2010

Realitès: The Lyric Sculpture of William King

William King

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artcritical

Iowa State University Museums

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The Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden is located by the Christian Petersen Art Museum at historic Morrill Hall. The sculpture garden design incorporates changing exhibitions of sculpture, a gathering arena, and sidewalks and pathways. Planted with perennials, ground cover, shrubs, and flowering trees, the landscape design provides a distinctive setting for important twentieth and twenty-first century sculpture, primarily American.

The sculpture garden is adjacent to Iowa State’s 22-acre central campus. Iowa State’s first president Adonijah Welch (1821-1889; President 1868-83) envisioned a picturesque campus with a winding road encircling the college’s majestic buildings, vast lawns of green grass, and many varieties of trees sprinkled throughout to provide shade, shrubbery and flowers for fragrance. Today the central lawn continues to be an iconic place for all Iowa Staters, and, in 1999 Iowa State became nationally acclaimed by the American Society of Landscape Architects as one of the most beautiful campuses in the country. The new Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden further enhances the beauty of Iowa State.

Please enjoy the garden and sculptures. We ask you not to touch the works of art.

No rollerblades, skateboards, or climbing on the sculptures and pedestals.

Consult the University Museums Web site www.museums.iastate.edu for exhibitions, public programs and events.

**Hours**

Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden
Open 24/7 year-round

Christian Petersen Art Museum, Morrill Hall
Open Monday through Friday 11:00am to 4:00pm while school is in session. Closed on weekends and during University breaks and holidays.
Introduction

Lynette L. Pohlman, director and chief curator, University Museums

From its founding in 1858 Iowa State has embraced aesthetics as a core campus value—expressing our ideal of a progressive education as imperative to support an enduring national democracy—a founding ideal from the nation’s founding fathers. Our campus aesthetics was first expressed in transforming a prairie to a planned farmstead, then to creating a picturesque central campus green, followed by Beaux Arts buildings surrounding a central lawn, and now to a contemporary university campus. Iowa State’s aesthetics are expressed in its landscape, its architecture and its public art.

While all Iowa State presidents have been and are involved in campus aesthetics, Raymond M. Hughes (President, Iowa State College from 1927-1936) deeply believed in and was a major advocate for the visual and performing arts at Iowa State. During the depth of the Great Depression, he fortified efforts to bring the arts into the daily academic life of Iowa State students. Hughes often wrote and spoke of the ‘appeal of the beautiful’ and its centrality in education that transformed young minds into well rounded citizens. He, as most faculty, believed students would be well prepared in their chosen field of science, engineering and humanities, if they also understood the ideals of human expression—most importantly the power of the beautiful to inspire and educate.

With over sixteen decades of artistic legacy, Iowa State continues to integrate campus aesthetics as part of its education program. A part of the campus aesthetic legacy is the Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden and the Christian Petersen Art Museum that together illustrate a profound and vital role in the University Museums’ mission. Along with aesthetically and intellectually illuminating Christian Petersen and the entire Art on Campus Collection, the sculpture garden presents exhibitions by sculptors of national and international acclaim while continuing the commitment to present artists and works of art of the highest caliber on the Iowa State campus while pursuing the on-going campus aesthetic.

William King’s sculpture is the second exhibition to be presented in the Anderson Sculpture Garden. While King’s art has been part of the ISU campus for two decades, this exhibition Réalité: The Lyric Sculpture of William King affords this generation of Iowa State students and faculty the opportunity to explore and delight in King’s artistic expressions.

In 1990 William King was commissioned to sculpt a work of art for the entrance of the then new Lied Recreation Facility. A site specific sculpture, Stride, depicts three, twenty-foot tall figures who appear to race after an imagined ball, and reflects Iowa State students’ playful, competitive interactions. In 1991 Forward, another heroic scale sculpture, was added to the permanent collection, and has become an iconic campus sculpture of students walking in tandem to classes, concerts, events, and even graduation. King is an internationally acclaimed artist known for his simplified figurative sculpture, which is often presented with a warm and subtle touch of humor.

For much of William King’s career, his sculpture has been identified with Pop Art. The satirical nature and humorous nuances of his sculpted figures are suited to Pop’s kinship for aspects of daily life. Now eighty-six, King has been exhibiting figurative sculpture for over fifty years. His familiar, often long-legged, figures personify a unique blend of social satire, fantasy, and an affectionate eye for everyday life, and have long been recognized as King’s distinctive contribution to American art. These witty figures, often self-portraits in various guises, combine precise observation about the body language of contemporary life and social situations with an abstract expression of the metal forms.

