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UPPER AND LOWER CASE. THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TYPOGRAPHICS

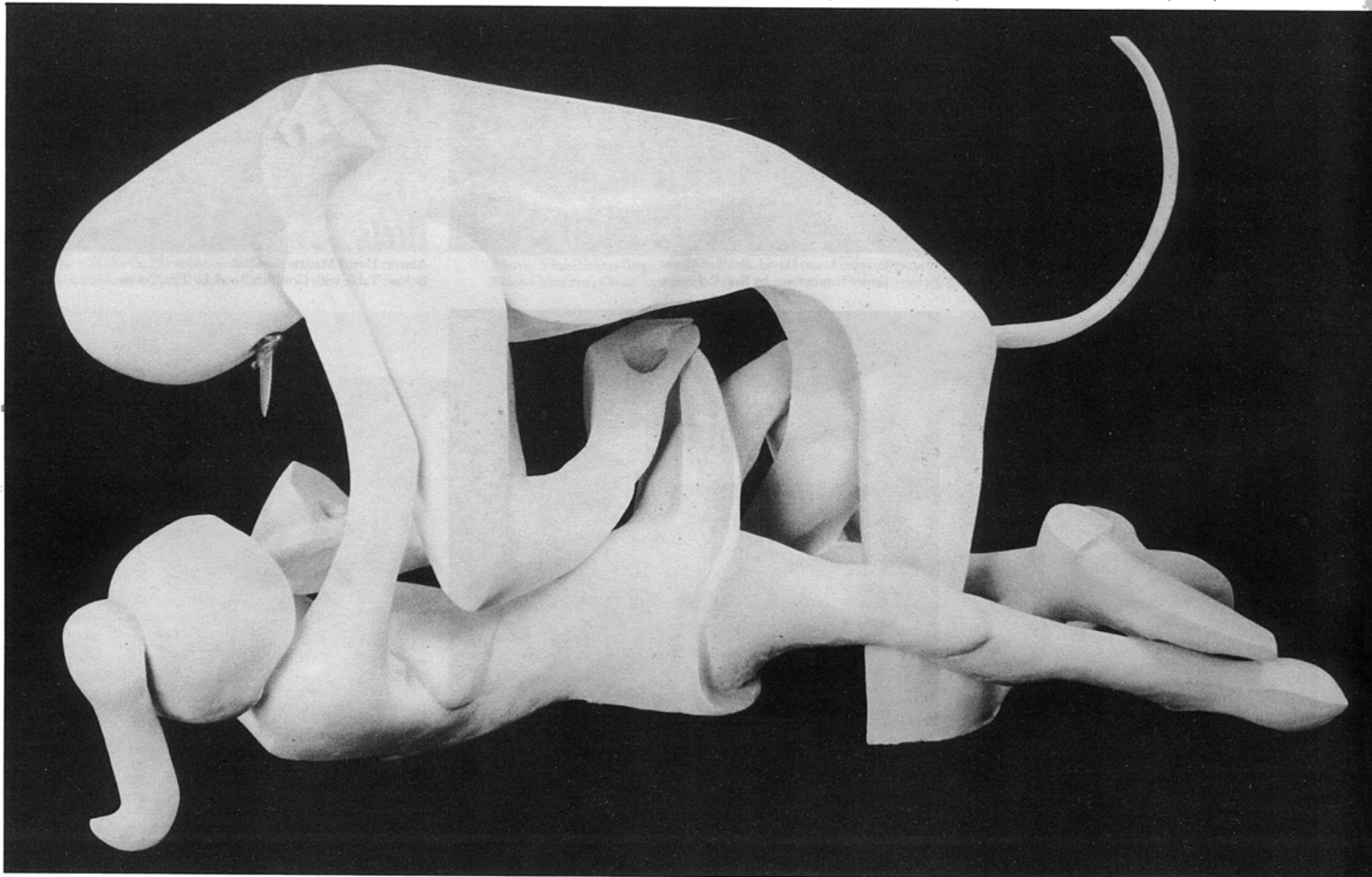
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a call for help

For a long time in America, it was not very fashionable for artists to concern themselves with the messy problems of the human condition. Artists turned away from the social realism and protest art of the '30s. Art turned cool. Artists concerned themselves only with art. They flitted from form to form, with the public breathlessly hanging onto their smocktails trying to keep up with the changing scene. From abstract expressionism of the '40s, we moved to pop, op, hard edge minimal, funky

minimal, abstract impressionism, color-field, conceptual, photo-realism, neo-realism, post-modern and finally to neo-expressionism – which brings us full circle; right back to about where we were half a century ago. That is not to say that every artist made the full tour of art experiences. Some have worked persistently and patiently in just one form, with one theme. Fredi Cohen is such a sculptor. In wood, ceramic, terracotta and bonded carrara, she has persevered with her perceptions of

