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# Performance art may leave audience breathless

By Ernest McIntyre  
Special for The Republic

## ARTS IN PHOENIX

Few artists could handle drawing for 38 hours while standing at an easel, let alone while running on a treadmill.

If you're mentally breathless just thinking about it, you've just become a part of the Angela Ellsworth piece of performance art now showing at the island of downtown art known as Studio LoDo.

Performance art isn't easy to explain to those who think of art as something you can either hang on a wall or place in the yard. It may involve objects, props, music, movement, stillness, everything or nothing.

"It's about being involved as a witness to artistic creation," says Studio LoDo Director Kathleen Thomas. Sometimes, according to audiences, it can experientially resemble being a witness to an accident.

It's no accident, however, that Ellsworth, of Phoenix, draws big crowds. She received her master's in fine arts degree in painting and performance art from Rutgers University and has taught drawing for more than 15 years.

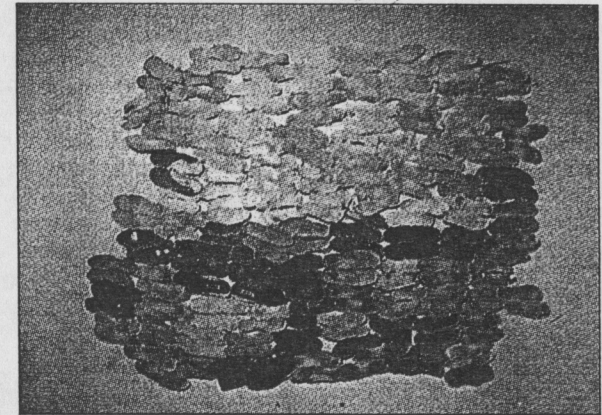
"Because I came from a figurative painting background," Ellsworth says, "it just seemed natural to move into performance work."

Her intimate knowledge of art's rules allows her to move beyond them in search of creating art through movement. Charcoal taped to the end of a flexible bamboo stick jiggles and shakes as Ellsworth jogs on the treadmill. She reaches forward and fills the large sheet of paper with sweeping lines and hash marks that only begin to hint at the movement of her body. Movement is the connec-

tion that ties together the physical act of athletic exercise and the making of art.

"Drawing on Breath" exercised her creativity in redefining "life drawing." Ellsworth had Ironman Christopher Bergland run 25 miles on a treadmill while a group of eight life drawing students worked on a single piece of paper. Athlete and artists created art through a shared commitment to passion, breathing and action.

Action is also implied in Ellsworth's wall-mounted quilt of shoe insoles from artists. As you look at the work, you can't help but think about the steps artists take in the creation of their art. Ellsworth wants you to get a sense of the place where art and movement overlap. "I gave artists a pair of Dr. Scholl's insoles, had them wear them for a while and then return them. They may be perceived as both intimate and disgusting, but as a quilt they warm the soul."



"Insole Quilt" by Angela Ellsworth.

### If you go

**WHAT:** "Drawing on Breath: New works by Angela Ellsworth."

**WHERE:** Studio LoDo, 15 E. Jackson St., No. 111, Phoenix. (602) 200-8790.

**WHEN:** Noon to 6 p.m. today and Saturday, or by appointment. Artist reception: 5 to 10 p.m. Saturday. Now through Wednesday.

**ADMISSION:** Free. +