

# Close-up

Sunday, July 15, 2007 — 1B

## StudioSwan introduces artists Melissa Stern and Jessie Mann

StudioSwan at Serenbe is pleased to present the work of sculptor Melissa Stern and painter Jessie Mann.

"Presenting Melissa Stern and Jessie Mann" opens on Saturday, July 21 and continues through Sept. 8; the opening reception will take place on July 21 from 1 to 8 p.m.

Melissa Stern, continuing her work in carved and fired clay, conceived this body of work, titled "Above the Belt," as a take on classical ceramic portrait busts. Working

within this classical construct, the artist created a series of "portraits," more imagined than real. "They are not actual portraits of people," Stern notes, "but rather of my feelings about people I know, experience, or imagine. This tension between an art form rooted in classical realism and the imagined images I've built, makes for a universe of people who are both funny and a little dark, formal and funky."

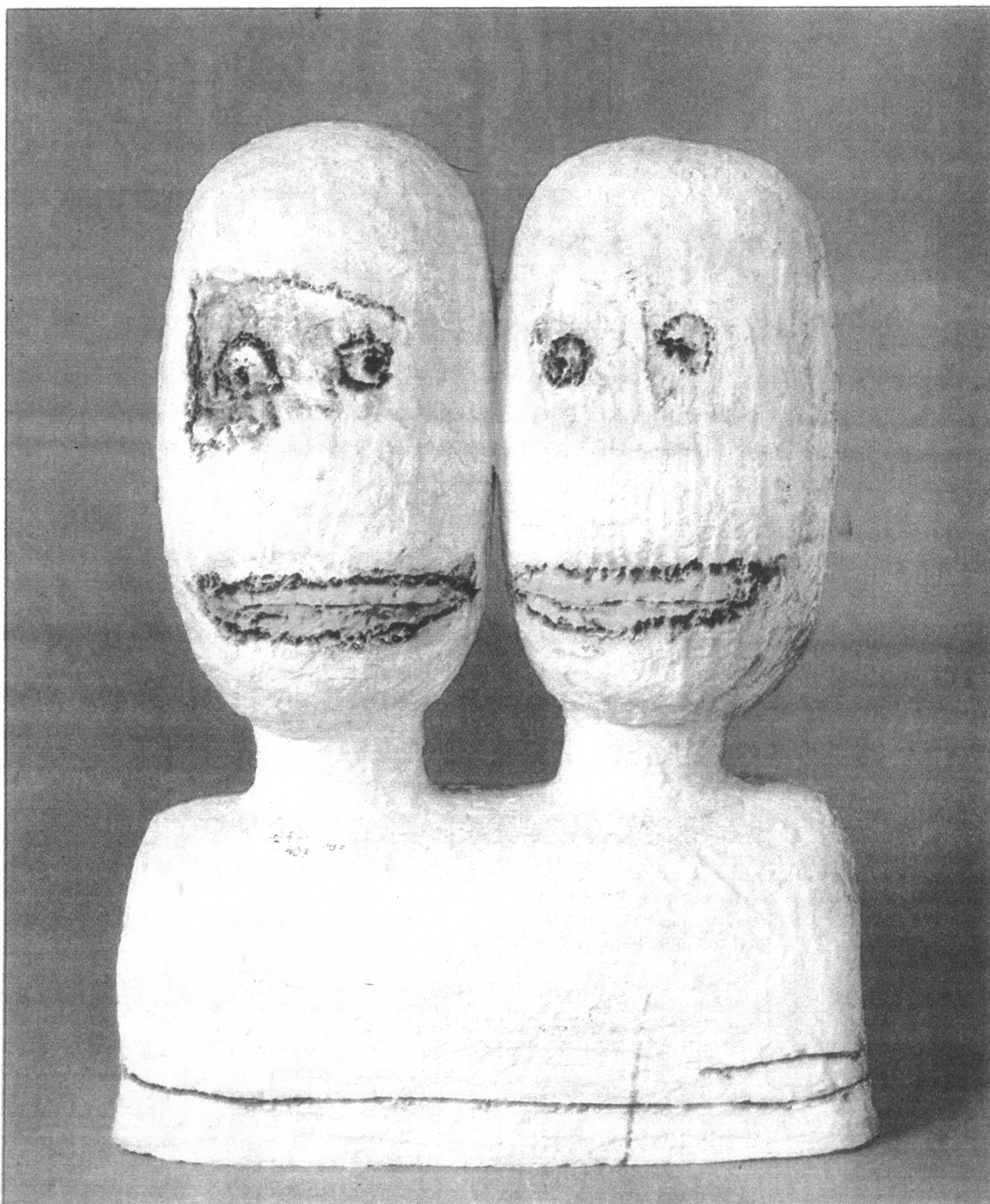
Stern has exhibited extensively throughout the U.S. and internationally; her recent solo exhibitions include Zihlka Gallery at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., David Lusk Gallery, Memphis, Tenn., Weiss Pollack Gallery, NYC, Spike Gallery, NYC, The Children's Museum of the Arts, NYC, Ballard Featherston Gallery, Seattle, Wash. and John Elder Gallery, NYC.

Born in 1981, in Lexington, Va., Jessie Mann became a familiar presence in contemporary art in the 1990s, through the photographs taken of her and her two siblings by their mother, Sally Mann. Jessie returned full-time to painting after concentrating on the sciences at George School (Newtown, Pa.) and obtaining a degree in psychology from Washington and Lee University. Her academic studies in perception, memory and the establishment of subjectivity feed into her abstract paintings on masonite. Jessie Mann's works have been shown in exhibitions at the XYZ Gallery in Blacksburg, Va., and Zone Chelsea, New York City. She had a solo show at Nelson Fine Arts in Lexington, and most recently displayed work at the Reynolds Gallery in Richmond, Va.

StudioSwan opened in 2006 in Serenbe, near Palmetto, as the combined studios and retail gallery space of nationally acclaimed artists Thomas Swanston and Gail Foster. Aside from regularly exhibiting Swanston's and Foster's art, StudioSwan showcases a number of other local and national artists, who share the same intensity of creative vision, passionate pursuit of innovation and technical mastery of their chosen medium.

StudioSwan was named among Atlanta Homes and Lifestyles magazine's "HOT100: Atlanta's 100 most intriguing people, captivating places and mesmerizing things that are defining Atlanta life and style in 2007— and beyond."

For directions to Serenbe, visit on the Web at [www.serenbe.com](http://www.serenbe.com).



Melissa Stern's work, "She-She," is a work of clay, oil and encaustic. StudioSwan near Palmetto will have a opening reception for Stern's exhibit July 21.