



From figures to forms

Manuelita Brown reshapes her story while preserving those of others

Manuelita Brown works with her hands—fueled by her mind.

“Give your brain a chance, and it will do the job. You just have to have confidence and prepare it,” she says. After decades as a math teacher, and earning her master’s in psychology from the University of California San Diego, Manuelita changed course and began creating art. The order of numbers and the complex workings of the mind gave way to new inspiration—sculpting people’s lives in bronze. A frequent subject is the African-American experience. Her artwork celebrates the human spirit: a mother tenderly embracing her infant, a relentless Sojourner Truth fighting for equality, a cleaning woman taking a rare pause to rest.

“The story of people is usually told by what’s left behind,” she says. “I want to leave a record about those people who came before me or those who are here with me.”

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