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BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

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Larger-than-life ceramic sculptures at Bellevue Arts Museum

Tip Toland: Melt, The Figure in Clay

On view September 23, 2008 – February 8, 2009

Bellevue, WA – Bellevue Arts Museum is organizing a new exhibition by Northwest sculptor Tip Toland entitled **Melt, The Figure in Clay**. On view from **September 23, 2008 through February 8, 2009**, this solo exhibition will feature six to eight life-size and larger-than-life human figures, most of which will be new works debuting at **Bellevue Arts Museum**.

Constructed laboriously of clay, stoneware, synthetic hair and paint, Toland's human figures look strikingly realistic. In this exhibition her subjects range from children to the elderly, all captured on the threshold of self-awareness: an aging woman swings playfully above a yawning box of jet black sand, a bathing-capped octogenarian prepares for her ultimate "Dive," a scrawny nine-year-old in a wet swimsuit shivers against life's chillingly harsh elements, while a young boy is caught in the act of the discovery of his body. In her figures Toland frequently captures themes of age and aging and their spiritual, physical and psychological implications, as well as the metaphor of nudity as humankind's natural and lowest common denominator. "What is of primary importance to me is that the figures contain particular aspects of humanity that they can mirror back to the viewer," says the artist. "It's the vulnerability of humanity I am after. That is one reason for choosing very old or very young subjects."

A Virginia A. Groot Foundation Award and National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship recipient, Toland received an MFA in ceramics from Montana State University in 1981 and a BFA in ceramics from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1975. She has taught extensively nationally and locally at schools including Louisiana State University, University of Montana, Montana State University, University of Washington and Seward Park Clay Studio. She exhibits nationally and is represented by Nancy Margolis Gallery, NY. Her work is in many prestigious collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Tip Toland: Melt, The Figure in Clay is organized by Bellevue Arts Museum.

For more information on this exhibit and other Museum-related programming, to schedule an interview with the artist or to receive press images, please contact Tanja Baumann (see contact information above).

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of the fine art of craft and design. An emphasis is placed on regional craft artists as part of the national and international conversation on fine craft and design.