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Marker, myth and monolith: A Sculpture garden

E. Blaise DePaolo

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Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences in candidacy for the degree of Masters of Fine Arts

Marker, Myth and Monolith: A Sculpture Garden

by
E. Blaise DePaolo

4/26/97
### Approval

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INTRODUCTION

In my thesis proposal I said I wanted to make four large scale works, relative as a group but individual. As the work evolved in the design stage, it became obvious to me that what I was doing was designing a sculpture garden. I have referred to my thesis work as *The Sculpture Garden* since, and refer to it as such throughout this paper. The individual sculpture pieces I refer to as ‘markers’. After much critical discourse with Rick Hirsch, I determined that the sculptures I wanted to create were in fact markers or signposts, beacons to whatever audience they might attract, with a message -- some meaning for those who pass.

*The Sculpture Garden* turned out to be seven sculptures, varying in size from 18” to 6’4”, composed around a ceramic block path 16’ x 16’. The work took 2800 pounds of clay and eight weeks to build. The scale of the work and it's composition had the impact I was looking for. It seemed to catch the attention and curiosity of the viewer. I watched people walk around *The Sculpture Garden* examining individual pieces and then the work as a whole. The work represented two years worth of experimentation in graduate school, and years of being influenced by a love of ancient Mayan art and architecture. It was my intention in creating *The Sculpture Garden* to take the pedestal out from under ceramic sculpture, to flirt with architecture by magnifying scale thus magnifying the ‘presence’ of the piece; to create the feeling of being in a place where something incredible had or could happen. This paper is an autobiographical account of what lead up to the creation of *The Sculpture Garden* and a discussion of what the work means.
CHAPTER 1

Travels On The Gringo Trail

Shortly after graduating from The Evergreen State College, in Olympia, Washington, I packed my bags and headed for Mexico. I was hoping the adventure would help me reconcile what path to take in life. Matthew Fox, in *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, addresses the dilemma I was having from a cultural and historic point of view when he says:

In our day of dedication to facts and hard headed objectivity, we have disparaged imagination: it gets us away from "reality"; it taints our works with "subjectivity"; and worst of all, it is often taken as the "frosting" to life rather than as the solid food. Throughout Western history our dilemma has been whether imagination shall turn out to be artifice or the source of being.¹

I was feeling that an art career was a self indulgent life choice that held marginal security. Yet I was interested in little else. What I discovered in traveling to Mexico was

'the gringo trail', a path well worn by European and American travelers from ruin site to ruin site throughout Mexico and Guatemala. The ancient Maya, their art and architecture, continue to be one of the strongest influences on my art work. Encountering the Maya, and the transforming effect of months of travel throughout the Yucatan and Guatemala, helped me put my life into perspective. Although I could not have articulated it at the time, I somehow figured out that imagination was not the 'artifice' or self indulgent, but was in fact the 'source' of being. I came away from my travels with the confidence to make the leaps of faith that have become my life, and with enough content for my work to fill a life time of exploration.

Between 1985 and 1987 I spent a total of five months visiting ruin sites in Mexico and Guatemala and became utterly fascinated by the Indian cultures of antiquity. Before my travels, I had not been aware of the rich inheritance of artifacts and ruins they left to Mexico. One looks at the ruins and tries to imagine them when they were active as in the accounts given in The Bernal Diaz Chronicles, and then tries to imagine what it must have been like to have discovered them in their most decayed state as did the explorer John Lloyd Stephens.

The Bernal Diaz Chronicles are the historic memoirs of one of Cortés' most trusted conquistadors, who accompanied him in the conquest of Mexico. The Chronicles give the world a glimpse of what the lives of the Indian cultures were like at the time of their discovery in 1519. It gives gripping accounts of what it was like to meet the natives in war and in friendship:

When we arrived within a quarter league of the city, the chiefs, who had gone on ahead, came out to receive us, bringing with them their sons and nephews and many important people, each group dressed in its own colors. Although their clothes were of henequen, as they had no cotton, they were beautifully made and decorated. Then came the priests, and there were many of them, because of the huge temples, or cües, that they had. They carried braziers with live coals and incense, and some of them wore long white robes like surplices. Their hair was long and matted and so clotted with blood from their ears that it could not have been parted without cutting it; their fingernails were also long. They bowed their heads in a gesture
of humility as we passed, and we heard it said that these priests were very religious and led good lives.²

Or, at another point in his account:

We had not gone an eighth of a league when we saw the fields filled with warriors, wearing feathered crests and various devices, and making a din with their trumpets and horns. The whole plain was swarming with them, with ourselves in the middle, some four hundred soldiers including many wounded and sick. We knew for certain that this time they were coming with the idea of leaving none of us alive except for a few to be sacrificed to their idols.³

John Lloyd Stephens, an American lawyer, writer, and adventurer, and British artist Frederick Catherwood, traveled to Mexico in 1839 to see the ruined cities of which they had heard. Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan is an account of their travels.