For this exhibition in Iowa State’s Anderson Sculpture Garden, King’s sculpture was selected with themes that are inclusive of Iowa State student life including romance, accomplishment, recreation and community. Cupid, Adam and Eve, Kiss, and Marry Me refer to romance and significant relationships that often develop during an academic career. Personal accomplishment and goal setting are reflected in Solo and Satisfaction. Nimrod speaks to building cultures and community, and Power Tennis and Forward reflects students at play and passing through a collegiate life.

King’s art has been the subject of over 60 solo exhibitions. The artist lives and works in East Hampton. He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a past president of the National Academy. In 2007, the International Sculpture Center presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to William King, one of only twenty one artists to receive this distinguished recognition.
The sculptures in the exhibition are generously loaned by the artist, William King. The exhibition is sponsored by Richard Bartosh, George and Susan Christensen, Chuck and Joanne Fredericksen, Beverly and Warren Madden, Rebecca Klemm, JaneAnn and Michael Stout, Ann and Al Jennings and the University Museums Membership. The University Museums wishes to express its deep appreciation to William King for the loan of his sculpture; to David Cohen for authoring his authoritative essay for this publication; to the exhibition donors that make this educational experience available to thousands of Iowa State students; and to Elizabeth Anderson for her continuing support to expand the sculpture garden to fulfill the campus aesthetic legacy that began more than 160 years ago.

Note:
1. Raymond M. Hughes papers, 1923-1972. Special Collections, Parks Library. RS 2/8

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Visual Literacy and Learning

The primary business of the University Museums is education. The Visual Literacy and Learning (VLL) Program is inclusive and overarching in all museum exhibitions and educational activities. The VLL has been active since 1982 in the University Museums, with incorporation into all of ISU’s college curricula for the last 30 years. VLL is at our museum core, and it is evolving and changing to meet current educational needs and respond to campus partners. VLL links exhibitions, events, class assignments and pedagogies that are developed by museum staff and ISU faculty to utilize the University Museums as an interdisciplinary teaching resource. The ISU faculty uses the museums with its exhibitions and collections as a resource for teaching, classrooms, seminars, and subjects for research and writing. Periodically faculty also serve as co-curators and organizers of exhibitions, as authors for catalogue essays and gallery texts, and as participants in lectures and dialogues—through these means, faculty add their voices and expertise to the educational role of the University Museums. It is through VLL, ISU students can become museum interns, and perhaps museum professionals in their chosen career path.

Learn more about Visual Literacy and Learning at www.museums.iastate.edu
Quite a family appears to have taken up residency at Iowa State University: they cavort, frolic, march, combat, plead, fly, or simply, in one instance, stand proud, in open embrace to the world. Clearly they are a family – or perhaps even, a sub species. Although each has individuality, they issue from one hand—that of artist William King. They embody foibles that are all too human, but unlike homo sapiens, in place of flesh and bone there is steel plate, although like us, there are sometimes sartorial additions. With elongated limbs and abbreviated features they are a fabulous bunch – literally fabulous, as the stories they tell and the types they embody could populate a set of fables like Aesop’s or Fontaine’s that run the gamut of human nature.

The characters in King’s sculptures are as diverse as the scholars and students at Iowa State University. Among the many subjects people travel to Ames to study are those taught at the University’s famed College of Agriculture and Life Sciences it is only natural to ask the questions a good agronomist would want to know about their stock, ancestry, extended relations, particularities, potentialities.

These figures, and the movements and humors they encapsulate, are highly evolved: they issue, indeed, from a long and illustrious career. Bill King was born in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1925, and grew up in Coconut Grove, in the Miami area. After college he studied at the Cooper Union in New York, graduating in 1948 and winning a Fulbright the following year that took him to Rome. He was by all accounts a star pupil at Cooper where his associates included Alex Katz (b.1927) and King’s first wife, Lois Dodd (b. 1927). There is a strong affinity (a family likeness it can be said) to the early work of all three artists, along with such contemporaries as Red Grooms (b. 1937) and the Venezuelan Marisol Escobar (b.1930), and if we can define what this is we will perhaps get close to the DNA of King’s art and have a vital clue about the motley crew taking over the university.

