



**VISELAYA SCULPTURE COMPETITION
SEPTEMBER 6-19, 2003**

A catalog of the Viselaya Sculpture Exhibit, a juried exhibit of figurative sculpture for the garden

Twenty-eight sculptures by twenty living artists, selected in an international competition

and

Nine sculptures by seven deceased artists comprising the Twentieth Century Exhibit



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Introduction

The Viselaya Sculpture Competition was established to promote and advance the figurative tradition in sculpture, and to recognize the best living artists working in this tradition. The event was organized and sponsored by the Viselaya Foundation, a nonprofit corporation established for this purpose. The winning sculptures were exhibited in the gardens of a private residence in the rural outskirts of Boston, Massachusetts. The juried exhibit was presented alongside an exhibit of works by deceased artists of the 20th century, to place the contemporary works in historical context. The 20th C. Exhibit works were generously loaned by private collectors and galleries.

Figurative sculpture is a universal and timeless art form that has been neglected by the mainstream art world for over fifty years. Few schools still teach the considerable skills required, few "experts" still recognize the artistic values that are uniquely achieved through the figure. Nevertheless figurative sculpture continued behind the scenes through the 20th century and is experiencing a remarkable revival today. Many young artists have had the courage and tenacity to pursue the rigorous training required, and are achieving works of impressive technical skill and artistic expression. The primary goal of the Viselaya Exhibit is to find such new works and provide a venue for their exhibition, in order to support this emerging movement.

An open competition was held to find the best figurative sculptures by living artists. The contest was open to all living artists, and entries were received from throughout the US and Europe, from artists young and old, well-known and obscure, the self-taught and protégés of the famous. The competition was judged by Jonathan Fairbanks, the Katharine Lane Weems Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Emeritus, at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. The judge was asked to select works based on both artistic expression and technical merit, with criteria to include: vitality and sensitivity of expression; originality; beauty; success in portraying an important theme or concept; mastery of the medium; quality of composition; and excellence in anatomy, including structure, balance and movement of the figure(s).

Like all great art, figurative sculpture should be both intelligible and inspirational. The criterion of "portraying an important theme or concept" deserves additional comment. Today it is radical for art to represent anything, even in the literal sense of representing a human or animal body. In the modern context, using a realistic figure to represent an abstract idea is almost unheard of. Yet this is how figurative sculpture communicates important and fundamental themes. The human figure has a unique capacity to represent human values and emotions.

Figurative artists today often work in isolation, without the intellectual, material or moral support of the art establishment. Thus it is interesting that the most sensitively and powerfully communicated themes are often themes of exile (for example Voitko's "Chandala" or Eduardo's "Paradise Lost"). Even the most optimistic and benevolent works (such as Faraut's "Child of Atlantis") make reference to isolation, if only in the sense of a safe haven from the world.

This is perhaps the most striking difference between the figurative sculpture of today and the more confident and joyful sculpture of the late 19th and early 20th century. Animal works are an exception. Rather than using animals as allegorical figures to symbolize human values and struggles, the animal figure of today is innocent and direct.



Crowds attending the exhibit on opening day.



Jonathan Fairbanks, judge of the competition, congratulated all artists and announced the top prizes.

Top Prize Winners

All the sculptures included in the juried exhibit were winners of a stringent international competition. In addition, the following entries were singled out for top honors in the exhibit:

Best Figurative Sculpture for the Garden: "Paradise Lost" by Pablo Eduardo. The figure portrays an angel in acceptance and surrender, having willingly accepted the price of banishment in exchange for knowledge; only a core remains from an apple devoured and savored. The work of a Bolivian sculptor now living in Gloucester, Massachusetts, this sculpture is extraordinary both technically and artistically, including all the aspects listed in the judging criteria. It is also exceptionally well suited for a garden setting.

Best Work in Human Anatomy: "Chandala" by Stephen Voitko of Toms River, New Jersey. The artist studied anatomy under the mentorship of Eliot Goldfinger. This sculpture brings to mind sculptures of antiquity, but its theme is unmistakably modern. "Chandala" (a Sanskrit word meaning "outcast" or "unclean") asks the viewer to experience himself, and man in general, as outcasts in the universe. Significantly, it is not a decrepit figure but the beautiful and ideal man who is cast out.

