

The original documents are located in Box 29, folder “Benton, Suzanne” of the Betty Ford White House Papers, 1973-1977 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FIRST LADY GIVEN SUSAN B. ANTHONY
COMMEMORATIVE COLLECTION BY SCULPTOR SUZANNE BENTON -
PATRICIA LINDH, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT FORD FOR WOMEN'S
AFFAIRS, IS SHOWN ACCEPTING THE COLLECTION FOR MRS. FORD FROM
MS. BENTON.

Betty Ford chose Susan B. Anthony as the most meaningful
American in our history because she was the key figure in the abolitionist
as well as the women's suffragist movement. "Susan B. Anthony was a
person with deep convictions, a strong conscience and the moral courage
to pursue these convictions actively."

Susan B. Anthony's work paved the way for the adoption of
the 19th amendment to our constitution bringing forth the world-wide
recognition of human rights as expressed in the charter of the United
Nations.

Suzanne Benton sculpted the famous statue of Susan B.
Anthony that was the focal point at the inception of the NOW Susan B.
Anthony Hall of Fame. She also is a strong advocate of the words and
actions of Susan B. Anthony. Therefore, in line with the bicentennial
celebration, she designed the pewter keepsake collection given the
First Lady in the form of a plaque, paperweight, letter opener, tape
measure, pendant and key chain.

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The sculptor, Suzanne Benton, has been projected into
national prominence through her Metal Mask Ritual performances of
Women of Myth and Heritage. A grant recipient, her sculpture is
widely collected and exhibited. She is the author of the forthcoming
book, "The Art of Welded Sculpture" (Van Nostrand Reinhold, Pub-
lishers). She is the founder of the Museum of ArtWomen. One of
her major exhibitions in 1975 was at the Wadsworth Atheneum in
Hartford, Conn., where the statue of Ms. Anthony was exhibited.
Her latest monumental work will be on exhibition at the Lyman Allyn
Museum in New London, Conn. this November through December.



Artpark

SUZANNE BENTON

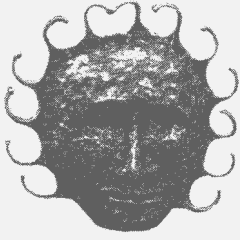
June 22-July 19)

Suzanne Benton is a metal sculptor from Ridgefield, Connecticut. She plans to affix a bronze relief to one of the prominent rock formations near the river on the "tail" of the park, extending toward the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge. With extensive welding and hammering of the bronze, the piece Sunqueen, will relate to the rocky landscape and be seen from the distance from most areas of the park.

Ms. Benton's works have been exhibited frequently in New York and Connecticut, and she participated in a USIA exhibition which toured Eastern Europe. Her diversified activities include set designs, theater production and direction, numerous articles, and a book, The Art of Welded Sculpture (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1975).

In addition to the one major work, Sunqueen, Ms. Benton will also compose a free-standing ritual form: "The Throne of the Sunqueen," to be placed in the grassy area relating to the principal work.





SUZANNE BENTON

CRITICAL ACCLAIM

"I have been most impressed with her work and I feel her Metal, Mask & Ritual Sculpture for theatre presentations constitute an important area of concern that should be encouraged." George E. White, Pres., Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater Center, Inc.

"...Her sculptures express the nature of metal, which she insists is not rigid - it can bend and flow from one shape into another. Her 'beads', where the metal planes join, are irregular and sinuous. She succeeds in making plane geometry expressionistic. She never forgets that people like to participate personally in art. Her sculptures, some of which are over six feet tall, include a serpentine horn that one can talk through in order to decrease the distance between people." Gordon Brown, Arts Magazine.

"...Suzanne Benton's works at the Wadsworth Atheneum Lion's Gallery of the Senses are dramatic pieces (with) strong connotations... This is a sophisticated exhibit, which marks a new dimension for both sighted and non-sighted repeat visitors to this very special gallery." Jolene Goldenthal, Art/Life's Largeness Experienced, Hartford Courant.

"There are very few artists of whom one can say that an encounter with her work is akin to that of a religious experience. I believe one can say that of Suzanne Benton. I rate her performance and my participation in the Lifestory workshop as one of the most significant experiences of my life... it affected me so deeply and on so many levels that I believe I have grown more vitally alive as a result. Suzanne's power... stems from her ability to wed the personal, historical, conditioned experience of life with the universal to find in history, myth and symbol the well-springs of the human psyche... People experience her stories on an intensely personal level... They have particular meaning for women, but I have seen men moved to tears and have watched as they have come to a deeper understanding of the reasons for the alienation between the sexes as a result of her work. Suzanne's work (belongs) where people live, work or go to church. The participatory nature of her art carries tremendous potential for healing and energizing." Sheila D. Collins, Associate for Publications, JSAC: Author, A Different Heaven & Earth.

