

# NEW CITY

## SUNRISE-TIMES

MAYA  
ROMANOFF  
GIVES THE  
PAPER A  
NEW COVER

50 galleries  
and museums  
'converge'



photo/ DAVID NELSON

(writing on the (restaurant) wall • (pal joey) ugly love

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THE CHICAGO BIWEEKLY  
JUNE 30—JULY 13



Photo/David Nelson

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The skyline will change rather dramatically when **Maya Romanoff puts Bess' Sunrise** by *sally ruth bourrie* p16 on the Sun-Times Building for **Convergence 88** by *sally ruth bourrie* p14. As the powers-that-be argue about trading **the McCarthy for the Reliance** by *margy ann williams* p6 there could be more subtle changes. Inside the buildings, **the writing on the walls** by *jacqueline sloane* p9 tells why some restaurants don't have to change. Mamet's **Writing in Restaurants** by *jack helbig* p9 shows how he's changed. Reworking the classic: **Pal Joey** by *michael amedeo* p8 adds an edge; **Little Caesar** by *nate lee* p8 takes one away. **Nebraska** by *jack helbig* p8 can't rework a true story. The **Indigos** by *david witter* p10 are working themselves into the big time.

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THANKS!

# DETOURS

## kids

### CITY CHILD

Picture yourself in the hot, greasy midst of Taste of Chicago. One child is pulling you toward the corn and the other toward the burgers. What do you do? You pull them into the nice, beautiful, cool, comfortable Theatre of the Cultural Center, where, for free, you can see the Whirlwind Performance Company's musical revue of Broadway show tunes, Saturday, July 2 at 11:00 and 2:00. This, and "The Magic of Mime" at the same time and place on Saturday, July 9, are part of the eighth annual "City Child" extravaganza of performances, presentations, films, et al, in all the arts continuing through the end of August.

## film

### ARIA

The only thing the ten "music videos" by prominent directors that make up *Aria* have in common is opera. They are all (but one) silent films put to famous arias. Their visuals are beyond the capacity of MTV directors. Their confident imagination in teaming up with this timeless music makes the few minutes of Nicholas Roeg's *King Zog*, Jean-Luc Godard's sirens trying unsuccessfully to lure bodybuilders away from their pressing business, or Ken Russell's bloody jewels, as good as the best footage in their feature films. Altogether, the works have an epic quality that leaves you satiated and exhilarated. July 1 through July 10 at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport. \$5.50. 871-6604.

### GATES OF HEAVEN

Roger Ebert calls it, "rich and thought-provoking, it achieves so much while seeming to strain so little, that it stays in your mind for tantalizing days." *Gates of Heaven*, which Ebert gave four stars, is a 1978 documentary on pet cemeteries and their owners, produced, written and directed by Errol Morris. But, of course, it is about much more than that. "...it is about such large issues as love, immortality, failure, and the dogged elusiveness of the American Dream," writes Ebert. With the help of such praise, which it richly deserves, *Gates of Heaven* has become one of the most celebrated American documentaries. The film will be screened at Facets Multimedia, 1517 West Fullerton, on July 7 at 7:00. Afterward, both Morris and Ebert will be speaking on various topics concerning the film. During the question and answer period, ask Morris what it was like to see Werner Herzog eat his shoe (which he promised to do when and if Morris ever finished this film.) 281-9075.

## architecture

### TOURS

Explore the architecture, design, and landscaping of Sherman, Grant, and Washington Parks on Sunday, July 10, at 2:00. Meet in front of the Sherman Park fieldhouse on 52d Street between Loomis Blvd. and Racine (1200-1400W). A tour of Wicker Park, which is not a park but a neighborhood whose history includes principals in the 1886 Haymarket "Affair," meets at Damen and LeMoine (2000W, 1500N) at 1:00 on Sunday, July 10. If the whole Printers Row district just mystifies you, then meet on Wednesday, July 6 at 2:00 at the ArchiCenter, 330 S. Dearborn, for a two hour tour which will unravel some of the mysteries of who was here and who is here now. On Wednesday, July 13 at 10am, meet at Hyde Park Union Church (5600S, 1200E) for a tour of the area's stained glass, including Tiffany. A lunchtime tour of LaSalle Street buildings starts at the Rookery, 209 S. LaSalle, at 12:15 on Tuesday, July 12. All tours are sponsored by the Chicago Architecture Foundation, 782-1776.

