

Living



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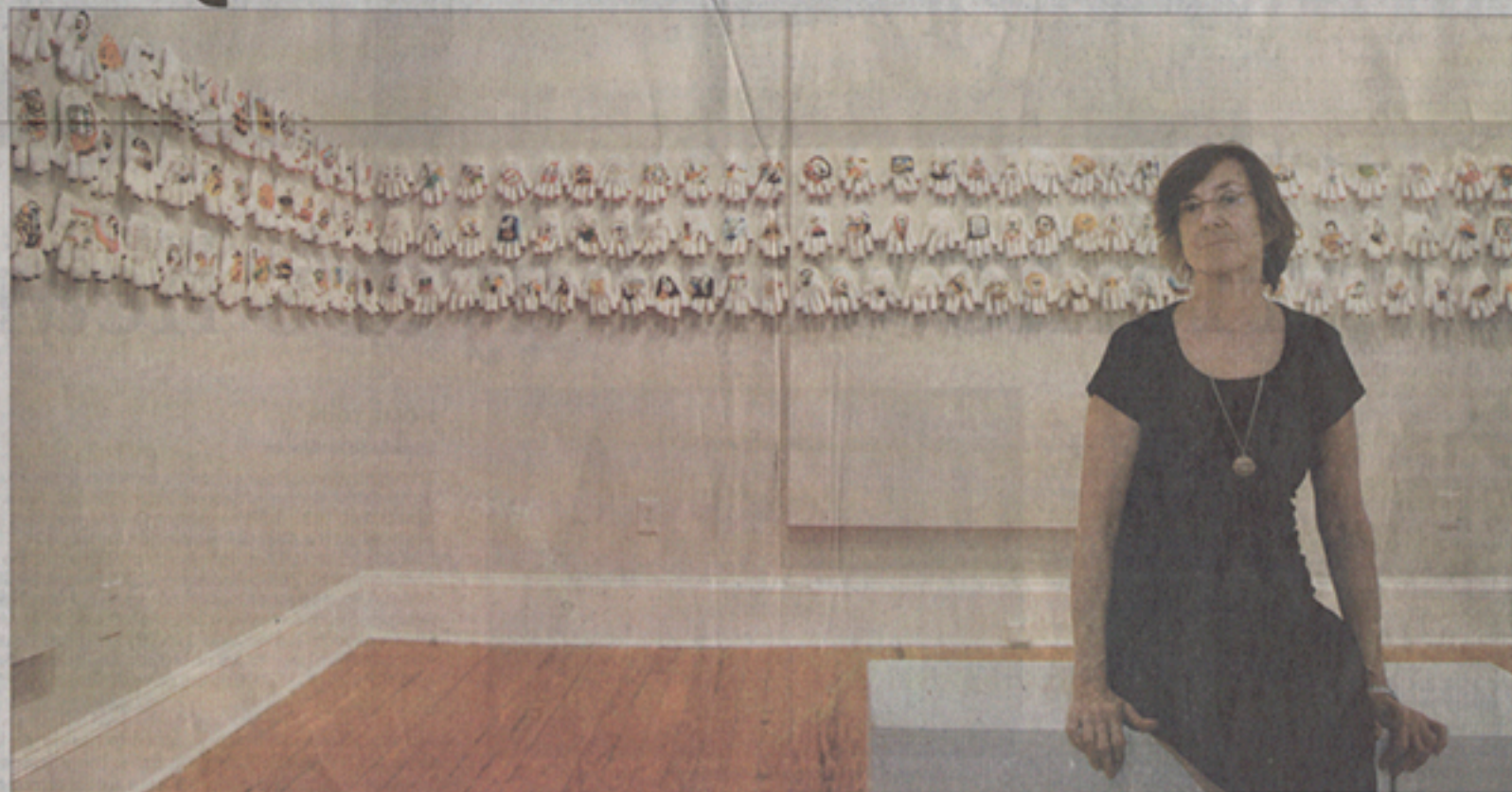


COMING WEDNESDAY

Little Bear has a big heart

The toy poodle/Shih Tzu and other Happy Tails pups visit assisted living facilities and other places in need of cheer. In *Living*

IRAQ WAR IN A SHOW OF HANDS



Curator Cecelia Kane began the diary of the Iraq war on March 20, 2003, on white cotton gloves. The project, which now involves over 100 artists, is 1,400 gloves strong and counting.

