

RISING STARS

By Renée Targos



Shray



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The career of Subtractionist sculptor Shray, a name that means Rising Star, is reaching a new level as her sculpture, *Raising Tomorrow's Olympic Champions*, received the status of Excellent Works, out of eight American pieces selected for China's Beijing Landscape Sculptures of the 2008 Olympic Games.

Out of 2,433 submitted works from 82 countries, 17 international judges selected 386 pieces for this contest. Shray's sculpture travels with the 2008 Olympic international exhibit starting in Chinese cities, where citizens vote on favorite works, and then around the world to express China's respect of the Olympics.

"It's very humbling to be on tour representing the U.S.," says Shray.

The Olympic piece carries an overall theme found in Shray's work; the importance of loved ones. "All of us have gifts, but we need love and support to achieve our goals," says Shray. "We can't do it alone."

Seeing objects in 3-dimensions, Shray works by removing (abstracting) clay from a mound without using sketches or armature. She lets her heart and knowledge of anatomy guide her hand. Without turning the piece, she works from the front letting her arms sculpt the back following her mind's eye that "sees all the way around the form."



Evermore by Shray

At 15, she was inspired by Rodin's work and later by Brancusi, who her mother (a painter) introduced to her. Working in two styles, detailed and smooth, both are figurative.

The smooth style, accepted in the Olympic sculpture, reveals humanity without racial detail making it internationally appealing. With a focus on love, harmony and beauty, Shray challenges herself to create powerful work "with a sense of safety that evokes strong emotion."