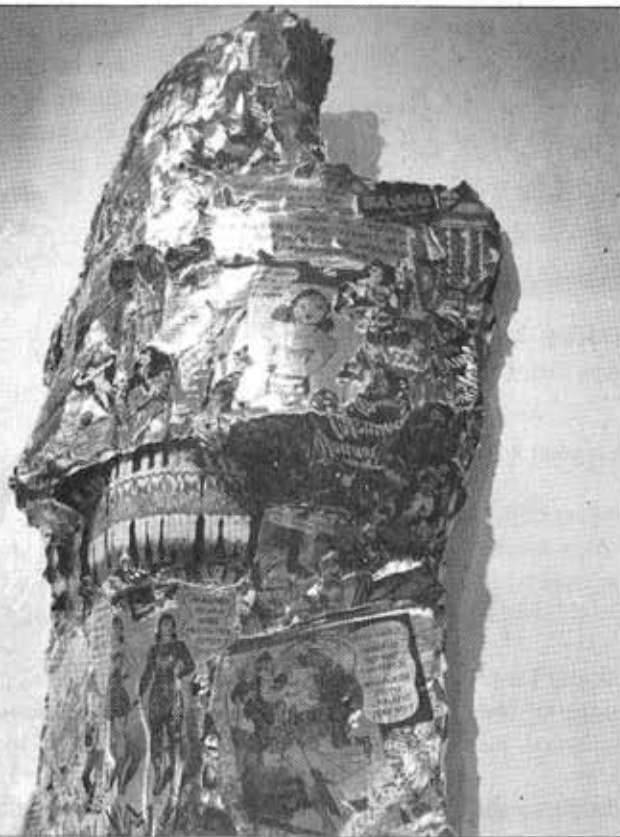
“That day had a very profound impact on me.” she said. “Some of it I wouldn’t realize until much later.”

Soon after the attacks, Stein’s art became more representational and started to take its current form. This new style has garnered her much attention in recent years.

“There’s been a fantastic response,” says Stein, “These topics seem to be very much in the minds of college students. Young people seem much more accepting of different races and sexualities now.”

Stein encourages students to fill out “Gender Response Cards,” which she has left in the exhibit. They ask questions pertaining to how we perceive masculinity, femininity, and ourselves.

“The Fluidity of Gender” will be on display until Feb. 16.



Ed Phillips/Marlin Chronicle

Linda Steins sculptures provide interesting insight on the modern view of femininity.