Photographed by Allen Arpadi



Abuse of Power, 50" long x 32" high x 35" deep in white hydrocal, polished to resemble carrara marble. The piece can also be cast in bronze and finished with a white patina for the same effect.

all humanity – men, women, children, their moods, emotions and relationships to each other and the natural world. Her titles – *Family, Femme, Charms, Sensitivity, Woman-Child, Two Generations, The Dancer, Lovebirds* – are clues to the work. They are quiet, intimate pieces of sculpture that can hang on a wall, stand on a small pedestal or sit at the center of a table.



Recently Fredi Cohen was prompted to break out of her confined scale and gentle sensibility and produce a mammoth piece of sculpture that currently fills her entire dining room... and fills viewers with horror and outrage. It is just what she intended.



The piece, called *Abuse of Power* is quite literally an attempted-rape scene. The male figure, half man, half animal, is a full six feet, five inches long. The female victim is a diminutive five feet. While rape is the obvious theme, Ms. Cohen created it as a call for "HELP!" in fighting all abuses of power and systems that permit the mighty to devastate the powerless, whether they are individuals or whole nations.

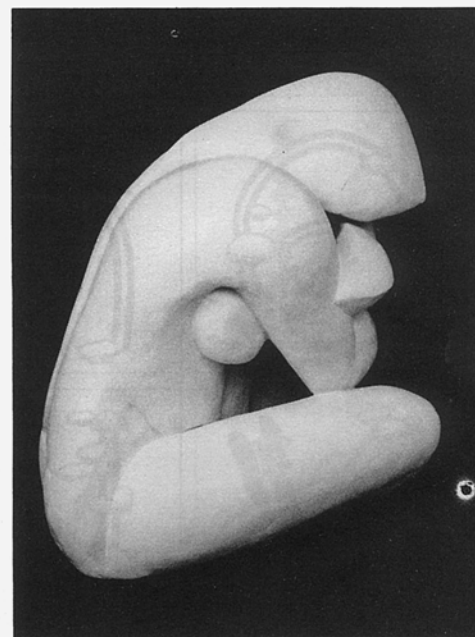
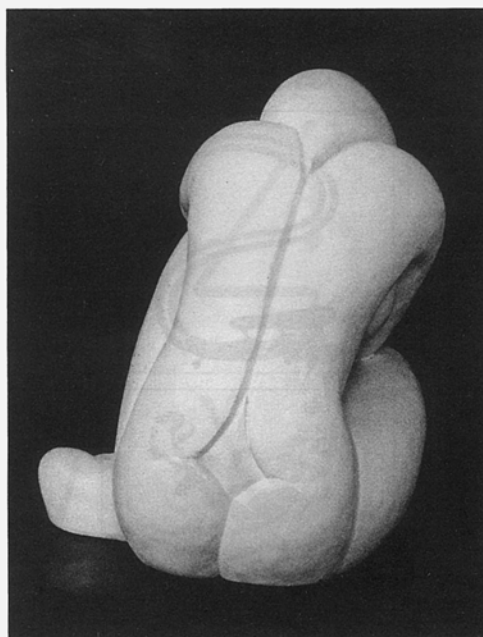
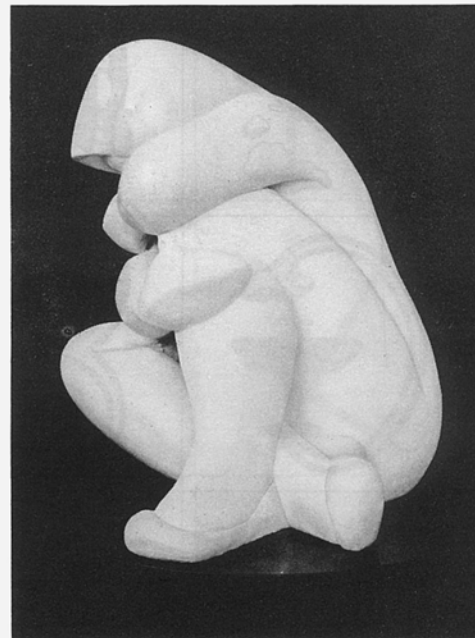
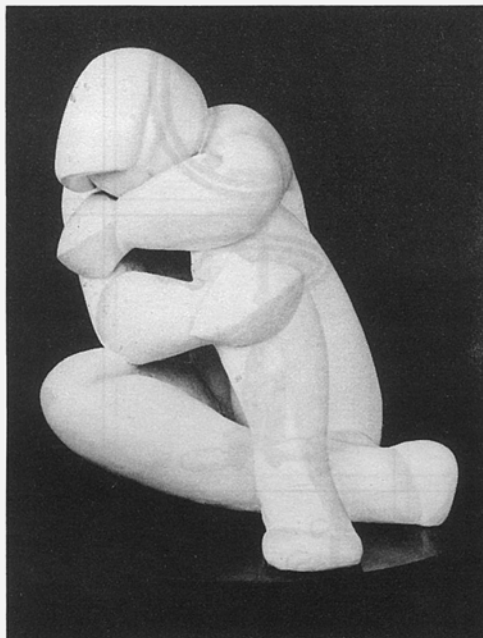
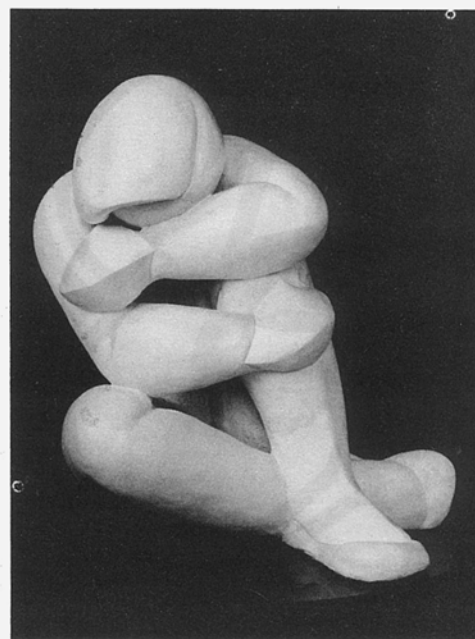
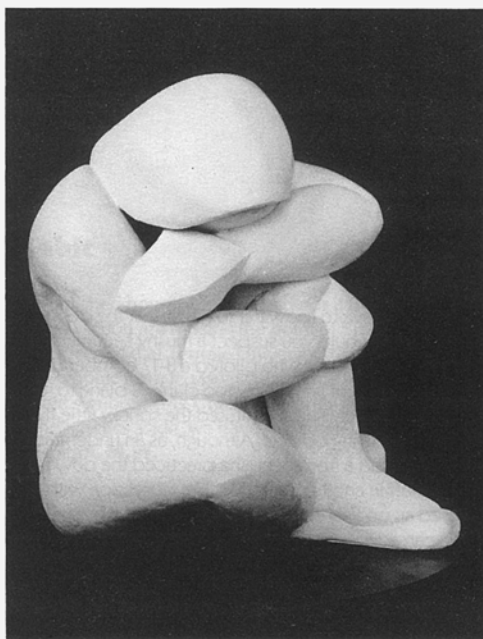