We ascended by large stone steps, in some places perfect, and in others thrown down by trees which had grown up between the crevices, and reached a terrace, the form of which it was impossible to make out, from the density of the forest in which it was enveloped. Our guide cleared a way with his machete, and we passed, half buried in the earth, a large fragment of stone elaborately sculptured, and came to the angle of a structure with steps on the sides, in form and appearance, so far as the trees would enable us to make it out, like the sides of a pyramid.⁴

Further on Stephens conjectures about what he has found:

Architecture, sculpture, and painting, all the arts which embellish life, had flourished in this overgrown forest; orators, warriors, and statesmen, beauty, ambition, and glory, had lived and passed away, and none knew that such things had been, or could tell of their past existence. Books, the records of knowledge, are silent on this theme. The city was desolate. No remnant of this race hangs round the ruins, with traditions handed down from father to son, and from generation to generation. It lay before us like a shattered bark in the midst of the ocean, her masts gone, her name effaced, her crew perished, and none to tell whence she came, to whom she belonged, how long on her voyage, or what caused her destruction; her lost people to be traced only by some fancied resemblance in the construction of the vessel, and, perhaps, never to be known at all. The place where we sat, was it a citadel from which an unknown people had sounded the trumpet of war? or a temple for the worship of the God of peace? or

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³Ibid.,
⁴John Lloyd Stevens, Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan.
did the inhabitants worship the idols made with their own hands, and offer sacrifices on the stones before them? All was mystery, impenetrable mystery, and every circumstance increased it.5

Visiting partially restored ruins in 1985, I was similarly transfixed by the mystery of the past occupants of these sites, their lives, rituals and myth. The mystery of the Maya is so tangible a feeling at these ruin sites that it gives life and animation to the glyph carvings and figures that adorn the stone. You can't help but wonder what it all means (the glyphs carved into the stone and onto the pyramids), but ultimately not understanding the glyphs, not understanding the culture, does not lessen the impact or appreciation of these works of art and architecture. Another artist who I think was similarly affected by the Maya is Norman F. Carver Jr., whose work Silent Cities is a photographic documentation of the major Mayan ruin sites. He describes his relationship with the Maya ruin sites in the introduction:

The first edition of this book grew out of my realization that the visual drama of these ancient cities had for too long been buried by excessive archaeological and historic detail and that, vitiated by stereotyped photographs, these powerful forms had been reduced to mere anecdotes of a vanished civilization.6

He goes on to say:

My presence, therefore is primarily visual. Although these cities and their architecture exist today only as partially restored ruins, the photographs attempt to evoke some sense of the original architectural concepts although not entirely ignoring the appeal of the picturesque, that blending of the intentional and the accidental that is the essence of these not silent cities.7

I think Carver’s work does capture the “essence” or feeling of the ruins. And, it is this ‘essence’ of the ruins coupled with the physical experience of exploring the glyph carvings and weathered stone, that has sought to articulate itself through my work in clay ever since. I explain the concept of “essence “ as feeling but F. David Martin in his

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6Norman F Carver Jr., Silent Cities of Mexico And The Maya. (Kalamazoo, MI: Documan Press Ltd., 1986) p.6
book *Sculpture and Enlivened Space, Aesthetics & History*, describes the concept this way, "An essence is not a thing but the generative power that makes a thing what it is."⁸

The generative power of the ruin sites imprinted itself onto my psyche and has been the spirit motivating my work ever since.

CHAPTER 2

Graduate School

I came to RIT in the fall of 1989. At that time I was making a series of tiled panels that were a direct reflection of my experiences in Mexico. I was taking glyphs straight out of the textbooks and carving them into clay tiles very much in the spirit of the pastiche. By copying the glyphs I realized that what I was reacting to so strongly was the beauty and simplicity of the Mayan line, even though the glyphs themselves and much of their ornamentation is incredibly complicated. Curved and full, organic and voluptuous, the Mayan line was the closest I had ever come to defining beauty, and I wanted to be able to capture that beauty in my work.

