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Healing 'Liquor'

Mobius artists
bring home
Bosnian tragedy
with cultural
exchange

By MARY JO PALUMBO

This is not your usual light summer fare. In performances here and in Providence, R.I., 10 women - five from Boston, five from the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia - are exploring the destruction in Bosnia, the fleeting nature of childhood memories and the tender process of self-realization. It's the culmination of "Liquor Amni," a yearlong cultural exchange project involving women from Boston's Mobius artists collabo-



BRIDGING THE GAP: Four of the five artists who participated in the Mobius exchange are, clockwise from near right, Cathy Nolan, Margaret Titemore, Mari Novotny-Jones and Marilyn Arsem.

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Exchange enriches Mobius

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rative and their Macedonian counterparts.

"Working with people from different cultures, you learn another way of thinking and another view of history," said Mobius founding director Marilyn Arsem. "You begin to see your own world through different eyes."

Last July, the Mobius artists joined the Macedonians in the former Eastern bloc country for three weeks. The group created works in the ruins of a 20-room, 16th century Turkish bath outside Skopje, the capital. Now, the artists will develop and stage new works here.

In Boston, an exhibit by photographer Bob Raymond opened at Mobius yesterday, documenting the first half of the exchange with 25 computer-generated color images and background texts about the Skopje project. The exhibit continues through June 28.

The artists will present a series of individual installations at the 10th annual Convergence X International Art Festival in Providence, R.I., June 20-21. Projects will be presented at the new Riverwalk Park downtown nightly from 5 to 10. And Saturday through June 22, a storefront exhibit at 130 Westminster St. will feature some of the work created last summer.

Also in Providence, Arsem will use ice and water in an interactive performance piece titled "Rivers of Memory, Oceans." She aims to engage the audience in examining notions of time, relationships, memories and dreams. "The different properties of water become a metaphor for our understanding of how time and history move through us," Arsem said.

Macedonian artist Nora Stojanovic's project, "Collecting the Scales of the Big Fish," includes a video and slides from Skopje, where she submerged herself in an aquarium as a way to explore her childhood and the political history of her people.

Margaret Tittlemore of Weymouth plans to set up chairs on both sides of the Woonasquatucket River to attempt a dialogue with Stojanovic in "Across the Waters."

"The whole thing will be about communication," said Tittlemore.

"I would like to see if we can form a relationship somewhat like the pen pal I had when I was 10. I'd like to talk about personal issues as well as the political history of the two countries. A lot of it will be spontaneous. I'm hoping we will surprise each other."

One artist from Macedonia plans to cast her body in wax and float the cast on the river with a candle inside. Another will use the American flag, life preservers and a red carpet to make a statement about the role the United States has played in recent economic and political changes in Eastern Europe.

The project was funded in part by the Trust for Mutual Understanding and the Fund for U.S. Artists at International Festivals and Exhibitions.

"This project has brought me much closer to the events that happened in the former Yugoslavia," said Tittlemore, who runs the teen docent program at the Fuller Museum in Brockton. "I feel that I know these people."

"Liquor Amnii" will be presented at various sites in Providence, R.I., Saturday through June 22; and at Mobius, 354 Congress St., Boston, through June 28. Free. Call (617) 542-7416.

Below are two of Bob Raymond's photographs featured at the 'Liquor Amnii' exhibit; at left is Marilyn Arsem in 'Pools of Time,' right, Cathy Nolan in 'Table.'

Herald photo, right, by Testaye Bizua