Best Narrative Sculpture for the Garden: "Creation" by Shelly Bradbury of Rockport, Massachusetts. This is an excellent example of using sculpture (in this case bas relief) to relate a narrative. The story of creation is perfectly suited for a garden sculpture. Several dozen animals surround the central figures of Adam and Eve, including insects, fish, and mammals as well as numerous plant species. These tiny figures are executed in stunning detail and represent all the categories of living things outlined in the Biblical story of creation.

Best Animal Figure: "So Good to See You" by Joy Beckner of Chesterfield, Missouri. This animal sculpture was chosen for its exceptional vitality. This dog breathes with life and has a palpable and authentic personality. One fully expects it to move. The sculpture also shows great attention to detail, showing knowledge of dog anatomy and even breed standards.

Best Small Sculpture: "Venus Seated" by Carol Tarzier of Oakland, California. A separate category was designated for figurative works less than half life size, of which only 8 were allowed by the competition rules. In this highly competitive category, "Venus Seated" is notable for its lyrical expression and also for the technical skill shown in the drapery and the beautiful and original patinas.

Best Mastery of Medium (Haley & Steele Gallery Prize): "Senegal" by Philippe Faraut of Honeoye, New York. The stone carving skill of Faraut is extraordinary, and can be seen in three separate works accepted in the exhibit. For technical mastery "Senegal" was singled out for especially for the impressive stone inlay work in the eyes.

Best Work by an Artist Under the Age of 30 (D. Roger Howlett / Childs Gallery Boston Prize): "Blossom" by Paige Bradley of Carmel, California. Few artists younger than thirty had works accepted in the exhibit; Bradley had three. This alone is testament to her unusual talent. Bradley's works reflect the influence of her mentor MacDonald, but she has a distinctive style of her own. "Blossom" is particularly successful in achieving contrasts of texture, weight and motion.

The next Viselaya Sculpture Exhibit is planned for September, 2005. Application materials will be posted on the web in January, 2005 for a March entry deadline. To reach the foundation write:

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info@viselaya.org
www.viselaya.org



Greg and Pam Bruell, co-founders of the Viselaya Foundation. Greg designed the gardens at their home, where the exhibit was held. Pam directed the sculpture competition.