I thought the tiled panel series, based on the glyphs, was strong work. I thought that graduate school was a place you went to get better at what you were already good at. Rick Hirsch, in what seemed like endless critique sessions that first quarter, made me question everything I knew and was doing. Rick challenged the use of the Mayan glyphs as being too literal and questioned me frequently on the meaning of my work. At the time I could not discuss meaning because I had never verbalized, or tried to verbalize, what the works meant, and so didn’t really consciously know. I could only tell Rick that it was the shape and the form of the glyph drawings that I responded to, and wanted to somehow recreate as my own. Rick encouraged me to look at sculpture, not just ceramic sculpture, but sculpture from every medium, and to look at painting. We went together to the Wallace Library and looked at and discussed the works of Mark DeSwervio, Antonio Tapies, Martin Puryear, Howard BenTré to name a few. Rick, I believe, was trying to open my mind up a little to the possibilities that existed, to expose me to works whose texture, content, and composition would inform my work. By the end of that first quarter I was
pretty exhilarated, but a little lost. I relinquished the notion of having to already know it all and decided to start all over.

Between fall and winter quarter that year I spent every day in the studio. It was such a luxury to work without the responsibility of a course load. Rather than working with the clay and because I didn’t know very much about hand building, I began to draw. The works that came out of me in that handful of days were quite surprising. In the drawings I tried to capture what I most loved about the glyphs, not by copying them but by condensing the imagery to its simplest anatomy of line and form. And although complicated as I have said, when looked at under a microscope as it were, what I got from the glyphs was an appreciation for simplicity of imagery and clarity of form. I dissected the glyphs and extracted these organic simple rock-like forms, the ruins perhaps, one piece at a time. The rock like organic forms that I drew, stacked askew on top of one another, had the same qualities of the panels, only they were objects rather than drawings. Although abstracted, the anatomy of the objects was somewhat figurative. The top form or head, had a dramatic hole running through it, and the body was made up of between two to four stacked rock forms. I drew every possible variety of this series I could think of, and then chose three to make for winter quarter. Although similar in content to the panels, these pieces were very different in one important way; they dealt with mass and volume, the properties of sculpture.

With Bob Schmitz’s help I learned to hand build both winter and spring quarter. I coiled the first three sculptures winter quarter. I was so pleased and excited to discover that I could make the forms I had drawn. I coiled, paddled, shaved, and smoothed until I had made each of the three drawings. My biggest problem was engineering. I used gravity alone to hold things together, not knowing how to secure the shapes one on top
of another. This stacked method was not altogether secure, so if someone touched the piece, which people were bound to do, they moved and knocked, not what you want in large heavy ceramic pieces. I think at the time I was more concerned with just getting the work made and the shapes I wanted formed rather than ever dealing head on with the problem of getting them to stay together. In each piece I made I attempted to resolve the engineering problems but never got it quite right. But my skill at hand building was developing. Bob Schmitz encouraged me to explore many different ways to approach making what I had by then begun to call the ‘markers’.

In spring quarter that year I experimented working solid, by mixing vermiculite and perlite into my sculpture body in the dough mixer. I mixed 25 to 35 pound batches of clay and then knocked them into large solid blocks that I would shape with paddles. The materials I put in the clay gave it a rough stony texture with lots of scarring and pitting. Physically it was much harder than coiling but, the process of subtracting the form out of the block was an intriguing way to work. I experimented with a variety of different surfaces that quarter, trying to use materials I had not tried before. I made vitreous engobes, cracking slips, and washes, and reduction fired the pieces anywhere from cone 04 to cone 10 depending on what I was looking for. It was a good quarter for just trying to learn how to use new materials and experiment with different firing ranges.

Between my first and second year at RIT Bob Schmitz helped me get a summer job at Boston Valley Terra Cotta, a small family owned manufacturer of terra cotta building facades. The majority of work done at BVTC was, and still is, restoring nineteenth century terra cotta buildings. The experience was to play a part in the evolution of the sculpture I had so recently begun to make. Working with clay in relationship to architecture expanded in the extreme, my understanding of scale and was directly related to the influ-
ence of Mayan architecture. Here I was working on modern temples, restoring some of the most celebrated terra cotta buildings from the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.

