

AFRICA DRAWS ARTIST



The Burch/Staff Photographer

Tujunga artist Danielle Eubank is seen against the shimmering waters of Channel Islands Harbor in Oxnard, depicted in one of her water-theme paintings.

Fantastic voyage

Odyssey Tujunga artist will join may cast new light on world's history of sea exploration

By Dana Bartholomew
STAFF WRITER

TUJUNGA

An equatorial sun beats down on a lone Phoenician galley, its sail grasping for a breeze as its crew heaves every oar. Some say the Phoenician "rulers of the sea" could have sailed the open boat around Africa some 2,600 years ago. And Tujunga artist Danielle Eubank will man an oar next month on a replica-boat expedition on a 16,000-mile voyage to prove it.

"It's an extremely dangerous voyage," said Eubank, 39, official voice of the galley Phoenicia and the only American on the journey. "These are some of the most pirated waters in the world. And going around the Cape (of Africa) are some of the most dangerous waters in the world, with freak waves, bizarre currents, high winds. You're not trying hard enough unless you're scared."

Built of Aleppo pine and bound by pitch and wooden dowels, the 70-foot Phoenicia will sail by wind and brawn down the Suez Canal on Aug. 1 for a 10-month voyage around Africa. A crew of 20 will man the



Above are the replica of a Phoenician galley and Danielle Eubank's sketching materials. Below is the artist's painting "A Stroll in Camden."



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EUBANK

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vessel — minus motor, kitchen, shower or toilet. The only comforts along the way will be 14 ports of call and some bunks in a leaky bilge.

The expedition is the brainchild of British sailor Philip Beale, who wants to rewrite African history by proving that the Phoenicians beat the Portuguese around the Cape by a full 2,000 years.

The amateur historian and businessman had sailed a replica eighth-century ship, Borobudur, from Indonesia to West Africa in 2003-04, on which Eubank was resident artist.

Best known for her undulating close-up paintings of water, Eubank will join the Phoenicia as expedition artist on several legs of the journey. "Going through the Suez will be a killer," she said, "because you can't use a sail. You have to row. It is hot and humid."

Beale believes it was Egyptian King Necho II who had commissioned Phoenician seafarers to sail around Africa in 600 B.C. He claims research shows that Greek historian Herodotus made mention of the voyage 200 years after the event.

"The Europeans think it was Portuguese explorer Bartholomeu Dias who did it first," the ex-Royal Navy man who will captain the 50-ton Phoenicia told Reuters.

"But I think the Phoenicians did it 2,000 years earlier and I want to prove it. They basically built (the ship) in kit form, carried it overland to the Red Sea, put it together and set off."

Beale was inspired by such epic voyages as Thor Heyerdahl's 1947 Kon Tiki expedition across the Pacific on a balsa-wood raft.

His Phoenicia galley replica will set sail from Tartus, Syria, around the Horn of Africa, hug the east coast and circle the Cape of Good Hope off South Africa before heading north toward the Strait of Gibraltar and home.

Historians and mariners applauded the 21st-century re-creation of an alleged 2,600-year-old journey, supported by the Royal Geographical Society.

"I'm inclined to believe the Greek historian," said Jacco Dieleman, an Egyptologist at UCLA. "I believe it was based on truth — for the simple reason that he himself didn't believe it."

"I believe the Phoenicians did this, because no one else could have come up with that story."

Dieleman said Herodotus, who held a different view of

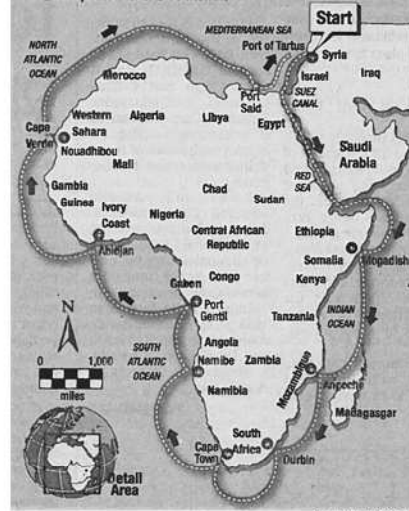


The Burch/Staff Photographer

Tujunga artist Danielle Eubank sits in her garage, which she uses as a studio, as her paintings of water hang on the wall. She'll add to those works during her upcoming voyage around Africa.

The route

Tujunga artist Danielle Eubank will join an ancient Phoenician galley replica on a 16,000-mile expedition around Africa to prove the Phoenicians beat Portuguese explorers around the continent 2,000 years earlier during a voyage in 600 B.C. The clockwise journey on the galley Phoenicia will begin in Syria on Aug. 1 and is expected to take 10 months.



Gregg Miller/Staff Artist

the world, was suspicious of the Phoenician account that the sun rose on one horizon going south and the opposite while sailing north.

Claude Hulet, a mariner now writing a book on how Dias braved frigid westerlies around the Cape in his caravelle in 1479-80, believes the Phoenician tale, too.

"They were rulers of the sea, masters of the Mediterranean," said Hulet, a UCLA professor emeritus in Spanish and Portuguese. "It was entirely possible."

"If (Beale and his crew) can get a boat to hold together, they have a relatively easy task" of sailing east-to-west around the Cape, he said.

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— DANIELLE EUBANK
Only American on a voyage around Africa

Eubank, who has studios in Tujunga and London, will pack charcoal and paints to chronicle the voyage and the waters around Africa — when not manning her 12-foot oar. "I'm thinking about water, in that the painting is an homage to water," the Northern California native said, daubing a canvas rippling with the surface of the sea. "Water is infinity. It's also a great source of freedom to me as an artist."

"My palms are pretty ready for the oar," she said. "I work out. I swim. I hope I have enough callouses."

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