VISELAYA



"Paradise Lost"
Pablo Eduardo
2002
Bronze
84" h x 22" w x 23" d

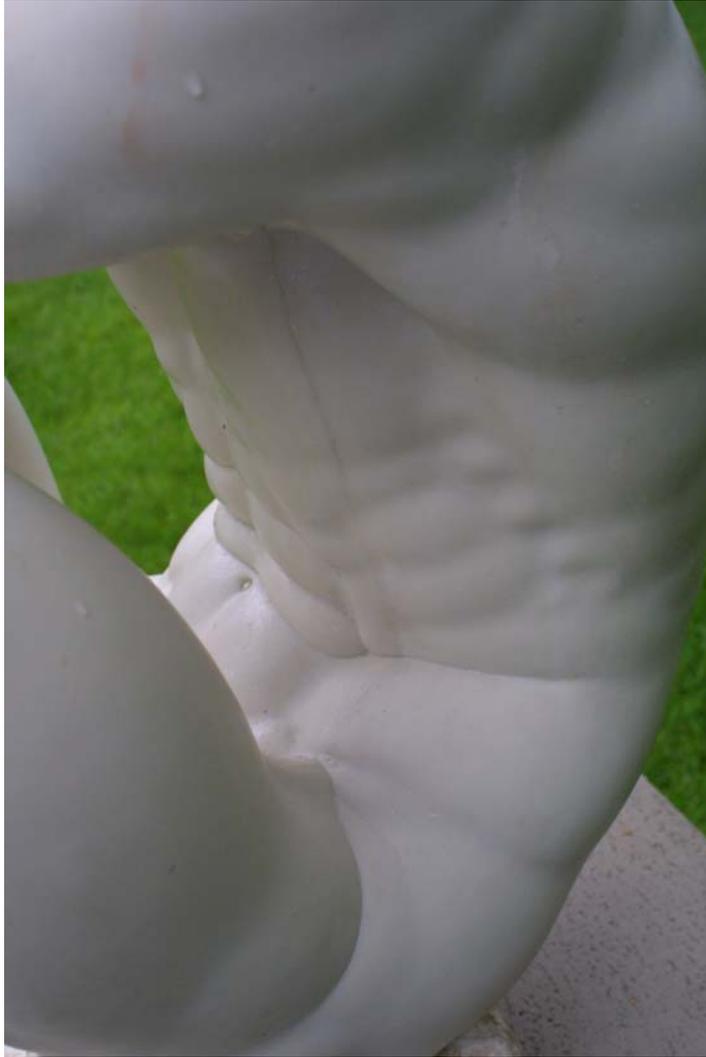
5



Best Figurative Sculpture for the Garden
"Paradise Lost"
Pablo Eduardo



6



26" h x 30" w x 17" d

Resin (proof for bronze)

1989

Stephen Voitko

"Chandala"



Best Work in Human Anatomy
"Chandala"
Stephen Voitko





Best Narrative Sculpture for the Garden
"Creation"
Shelly Bradbury



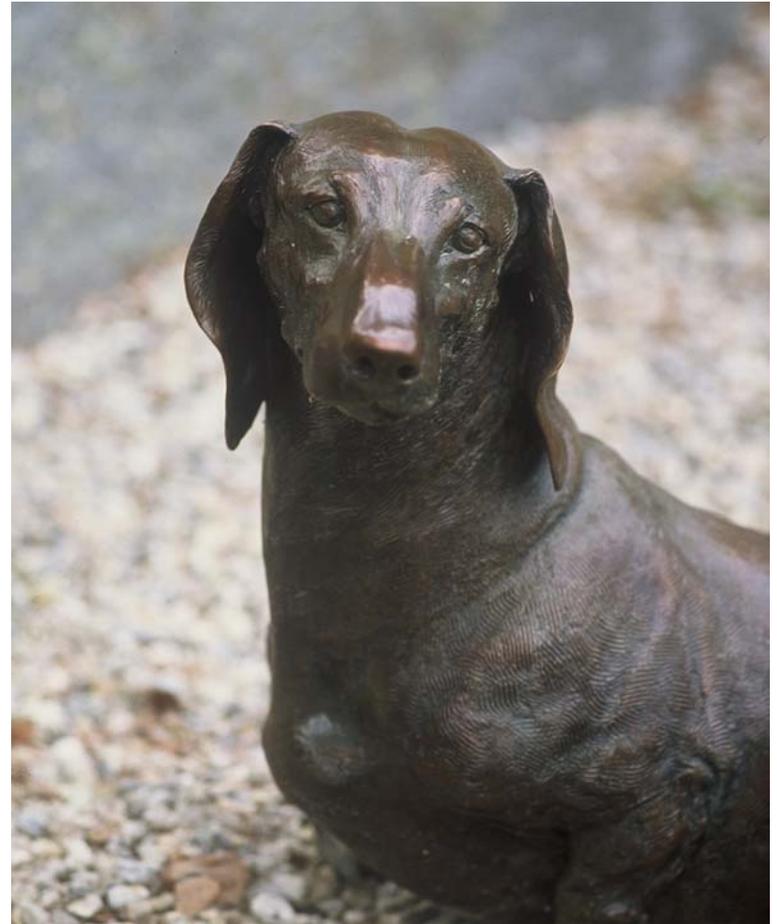
"Creation" 2003
Shelly Bradbury Plaster (proof for bronze) 5.5' h x 5' w x 4" d



