

Art + Artist - 1990

# Anti-nuclear statue finally gets a home

## Naked, wailing trio to go up at Town Clock tonight

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After more than a year of debate, one of the most controversial and disturbing pieces of art in Santa Cruz will finally get its place in the sun.

"Collateral Damage: A Reality of War" — a 6-foot bronze depiction of a naked man, woman and child wailing skyward before nuclear annihilation — will be erected at the Town Clock at 6 tonight. The statue, by local artist E.A. Chase, takes its name

from the military term for civilians killed in war.

A formal dedication is planned for 11:30 a.m. Saturday — the day before the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima — to be followed by a "No Nukes" rally at 1 p.m. in San Lorenzo Park.

For Chase, 62, an anti-nuclear activist who created the statue in 1959 as "Last Event," it is the end of a long struggle to find a public home for it.

"I feel righteous gratification,"

Chase said earlier this week as the concrete pedestal, embedded with sawed up guns, was poured. "A lot of people who were close to me at the time felt I was putting my career in jeopardy because it was un-American to oppose nuclear war."

Chase trucked the original, fiberglass statue around the country, hoping to have it placed at the United Nations Plaza in New York City. But the U.S. State Department blocked the move, say-

See **STATUE**, Page 2B

SJMN AUG 4, 1995



MERCURY NEWS FILE PHOTOGRAPH

E.A. Chase with his "Reality of War," which will go on public display.

# Controversial piece of art finds a home in Santa Cruz

■ **STATUE**  
from Page 1B

ing it "doesn't represent the best interests" of the country.

For the next 30 years, the statue collected dust in Chase's garage and in friends' homes, he said, acknowledging that the piece "is hard to live with on a personal level."

"It's such an anguished sub-

ject," Chase said. "The beauty resides in the truthfulness of the statement."

Many, however, have had trouble seeing that beauty. When Santa Cruz peace activists in March 1993 proposed erecting the statue in place of a 75-year-old World War I monument downtown, they drew howls from outraged veterans.

That led to a months-long

search for another location. The activists, from the Resource Center for Nonviolence and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Bill Motto Post 5888, suggested putting the statue over a granite compass set in the sidewalk across from the post office after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. That idea was shot down.

Asked in a local newspaper poll where they would prefer to see

the statue, most respondents said "somewhere else."

Critics argued the statue's message — essentially attacking the U.S. decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan to end World War II — is inappropriate for downtown and insulting to veterans.

But supporters said civilians killed in war deserve to be remembered as much as soldiers.

The sculpture will make Santa Cruz one of few U.S. cities to commemorate civilian war dead, Rand said.

"I think it's a very important expression for the community that there's another side to war and another price to be paid in war," Rand said. "It's a very striking piece."

In December 1993, the city council voted to place the statue

near the Town Clock. Activists then set out to raise the \$30,000 needed to cast the statue in bronze. They have collected half that much so far, and hope to collect \$20,000 more for a second statue to be placed in Hiroshima.

"I'm sure there are a lot of people who would rather see it back in my garage," Chase said. "But it's a pleasure to me to see it finally get a public setting."