The practical experience I got at BVTC was invaluable. I watched the entire process from pugging the clay to packing the plaster molds to detailing, drying, and eventually firing. That summer one of the projects I worked on was the BG&E building in Buffalo, New York. I learned about the terra cotta they use which is especially designed to withstand freezing and thawing. It’s a cone 3 white body that has a 35% grog and aggregate content. The body also contained wollastonite and fire clay. It was a very simple body that was rich and warm at cone 3. They used a number of stony matte glazes, heavily fritted glazes. The glaze was sprayed on, a neutral or white color underneath, and then spatter sprayed with a number of different colors to create a mottled and stony texture. One of the engineers invented and made a spray nozzle that could spray three different glazes at one time, making the whole process faster. My job was in the glaze pantry. I would get a chip of an existing building and, through a series of glaze testing and acid etching, come up with a match that would blend in with the old facade. I did on the average of twenty glaze tests a morning; consequently I gained an excellent grasp of glaze chemistry at cone 3 and in general.

My love of Mayan art and architecture, my experience making sculpture and the influence of the terra cotta factory all came together that fall quarter. My impulse was to work large, to make large architectonic blocks from plywood molds. What I was most interested in doing was making an archway, an element of architecture I could extract that would stand on its own. The work I did that quarter also included a glass column, also an element of architecture. The technical processes involved in making these works were really the driving force behind them more than artistic intent. I wanted to work on a challenging scale and encounter the technical and engineering problems specific to that scale. Consequently, the works I made lacked some aesthetic grace but taught me I was capable of large scale work, which was very exciting. I completed a very tall narrow arch
piece that was ten feet tall by four feet wide by eight inches deep, and a cast glass column that was six feet tall by twenty inches wide by eight inches deep. The column was made of five cast glass elements that were one foot by twenty inches by eight inches, and were held together and connected by three terra cotta collars. The glass was epoxied into the collars and the whole thing was epoxied onto a base. No epoxy in the world is going to hold a six foot glass and ceramic sculpture together for long, not even PC-7, so the piece could not be moved from where it stood without being broken apart. It was definitely a 'walk through' piece, but it was impressive nonetheless and gave me my first experience in combining glass and ceramic in sculpture. I learned a lot from making these two pieces; they gave me the experience and confidence I needed to design my thesis work which was *The Sculpture Garden*.

The quarter I was working on *The Sculpture Garden* I was also taking a print making class with Jud Williams. Working with paper and printers ink was a welcome diversion to the rigors of building seven sculptures and a 16' x 16' block base. I had a conversation with Jud in the elevator one day, on the way to class. He was saying a print could be taken off of anything: floors, walls, doors. The elevator door, for instance, could provide a 'block' in essence from which you could pull images or texture. The point of the conversation was that if I didn't want to spend the ten weeks learning to etch stone I could experiment with printmaking in other ways, which
really appealed to me. I rolled out one or two slabs of clay and roughly and spontaneously made simple drawings of the markers on the surface of the clay. I painted on either blue or black printer’s ink very heavily and then pulled prints onto 32”x24” sheets of heavy drawing paper. I was hoping to capture the spirit or personality of The Sculpture Garden in my prints. The work seemed to leap off the page. The printers ink would pool on top of the wet clay surface, giving the images an aura or halo around them. I took sponges and lightly went over the wet ink, smearing and dragging out the ‘aura’. I was so involved with the thesis work, building my temple as it were, that the energy of the piece surged out of me in the prints. I was very grateful to Jud for giving me the opportunity to invent a printing process, which provided me with a vehicle to express the ‘essence’ or spirit of this monument I was making. It was one of those rare instances of artistic timing where things ‘click’ and the work takes on a momentum of its own. Some of the prints I made in that class are the best two dimensional work I have done.

After three or four compelling critique sessions with my thesis committee, I built The Sculpture Garden my last quarter of graduate school. I made seven pieces of sculpture, composed around an open square path. I used every method of building I had experimented with in the course of graduate school. The blocks were the most challenging. I needed thirteen of them, and each one took 70 pounds of clay. I packed plywood molds that were 26”x24”x6”. It took two people to turn and release the clay. First I lined the molds with paper and then knocked the clay to the wall of the mold smashing the paper onto the surface of the clay. I got a uneven folded and creased surface that gave the block the look of either stone or a natural formation. I glazed the blocks with a low fire black glaze at cone 04 in the reduction kiln. I could only fit one or two blocks into a firing
at a time, which made the whole process very time consuming. At the same time I was making The Monolith, which was also made with plywood molds. Once I had all the mold work well under way, I started coiling the Bean Pod. It was to be the largest single coiled piece, at 27”x32”x18”. It took 250 pounds of clay. I decided to experiment with the pod and not put a bottom on it, but just start coiling the walls, with an open bottom. I was trying to keep the weight down. The clay (cone 3 terra cotta from Boston Valley) did remarkably well at withstanding warping and cracking, but I could not close the top of the piece in the way I had planned because there was no support to build onto from the interior of the piece. I dried the top slowly, and closed it about six inches at a time over a week period, but it cracked and slumped. I patched, puttied, and painted, but the piece was a disappointment. It did, however, teach me what not to do in coiling, a method I use almost exclusively at present.

