

Publication: Palm Beach Post; Date: May 9, 2016; Section: Accent; Page: E1

ART

All in the family at Norton exhibition

Four generations of Phipps family artists showcase works.

By Jan Sjostrom
Palm Beach Daily News

Not many families could be the subject of an exhibition spanning six artists and four generations. The Phipps family can.

The artists featured in "Art in the Family Tree" at the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens in West Palm Beach are all related to resident Susie Phipps Cochran, who also has works in the show. They are: Michael Phipps (her late father), Diana Guest (her late second cousin), Hubert Phipps (her cousin), Jay Cochran (her son) and Rafe Cochran (Jay Cochran's son).

The Phipps family fortune originated with Susie Phipps Cochran's great-grandfather Henry Phipps, a partner in Carnegie Steel. The family once owned large stretches of coastal South Florida, including much of Palm Beach and the El Cid neighborhood, home of

the Ann Norton. That's one reason the Ann Norton mounted the exhibition, executive director Karen Steele said. "This makes sense historically, plus Susie's work is so aligned with what we have in the gardens."

Susie Phipps Cochran's giant bronze insects and figurative pieces are more playful than the monumental abstract sculptures by Ann Norton that anchor the gardens, but they're equally at home outdoors.

Did family play a role in the artists' individual decisions to pursue art? It depends on who you ask.

"No," Hubert Phipps said. He's been making art for most of his life, even when he was a professional race car driver in the 1980s.

Sporting competition runs in the family. Michael Phipps was a champion polo player, and Jay Cochran competed on the high-performance prototype

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Diana Guest's bronze cheetah head is among several pieces inspired by the natural world she has in the exhibition "Art in the Family Tree" at the Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens. CONTRIBUTED

IF YOU GO

What: "Art in the Family Tree"
Where: Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens, 2051 S. Flagler Drive, West Palm Beach
When: Through May 15
Information: 561-832-5328; www.ansg.org