"A please-touch rather than please-don't-touch sculptor, she strives to involve viewers as participants in the visual arts, to communicate with each other through her work." New York Times Feature Article.

"Ms. Benton's innovative exhibit will spark eager audiences in this gallery. She has great energy and seeks to broaden the horizons of artistic awareness for the public. Ms. Benton's concern for the exposure of art forms to the handicapped further demonstrates her sensitivity as she presents her work for new dimensions of discovery to those who would ordinarily be denied the museum art experience." Bette Leicach, Curator, Lion's Gallery of the Senses, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn.



"...Through her individual presentations, workshops and exhibitions, Suzanne Benton has touched many people...She has expanded the role of metal sculpture far beyond the traditional. Her work is an important contribution towards the general quality of artistic achievement." Ray Pierotti, Asst. to the Pres. American Crafts Council.

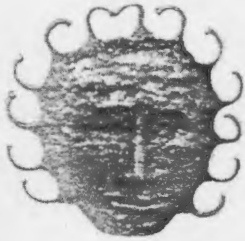
2 Year consecutive grant support; Conn. Commission on the Arts: For the continued development of the artist's metal mask and ritual sculptures used in the theatrical presentation, "Tales of Women of Myth & Heritage."

"The commission is supportive of your work; it recognizes and applauds the growth you have demonstrated." Anthony S. Keller, Executive Director, Conn. Comm. of the Arts.

"...Her metal sculpture and stories are dramatic artistic experiences in themselves... I value them...because they are so evocative of memories and feelings within us and, therefore, so revealing to us of ourselves...and our common humanity...very healing! I find her work unique and extraordinary in its 'involving' and communicative power." Joan Bates Forsberg, Yale University, The Divinity School.

Suzanne Benton has been quoted and written about in the following books: Woman In The Year 2000, edited by Maggie Tripp. Arbor House, Publisher. A Different Heaven and Earth, by Sheila D. Collins. Judson Press, Publishers. Masks, Face Coverings and Headgear, by Norman Laliberte/Alex Mogelon. Van Nostrand Reinhold, Publishers. Unmasking, edited by Valerie Harms Sheehan. The Swallow Press, Inc., Publishers. When the Mode of the Music Changes, C.R. Cooper, P. Cherry & B. McKeown. Ginn & Company, Publishers. She is also the author of the forthcoming book, The Art of Welded Sculpture. Van Nostrand Reinhold, Publishers.





SUZANNE BENTON
METAL SCULPTOR

22 Donnelly Drive Ridgefield, Conn. 06877 (203) 438-4650

June 29, 1975

Mrs. Betty Ford
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Ford:

Your choice of Susan B. Anthony as the most meaningful woman in American history has special significance for me and has prompted this letter.

In 1971, I was awarded the commission from N.O.W. to create a sculpture of Susan B. Anthony for the Susan B. Anthony Hall of Fame. I have since sculptured other versions of this remarkable woman whose life force has strengthened my own life.

I have long been dismayed that the antelope has more space in the encyclopedia than Susan B. Anthony. By creating the likeness of Susan B. Anthony in sculptured forms and coupling these with important quotations from this great lady, I hope to spread to others the humanitarian greatness of this woman. She held to her convictions in the face of scorn and abuse, totally certain of her knowledge of truth in regard to the rights and potentials of all human beings.

She was a woman dearly loved by many in her time, and I hope to share with you in the effort to place her name, her character and her achievements before the American people of today.

I would like to present to you in person, the Susan B. Anthony commemorative collection, and, to discuss with you the placing of the Susan B. Anthony bronze sculpture. I feel it is most appropriate to present you with this significant collection in light of our shared commitment to Susan B. Anthony.

I look forward to hearing from you. Until July 20th, I will be at Artpark in Lewiston, N.Y. as an artist in residence and can be reached by telephone at 716-754-8862; or by mail, c/o Artpark, Box 371, Lewiston, N.Y. 14092.

In sisterhood,

Suzanne Benton

SB:mb