Cooper was a stronghold, in the late 1940s, of a European idea of modern art in which Braque, Picasso and Matisse loomed large. These Frenchmen were radical innovators who broke down received ideas of representation, but at the same time, they were all essentially painters and sculptors of the figure: the human subject was of paramount value to them. European modernism brought two vital ingredients to the table: special attention to the materials out of which art was made and a new awareness and appreciation of the spontaneous, fresh vision of so-called “primitive” and “outsider” art.

Much as they appreciated the European moderns, however, the students at Cooper could only take so much from their professors when New York was such a hotbed of innovation at that moment. For this was the heyday of Abstract Expressionism with its radical ideas about scale and energy.

The younger artists, King being no exception, loved the vibe of the New York School, but sensed that it ran the risk of becoming an academy: everyone being a highminded lonely genius in his or her loft searching for their own authentic form was producing work that looked the same and anyway, didn’t accord with the new spirit
of exuberance and prosperity of the generation coming up after World War II.

When you look at the early work of King and his friends you see an unlikely but very energetic mix of two impulses that relates in a way to the forces shaping them as artists: ambition and innocence. These are works that break boundaries but also want to have fun. Radical experiment keeps company with social connection and hedonism. It is an odd mix of big, important, innovative ideas and immediate, sensory, in-the-moment experience.

As befits a man whose handling of materials is so effortless and whose aesthetic is cool, casual, in the moment, King was disarmingly dismissive about his early efforts, especially when he moved on to something new. King was deeply appreciative of a Polish-born, School of Paris sculptor by the name of Elie Nadelman (1882-1946) who had made his career in New York between the wars with highly stylized, folk-inspired, doll-like figures. Seeing Nadelman’s memorial retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in 1948, the year King finished Cooper, was instrumental in shaping his outlook. But when he called his own early works in wood “watered-down Nadelman” he was being overly self-deprecatory. Yes, there is a formal debt, but as the critic Sanford Schwartz has written, King’s wooden sculptures are “relations of Nadelman’s people, but with innards.” Where Nadelman strove for impersonality, King achieved real individuality while miraculously preserving his pared-down abstraction, leaving out any details that don’t convey particulars he was after. Nadelman was liberating for King because he showed that satire and streamlining could go together. But King’s sculpture managed to really expose an individual’s flaws while also bringing us close to his or her humanity. As Hilton Kramer wisely observed, thinking of the sculptor’s self-portraits along with his portraits of others and of different types, King’s humor is essentially Chaplinesque: “a mockery that remains sweet to the taste, a satirical vision that does not exempt the artist himself from the reach of its criticism.”

His social portraits were at their most acute in the ceramic medium. Bob and Terry, 1954, is a tour de force of economy: it seems the more he leaves out the more he gets across. In such simply shaped forms he captures the togetherness of the couple, the support relationship between them, their
social aspirations. You feel you know all about these people, where they have a sense of humor and where they don’t; which partner speaks loudly and which is taciturn. All this might be pure projection, but that doesn’t matter: there is just enough expression in the barely differentiated features to empower the viewer with the sense of being in the presence of real, knowable people.

The ambition to test the limits of what can be left out while getting across real sensations of movement and feeling led King, in the 1960s, into radical new territory. Here, once again, he was in harmony with the spirit of the time—or probably, truth be told, ahead of the curve and actually defining it. The materials he favored in the 1950s were warm, natural materials like wood and ceramic. The metal piece I described was from found tin in all likelihood. The sixties was an era of new technologies, mass communication, economic optimism, and heightened hedonism, and King’s forms responded appropriately. Magic, 1970 is aptly named because it is a sculpture in which so little conveys so much. It is simply two sheets of shaped aluminum that slot into each other with the planes at a 90 degree angle, in which one half denotes a leg, from thigh to foot, the other upper body, from torso via head to outstretched arm. There is no color, no joinery, no facial feature or expressive excrescence of any sort. But where you would expect this little information to at best be like a traffic sign or scarecrow of a figure, a mere schemata or signifier of a figure, this, on the contrary, is a portrait of a very knowable figure—one that certain lusty viewers, indeed, would want to know better! Magic conveys the sensual, curvaceous form of a young woman absorbed in some activity of her own—yoga stretching, perhaps, or tending a flower. The shape of the metal gets across lithe limbs without resorting to erotic stereotypes. The simple angling of one plane to another creates enough shadow to give the figure voluptuous volume.

