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A TRANSFORMATIONAL BOND

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A TRANSFORMATIONAL BOND

By

Nettie Locke Rogers

A THESIS

Presented to the faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Peter Pinnell

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 2012

A TRANSFOMATIONAL BOND

Nettie Locke Rogers M.F.A.
University of Nebraska, 2012

Advisor: Peter Pinnell

I create two- and three-dimensional narrative works that are inspired by memories, objects and animals that have a significant impact on my life. The work draws from a darkness that at times surrounded my childhood. Through drawing and sculpture I create an invented world that allows me to reflect, resolve and cope with real world events and memories. The main character in my work is the horse, an archetype that became my guide. He came to me when I was ten years old, my starting point of memory. My father wanted me to smile again so he found a place in the country where we began trail riding. It was a gift that changed my life.

There is a history of invented hybrid animal forms in contemporary art that includes artists such as Beth Cavener Stichter and Rona Pondick. For Stichter, the body language of her animal is a metaphor for human emotion while Pondick's forms originate from a feminist critique of Freudian theory. In both cases, the animal form is vivid in its psychological expression. My animal forms are also tools for exploring the psychological, my internal world and events in the past. The narratives in the work are not polite. The princess is not innocent and the horses seem to be protecting themselves more than anyone else.

The hybrid horse and human figure symbolizes the strong bond I have with the horse. When I make these specific pieces I feel as if I am subconsciously communicating with myself in a way that brings me happiness. When sculpting large and small-scale horses, especially the legs, I am forming them with both hands and fingers. All my energy goes into the work. I imagine embracing a real horse's leg and the interaction I have when I am touching them. Caring for horses everyday, I am more aware of their form and structure. When I begin this process it's as if I am bringing one to life. The powerful connection I have with them is immediately transferred into what I am creating. Clay remains the most intuitive and natural material that I can manipulate to achieve this expression. Most of all, it brings me an immense amount of joy and fulfillment when I am doing this act.