

GIVING ART A HOME



From left: TMC President and CEO John Bluford; artist Rita Blitt; Joan Israelite, President Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City. Blitt's sculpture "Jubilee" adorns the front of TMC Lakewood.

Rita Blitt says she would rather give than receive.

I "I'm thrilled to be able to share my art in not-for-profit, public spaces," she says.

The internationally recognized painter and sculptor has generously donated several pieces of artwork to Truman Medical Centers. At a recent reception honoring Blitt and her works, John Bluford, TMC President and CEO, said that her artwork was key in creating an environment that "heals the healer."

"We have doctors, nurses, pharmacists and technicians, who give their all to our patients every day," Bluford said. "We are trying to create a soothing environment so they can practice their craft."

Her donations are in support of the Truman Center for the Healing Arts (CHA) and out of a belief by Blitt in the mission of the CHA and the hospital. The sculptures were installed in 2007, one at Hospital Hill (Serenity) and the other (Jubilee) at Lakewood.

The giving doesn't stop there. Blitt also donated Magical Dreamland, a 32-foot-long mural that will hang in the atrium of TMC Lakewood.

"I decided I wanted to paint a long narrow painting, so I started on a roll of wallpaper. But I thought 'where am I going to put it?' she said. "It thrills me that it has a home."

Another of her sculptures, Nessie, sits at the front of the Hospital Hill Pavilion and was donated to the hospital on behalf of Edward Smith.

Blitt has received numerous awards as a painter and sculptor. Her works are an expression of life and the energy and spirit that art creates around us in our environments. Blitt's work celebrates her love of nature, music, dance and the spontaneous flow of movement captured in the drawn gesture. Her drawings and paintings, which sometimes become sculpture, are often created with two hands at once. She says, "when those lines come from my hands...I feel like I am dancing."

Blitt's sculptures, which can range up to sixty feet in height, have been permanently installed and exhibited along with her drawings and paintings, in museums, galleries and public places in Australia, Germany, Israel, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan and the United States.

Blitt also is a noted filmmaker. Her films have been shown in numerous festivals, with Caught in Paint, a six-minute documentary featuring David Parsons and the Parsons Dance Company being the big winner with invitations from more than 100 festivals and the recipient of 14 awards.

Blitt feels that her most significant contribution, beyond family, has been developing the phrase "Kindness is Contagious...Catch it," which has led to the creation of Kindness programs affecting the lives of thousands all over the world.

Through June 27, 16 pieces of Rita Blitt's artwork will be on display in the TMC Lakewood Healing Arts Gallery.