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Artist ‘Honey’ Kassoy was 96

Hortense Kassoy, who died at 96 on July 5, was an artist as adept with a chisel as she was with a paint brush. For many years she shared studios with her late husband, Bernard, in both Kingsbridge Heights and Burlington, N.Y., not far from Cooperstown.

The couple moved to the Amalgamated Houses in 1950 and quickly became active members of the community. Among the many activities Honey — as she was known to all — embraced were the Amalgamated Nursery School, the co-op’s visual arts committee, the costume ball committee, a publication called *Co-op Voices* and the Apricot theater group. Her sculpture, “Maternal Force,” is a permanent fixture in the courtyard of the two Amalgamated towers located on Sedgwick Avenue between Saxon and Dickenson avenues.

Ms. Kassoy’s reach extended far beyond the confines of the Amalgamated. She was a teacher at Evander Childs High School and a founding member of the Bronx Council on the Arts who was instrumental in founding the Bronx Museum of the Arts. Together with her husband, she hosted an annual open studio during Bronx Week celebrations.

Beyond the Bronx, she was corresponding secretary for the United States Committee of the International Association of Artists — a branch of UNESCO — from 1979 to 1993, serving as a U.S. delegate to its 10th Congress in Finland in 1983. She has held executive positions with New York Artists Equity Association and the American Society of Contemporary Artists.

Her artistic career spanned 74 years. She graduated from Pratt Institute in 1936 and earned degrees from Columbia Teachers College in 1938 and 1939 when her work was first featured in museums and galleries. Both she and her husband were noted for exploring a wide variety of media including oils, watercolors, wood and stone.

According to a recent posting on the Bronx Council on the Arts website, Ms. Kassoy’s accolades include a scholarship to Parson’s School of Design in Paris and first prize in watercolor on painter’s day at the 1939 New York World’s Fair.

She received numerous awards for sculpture from the American Society of Contemporary Artists’ annual showcases and six fellowships from the Virginia Center for Creative Arts.

Ms. Kassoy is survived by her daughters Meredith Kassoy and Sheila Kassoy Krstevski, sons-in-law Rafael Bustin and Dimitar (Mitko) Krstevski, grandson Alexander Krstevski and wife Anna Krstevski with great-grandson Nicholas Krstevski and granddaughter Toby Krstevski.

A memorial gathering will be held on Saturday, July 13, at 2 p.m. in Vladeck Hall, at 74 Van Cortlandt Park South on the Corner of Hillman Avenue.