"So Good to See You"
Joy Beckner
2000
Bronze
5.5' h x 5' w x 4" d



11

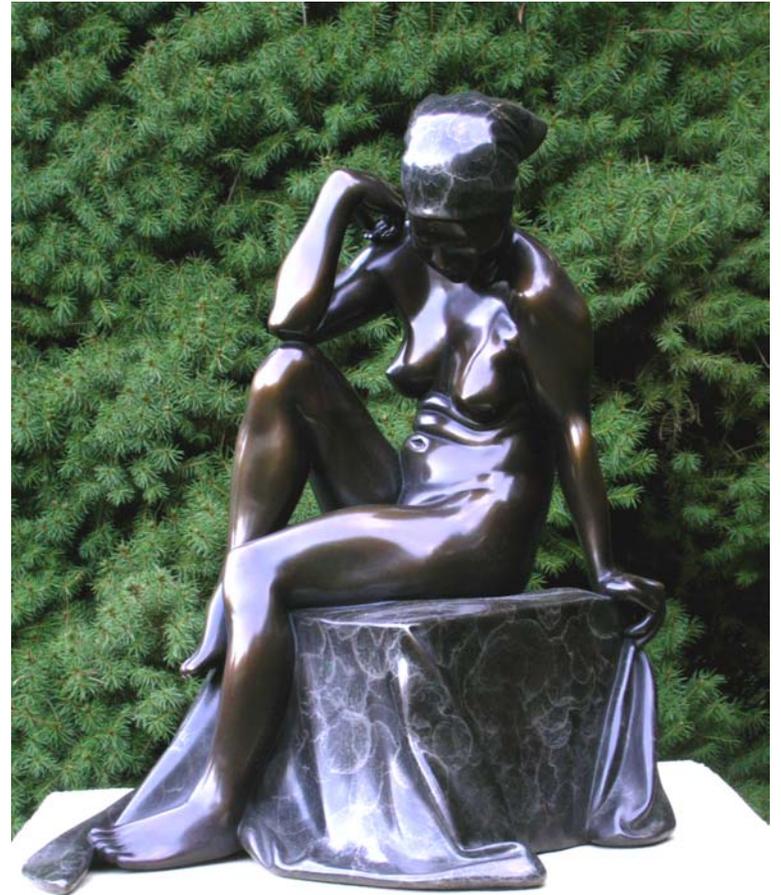


Best Animal Figure
"So Good to See You"
Joy Beckner

12



"Venus Seated"
Carol Tarzier
2002
Bronze
15" h x 10" w x 13" d



Best Small Sculpture
"Venus Seated"
Carol Tarzier



15



Haley & Steele Gallery Prize for
Best Mastery of Medium
"Senegal"
Philippe Faraut