The real magic of Magic is that it marries in perfect harmony what seemed like opposing aesthetic poles: there is the “less is more” idea of minimal art and radical abstraction and the fun, sexy ethos of Pop Art. But King is neither minimal nor pop, and there is a third big idea at play here, one that transcends period: humanity. The piece is about observing people, life, social mores, natural actions, the viewer’s desires and the viewed one’s sense of self.

King’s genius has been to fuse formal innovation and humorous observation. An American sculptor who stands as a giant in both these camps is Alexander Calder (1898-1976), with his circus of wire figures and his joyous, purely abstract stabiles and mobiles. But in his interlocking metal pieces King made a sculptural move as bold as Calder’s mobiles with an earthy wit comparable to Calder’s Circus: a marriage of modes.

In his work of the last decades, King has to some extent found a synthesis of the satirical explorations of his early period and the formal freedoms of his interlocking pieces. He now gives us a kind of stick figure that, as has always been his won’t, has it both ways: it has all the virtues of speed of execution and lack of preciousness—perfunctory, streamlined, economical, sketchy, unpretentious—and at the same time stands its ground, is rock solid, and simultaneously conveys individuality and type. Forward, 1984, his work in the permanent Art on Campus Collection collection of the University, naturally veers more in the direction of type as the conceit of the piece is the identikit nature of this marching company who might have made it from a cloning experiment in the Life Science’s lab. The brash, red fellow in Solo, 1990, by contrast, is marked with individuality—aside from his strident color and eponymously solitary status—by a gnarled facial characterization built from assembled cogs and twisted metals. King himself is a tall gangly man, and he invests similar characteristics in his sculptural progeny, the family of King. Solo nonetheless stands out, almost, as a self-portrait.

In Power Tennis, c. 1990, the language and material almost come in for a sculptural dig in the way the sculptural language bonds players and their equipment. Because the rackets are rendered in much the way of the arms that hold them as flat shapes of aluminum there is a literal oneness of inanimate object and person wielding it that drives home the way sportsmen and women become like machines as surely as equipment become quasi organic extensions of the limbs to which they are attached. The humanizing of automata also brings to mind the graphic works of Russian Constructivist El Lissitzky (1890-1941) whose utopian machine-people are tenderized in his children’s book illustrations when shown in day to day activities. King’s use of a reductive and technological language to convey humanity escapes the literalism of traditional figuration in order to enhance the humorous and universal aspects of people’s foibles rather than to convey any notion of standardization.
So, this is where King people come from and what they can do, in terms both of pure form and of social interaction. They are the work of an artist who has counted other major figures of the last half-century among his peers and supporters even as he has struggled with the prejudice that sculpture full of humanity and humor can't be quite as serious as sculpture devoid of them. But actually, the tide is now turning in King's favor. There are an increasing number of sculptors, fêted internationally, who are producing work that looks remarkably close in spirit, if not quite as regal in sheer mastery of form, as William King. When art historians of the future connect the dots of modern sculpture then artists like the German Stephan Balkenhol (b.1957) and Britons Thomas Houseago (b.1972 and living in Los Angeles, Cal.), Julian Opie (b.1957) and Rebecca Warren (b.1965) will be linked to William King the way King can be to Calder, Nadelman and Picasso.

One of King's earliest champions, the painter and critic Fairfield Porter, marveled in 1960 at the young sculptor's ability to fashion single sculptures of multiple figures, to "create a three dimensional whole out of more than one figure in the round," a feat he compared to playing three-dimensional chess. Making sculpture this way is something the senior King now takes in his stride with skillfully but casually engineered conveyances of marching rows of figures, or cavorting players of games, whether sports or courtship, as we see about campus. Light on their feet, flexible, quivering yet rock solid, his elongated metal figures are as durable and vulnerable as actual people. Their bodies get them through life even as they register its trials and temptations.

David Cohen is Publisher/Editor of artcritical magazine and moderator of The Review Panel. From 2001-10 he was Gallery Director at the New York Studio School and from 2003-08 he was art critic of the New York Sun.
Realités: *The Lyric Sculpture of William King*

Exhibition Checklist  September 2010 through July 2012

A. **Power Tennis**  
   1992  
   Aluminum  
   On loan from the artist.

B. **Forward**  
   1984  
   Aluminum  
   Gift of James R. and Barbara R. Palmer. In the Art on Campus Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.

