

Bloch's sculpture is dedicated in Shelton

by **Janis Gibson**

Free-lance Writer

One of the world's most famous drawings, Leonardo da Vinci's Renaissance masterpiece "Vitruvian Man," has been transformed into a monumental stainless steel sculpture of the same name by Redding's Babette Bloch.

The 16-foot-tall 5,000-pound sculpture was dedicated at Enterprise Corporate Park in Shelton on Aug. 29 with about 700 people in attendance. It was commissioned by the 65-acre property's developer, R.D. Scinto, Inc.

Company principal Robert Scinto, art historian Philip Eliasoph and Ms. Bloch spoke at the dedication.

Ms. Bloch described the challenges and joys of creating the massive sculpture, comprising three hand-textured stainless steel figures, one inside a circle, two within squares standing on a granite base, and the decision to have two nearly identical figures facing outward on either side since Leonardo showed the Vitruvian Man only from the front. She noted the years-long project included her passions for creating art and solving engineering problems.

Too thick to be precisely cut by lasers, the 5/8ths of an inch thick stainless steel was water-jet cut by a mixture of water and garnet sand forced through a tube nearly as slender as a ballpoint pen under 60,000 pounds of pressure. Features including facial expression, hair, and musculature, are suggested by piercings in the steel.

Ms. Bloch acknowledged the contributions of RAM Specialty Fabrication of Naugatuck in engineering, grinding, welding and fabri-



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Babette Bloch's "Vitruvian Man" was unveiled at Enterprises Corporate Park in Shelton on Aug. 29.

cating and KV Technologies, Suffield, for fabrication and cutting.

An innovator in the use of laser- and water jet-cut stainless steel, Ms. Bloch's sculptures range from tabletop to monumental in size; her entries in the Mark Twain Art Show are always popular with those attending.

Her limited edition sculptures of vases and flowers and wildlife are collected privately in Europe and the United States and her public commissions include sculp-

tures of pioneers installed in Hudson Heritage Farm in Ganges, Mich., and nine-foot-tall figures that recall life on an antebellum farm, including a plantation owner, an overseer, and enslaved Africans, at Brookgreen Gardens, founded in Murrells Inlet, S.C., in 1931 by the late Archer and Anna Hyatt Huntington.

Ms. Bloch and her husband, noted sculptor Marc Mellon, maintain studios in their Redding home. For more information on her work, visit babettebloch.com.