## dance

### NEW DANCES '88

The Chicago Repertory Dance Ensemble is performing in October at World Expo '88 in Brisbane, Australia. But you don't have to wait till October, go to Brisbane, or pay World Expo prices to see the work of this most innovative company in new dances with titles such as "Withinsight," "Wired," "How Is My Flower!" and "Colors," a high-energy work choreographed to computer-programmed slide projections by visual artist John Boesche. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays, July 8 through July 23 at 8:00 at the Ruth Page Foundation Theatre, 1016 North Dearborn. \$12 for adults, \$8 for students, seniors, and professional dancers. Choreographers Forums will follow performances on July 9, 15, and 22. 440-9494.

# SUMMER

## Chicago Distance Classic Grant Park

**•5-Mile Non-Competitive Walk.** Sun. July 17 at 8am. Mile pledges urged with proceeds benefitting Chicago Lung Association's summer camp for asthmatic children. \$13. \$15 day of race. Call RUN-1900 or 243-2000.

(Attention all runners and triathletes. Mama Mia! Pasta offers free carbo-loading at its three locations. From now until Thanksgiving, athletes showing a pre-registration number for any race buying their first plate of pasta get their second free. Lines will start 48 hours prior to race times listed in the official CARA. 580-0788.)

### Farmers' Market

Daley Civic Center between Dearborn and Clark Street on Washington.

•Summer. July 7 and 14.

### Grant Park Concerts

Petrillo Music Shell

•**Grant Park Symphony Orchestra and Chorus.** Features leading international soloists and conductors. Every Wed., Fri., Sat., and Sun. evening through Aug. 28. Free. 819-0614.

### July 4 Celebrations

•**Chicago's 3rd of July Concert and Fireworks.** Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture and spectacular fireworks finale. Petrillo Band Shell in Grant Park.

•**Chicago's July 4 Parade.** Michigan Ave. to Congress.

•**Old-Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration.** 29th annual picnic and program at the Chicago Historical Society in the Society's Uihlein Plaza at Clark Street and North Ave. Bicentennial Band at 10:15am. Reading of the Declaration of Independence at 11am. Patriotic oration by State's Attorney Richard M. Daley. Free flags and balloons, patriotic tunes, and the firing of authentic Revolutionary-era Brown Bess muskets will round out the morning. Bring picnic lunch for later.

•**New World Patriotism Day Coalition Festival.** Grant Park Old Band Shell. 1-10. 324-1124.

•**Promontory Point Jazz Festival.** 55th St. and Lake Michigan. 1-5. 922-3307.

### Neighborhood Festivals

•**79th Street Treasure Chest Street Fair.** 2233 W. 79th Street/Liberty Temple Parking Lot. July 9, 11am-6. 778-3112.

•**When Good Neighbors Get together II.** South Shore Country Club, 71st and South Shore Dr., July 10 at noon.

•**Chicago 4-H Cook County Fair.** Lincoln Park farm and Zoo. July 15-18. 286-6767.

•**The Sixth Annual Brighton Park Lithuanian fair.** Western Avenue between 43th and 47th. July 15-17, 10am-10. 847-0664.

### Sidewalk Sale and Fest

Ashland Ave. between 42nd and 49th Sts.

•**Merchandise and Entertainment.** Sponsored by the Back of the Yards Businessmen's Assoc. The Jessie White Clemente H.S. Steel Drum Band. July 14-17, 10am-dusk. Call 247-5100 for more information.

### Taste of Chicago

Grant Park

•**July 1-10.** 11am-9:30. 86 restaurants represented. Concerts by Stevie Wonder, the Robert Cray Band, the Grant Park Symphony, and top pop, folk, blues, gospel, Latin and big band attractions. The Culpepper and Merriweather one-ring traveling circus. Chicago's 3rd of July concert with Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture and spectacular fireworks finale. Special entertainment for children and seniors. Free except for food coupons.

### Washington Square Park

Walton and Dearborn Streets

•**Absolute Music Dixie-Jazz Band.** Sun. July 10 at 2.

•**Big Band Music.** Northwestern University's Jazz Ensemble. Thur. July 14 at noon.

### WBEZ "Flea Market"

Navy Pier

Live concerts, jazz from Bluegrass to Blues, from 5:00-7:00, free:

•**K.D. Lang and The Reclines.** Sun. July 3.

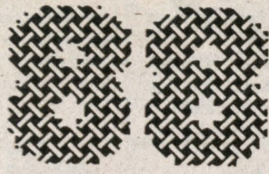
•**Lyle Lovett and The Big Band.** Sun. July 3.

•**Mike Cross, Alex Eppler, and Andrena Belcher.** Sun. July 10.

•**Bill Monroe and Bluegrass Boys.** Sun. July 17.

•**Chicken Chokers.** Sun. July 17.

# convergence



By SALLY RUTH BOURRIE

Few things play a more intimate role in our lives or have a longer history than the textile or fiber arts. Clothing was made from patterned cotton in the Indus Valley (modern Pakistan by about 2500 B.C. (a few centuries later than in America; it is first recorded in central Mexico c. 3000 B.C.). Woven silks from China, known only from their impressions left on objects wrapped in them, date about a thousand years later.

As for intimacy, loincloth-clad hunters are portrayed in seventh millennium B.C. cave paintings. And we all know that "Nothing comes between me and my Calvins."

From July 8-15, Chicago will be a garden of delight for textile hedonists when more than 2,000 textile and fiber artists from all over the world "converge" on our town to attend Convergence '88, sponsored by the Handweavers Guild of America and hosted by the North Shore Weavers Guild.

This isn't a specialists' conference, but a citywide jubilee with offerings for everyone. The three opening days of the event will

include special tours, workshops, seminars, and on- and off-site exhibits for the artists in attendance. At the same time, the public is invited to the more than 150 booths at the Hyatt Regency for demonstrations of weaving, and to see ethnic and antique weavings. Foreign participants include New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Sweden, and Mexico. Spinning wheels and accessories, dyes, books, clothing, baskets, and lace will be on view and available for purchase. Admission is \$5.

Clothes horses will love the informal fashion shows. But above all, don't miss the "Bob and Bob Bobbin Shuttle Race."

To best the superb job Toronto did with Convergence in 1986, Chicago's art community has rallied behind the North Shore Weavers Guild in supporting this biennial event. Fifty museums and galleries are presenting fiber-related exhibitions. Special gallery guides will be available at the art galleries as well as at the Hyatt Regency. Instead of Chicago's renowned Friday night gallery openings, most Convergence galleries will have Saturday night opening receptions that

## MAYA

(Continued from Page 16)

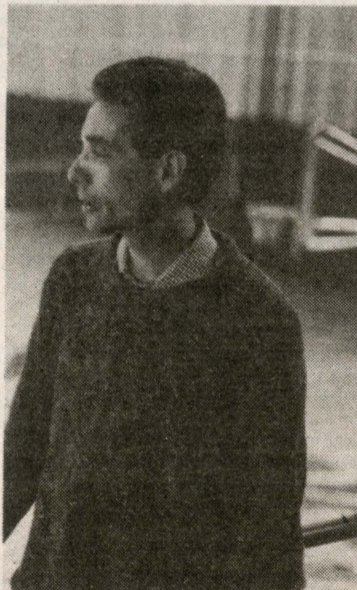
On these monumental structures, his work goes "where people live" on virtually the grandest scale possible.

The Chicago Design Pavilion was Romanoff's earliest outdoor installation. A few years later, in 1979, he undertook the first draping of an historic landmark in the New York park system when he installed *Kimono* on the New York Arsenal. Made of 400 yards of fabric in eight panels, it was in place for two months, surviving several major thunderstorms and winds of 40 miles per hour.

Now Chicago is the site of his—and the world's—largest hand-dyed work of art to date, totaling 48,000 square feet of fabric panels in every color of the rainbow. *Bess' Sunrise* will hang on the facade of the Chicago *Sun-Times* building from July 6-20 as part of Convergence 88.

Named for his late mother, the panels of *Bess' Sunrise* create the entire spectrum of colors we see when the sun comes up. Going from the sun's brilliant yellows on the east side of the *Sun-Times* building to the intense blues of the sky on the west, the piece is a melodic rendition of the sunrise experience. But it is also much more than that.

