

THE SCULPTURE CENTER

The Sculpture Center is dedicated to enhancing our community's appreciation of sculpture by fostering the careers of emerging sculptors and promoting the preservation of outdoor sculpture.

Fall '02
#33

A Friend to Sculpture by Meredith Light

Professor Edward Olszewski is an art lover. His home, laden with tasteful paintings, drawings, and sculptures, is a museum of personal memories and refined taste. From 19th century French anonymous sketches to abstract, contemporary sculpture made by regional artists, Professor Olszewski embraces it all. He is a self-made man, a culturally-rich father-figure type, exuding warmth and wisdom all at once.

The origins of Ed's interest in art began back in 1966 when the Arno River flooded in Italy. As a chemist, "I thought maybe I could do something with my scientific knowledge that involved damages suffered in Florence and Venice," he tells me. So what did he do?—take matters into his own hands. "I wrote to the distinguished art historian H.W.Janson," who invited him to New York City to discuss the issue. This eventually led to the completion of a Ph.D. in art history, specializing in the Renaissance. He accepted a position as Professor at Case Western Reserve University in 1971, "and have never regretted it since," he adds.

Looking around his living room, though, I spot much more than a taste for Renaissance art. It is his general interest in art theory and treatises which broadens his appreciation for art of all ages. "I began collecting a variety of things mainly for pedagogical reasons," he says, pointing to his French drawings collection hanging side-by-side on the corner wall. He explains that the 19th century French Academies took a similar approach to composition and draftmanship as the Renaissance Italians.

His interest in theoretical approach and detail reinforces his interest in contemporary art. "So when something like The Sculpture Center came along, I was quite interested because this was an organization interested in supporting young students and providing exhibition space for BFA and MFA graduates," Professor Olszewski says. As a long-time friend of The Sculpture Center, Professor Olszewski serves as an active member of the Conservation Committee and presented a lecture on Cleveland's *Free Stamp* just this past winter. He continually takes a sincere interest in the exhibiting artists, occasionally buying favored



pieces of sculpture. Referring to the young exhibiting artists of The Sculpture Center, he tells me: "The best can be quite good."

His judgment on 'quite good' sculpture: he displays it throughout his home. The wood sculpture *Minerva's Owl* by local artist Ken Palko stands in the foyer in full view. Professor Olszewski explains the sculpture as a study of positive and negative space, resembling David E. Davis' work. A sandstone sculpture by Bruce Biro sits between two chairs on a living room coffee table, abstract and biomorphic in nature. Professor Olszewski purchased it because of his interest in Biro's expression of pure form. A trellis-like sculpture by sculptor Charles Rayburn, a graduate of Ohio State University, decorates the front lawn for all passers-by to enjoy. This work is part of a three-piece set and is named *Guardian*. Professor Olszewski guides my attention to the sculpture's beauty in symmetry. All three of these artists have been exhibitors at The Sculpture Center in recent years.

Despite their shared beauty, the sculptures do not actually resemble each other in material, dimension, or size. So what is it that attracts him to specific works of art? His interest in promoting and supporting contemporary art has more to do with theoretical approach. "Even though my interest is in the 16th century, I live in the 21st century," Professor Olszewski points out. He feels strongly about supporting and encouraging emerging artists "which is exactly what The Sculpture Center does," he says. Professor Olszewski continues to be a vital part of the art community in Cleveland through his knowledge, support, and appreciation for young artists and their endeavors. He is a wonderful example of support and appreciation for one of humanity's greatest modes of expression and beauty: art.

Window To Sculpture:
John Leyland
by Carolyn Jirousek



Ancient artifacts and elemental materials, such as stone, jade, bones, and quartz, are the inspiration for John Leyland's most recent ceramic works exhibited at The Sculpture Center this summer. Musing upon the use of visual metaphor by Neolithic cultures to explain the mysteries of the universe, Leyland has fashioned sculptures from clay that evoke the character of ritual objects and primal life forms. Most of the work is based on the sphere, disk and blade—more specifically influenced by Chinese axe and blade forms, as well as ceremonial celts and carved balls from Meso-America and the British Isles. The hand-built forms lose their identity as clay and take on, instead, the shape and texture of roughened stones and weathered bone.

Several wall-mounted cocoon-like shapes seemed to swell gently into space, as if they could inflate themselves through one or two small orifices punctuating their surfaces. Delicate, crackled glazes reinforced the

notion of a stretching skin. A number of floor pieces suggested small boulders strewn across a barren plain. Leyland achieved the natural effect of moss and lichen growth with his choice of surface treatment, yet has chosen to leave the markings of his handmade process in scratchings and carved out openings, through which light flows to create intriguing shadows beneath the sculpture. Sometimes the artist mixes sawdust into the clay, which burns out during firing to leave a pitted, eroded surface.

The simplicity of form, muted color, and earthy texture of the artifacts that inform Leyland's work endow them with a contemplative, spiritual power. One could easily live with these creations.



ATTENTION EMERGING SCULPTORS: Fill out the enclosed form to be considered for our 2003 *Window to Sculpture* exhibition series.



Ace Volunteer
Al Krueger
by Carol Gill

It was a fortunate day for The Sculpture Center when, several years ago, Al Krueger attended an exhibit which he had read about in the Newsletter. Already having a special interest in outdoor sculpture, he was impressed with The Sculpture Center and was later to become one of its most valuable volunteers.

Born in St. Louis, Al was a geologist in the soft rock mining business working for several companies in the Northeast United States before settling, and eventually retiring, in Elyria.

