

## **Israeli to exhibit at at SVSU**

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**THE SAGINAW NEWS**

A first is headed for the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum in mid-June.

" 'The Softness of Iron' is the first exhibition by an international artist we have hosted," says Marilyn Wheaton, the director of the museum on the grounds of Saginaw Valley State University.

"We are delighted that Orna Ben-Ami will travel from Tel Aviv (in Israel) to lecture about her work and attend the opening reception."

Opening Friday, June 12, the show will feature 29 welded sculptures by the Israeli artist.

It is written that Ben-Ami creates highly symbolic pieces that carry universal as well as deeply personal meanings -- conveying thought-provoking contrasts of war and peace, memory and forgetting, the private and the collective.

The pieces use everyday objects such as clothing, books and furniture which undergo a transformation as Ben-Ami explores her childhood memories and the struggles of Israel.

"Unlike some of the other artists working in iron, Orna executes the sculptures herself," says Ruthi Ofek, a curator at the Tefen Open Museum of Israeli Art.

"Her use of flat iron plates, which she transforms into voluminous forms by cutting, bending, welding and polishing, call for high technical skills. She turns the steel's hardness into the softness of a material that is both intensely expressive and powerfully present in space."

The show runs through Saturday, Sept. 19. The opening reception is from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. June 12, and is preceded by a 4 p.m. lecture by the artist.

Ben-Ami, 53, studied sculpture at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., and Tel Aviv University.

She has had numerous solo exhibitions in her native Israel as well as around the world and works in a renovated henhouse turned into an art gallery.

The exhibition was organized by International Arts & Artists, a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts.

Gallery hours at SVSU are noon to 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays.