



## Christina Cassara

June 28, 2024

Christina "Tina" Cassara, the artist, educator, and child of the 1960s, who taught at the Cleveland Institute of Art for nearly 40 years and had a significant influence on generations of young artists, died on June 17 after suffering a traumatic head injury. She was 75. Tina brought social themes and an aggressive awareness of cultural diversity to her studio and classroom. She believed there are many things artists can do to change the standard norm without losing a sense of self-awareness. Tina defended the right for marginalized artists to be heard and seen, and to support one's true self in the face of critical opposition. She understood her creative work as political activism, though she distrusted overly simple solutions, leaned heavily against them, and resisted authority. She married photographer, filmmaker, and writer Bruce Checefsky in 1988 and has lived in the Tremont neighborhood of Cleveland since the mid-80s, where she founded a supportive arts community. Tina devoted her time to working in the studio, researching the women's labor movement in the American textile industry. She used computer-aided embroidery to create two-dimensional hangings of lyrics from working women's songs. She also co-produced and appeared in several of Checefsky's short films. "It takes a long time for these various ideas to come together. It happens over years and years of work??one piece develops another," said Cassara in her solo exhibition at the Sculpture Center in 2014. Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and a graduate of Barnard College, Tina was editor of the pioneering quarterly journal of folk music and folk songs,

Sing Out!, while living in New York City during the 1970s, a magazine whose mission was to preserve and support the cultural diversity and heritage of all traditional and contemporary folk music. She later studied at Cranbrook Academy of Art and graduated with an MFA in Fiber Arts. Besides her husband, Bruce Checefsky, she is survived by Evelyn Checefsky of Peckville, PA; Walter and Susan Checefsky of Archbald, PA; Christine Nugent and husband William of Doylestown; William Nugent of Hatboro; Walter A. Checefsky of Philadelphia; Sarah Nugent and Jack Nugent of Doylestown. Siblings include Francesca Cassara of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her parents, Gretchen and Frank Cassara, preceded her in death. A Memorial and Celebration of Tina's life at Praxis Fiber Workshop in the Collinwood neighborhood of Cleveland will take place on August 25, 2024, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Instead of flowers, Memorial Contributions to Praxis Fiber Workshop in Tina's name to support an artist scholarship are being accepted.

# Tribute Wall

CP

“ Bruce and family. I met you and Tina years ago at our CDC. She came to our O.W.L.S. gatherings, always pleasant and had a smile for everyone. She is missed and will be. My deepest sympathies and condolences to you. May God bless you. Carol

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**Carol Prusak** - July 01, 2024 at 06:39 PM

KM

“ My deepest sympathies and condolences to Bruce and his family, and to Francesca for their loss of Tina. She was my instructor for three years at CIA which was an honor to have had her a creative mentor. She made me think outside thr box of 'traditional women's work". The art community in Cleveland is not the same without Tina.

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**Kathryn Mierke** - June 29, 2024 at 10:06 AM