The last three works were: The Hungry People, The Sentinels, and a small coiled marker. The Hungry People weigh approximately 250 pounds a piece. The Hungry People and The Sentinels, are sculptures made up of two elements facing each other and having some dynamic between the two to reflect or bounce off of one another. I used my terra cotta recipe, plus the addition of 75% perlite, to open the body up so I could work solid, and 12% red iron oxide for color. Richard Zakin in Hand-Formed Ceramics describes perlite in a section on aggregates:

Perlite is made from mica particles that have been “popped” so that they take on a greatly expanded form. They return to their original size during the firing and leave only a tiny bit of mica. Perlite-loaded clay bodies are light and their surfaces are marked by the cavities left when the mica shrinks back to its original size.¹

I mixed 50 pound batches of clay at a time and unloaded it onto flat plywood dollies. I

slapped and knocked and paddled the forms together solid, knowing the basic shape I was going after with each block. After the base pieces stiffened I worked on the surface, cutting away at the clay with a large dull butcher knife and a loop tool. The high grog and perlite content gave the clay a rough, pitted, scarred surface texture that I wanted to expose. I reduction fired these pieces to cone 04. The pieces had some scumming on them when they came out of the kiln that gave the blocks a frosted look. Scumming "is produced by the soluble compounds of calcium, sodium, potassium, magnesium and iron; calcium sulfate being the most common." I liked the way it looked and decided to enhance the effect by painting the surfaces with a transparent latex white paint, highlighting some of the texture with white in contrast to the red of the clay. It was a nice effect, *The Hungry People* had an interesting variety of surface textures. The dynamic, or relationship, between the pieces was quite animated, like two old men bickering. The technical aspects of the piece were not terrific though; the weight of the base pieces prevented me from working them until they were more finished looking and less bulky and the smaller piece of the two is ill-proportioned. Their relationship to each other, however, and the rough activated surface, helps to pull the piece off.

By the time I started building *The Sentinels* I was three weeks away from my thesis exhibition and working very hard. I had already cast the glass that was to sit inside them earlier on in the quarter. I slab built them, cutting out the shapes from cardboard templates. The two bottom pieces were held together with a steel pin, the top piece was not attached but held in place with weight and gravity. I built the six pieces that make up *The Sentinels* in four

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3Harry Fraser, *Ceramic Faults and their remedies.* (London: A&C Black, 1994) p.23
days and dried them under plastic very slowly over a ten day period. I electric fired them to cone 04 and then painted them with the same acrylic grey paint as I used on the Bean Pod. I also finished a small coiled marker piece that was to sit on the floor next to the ‘opening’ of The Sculpture Garden marking it as the entrance. That was also electric fired to cone 04 and painted grey.

I really wanted the piece to create a strong visual impact. It was very ambitious to do so much building in a relatively short period of time, but it was important to me to have as many pieces as I could. I wanted The Sculpture Garden to give the feeling of an environment, a place where something incredible either could or had happened. The composition of the pieces was very important in conveying this feeling. The most dramatic relationship takes place between the Monolith, the Hungry People and The Sentinels. It is the relationship between those three pieces, supported by the block path, that gave the piece its strong visual impact. The small marker piece and the large Bean Pod turned out to be not so important to the over all impression of the piece as I had thought. But never having worked on such a scale before, I found it impossible to really visualize the final impact of the work until it was all assembled. It was one thing looking at it in maquette form, and quite another to be standing amongst these large scale pieces. Viewing them in relation to one another I really felt I had accomplished what I set out to do. The work, although flawed, had ‘presence’.
CHAPTER 3