C. **Cupid**  
   c. 2000  
   Aluminum  
   On loan from the artist.

D. **Marry Me**  
   2007  
   Aluminum and fabric  
   On loan from the artist.

E. **Adam & Eve**  
   2007  
   Aluminum  
   On loan from the artist.

F. **Satisfaction (or Las Brisas)**  
   1990  
   Aluminum and fabric  
   On loan from the artist.

G. **Solo**  
   1973  
   Painted aluminum  
   On loan from the artist.

Interior works of art located in the Roy and Bobbie Reiman Gallery, 0003 Morrill Hall

- **Nimrod**  
  1998  
  Aluminum  
  On loan from the artist.

- **Baiser [The Kiss]**  
  1990  
  Aluminum  
  On loan from the artist.

- **Inventory**  
  c. 2000  
  Aluminum and fabric  
  On loan from the artist.

Additional installation on campus by William King

- **Stride**  
  1990  
  Aluminum  
  Commissioned by the University Museums. Iowa Art in State Buildings Project for the Lied Recreation and Athletic Center. In the Art on Campus Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.
William King

Selected Public Collections

Allentown Art Museum, PA
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR
Art on Campus Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, IA
City of Fort Dodge, Catherine V. Deardorf Foundation, IA
Columbus Museum, OH
Fine Arts Center, Cheekwood, Nashville, TN
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Hopkins Art Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
First National Bank of Chicago, IL
Guggenheim Museum of Art, NY
Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY
Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
Iowa West Foundation Public Art Collection, Council Bluffs, IA

Hunter Museum of Art, Chattanooga, TN
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA
Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY
New York University, NY
Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA
State Universities of New York - Potsdam, New Paltz, Oswego, Plattsburgh, Jamestown, & Fredonia
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
University of California, Berkeley, CA
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Left: Marry Me
Right: Detail of Satisfaction
William King
Selected Chronology

Born
1925 Jacksonville, FL

Education
1942 – 1944 University of Florida, FL
1945 – 1948 Cooper Union Art School, NY
1949 Brooklyn Museum Art School, NY
1949 – 1950 Academia dei Belle Arti, Rome, Italy
1952 Central School, London, England

Teaching Experience
1952 – 1955 Brooklyn Museum Art School, NY
1956 - 1966 University of California, Berkeley, CA
1968 – 1969 Art Students’ League, NY
1972 – 1973 University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; State University of New York, Potsdam, Fredonia, New Paltz, Jamestown, Oswego, Plattsburgh, Artist-in-Residence

Awards
1948 Sculpture Prize, Cooper Union Art School, NY
1949–1950 Fulbright Grant
1951 Margaret Tiffany Blake Fresco Award
1964 Augustus St. Gaudens Medal, Cooper Union, NY
1974 Creative Artists Public Service Award and Grant

Selected Solo Exhibitions
1954, 1955, 1961 Alan Gallery, NY
1970 San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA
1970 Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA
1971 Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN
1971 Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH
1971 Ringling Museum, Sarasota, FL
1971 Dag Hammerskjold Plaza, NY
1971, 1982 Alpha Gallery, Boston, MA
1972, 1987 Montgomery Museum of Art, Montgomery, AL
1972, 1987 Hunter Museum, Chattanooga, TN
1972, 1987 David Heath Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1988 Marilyn Pearly Gallery, NY
1989 Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland, FL
1989 The Atrium at Maison Aican, Quebec, Canada

1980 Hakone Open-Air Museum, Japan, Distinction Prize
1986 National Academy of Design, NY, Gold Medal
1995 American Academy of Arts and Letters, NY, Louise Nevelson Award
1997 Guild Hall of East Hampton, Lifetime Achievement in the Arts, Visual Arts Award
2007 Lifetime Achievement Award, International Sculpture Center

1980 Hakone Open-Air Museum, Japan, Distinction Prize
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1995 American Academy of Arts and Letters, NY, Louise Nevelson Award
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1971 Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH
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1971, 1982 Alpha Gallery, Boston, MA
1972, 1987 Montgomery Museum of Art, Montgomery, AL
1972, 1987 Hunter Museum, Chattanooga, TN
1988 Marilyn Pearly Gallery, NY
1989 Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland, FL
1989 The Atrium at Maison Aican, Quebec, Canada