Romanoff says, "*Bess' Sunrise* is about soft, moving color and substantial, unmoving concrete—not the contrast, but the relationship between them." His delicate panels (which are, in actuality, strong canvas) will move harmoniously with the wind.

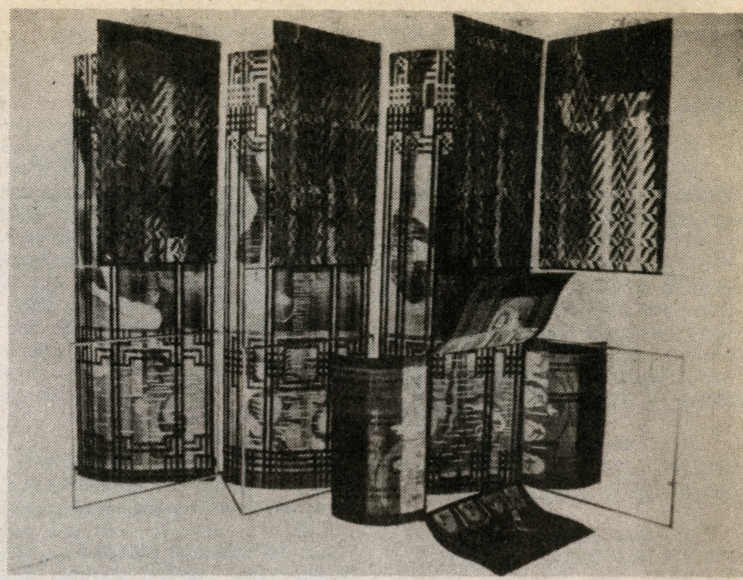


photo/ DAVID NELSON

"*Bess' Sunrise* will change the public's relationship with the *Sun-Times* building," Romanoff says. "Instead of seeing an aluminum structure, they will experience a light and airy edifice. The work will become a part of the lives of millions of city residents who daily observe this building."

This work is completely unlike that of the artist most associated with "wrapped" edifices: Christo. Romanoff doesn't hide a building or make a mystery package. He creates a new experience in which the panels and the building work in tandem, then go further—to live and breathe with the environment and the elements.

It's a spectacular gamble. As Romanoff says, "If I succeed, I'm a genius. If I fail, I'm a bum. "The power is frightening, but that's what makes it exciting and glorious." You sense he felt the same way when he saw dye seep into that first T-shirt.



Guardians of the New Life, by Gerhardt Knodel at Artemisia Gallery.

week, which the public is encouraged to attend.

Our museums are doing their part, too. On Thursday, July 7, from 6-8, the Cultural Center—always the home of not-to-be-missed shows—will host its opening reception for "American Baskets: the Eighties," and "World Tapestry Today." The State of Illinois Building will kick off "Tradition and Innovation in American Coverlet Patterns" on Friday, July 8 from 1-3. Both galas are free.

The Field Museum has brought in "1500 Years of Mexican Textiles" especially for Convergence. The Chicago Historical

Society is mounting a show on indigo dyeing.

With all that, you still won't need to step inside a museum, gallery or even the Hyatt Regency to know Convergence is here. Internationally acclaimed textile artist Maya Romanoff's commission "*Bess' Sunrise*," a 48,000 square foot fabric installation on the facade of the Chicago *Sun-Times* Building will be unveiled July 6. On view for two weeks, it is the largest hand-dyed work of art ever created.

For more information on events and lectures offered during Convergence 88, call 312/501-4001.

## international convergence

Chicago's wealth of ethnic museums gives Convergence 88 a special added richness. These institutions have risen to the occasion to provide a meaty international history of one of man's oldest art forms.

•**Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture:** national costumes, household linens, coverlets.

•**Czechoslovak Heritage Museum:** native costumes, household linens and embroideries.

•**DuSable Museum of African American History:** Kente weaving, dahomey cloth, Nigerian batik.

•**Latvian Folk Art Museum:** folk costumes, handwoven and knitted garments, linens.

•**Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum:** Mexican and Guatemalan garments.

•**Mitchell Indian Museum:** thirty Navajo rugs—historic, contemporary, geometric, pictorial.

•**Romanian Folk Art Museum:** handwoven costumes, rugs, tapestries, ornamental household linens.

•**Swedish American Museum Center:** varied textiles and em-

broideries, functional and decorative.

