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Lifelike Bronze Swimmer Sculpture Dazzles Passersby in SoHo

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An ultra-lifelike sculpture of a tranquil woman wearing a pink bathing cap was installed in SoHo on May 20, 2012. (DNAinfo/Andrea Swalec)

SOHO — A sculpture of a woman recently installed in SoHo's **Petrosino Square** is so realistic that observers couldn't tell the difference between painted raindrops and the real thing during a spring downpour Monday.

The ultra-lifelike sculpture featuring a tranquil woman wearing a pink **bathing cap** — the latest public art project backed by the city Parks Department — was installed Sunday and dazzled passersby this week.

East Flatbush resident Andrea McFarlane said **Carole A. Feuerman's** nearly 7-foot-long painted bronze sculpture, "Survival of Serena," added a touch of whimsy to her stroll through Petrosino Square, the triangular park at the intersection of SoHo, **NoLita** and **Little Italy**.

"The colors just popped," McFarlane said, as she examined the swimmer's eyelashes, fingernails and the wisps of hair hanging from her swim cap. "It looks so real I wanted to touch it."

Feuerman, a 25-year SoHo resident, spent six months applying more than 100 layers of paint to the figure cast in bronze — rather than in her usual medium of painted resin — so it can withstand the elements.

It's quite a feat to make hard metal look like soft flesh," she said.

A version of "Survival of Serena" made from painted resin debuted at the Venice Biennale in 2007 and won top honors in the Beijing Biennale in 2008, Feuerman said. The statue is named after Venice's former name *La Serenissima*, meaning "the most serene."

Feuerman said she has made a series of sculptures depicting calm bathers because people relate to "the simple act of resting."

"I like people to look at a sculpture and feel emotionally moved and connected to it. This work makes people stop and contemplate their own feelings. It makes people think about what this girl was doing to make herself so happy," she explained.

"I want people to go [to Petrosino Square] and for it to make them happy," added the upstate New York native, who has studios in Chelsea and Jersey City.

The busy intersection of Spring Street, Lafayette Street and Cleveland Place was also in need of some serenity, Feuerman said.

"I like this park for its peace at a place that has more and more happening and is become more of an 'in' spot."

"Survival of Serena" is scheduled to remain in Petrosino Square through September 23, according to a statement from the Parks Department.

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