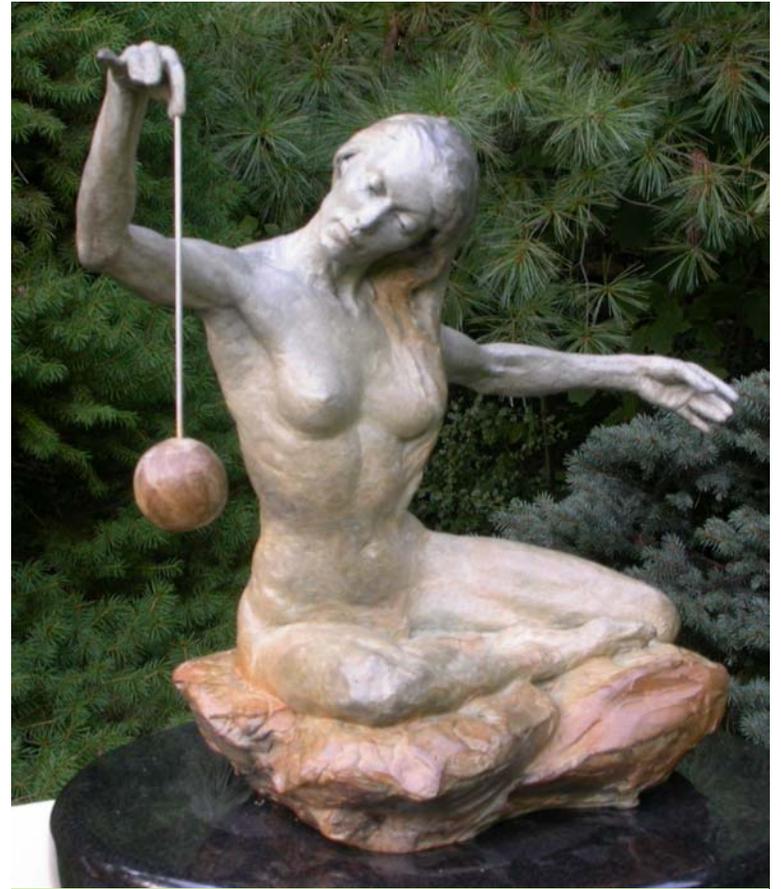


16



"Blossom"
Paige Bradley
2001
Bronze
15" h x 12" w x 12" d

17



D. Roger Howlett / Childs Gallery Boston Prize for
Best Work by an Artist Under the Age of 30
"Blossom"
Paige Bradley

18



19



20

"Dragoness"
Ailene Fields
2001
Bronze
27" h x 54" w x 42" d