•**Speratus Museum of Judaica:** ceremonial textiles, some functional, others decorative.

•**Ukrainian National Museum:** new and historic woven textiles, embroidery, applique, leather-work.



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By SALLY RUTH BOURRIE

Bernard Malamud wrote, "Some are born whole; others must seek this blessed state in a struggle to achieve order. That is no loss to speak of..."

Maya Romanoff's life was made in a moment. He'd spent many years when "nothing seemed right," living like "an artist without a medium." After graduating from Berkeley with a degree in anthropology, the Chicago native went to the London School of Economics, then traveled through Europe and North Africa with his then-wife Rebecca, who he calls an "extraordinary" artist. But he wrote and watched her draw; he considered Rebecca the artist in the family. He would be the provider and lead a good, middle class Jewish life as a professor—something respectable.

Instead, he found his life in the first fabric he dyed. It was right after Woodstock when Rebecca brought home a T-shirt to try her hand at something called "tie-dye." The idea, as with all resist processes, is for the artist to introduce a substance that will resist the dye—wax, string, stitches, paste—to create the design. Romanoff had never heard of it before, but he thought it looked like fun. From the first immersion, "the power was being unleashed to make all the things I wanted to make—and the making of it thrilled me."

It was like an explosion. Those years of "wandering, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, across Africa, Europe and India" paid off now. He'd created a "visual catalogue" in his mind. Within a year and a half, he and Rebecca were selling garments to Ultimo and to private clients. They were offered work by Halston and Giorgio Sant'Angelo, an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Craft in New

York, floor coverings for New York's Metropolitan Rug Co., and a *House and Garden* cover.

"Nobody tried to categorize them. Everybody looked at us as being artists. There was a liquidity in those days. The whole generation of artists who were self-taught—Bob Dylan and the Beatles. John Lennon went to art school, not music school."

While self-instruction can have its limitations—"you lose a lot of craft"—the benefits can be great. The artist doesn't learn predetermined ideas of "right" and "wrong." Romanoff finds that you learn the most from "mistakes" and that those "mistakes" were particularly beneficial in his early period when everything was still so new. "If you see it first as a 'mistake,' then you may be closing off an opportunity. In the beginning I either didn't know they were 'mistakes,' or maybe I did, but I used them anyway."

Often, too, the self-taught artist hasn't heard, "It can't be done." "My success has been based on entering new fields, doing things that were never done before, like hand-dyed wallcoverings." Romanoff also introduced lacquering to the manufacture of wallcoverings, produced the first resist-dyed leathers and the first entirely fabric environment, *Garden Room*. The award-laden Romanoff continues to achieve success across the board, creating textiles for the Royal Palace in Zaire, Neiman-Marcus, Miami's Fontainebleau Hotel, and the Muppets. He collaborates with designers (among them, Jack Lenor Larsen), and has placed his work in collections of celebrities like Julie Christie and Dustin Hoffman as well as in such corporate collections as Quaker Oats and Crain Communications.

At the same time, his work is collected

by such renowned fiber artists as Claire Zeisler and by art collectors like Ruth Horwich. Romanoff textiles have been displayed at the Smithsonian Institution, the National Gallery in Australia, and the American Craft Museum in New York.

"Being an artist means keeping clear the channels to that part of you that connects with Life with a capital 'L.' That source is the same, be it the one-of-a-kind work or the fabrics and wallcoverings. They are just as meaningful as the one-of-a-kind work and they have much more impact on people because they go where people live." A physical reaction just like his is what he hopes for when spectators look at his work.

A new area of exploration for Romanoff is three-dimensionality in hanging fabrics. Last year he was invited to create a major interior textile installation for International Textile Fair '87 in Kyoto, Japan. Composed of 15 large-scale hanging panels 20 feet high, with three semi-circles of panels within circles, *The Great Shibori Enclosure of Movement, Peace and Comfort* is a symphony of intense, deep color; flowing, fabric with soft pyramidal protrusions/pockets both clarified and mystified by light in an ever-moving environment. Chicagoans will get the opportunity to experience a portion of *The Great Shibori* while it's on view at Marshall Field's, State Street, during Convergence 88, the world textile conference to be held here July 8-15.

Romanoff makes few freestanding fiber sculptures; most of his one-of-a-kind works of art hang. He feels "gravity is to be used with textiles. Their softness and motion is what interests me."