1990 Brunnier Gallery and Museum, Iowa State University, Ames, IA
1992 Simmons Visual Arts Center, Brenau College, Gainesville, GA
1995 Pitt Program Council, University of Pittsburgh, PA
1996 Seaco Square, Bangkok, Thailand
1997 Miami Dade Junior College, Miami, FL
1998, 1999 Lizan Tops Gallery, East Hampton, NY
1998 Dorothy Blau Gallery, Miami, FL
1999 Brenda Taylor Gallery, NY
2000 Kraushaar Galleries, NY
2001 Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, NJ
2001 125 Maiden Lane, NY
2005 Pamela Williams Gallery, Amagansett, NY
2010-2012 Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden, Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Selected Group
Exhibitions
1955 Museum of Modern Art, NY. Recent Sculpture USA
1968 Whitney Museum of American Art, NY. Annual Exhibitions
1972-1973 Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA. Recent Figure Sculpture
Exhibition traveled to Museum of Art, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME; Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH; Vassar College Art Gallery, Poughkeepsie, NY
1974 Monumenta I, Newport, RI
1975 International Pavilion of Humor, Montreal, Canada. Man and His World
1976 Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
1976 Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA. Skowhegan Retrospective Exhibition traveled to Colby College,
Waterville, ME
1981 Ringling Museum, Sarasota, FL. International Florida Artists
1982 Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, OH. Shape in Sculpture
1982 Brainard Art Gallery, SUNY Potsdam, NY. Directions in Metal
1988 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY. Drawings on East End
1995 Staller Center for the Arts, SUNY Stonybrook, NY. Eighteen Suffolk Artists
1995 American Academy of Arts and Letters, NY. Invitational Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture
1995 The White House, Washington, DC. Twentieth Century American Sculpture
1998 Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI. Figurative Tradition
1999 Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY. Group Exhibition
1999 Grounds for Sculpture, Princeton, NJ. Fall/Winter

Selected Sculpture Commissions
1978 Government Center, Akron, OH
1979 Detroit Receiving Hospital, Detroit, MI
1979 Laurel Shopping Center, Laurel, MD
1979 Madison Art and Civic Center, Madison, WI
1980 Lincoln Library, Fort Wayne, IN
1983 Orlando International Airport, Orlando, FL
1985 Sterling Plaza, NY
1985 Alaska Council on the Arts, Anchorage, AK
1986 Schlotzky’s, Austin, TX
1986 Park Place, Clearwater, FL
1986 Vision, Palo Alto, CA
1987 Florida State Council on the Arts, Lakeland, FL
1990 Art on Campus Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, IA
1995 South Street Pedestrian Bridge, Philadelphia, PA

Compiled from the following sources: International Sculpture Center, Terry Dittenfass Gallery, Alexandre Gallery, and Lynette Pohlman.

Detail of Adam and Eve
A Legacy Endures

Lynette L. Pohlman

Invited to sculpt and teach at Iowa State College during the depths of the Great Depression, Christian Petersen did not anticipate that he would remain on campus for the remainder of his career. When he retired in 1955, Petersen had created twelve major sculptures for the campus, sculpted hundreds of studio works of art, and taught thousands of Iowa State students to mold a work of art from a lump of clay or carve a figure from a limestone block. As a teacher Christian Petersen molded minds, and as an artist he sculpted campus landmarks. His is an enduring legacy of learning and expression.

Elizabeth Brookhart and Byron Anderson were students at Iowa State in the 1950s and often met on the steps of Morrill Hall as they began their social engagements. During her final summer at Iowa State, Elizabeth was Christian Petersen’s only student during the session, and in the warmth of summer she created her own art. From this experience of sculpting in clay with the master’s assistance, Elizabeth developed a deep appreciation for the visual arts which she has carried throughout her life. After graduation, Elizabeth and Byron married, raised three children and traveled the world as part of Byron’s career with Mobil Oil Corporation.

In 2005, Elizabeth joined the Iowa State movement to further commemorate Christian Petersen. Since Elizabeth carried Christian’s legacy in her heart, she funded in-depth research into Petersen’s early, and nearly forgotten, artistic career. The result was the inaugural exhibition, Christian Petersen: Urban Artist, 1900-1934, at the new Christian Petersen Art Museum from March to August 2007. Immediately following the opening of the Christian Petersen Art Museum, Elizabeth generously funded the sculpture garden surrounding this historic campus building adjacent to the iconic and beautiful central campus. The Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden celebrates the sculptural legacy of Christian Petersen by presenting his art, as well as contemporary sculptors. From these visual expressions, the campus community can explore, discover and engage in strong ideas, interpretations and concepts that are embedded in the educational experience broadening our aesthetic understandings.

