

Karen Aqua, 57, of Cambridge, animation artist, film director

Karen Aqua of Cambridge, an independent animation artist, died Monday at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. She was 57.

Born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and raised in Forty Fort, Pa., Ms. Aqua was a longtime resident of Cambridge. She was a 1972 graduate of Wyoming Valley West High School, Forty-Fort, Pa., and earned a bachelor's degree in illustration with a focus on animation from Rhode Island School of Design.

Ms. Aqua completed 11 independently produced animated films and one collaborative animation/live action video. Her award-winning films have been screened worldwide, at festivals in Europe, Asia, North and South America, New Zealand, and the Middle East.

She received fellowships from the American Film Institute, the MacDowell Colony, Millay Colony for the Arts, Fundacion Valparaiso in Spain, New England Film/Video Fel-

lowship Program, Berkshire Taconic Trust, LEF Foundation, the Puffin Foundation and, just prior to her death, from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Ms. Aqua taught animation at Boston College and Emerson College, as well as at workshops and residencies around the United States.

She served as a juror for film festivals in Japan, Canada, and the United States, and presented many screenings of her work.

In 2005, a special program of Ms. Aqua's animated films was presented in Iran at the Tehran International Animation Festival. Since 1990 she directed/animated 22 segments for "Sesame Street." Ms. Aqua's recent film, "Twist of Fate," was screened at Telluride Film Festival, Starz Denver Film Festival, Kos Ippokratis International Health Film Festival in Greece, as well as at international animation festivals in Ottawa, Hiroshima,

and Annecy in France. The film received awards at Ann Arbor Film Festival, James River Film Festival, and Black Maria Film and Video Festival. Her most recent film, "Taxonomy," was completed just before her death and debuted at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston.

Ms. Aqua was a member of ASIFA, an international society for animation artists. She enjoyed traveling around the world and presenting films, most recently at film festivals in Sweden and Greece.

Ms. Aqua is survived by her husband, Ken Field; her mother, Ruth (Bhaerman) of Edwardsville, Pa.; a brother, Hal of Denver, Colo.; two sisters, Marlene of Northfield, N.J., and Ellen Hart of Stamford, Conn.; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. July 10 at The Center for Arts at the Armory, Somerville.

Arrangements by Burns Funeral Home, Cambridge.