Each glove represents a day in ongoing Mideast conflict

By CATHERINE FOX
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On March 20, 2003, Cecelia Kane read about the U.S. invasion of Iraq in the morning paper. In response, she made a drawing of Saddam Hussein on a white cotton glove with the headline "Saddam Dead or Alive?" She wrote the date on the fingers, which she tipped in blood red.

Thus began "Hand to Hand," a diary of the Iraq war that is now 1,400 gloves strong and counting.

Every last one is on view at Spruill

ART EXHIBIT

"Hand to Hand: 100 Artists' Comments on the Iraq War"

Through April 26, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Wednesdays-Saturdays, Spruill Gallery,
4681 Ashford Dunwoody Road, Atlanta,
770-394-4019; www.spruillarts.org.

Gallery in Dunwoody, lined up in rows like a phalanx of soldiers throughout four galleries. The sweep of five years can be hard to visualize; "Hand to Hand" makes the time palpable. And events: Not simply a recitation of battles and bombs, the piece recounts such

things as the surgery of Baby Noor and the daily life of soldiers.

This daily narrative is one source of its power, says Hope Cohn, Spruill's director of exhibitions. "It becomes a story that is continuing to be told, a mirror of what was happening."

"Then, it becomes an environment," she says. "To be surrounded by it, floor to ceiling, is a profound experience."

Like the empty chairs in the Oklahoma City National Memorial or the display of soldiers' boots travel-

► Please see SERIAL ART, E2



A glove on Baby Noor, the Iraqi child with spina bifida who was brought to Atlanta for surgery, is one of many created by Kane and displayed in "Hand to Hand."

Serial art: Each glove represents day in Iraq war

► Continued from E1

ing around the country, the gloves are a stand-in for the human figure. For Kane, the notion of using gloves in her work came after her mother died, when the Atlanta artist discovered pairs of them in her purses.

"I could see her shape in them," she says.

From one hand to many

"Hand to Hand" has become a team effort involving more than 100 artists, mostly from Georgia. For the first three years, however, Kane worked alone. She would sit down every day with coffee and her morning paper and, based on the news, make her painting on a fiber-filled glove. As her paintings became more complex, requiring two hours to complete, she would clip articles during the week and spend all day Sunday crafting the gloves.

"It was emotionally overwhelming, but I felt I had to do it," she says. "I had to [bear] witness."

Kane, 61, is no stranger to serial art. She once created a 100-foot-long "diary"



Teresa Bramlette Reeves uses roses to symbolize U.S. deaths, beads for Iraqi deaths. "I like the fact she used traditionally feminine material to approach a tough subject," Cecelia Kane said.

out of three years' worth of coffee cups. A self-described obsessive, she attributes what she calls "ritual counting" to her Roman Catholic upbringing.

"Each glove is a 'rosary bead' in this ongoing meditation of war," she says.

Yet, by the end of 2005, with no end to the conflict in sight, Kane felt she could no longer keep it up. When her work-in-progress went on display that year at the

Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, she announced it would come to an end.

Her artist friends were aghast. "They told me, 'You can't stop,'" she recalls.

"Then they began volunteering to take over for a week at a time."

They came up with many creative variations on the glove theme. Soon there were versions in feathers, in Kevlar (the material used in flak jackets) and in digital animation,



A glove by Scott Schult of Seattle uses Kevlar, body armor fabric. His statement: "At this point in time no one should have to be wearing armor."

which also plays in a symbolically endless loop on the home page of the "Hand to Hand" Web site, www.handtohandproject.com.

A communal expression

Dunwoody sculptor Maria Lucia Sarmiento made wax hands lit from within. Instead of headlines, she covered them with quotes from her e-mail correspondence with a soldier stationed on the USS Boxer, an aircraft carrier in

the Arabian Gulf.

Teresa Bramlette Reeves crocheted little gloves. "I was thinking about the beauty and fragility of life," the Atlanta artist explained. "Crochet is a metaphor for that — very tenuous, connected by threads."

Joe Peragine, author of the animation, thinks it's as important as ever to keep the project going, since most stories about the war have moved off the front page and further out of consciousness. Although he has dealt with war in his own work, he is glad to be a part of this project. Like the AIDS quilt, it's a chance to be involved in a communal expression.

As the war continues, so does the project. Though Kane no longer makes all the gloves, she is busy scheduling artists — lined up through July — and arranging for exhibitions for the project. When not on tour, it threatens to overtake her home.

Even so, Kane says she's never given any thought to the project's ultimate disposition.

"At first, I did it because I had to," she says. And apparently, five years later, she still does.