

Cade Tompkins Projects
198 Hope Street Providence Rhode Island 02906
www.cadetompkins.com cadetompkins@mac.com
Telephone 401 751 4888

The Newport Daily News Mercury
Friday, September 14, 2012

Donna Bruton-Coutis

PORTSMOUTH – Donna Bruton-Coutis, born May 3, 1954 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Donnamaria Bruton was the second of four children and the daughter of William and Loretta (Kent) Bruton. At age eleven, her father, a professional baseball player for the then Milwaukee Braves, (now the Atlanta Braves.) was traded to the Detroit Tigers and the family relocated to Detroit, where Donna lived for the next 20 years. Donna came from a line of ball players, her mother's father was William Julius (Judy) Johnson who played for the Negro Leagues and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1975.

Donna attended a year at Fisk University and later transferred to Michigan State where she received a BFA in Graphic Design in 1976. Following graduation, Donna worked for the Chrysler Corporation as a Color and Fabric Stylist. It was after this period she relocated to Wilmington, Delaware and began to study painting under her uncle, Edward Loper.

She acquired a Certificate in Painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago where she lived until being accepted into the Yale Graduate Painting Program. At Yale she earned an MFA in painting and printmaking in 1991. After leaving Yale, Donna taught for a year at the University of Texas, in Austin before joining the faculty of the Rhode Island School of Design in 1992 in Providence, RI. Speaking quietly to her sister Denise, she revealed she was marrying her best friend and in January of 1999 was wed to Timothy Coutis of Providence, RI. Later that year she received the Blanche E. Colman Award Mellon (Boston, Massachusetts) to pursue creative work in the field of art. At RISD, Donna served as Department Head of Painting 2001-03 and Interim Dean of Graduate Studies from 2003-05.

In 2000, she and her husband Tim settled in Portsmouth, on Aquidneck Island. Donna had a studio in nearby Middletown, RI. In 2002 the "Calculation Project" a series of paper dresses was included in the Gwanjiu Biennale, Art to Wear exhibit in Korea. Her work is included in private collections in London, Germany, Holland, Detroit, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Austin and Providence and is part of the permanent collection at the RISD Museum and the Gwanjiu Museum in Korea. Donna's work was presented in group exhibitions across the country and in 15 solo exhibitions, the most recent of which took place in 2011 at the Cade Tompkins Project in Providence, RI.

In the artist statement she submitted to RISD in 1991 Donna wrote "Rising above the human condition has truly been a journey from sense to soul. A pilgrimmage to a holy or secret place of refuge. My body of work is a reflection of my ongoing search for truth and the poetry of that experience." Twenty-one years later this statement rings true of both Donna's work and life.

Donna was the sister of the late Denise A. Marshall.

She is survived by her husband Timothy Coutis, and her stepson Nicholas Coutis of Providence, RI her siblings, William of Wilmington, DE, and Jacqueline of Detroit, MI, six nephews, four nieces, and a wealth of loving friends and family.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, October 6, 2012 at 2 p.m. in the Connors Funeral Home, 55 West Main Road, Portsmouth, RI.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Sophia Academy (sophia-academy.org/make-a-gift), 979 Branch Avenue, Providence RI, 02804.