



Krista Bard's 'Sacred Words' exhibit to go on view at Wally Findlay Galleries



By JAN SJOSTROM
Daily News Arts Editor

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If Krista Bard and her fiancé hadn't broken up, she might not be having a show at Wally Findlay Galleries today.

When their relationship splintered in fall 2008, Bard began making artworks on which she wrote mystical phrases over and over again to calm and uplift herself.

"I started them as a meditation for myself," she said. "They were very private."

Bard, 56, knows well the dangers of falling into a depression. Her mother, Hope, suffered from chronic depression all her life.

Her sister, Palm Beacher Audrey Gruss, founded the Hope for Depression Research Foundation to finance research into the origins, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of depression and related mood and emotional disorders after their mother's death.

A portion of exhibition sales benefits the foundation. One of the works in the show, titled Hope Springs Eternal, was commissioned by the foundation in honor of Bard's and Gruss' mother.

It's natural that Bard would have turned to art as a recourse in a time of crisis. Although she makes her living as a business consultant in Philadelphia, she studied studio art at Tufts University in Medford, Mass., and the Boston Museum School.

After a curator friend praised Bard's meditative works, Gruss brought them to the attention of James Borynack, chairman and chief executive officer of Wally Findlay.

"She was shy about it," Gruss said. But she shouldn't have been. According to Gruss, three galleries were interested in showing the series.

The artist uses a multistep process to produce the series, which she calls "Sacred Words." First, she cures the paper using essential oils such as frankincense, myrrh and spikenard or holy water. Then she writes the phrases in simple shapes such as circles or rectangles. She generally ends by dabbing the text with colored oil pastels.

She culls the texts from prayers, Biblical texts and other mystical or spiritually uplifting writings worldwide. The first one she created filled the page with the word "Alleluia."

Other works, which she calls her "secular" pieces, repeat affirmative phrases such as "Joshua loves Shoshanna" and "Shoshanna loves Joshua" — the text of a piece created for a couple.

If you go

What: 'Sacred Words' by Krista Bard

Where: Wally Findlay Galleries, 165 Worth Ave.

When: Feb. 19 to March 19

For more information: 655-2090



Jeffrey Langlois

[\(enlarge photo\)](#)

Artist Krista Bard's 'The Sacred Words' series to open at Wally Findlay Galleries on Worth Avenue. Here, Bard is pictured with her artwork, 'Jay Loves Amanda.'

The combination of elements impressed Borynack. "It's very moving in a spiritual sense," he said. "They're so serene. It's amazing how she gets the senses to respond because of how she infuses the paper with all these fragrances."

Currently, the works are framed with protective Lucite, but the gallery is considering framing alternatives that would allow the odors to escape.

Bard has been interested in alternative therapies and mysticism for a long time.

The "Sacred Words" series combines ideas she derived from the work of Masaru Emoto and Dr. David Hawkins. Emoto theorizes that the shapes of freezing water droplets can be influenced by the thoughts directed at them. Hawkins proposes that consciousness can be mapped and calibrated, and that these schema can help improve health and well being.

"The hope is that in creating these I can raise people's level of consciousness," Bard said.

She's not particular about how viewers perceive their responses. "I'm delighted if it gives them pleasure and if for some inexplicable reason it makes them feel good — great," she said.

Talk of the Town

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