Al's interest in outdoor sculpture began in 1963 while reading a New York Times article on David Smith, which pictured the illustrious sculptor viewing his field of sculpture. Now Al has his own "field of sculpture," a collection

of ten outdoor works. His most recent addition is a self-designed piece, which was fabricated by sculptor Mike Spencer of The Davis Studio.

Combining the keen observational skills of a scientist, an artistic eye, and a love of sculpture, Al is ideally qualified for documenting sculpture to be included in The Ohio Outdoor Sculpture Inventory. In addition, Al is a superb photographer. Each of his entries is not only meticulously described according to stipulated guidelines, but also accompanied with outstanding images. But wait, there's more! Al graciously (and without pressure from grateful staff members) offered to travel afar to survey sculpture. His most recent mission was to Toledo where he documented 30 works throughout the city. Other jaunts have taken him to Akron, Willoughby and around Cleveland. Altogether, Al has surveyed some 60 sculptures and continues to offer us his wonderful services.

In addition to sculpture, Al is an avid opera lover, attending some 24 performances a year! This certainly is a man for all seasons—and The Sculpture Center is most lucky to be the recipient of his talent and generosity. Kudos to Al Krueger!



New Homes for works by W. McVey by Claire Kovacs

The face of the city of Cleveland today is in a state of flux; buildings are being erected and demolished, businesses are coming and going, and a renewed interest in the arts is emerging. An unfortunate result of some these rapid changes is the orphaning of several of Cleveland's outdoor sculptures. They are often relegated to storage for long periods of time, thus out of the sight and minds of the public. Thankfully, The Sculpture Center, along with a few other concerned individuals, have not forgotten about these orphaned treasures and have been dedicated in finding new homes for them so that people may enjoy viewing them again.

A few of these rescued pieces are the work of one of Cleveland's most respected sculptors, William McVey (1905-1995). He enjoyed a long and prolific career here and headed the Cleveland Institute of Art's Sculpture Department for many years.

In 1987, McVey's bronze vision of "Cleveland's Greatest Mayor," *Tom Johnson* (below left), was originally placed behind Case Western Reserve University's Freiburger Library near the parking lot and was not highly visible. When the library was torn down in 1996, the piece was moved to CWRU's storage facility on Cedar Road. The monument remained there until it was reinstalled near The Western Reserve Historical Society in 2002 on a long-term loan from the university.

Two more of McVey's local sculptures, *Awakening* (below right) and *Medusa* (above), have recently been moved from their original locations to be enjoyed at the Woodland Gardens of the Cleveland Botanical Gardens. McVey created the cement *Medusa* head in 1957 to adorn the Medusa Cement Corporation's headquarters located at the corner of Lee and Monticello in Cleveland Heights. After the company closed, the piece was donated to the Gardens in 2001.

McVey's *Awakening* was also orphaned for a long time and has an interesting history. McVey intended for the sculpture be placed in the Cleveland Museum of Art's Rose Garden. However, *Awakening* was loaned to the Great Lakes Exhibition in 1936, which was held at the



former Cleveland Municipal Stadium. It made its home there in the Donald Gray Gardens until the stadium was demolished in 1996. *Awakening* then went into storage for about five years until Bill Jirousek and a local lawyer and friend of McVey's, Seth Taft, undertook the mission to get this piece as well as the two previously mentioned, back into the public's eye. This was accomplished largely through the help of The Sculpture Center, a few local organizations, and individual contributions.

On the whole, Cleveland has been changing for the better, but one must remember the importance of its cultural history. Much of our outdoor sculpture is a standing testament of this past—commemorations of our leaders, of businesses, and of our artistic heritage. This is why it is important to not allow these sculptures be orphaned for very long. Rather find new homes for them quickly, so that they can stand as reminders of where we came from and where we are headed for our future generations to enjoy.



Trolley Tour: Cleveland Cultural Gardens by Katherine Ukmar

I would like to thank The Sculpture Center patrons who attended our program on The Cleveland Cultural Gardens in Rockefeller Park. The event took place on Saturday, July 20 and began with an informative slide lecture given by Rebecca McFarland, a local librarian who enjoys sharing her passion for Cleveland history. She pointed out that the Gardens were conceived in the early 1900s to honor our city's rich cultural diversity and to symbolize peace.

Representing various nationality groups, there are presently twenty Gardens, many of which are expansive, showcasing beautiful foliage, elaborate masonry walls, paved terraces, and fountains. Over sixty commemorative sculptures were originally placed in the Gardens. Of these, the more famous include the monumental bronze of Goethe and Schiller in the German Garden and busts by the internationally renowned, Russian born, American sculptor Alexander Archipenko. We had the pleasure of viewing many of these sculptural gems when we toured the Gardens on "Lolley the Trolley" after the lecture.

I encourage all of you to stroll through The Cleveland Cultural Gardens. They are a timely reminder that as a world community, we should acknowledge, respect, and celebrate our pluralistic society; and that all people, regardless of belief or background, must seek to coexist in peace and harmony.

If you have an interest in gardening, landscape architecture, or cultural history, and would like to help preserve this unique national landmark, call Bill Jirousek at 216-229-6527.

THE SCULPTURE CENTER

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We Need Your Help!

The Sculpture Center relies on the generosity of its friends to financially support its work. Please consider making a generous contribution to our next Annual Fund which will enable our programs to continue and grow in the future.

HERE—NOW—FREE!!

A special booklet is included with this quarter's newsletter—the new *University Circle Walking Tour Map & Guide*. Outdoor sculpture in the Circle is highlighted in this colorful collaboration of The Sculpture Center, University Circle Incorporated, and Live Publishing. We hope you will share the guide with a friend and go for a walk!

THE SCULPTURE CENTER

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