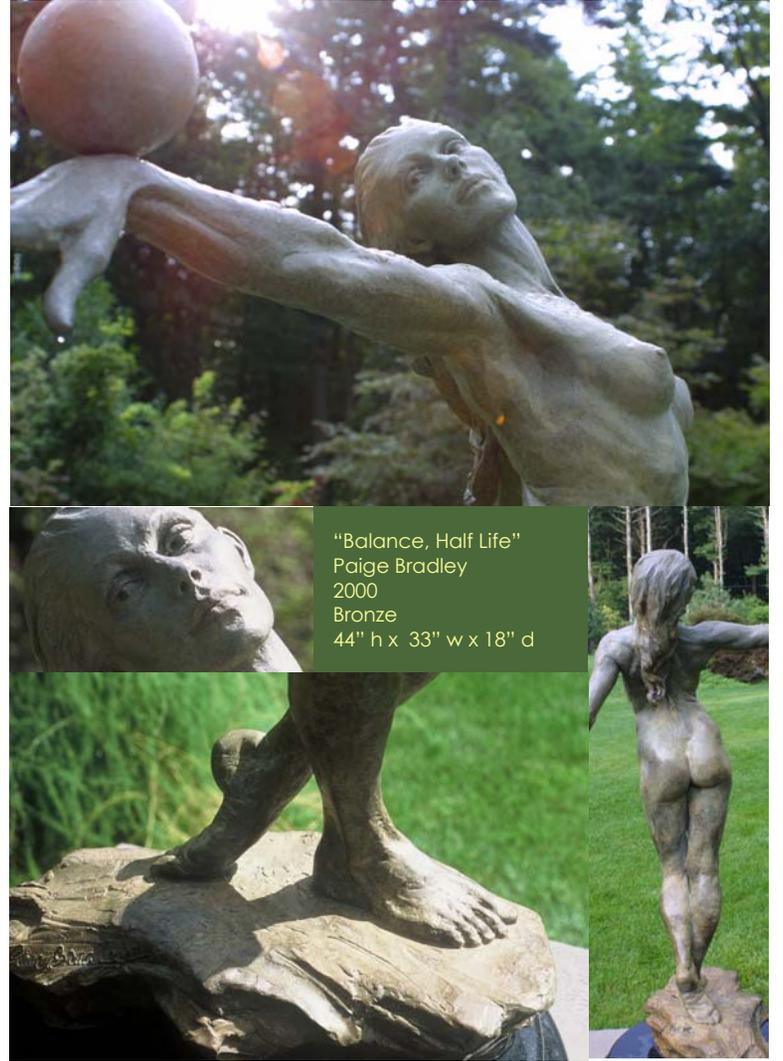


"Youth"
Melisa Gerber
1980
Bronze
12" h x 10" w x 9" d





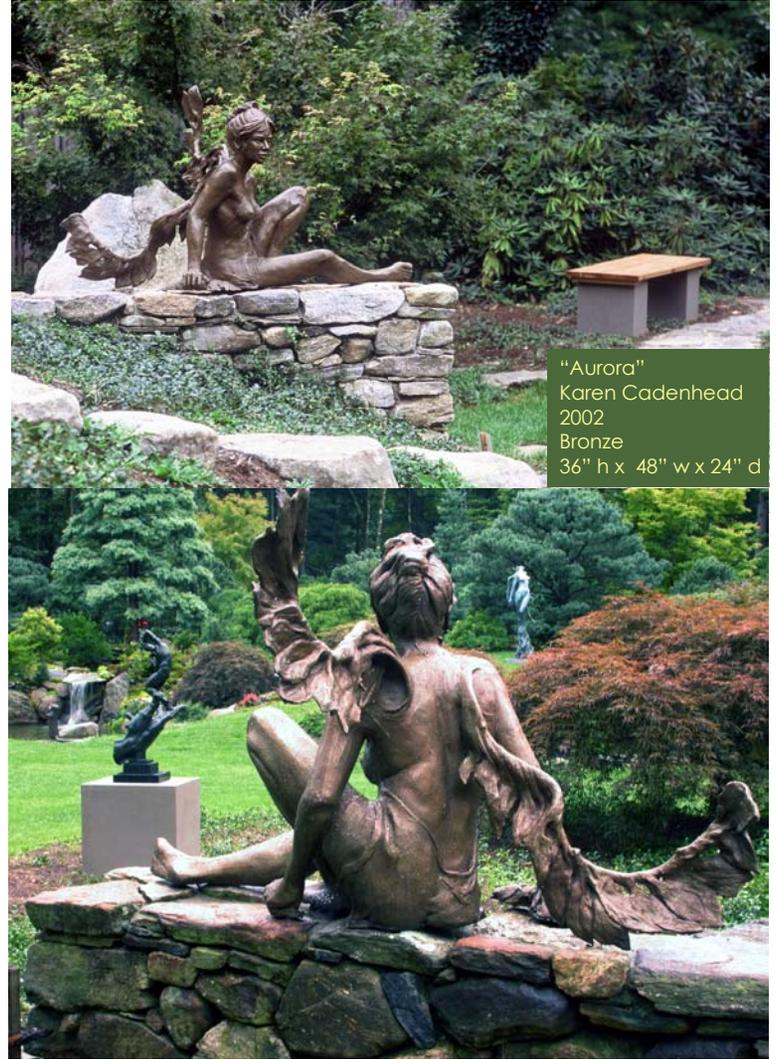
23



24



"Child of Atlantis"
Philippe Faraut
2002
Marble
20" h x 12.5" w
x 13" d



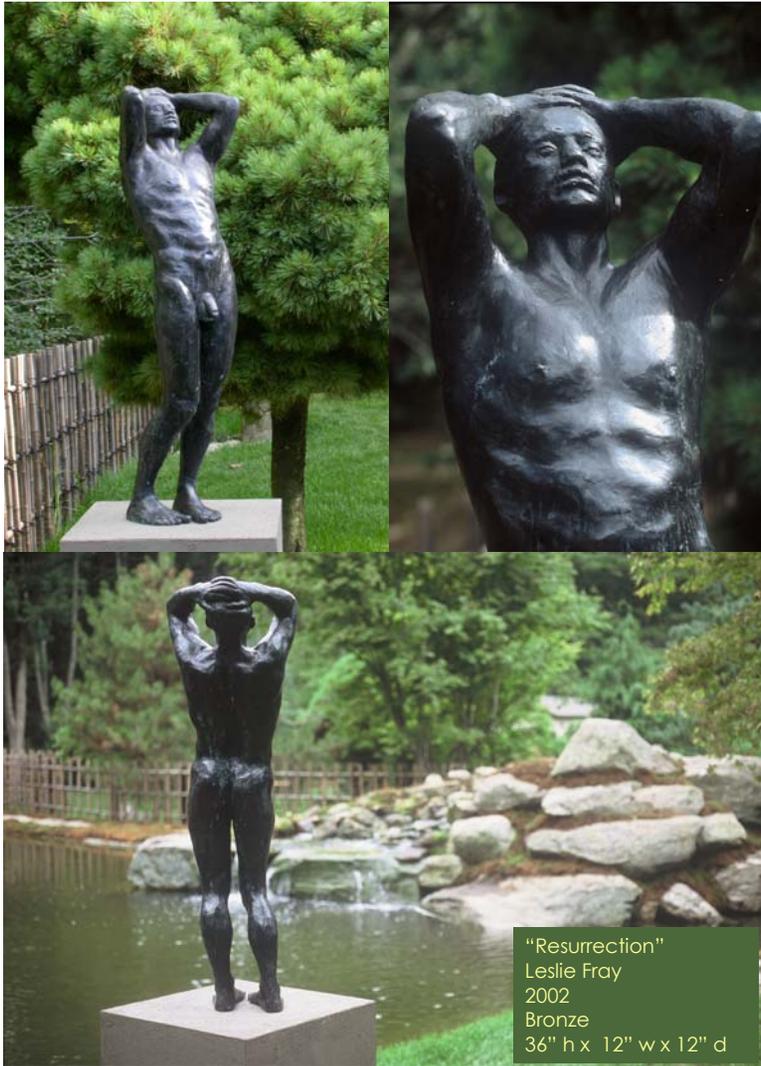
"Aurora"
Karen Cadenhead
2002
Bronze
36" h x 48" w x 24" d