On Meaning

What does it mean to create a place where something incredible could or had happened? Well, as I have said, I was making my own ruins, or temples. I wanted to make an environment wherein I could recreate the profound spiritual impact that the ruins, and Mayan art, has had on me. The first and most important element of that is to recreate the intense mystery one experiences at the ruin sites. To symbolize mystery I used the monolith, an image out of the Gene Rodenberry film *2001: A Space Odyssey.* A large black rectangular object lands on the moon and is resonating a frequency that causes the astronauts, who have been sent to investigate it, to have a particular reaction that could be interpreted as spiritual, that is they were seemingly in ‘awe’. The image of the ‘monolith’ shows up at key times in the film until, in the end, you realize that the monolith symbolized the mystery of life, that great unknowing of the hereafter that has mystified mankind from before the time of the Maya until now. The ultimate mystery is, ‘what are we doing here?’, the question every culture has asked throughout history. *The Sculpture Garden* was intended to be a place where one could experience the mystery of their own existence, to be removed from the familiar and the mundane, transported to a place of self reflection. The sculptures in the garden are self reflective, pieces that mirror each other, facing each other.

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*A Stanley Kubrick Production, 2001- A Space Odyssey, based on a novel of the same name, by Gene Rodenbergry. (MGM/UA Home Entertainment Group, Inc.,1968)*
The Monolith sits up against the block ‘path’. The ‘path’ is the foundation on which the sculpture sits, as well as the path that leads you through the garden. Symbolically, the path refers to the choices one makes in life, the decisions that shape the contour and history of a human life. Matthew Fox discuss this notion of ‘path’ in his essay Creation Spirituality Liberating Gifts for the Peoples of the Earth.

Taking a path is different from driving down a highway to work. A path has something personal about it; it implies choice or even mystery. To choose one path is to reject another. A path is a meandering walkway— you do not rush or even drive down a pathway. A path is not goal oriented. A path is the way itself...

The path creates both the opportunity and the location for experience. The path then is what makes The Sculpture Garden a place, and the ‘markers’ along it events, records of an experience so incredible that it transformed itself forever into sculpture, reenacting itself for those who pass, beyond history, culture, and language.

The Hungry People and The Sentinels sit at a diagonal, The Hungry People on the corner of the block path and The Sentinels in the very center of The Sculpture Garden. The Hungry People are what people would be if their was no myth in their lives, no questioning their existence, knowing that there is nothing after earthly life. They are spiritually devoid, ravenous; they consume much of the material of life but have no satisfaction. Whereas The Sentinels are in the center of the piece “peacefully reposing where they aspire to be” Soëtsu Yanagi’s definition of beauty. They represent the myth of a rich afterlife that is non-physical, the notion that that which passes engenders some element of life that will continue on in another form. The cast glass pieces which sit inside The Sentinels make reference to pregnant bellies or to

Thesis Exhibition, Bever Gallery, 1991

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being filled, spiritually resolved. At the end of 2001, the monolith is floating once again through the universe, only this time a fetus is transposed upon its surface. The message is hope.
CONCLUSION

What I learned in making *The Sculpture Garden* was the true nature of my work. Regardless of the content of the individual pieces, I am always striving for an aesthetic of beauty, defining and redefining in my work what I find beautiful. Beauty is discussed by many great philosophers but the one that rings truest for me is Soétsu Yanagi, author of the now classic *The Unknown Craftsman A Japanese Insight into Beauty* Yanagi says:

I would like to believe that beauty is of deep import to our modern age. Without question, the intention of morality, philosophy, and religious belief is to bring hope, joy, peace, and freedom to mankind. But in our time religion has lost its grip. Intellectualism has undermined spiritual aspiration in most people. At this juncture I would put the question, might not beauty, and the love of the beautiful, perhaps bring peace and harmony? Could it not carry us forward to new concepts of life’s meaning? Would it not establish a fresh concept of culture? Would it not be a dove of peace between the various cultures of mankind?¹

Yanagi believes, as do I, that beauty is not only aesthetic, but profoundly spiritual, and that the nature of the spiritual has the power to transcend culture, history and language. My desire to make objects of beauty is relative to nature and spirituality. I define beauty as that which pleases the senses, imbues a particular feeling of peace, pleasure, and harmony with living things. I see mankind as nature, rather than outside of nature. I believe the same life force that drives the tides of oceans also drives the human spirit, and that is the message of *The Sculpture Garden*. The ‘markers’ grab our attention and divert it to things spiritual, to remind us that life is as much a mystery now as it was to the Maya and, as then, a blending of science and myth explain who we are but not why.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Views of *The Sculpture Garden*
Opening night reception Bevier Gallery RIT
Rochester New York.