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Stone Beautiful Smooth expressions

When asked about her path to sculpting, former biotech engineering manager **Amana Brembry Johnson** stares off in another direction of her art- and plant-filled home to reflect on her impulsive moments as a guerrilla muralist in the '80s, and how she simply "had more time for art" once her children went to college: "Then I started drawing more, painting, carving wood, and then I found stone." Ever since her discovery of sculpture and the traditional African practice of Shona

stone carving, Johnson has embraced the artistic process of turning rock into smoothly expressive figures, shapes, and faces. "It took me about eight to ten years to become a full-time artist," she says.

Johnson's level of craftsmanship, however, belies her modest path. She is internationally acclaimed, and has evolved her art into a variety of installations, stone, clay, and fiberglass creations. One example of her use of traditional themes combined with modern materials can be seen in her fiberglass buff, five-foot sculpted head, finished with candy-coated auto paint to give it the look of bronze.

In addition to pumping out artwork, Johnson works with Oakland youth at the Paul Robeson College Preparatory School of Visual Arts, where she exposes her students to the craft of stone carving. She also conducts her own Shona stone sculpture class in her art studio, which is open to the public. Through hands-on training in stone and traditional tools, students of all ages learn the skills of Shona stone carving, and ultimately leave with their own self-carved pieces. "I use art as a vehicle for social change and to foster critical thinking

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for young people," she explains. "And my recent folder of works is more about my evolution of focus."

See Johnson's work — in a two-person show with **Bill Dallas** — at the Craft and Cultural Arts Gallery in the State of California Office Building atrium in downtown Oakland. Info: www.oaklandculturalarts.org, StoneDreamStudios.com, or 510-622-8190.

— K'YINDE MARCELOUS

The Struggle Continues

Anyone looking for clues about the ancient, seemingly never-ending unrest of poor, indigenous people in the Americas need look no further than El Salvador. It's a textbook case of socio-economic injustice, complete with rich natural resources, an entrenched oligarchy bent on controlling those riches, restless natives with nothing to lose, and horrific violence applied from the top down, for the sake of profit. One of the 20th century's worst human-rights violations occurred in that Central American country in 1932, when Agustín Farabundo Martí led a socialist revolt for land reform and political equality. The gov-

ernment responded by murdering some 30,000 peasants and Indians — anyone who looked *indio* was targeted. It was not the last outrage committed in El Salvador.

But some people remember *la Matanza* (the massacre) and are determined to keep pushing for social and economic justice. Thursday afternoon (4-6 p.m.) in the Goldberg Room at Boalt Hall School of Law on the UC Berkeley campus, the Three Nations Indian Circle and Boalt's Native American Law Students Association host the **tenth annual commemoration** of the ill-fated revolt, with speakers plus a screening of the documentary film, *1932: Cicatriz de la Memoria* (1932: Scar of Memory). Free. Info: 415-724-4497.

— KELLY VANCE