The sculpture was worked on a wire frame in white hydrocal, a plaster-like substance which when hardened can be polished to look like carrara marble. While the piece was executed as a personal catharsis, when it was finished in April 1985, Ms. Cohen, who usually shies away from juried shows, sent slides of the work to an International Juried Arts Competition to be held in New York. To her great satisfaction, she was invited to exhibit the piece. Better still, it won first prize in the show.



Subsequently the sculpture was exhibited at Mussavi Gallery in New York City. Considering the comments and reactions it evoked, Ms. Cohen thought that certain relevant government agencies might be interested in exhibiting the piece to a wider public audience. Invitations were sent to the agencies. Representatives came. They saw. They nodded. They did not buy (artists are accustomed to that). But in short order, she received a communication from the New York City Task Force Against Sexual Abuse. The Task Force, a coalition of public and private agencies and individuals committed to reducing the trauma to survivors of rape and sexual abuse, had elected to present Fredi Cohen with an award for her contribution to their cause. On April 4, 1986, at a conference held at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City, she received her certificate of appreciation. Other recipients of the award were a doctor who worked with victims, an actor who participated in a film, and an organization which also actively aided victims of rape. Although the award was a source of personal satisfaction, Ms. Cohen would like to see attention focused on the sculpture rather than on herself. She wants to upset people and shake them out of their passivity. She envisions *Abuse of Power* as a temporary centerpiece for a conference; better yet, installed as a public monument to serve as a perpetual protest against every kind of oppression inflicted by the strong on the weak.

Marion Muller



Rotated views of *Woman-Child*, 10 1/2" high and 10 1/2" in circumference, polished bonded carrara. Limited signed and numbered editions available.