"Gaia's Daughter"
Edward Fleming
2003
Marble
22" h x 30" w x 24" d



"River Otter" Beverly Seamans
Bronze 1999
27" h (life size)



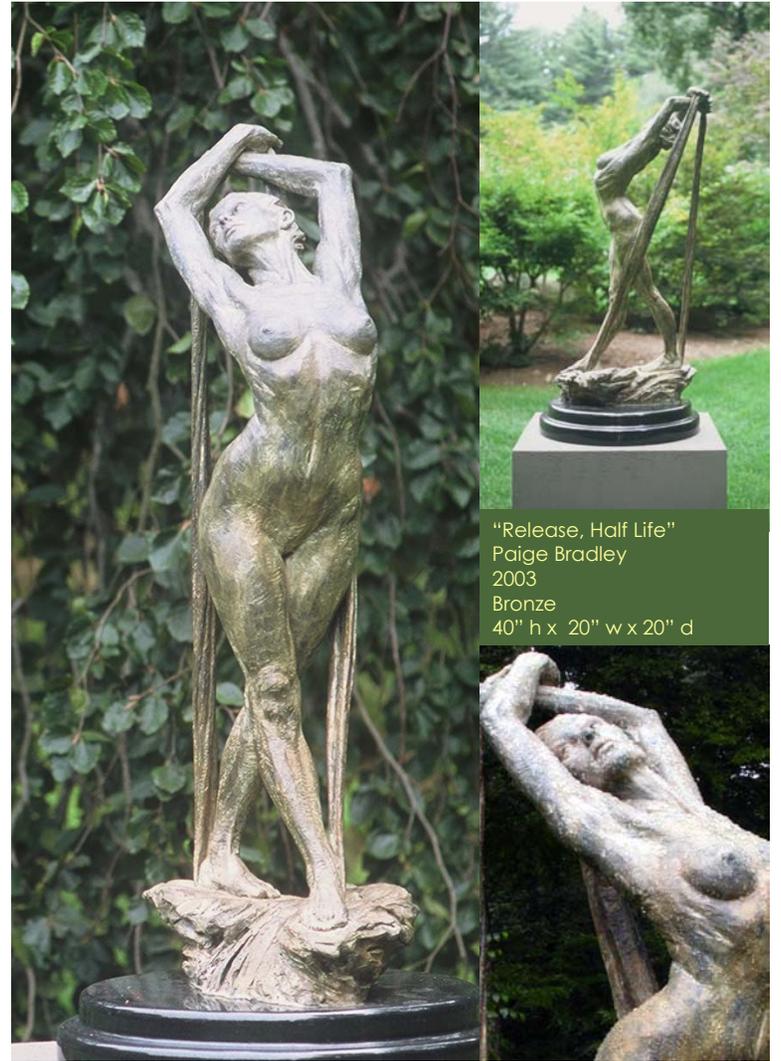
"Resurrection"
 Leslie Fray
 2002
 Bronze
 36" h x 12" w x 12" d



