

Eleanor Rappe-Raugust, née Blum/Gershkowitz

Born February 14th 1933, Brooklyn New York
Passed away April 5, 2021, Santa Fe New Mexico

Eleanor passed away peacefully after an extended illness, attended by her three children and her beloved husband, John. John was her life companion of 50 years, and was her sole caretaker during her 15 month illness. John did everything possible to mitigate her suffering and surround her with love and well-being as he cared for her over the months, faithfully keeping a vigil over her in her final days and going without sleep to attend to her bedside. He also did everything throughout their lives together to nurture her spirit and support her artwork. John was the love of her life and they moved to Santa Fe in 1995, building a house overlooking the Sangre de Christo Mountains.

Eleanor lived in San Francisco, California for 30 years, where she had established a career as a prominent printmaker, exhibiting several shows at major museums, including the De Young Museum, and the San Jose Museum. Eleanor retired as the chair of the art department at City College of San Francisco in 1994, having previously taught a large cohort of printmaking students, The Fort Mason Print Makers, who regularly exhibited their work and became successful artists in their own right. Some of her prominent students included the renowned San Francisco based Hungarian born artist, Theodora Varnay Jones, her dear friend Chris Knipp and the American artist Anita Toney.

Eleanor started her California career at the Vorpall gallery of San Francisco, with a one woman painting show. After obtaining her MFA in printmaking at SFSU where she studied with James Torlakson among others, Eleanor began to explore a number of printmaking techniques, including chine colle, collograph, etching, monotypes, and three dimensional forms. She later turned to digital arts. Eleanor's work evoked the ruins of Greco-Roman antiquity, including etchings that imitated the stone forms of pavements, fragments, and larger structures from photos she personally took during her extensive travels throughout the Mediterranean, Middle East, and North Africa. Eleanor visited numerous Greco-Roman archaeological sites, including Leptis Magna in Libya, Persepolis in Iran, and Palmyra, in Syria. Her work developed in prolific series, as for example her studies of the goddess Aphrodite, the drapery folds of the Parthenon metopes, or her monotypes that revolve around Pompeian wall paintings. She was a member of the San Francisco Women Artists, and was President of the California Society of Printmakers. She also developed brilliant collaborations with fellow Bay Area Printmakers, including the late Eleanor Bender, with whom she collaborated on an exhibit in 1977, at the De Young Museum, entitled, "Caerulea: ruins and excavations" Faux archaeology continued to be an interest of hers, and her 2001 exhibit at the New Mexico Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, "Plato's Studio," involved collaboration with scholars, who invented false historical narratives as a counterpart to her "excavations" of Plato's studio, including his hitherto unseen portraits of Socrates and Sappho.

Originally, Eleanor studied painting at City College of Brooklyn and among her teachers were the luminaries Mark Rothko and Ad Reinhardt. But Eleanor continued learning throughout her entire artistic life, studying in Santa Fe with Andre Roesch and producing evocative photoshop

collages based on principles of layering, using light, and creating molded sculptures placed in dreamscapes, ruins, and gardenscapes. Her last formal show was at the Jean Cocteau Theater in Santa Fe, where she exhibited some of her photoshop images together with other photographers.

Eleanor grew up in Brooklyn in a close knit Jewish family, living on Bradford Street in a cold water flat with her grandparents and mother, and attending public schools. She spent her summers at Rockaway Beach with her cousins and late brother, Martin. She was still especially close to her surviving first cousins, Roberta, Susan, and Barbara, at the time of her death, celebrating Passover and her 85th birthday at Susan's house in Thousand Oaks. She cherished the friendship of artists and collectors in the Santa Fe area, including Signe Joseph and Pat Hall, who collaborated with her on Plato's Studio.

She is survived by her three children, Audrey, Sara (Karin), and Gene Rappe (Jenny) as well as four grandchildren, Helen, Stephen, and David Rappe and Isabel Ahbel-Rappe. Her children, Audrey and Gene, followed in their mother's footsteps, becoming artists (Audrey painting; Gene: sculptural jewelry) in their own right. She painted to the very end of her life.

Eleanor was a loyal friend, a loving wife, mother, and grandmother, and fiercely creative presence whose passion for antiquity was rooted in her aspiration to what she thought of as the timeless present. She remembered fondly all the periods of her artistic ventures, her students and teachers, and had endless affection for her cousins, children and grandchildren. Above all, she found comfort and strength in her husband John's love and shared with him a truly rich and visionary life.