

Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts:

# Awakening the Animal Psyche

By Jeannette Casillas / CASA

**O**VER THE COURSE OF HER LIFE, Nina de Crefft Ward's passion for animals has grown deeper, becoming an initiating force for artistic expression. A retrospective exhibition of her work will be on view in the Logan Gallery at the Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts in Ojai from August 22nd through October 3rd with an opening reception on Saturday, August 22nd from 3 to 6pm.



Nina de Crefft Ward

"It is always interesting to see a number of my works in one place, to help me figure out where I am coming from and where I seem to be going," shared Ward.

The retrospective exhibition will feature over 45 of her sculptures, prints, and drawings.

"A lot of the prints and the sculpture in the exhibition come out of drawing studies of farm animals I made in Iowa

during the 26 years we lived there or from drawings at zoos in Chicago, where we lived for eight years before that."

When Ward began to assemble the work for the exhibit, she looked through sketchbooks from the past 30 or 40 years and chose drawings she especially liked. From those drawings, Ward made a number of solar prints (like an etching, on a metal plate sensitive to UV light) and new works in other media.

"I feel that in using drawings I collected over the years in a new context, I develop something new and grow as a visual artist," explained Ward.

Ward was born into a family of artists, her father was New York sculptor Jose de Crefft and her mother, Santa

Barbara sculptor Alice de Crefft.

"I never thought seriously of becoming anything else. The arts feed the spirit, and enrich culture in this way," shared Ward.

Ward grew up in Santa Barbara and Ojai with

horses, goats, dogs, cats, rabbits, and chickens, so she has been familiar with these animals since childhood.

"Animals have always been my inspiration and focus as an artist," noted Ward. "I am interested in line, form,

color, texture and pattern as well, and I want my work to show that interest."

Ward stays engaged by working in various media, large and small, two-dimensional or three. "Someone once said that art is a contemplative profession, and in that way it sustains me and keeps me moving forward as an important part of my life," she explained.

Ward received a BA from Scripps College and an MFA in sculpture from Claremont Graduate University. She moved to Iowa with her husband in 1975 when he was hired by the University of Northern Iowa. Ward was commissioned to do a sculpture for the Iowa State



Sunny Morning in the Barn (monotype print) by Nina de Crefft Ward



Chariot Horse #3: Thorion, Clay, low-fired, post firing reduction by Nina de Crefft Ward

University campus library and museum.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Ward will lead an *Animal Drawing and Clay Workshop* on September 19th and 26th (two consecutive Saturdays). The first Saturday session will focus on drawing and sculpting and on the second Saturday participants will glaze and Raku-fire their work.

**Beatrice Wood Center for the Arts** is located at 8585 Ojai-Santa Paula Rd. (in Upper Ojai). For more info call 646-3381 or visit [www.beatricewood.com](http://www.beatricewood.com)

The *Animal Drawing and Clay Workshop* is limited to 12 students. Call the Beatrice Wood Center to register.