And yet, he sees himself first as a dyer.



Photo/David Nelson

"I start from color. I love the softness and brilliance and wetness—and the raised participation of chance." When he bunches up the fabric and places it in the bath, he feels as though the dye is inhabiting the textile, filling it up. "Dye is the way the fabric lives—like breath penetrates the body."

But he doesn't impose himself on his materials. "Fabric determines the form and the dynamics of the color, which is why I rarely do matching fabrics and paper. I do complementary things."

Romanoff describes himself as a "timid" person, not a brave one. But there's one area of his work he can't deny involves great risk, even for a brave man: exterior installations on public buildings.

(Continued on Page 14)



By SALLY RUTH BOURRIE

At 48,000 square feet and weighing 1,000 pounds, *Bess' Sunrise* is the world's largest hand-dyed work of art. By the time the 28 panels are unveiled on the Chicago *Sun-Times* Building on July 6, Maya Romanoff and his veteran team will have spent two months of round-the-clock work to create the record-breaking piece.

About two months ago, Chicago artist Romanoff was approached with the idea of doing one of his internationally-renowned exterior hanging fabric installations as part of Convergence 88, the conference on textile art to be held here July 8-15. The piece would be on view July 6-20 and he could choose any building he wished.

When he saw the *Sun-Times* building, he immediately thought, "Perfect! The image that came to my mind was a sunrise." Because the building was so big and the facade basically a sheet of metal, Romanoff's "sunrise" became the world's largest hand-dyed work of art and the pressure on the team intensified.

Once Romanoff determined the design, Vandana Srivastava, his assistant and an alumna of the Indian design school founded by Charles Eames, entered the picture. Srivastava has been with Romanoff for 10 years, serving as a new product designer and project coordinator. To-



Photo/David Nelson

gether they created the practical blueprint for the design.

Srivastava's job description: make sure there were *no mistakes*. It was her responsibility to coordinate the process, to know how far along each panel was—and other things, finding out who could sew 28 panels measuring six feet by 120 feet.

Done in Romanoff's trademark resist process in his copyrighted "Sunlit Sea" pattern, the panels were marked with the pattern and then tied before being placed in the vat. Each panel required three layers of color. There were 28 panels and 17 colors in total.

Bopha Ly, who's been with Romanoff for six years, was in charge of the dyeing. She had a team of four veterans plus about seven volunteers to help. With the dye at 200 degrees, the studio was an oven. People came in around-the-clock to remove the panels from their four-hour baths and replace them with others.

Srivastava found a shop that could do the sewing, the

Robert Brian Awning Company. They had sewing machines large enough and people "sharp enough" to understand what to do so there would be *no mistakes*.

On June 24, with time still of the essence, Srivastava borrowed the panels from the Robert Brian Awning Company for a few hours for a press preview. For the first time in a space big enough to unroll them, it was possible to check for errors. Srivastava and her team, Many Chook, Heng Bou, and Kheang Kheang, who've all been with Romanoff for about four years, would find out how well they had done.

It was a success. So far, *no mistakes*.

Srivastava whisked them back to the Robert Brian Awning Company.

The installation team, a group of about 15 to 20 people, including many volunteers, will be headed by another longtime Romanoff associate, Tibor Gyore. The team will begin on June 30 and must be ready to unveil the panels by 7:00 a.m. on July 6.

Each panel must be connected to the others with bungee cord, an elastic rope that can expand to two to three times its size. The entire piece will then, as Romanoff puts it, work like judo, "giving in the wind rather than withstanding it." When *Bess' Sunrise* is fully installed, it will be tied to the building top to bottom and each piece will be tethered across.

What was Romanoff's role in this process? Like the head of a Renaissance workshop, he is the head and his assistants carry out his ideas. However, in this project, already burdened with so many pressures, he was stricken with tragedy.

Bess was Romanoff's mother, not the woman who bore him, but the woman who raised him. When the commission was offered to the artist, she was in the hospital. He spent most of his time with her there. Things looked bad, but she got better—hence, *Bess' Sunrise*. Then she unexpectedly took a turn for the worse and died. One might say that fate, in a twisted serendipity, gave Romanoff a meaningful way to brighten the darkness; he made Bess a sunrise—hopeful, light, and lovely.