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tri CityNews

MONMOUTH'S NEWS & ARTS WEEKLY

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Breaking the mold in Long Branch

"Sculptoure" takes over the city this Saturday, May 5

by STEVEN FROIAS

LONG BRANCH - Doug Ferrari is the artistic embodiment of Teddy Roosevelt's maxim "Speak softly and carry a big stick."

The quiet, even-tempered Ferrari has almost single-handedly raised the aesthetic climate of Long Branch through his exciting stewardship of that city's Shore Institute of Contemporary Art (SICA) located at 20 Third Avenue here.

It's one of the triCity's region most important venues for the arts, if not the most important. Whether by exhibition or by performance or by simply providing the space and encouragement artistic types need to ply their trade, SICA is an invaluable part of the landscape.

And now, that landscape will encompass the whole city of Long Branch as Doug and company let out an artistic roar beginning this weekend that will echo throughout most of the year and beyond - paying dividends that we can't even imagine now but will certainly bear fruit in the years ahead.

Because with "Sculptoure" the triCity area no longer can be compared with arts districts elsewhere. Rather, this unique "celebration of all things chiseled, shaped and formed" is both creatively progressive yet quintessentially Jersey Shore. By placing art into a redeveloping urban context and marrying it with the area's greatest natural resource - the shore itself, as well as the cultural dynamic that makes Jersey what it is, "Sculptoure" promises to be a breakthrough event in the triCities' climb to regional cultural relevance. In other words, other places will be looking to Long Branch, and by extension Asbury, Red Bank et al for inspiration after this one.

"Sculptoure" begins on Saturday, May 5. It is an urban sculpture park comprised of over 25 major artworks on sites throughout downtown Long Branch, Pier Village and along the ocean.

Ferrari dreamed up this concept and has worked throughout the winter making it a reality. With his usual quiet determination, Doug has pulled off, not unlike the creation of SICA itself, an event and exhibit that at once comes flying in under

the radar yet soars high above it.

Imagine corraling the powers that be in taste-challenged Long Branch (see the architectural abortions on the boardwalk here), dozens of artistic temperaments and even a passel of drag queens (!) together for one moment - and then think how much easier it would be to herd cats for a living. Yet somehow, that's exactly what Doug and his compatriots at SICA have accomplished with "Sculptoure."

The sculpture will be up though the summer and into the fall, but you'll want to be in Long Branch on Saturday from...

10 a.m. - noon - Reception for High Relief - SICA's first statewide High School Sculpture Competition. The reception will be held at The Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts. Come out and congratulate these young artists before heading to Pier Village for the rest of the days activities.

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. - Sand sculpture competition (Registration begins at 10:00 am at Pier Village). The categories include: - Family (3 or more persons); Brothers and Sisters (2 or more); Couples (2 persons); Youth Groups (3-5 persons); High School Groups (3-5 persons); College Groups (3-5 persons); and Individuals (16 and older). To register in advance, call 732-263-1121 or visit www.sica.org.

Noon - 2 p.m. - The Car Music Project will be performing at Pier Village. Composer/guitarist Bill Milbrodt leads this ensemble of musicians performing on instruments built almost entirely from the parts of his old automobile by metal sculptor Ray Faunce III. Performers include renowned jazz bassist Wilbo Wright on Tank Bass (made from the gas tank), new music percussionist William Trigg and brass player James Spotto on Exhaustophone and other instruments. Each of these members has a long history of performances and recordings in his own right: Trigg is leader of The College of New Jersey's percussion ensemble and has performed with John Cage,

Philip Glass and the New York Philharmonic; Wright is a member of the instrumental avant garde band UI, and has played with Yo La Tengo, Chris Harford and Marc Ribot; and Spotto is known from his own quintet, "Proper James."

2 p.m. - 3 p.m. - Body sculpting demonstrations. Amazing bodies become amazing art.

3 p.m. - 4 p.m. Human kinetic sculpture dance performance. Watch creative and beautiful movement as the day.

4 p.m. - 6 p.m. - The Shore's own Wigstock. As part of the activities, there will be a hair sculpture competition, lending a hirsute interpretation to sculpture. Cee Mour Cox, a regular performer at Asbury's Georgies Drag Mondays has rounded up a bunch of dubious damsels to lead the Aqua Net charge.

6 p.m. - 8 p.m. End the day with a cocktail party wrap. The Art of Hospitality is sponsored by Ocean Place Resort & Spa and brings "Sculptoure" to a close - event-wise. The suggested donation to attend is \$30.

There you have it - SICA's first ever city-wide art event. Long Branch will never be the same again. Hallelujah!