Christian Petersen (1885-1961) is well known as a Midwestern sculptor of rural themes and student life. Born in Denmark in 1885, he arrived in the United States at the age of nine and grew up in New Jersey and New York. He received his artistic education on the East Coast and established both a commercial career as a die cutter and a reputation as a fine art sculptor. Before he arrived at Iowa State in 1934, Petersen had already created significant sculptures, primarily war memorials in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and elsewhere in the East. He is further distinguished as the first permanent artist-in-residence at an American college. Raymond M. Hughes, president of Iowa State College, hired him in 1934—in the depths of the Great Depression—and Petersen remained here producing sculpture and teaching until his retirement in 1955. Petersen’s first public art sculpture at Iowa State was the seven-panel relief mural, The History of Dairying in the courtyard of the Food Sciences Building. Petersen retired from Iowa State in 1955, but continued to sculpt until his death in 1961. In 1982, the University Museums formally established Iowa State’s Art on Campus Program and Collection, and consider Christian Petersen to be the founding artist for this campus public art collection, although Petersen would have never claimed the honor for himself.
The Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden is an important artistic and educational addition to the University Museums. The Anderson Sculpture Garden profoundly enriches the artistic relationships between the Christian Petersen Art Museum and the Art on Campus Collection by providing changing exhibitions, based on a two-year cycle, of loaned sculptures from contemporary artists, as well as sculpture from the permanent collections. As the Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden provides opportunity for formal integration of art into the academic curriculums at Iowa State, it also provides accessibility for casual visitation of art.

Living with sculptural art, both casually and with repeated exposure, can lead to understanding and appreciation, and one would hope, passion. It is a wish that over time each campus community member will intellectually and emotionally respond to individual sculptures in their own unique way, sometimes ignoring, sometimes delighting, often optimistic the sculpture will elicit a strong response. Thinking and feeling are the most important reactions to art—to experience new feeling, to escape for a moment from one’s routine. The most meaningful aspect is to interact with the art over time, to develop a relationship, and to create a new friend!

As the Art on Campus Collection expands with new sculptures by major American and international artists, these artists may also be invited to the Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden to present a broader selection of their art, thereby allowing the Iowa State community to know and understand their art in a larger and more complete context. Simultaneously, selected sculpture from the University Museums Permanent Collections, including sculpture by Christian Petersen, will also be placed in the Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden to compliment and contrast with the changing exhibitions. Accompanying the loaned sculpture exhibitions will be educational programs and scholarly publications to inform, delight and engage the campus audience in the arts and Visual Literacy and Learning.

The exhibition schedule in the Elizabeth and Bryan Anderson Sculpture Garden focuses on contemporary sculpture, while referencing previous artistic traditions. Christian Petersen believed, and most artists would agree, great art is created in and of its own time; thus the sculpture garden will be of its time, where sculptors are responding to and expressing the issues of today.

The Christian Petersen works of art in the sculpture garden are commemorating the human figure in narrative style, exploring the legacy of Abraham Lincoln and the Morrill Act as well as rural Iowa life. Selections from the Art on Campus Collection by artists Harriet Bart and Albert Paley are represented in the sculpture garden to help the viewer understand the impact of such a vast contemporary public art collection on the Iowa State University campus.
Abraham Lincoln, 2007 cast from 1933 plaster maquette
25 x 13 x 18 inches
Casting funded with support from Beverly and Warren Madden.
In the Christian Petersen Art Collection, Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.
U2007.11

Petersen designed this sculpture of a seated Lincoln for a competition sponsored by the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1933. Though he won only an honorable mention, Petersen kept his sculpture, surely hoping that it could one day find an appropriate place.

4-H Calf, 2003 cast from 1941 plaster maquette
40 ½ x 31 ½ x 18 inches
In the Christian Petersen Art Collection, Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.
U2004.58

The 4-H Calf was inspired by and is a tribute to Iowa's youth who learn and labor on farms. The subject is one Petersen observed many times at the Iowa State Fair, were he annually demonstrated fine art sculpting.

Cornhusker, 2001 cast from 1941 plaster maquette
43 x 16 x 24 inches
In the Christian Petersen Art Collection, Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.
U2007.9

Marion Link, Iowa husker champ, unwittingly inspired Petersen to sculpt an Iowa masterpiece that afternoon in 1941 when he ran away with the county contest and started his climb to husker fame.

Library Boy and Girl models, 2008 casts from 1944 plaster maquettes
24 x 12 x 12 inches each
In the Christian Petersen Art Collection, Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa.
U2008.541 and U2008.542

Petersen’s Library Boy and Girl depict two students sitting modestly on either side of the entrance, so that viewers must pass between them whether going into or out of the Hub. Although at first they seem unassuming and absorbed in their reading, with a little scrutiny it soon becomes clear that the two students are actually absorbed in something else: each other.
The Art on Campus Collection

Public works of art on campus have been woven into Iowa State’s history since the mid 1930s. Whether perched atop buildings, adorning hallways, or secluded in courtyards, icons of campus heritage now number in the thousands. As a result of catalyst Christian Petersen’s body of work, the largest university public art collection in the nation has emerged. Today the Art on Campus Collection and Program is the only one of its kind that codifies university-wide the acquisition, education, and care and conservation processes.

The diversity of the Art on Campus Collection ranges from the realistic and regionalist style expressed by Christian Petersen to abstract, organic, and stylized works of art expressed by contemporary artists such as Beverly Pepper, Bill Barrett, Mac Adams, Stephen DeStaebler and Albert Paley. Encoded in each Art on Campus work of art is information and expression; similar to the University Library with books expressing numerous points of view in a broad spectrum of subject areas. Most Art on Campus works of art are site specific, directly pertaining to the colleges, departments and people who labor and study daily around them.

Public works of art on the Iowa State campus enrich campus aesthetics, document change, commemorate heroism, challenge hypotheses, and explore the unfamiliar. The Elizabeth and Byron Anderson Sculpture Garden allows the examination of public works of art by contemporary artists and invites the audience to take a step into the artists’ mind and emerge with a better understanding of artistic process, style, and significance. To complete this experience, journey around central campus to see first hand the numerous campus landmarks that are educational and strategic assets for Iowa State students and faculty. Those with a keen eye can explore the diversity, prosper from the bounty, and be enriched by the aesthetic scholarly environment created by the Art on Campus Collection and Program.
**Art on Campus Checklist**

**Harriet Bart (American, b. 1941)**

*Alcove*, 1995; reinstalled and modified in 2011

Bronze and limestone

84 x 11 inches; 11 x 8 ½ inches; 18 x 18 x 65 inches

An Iowa Art in State Buildings Project. In the Art on Campus Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. U95.62

*Alcove* is an art installation for quiet contemplation, reading a book, or visiting with a friend. The sculptural elements of the installation include: three bronze pilasters, cast from altered and textured books and incorporated into brick wall; bronze text, *Pay Attention to What They Tell You to Forget*, a poem from *Double Ode* by Muriel Rukeyser; and a bench, which provides seating and visually contains the space.

**Christian Petersen (Danish-American, 1885-1961)**

*Reclining Nudes*, 1936; reinstalled and modified in 2011

Terra cotta cast in nine panels

25 x 163 x 8 inches

Commissioned by Iowa State College. In the Christian Petersen Art Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. U88.74

Two reclining nude figures on either side of a small fountain. The fountain and pool were removed for conservation from Roberts Hall in 1998. The inscription reads: “AND NO WORLD MORE WIDE, SINCE ALL HER DREAMS START HERE AND HERE ABIDE” (poem *Sancta Ursula* [after Carpaccio]).

**Albert Paley (American, b. 1944)**

*Transformation*, 2007

Formed and fabricated stainless steel

Two sections: 15 x 15 x 2 feet and 9.6 x 10 x 2 feet

An Iowa Art in State Buildings Project for Morrill Hall with support from the Class of 1956, Barbara Palmer, University Museums, George Christensen, Rebecca Klemm, Martha LeBuhn Allen, the National Endowment for the Arts, Ruth and Clayton Swenson, Ken Bussard and RDG Planning and Design. In the Art on Campus Collection, University Museums, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. U2007.70

*Transformation* marks a boundary and carries the associations of rites of passage. In this place of learning, the sculpture expresses intellectual and psychological transformation as students and other viewers physically crisscross its threshold. It is a tangible symbol of Morrill Hall’s transformation from a nineteenth century structure to a thriving, contemporary visual learning center.