"Cornerstones"
 Philippe Faraut
 2002
 Marble
 26.5" h x 29" w
 x 23" d



"Will There Be a Place For Me?"
Ann Morris
1994
Bronze
48" h x 48" w x 60" d



"Release, Half Life"
Paige Bradley
2003
Bronze
40" h x 20" w x 20" d

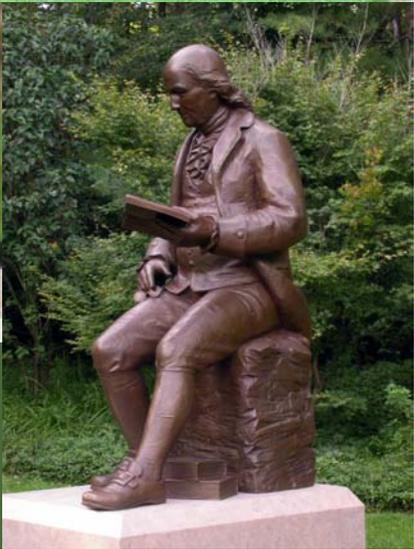




"Reverie"
Rose van Vranken
1972
Bronze
39" h x 41" w x 26" d



"Goddess of Light"
Karen Cadenhead
Bronze 2002
36" h x 12" w x 12" d



"Benjamin Franklin Memorial"
Robert Shure
2000
Bronze
8' h x 5' w x 4' d





"Ambrosia"
Daniel Altshuler
2001 Bronze
17" h x 7" w x 6" d

37



"Master"
Sam Axton 2000
Bronze 24" h x 15" w x 13" d

38



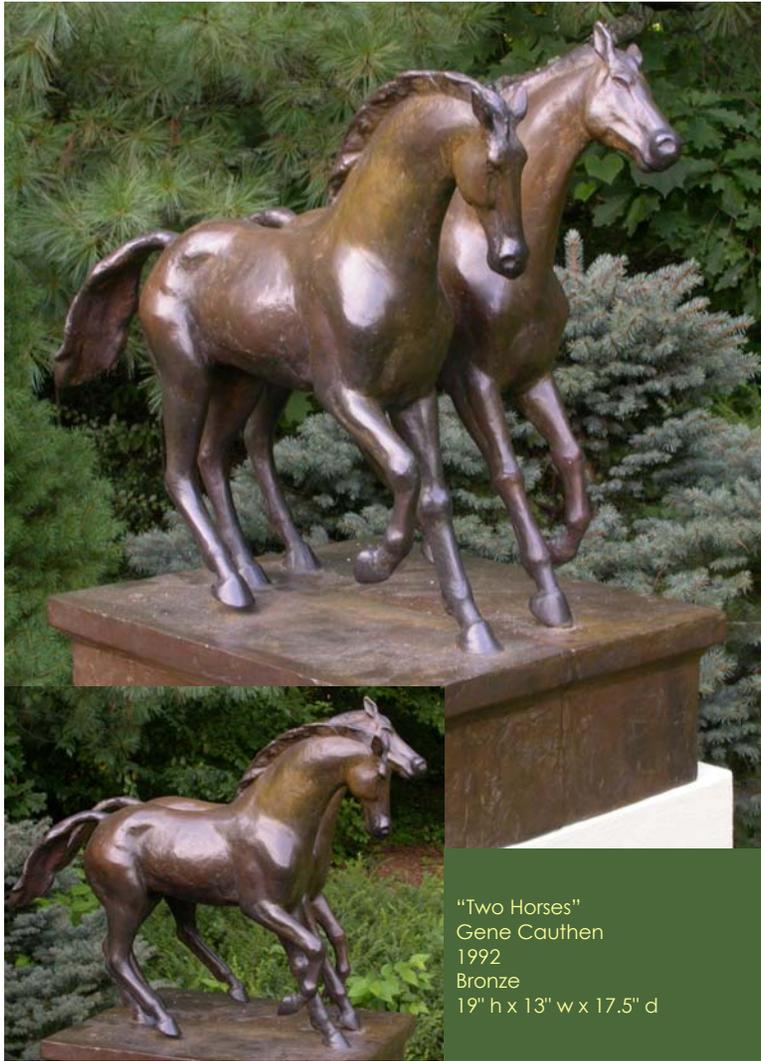
(Untitled)
Masao Morimoto
Resin 23.5" h x 9" w x 7" d

39



"After the Bath"
Carol Tarzier
Bronze 2000
17" h x 6" w x 9" d

40



"Two Horses"
Gene Cauthen
1992
Bronze
19" h x 13" w x 17.5" d

41



(Untitled)
Masao Morimoto
Resin 24" h x 6.5" w x 11" d

42



43



"Spirit Triumphant"
Donald De Lue (1897-1988)
Bronze, 1971
76" h x 27" w x 15" d
courtesy of
Childs Gallery, Boston

44

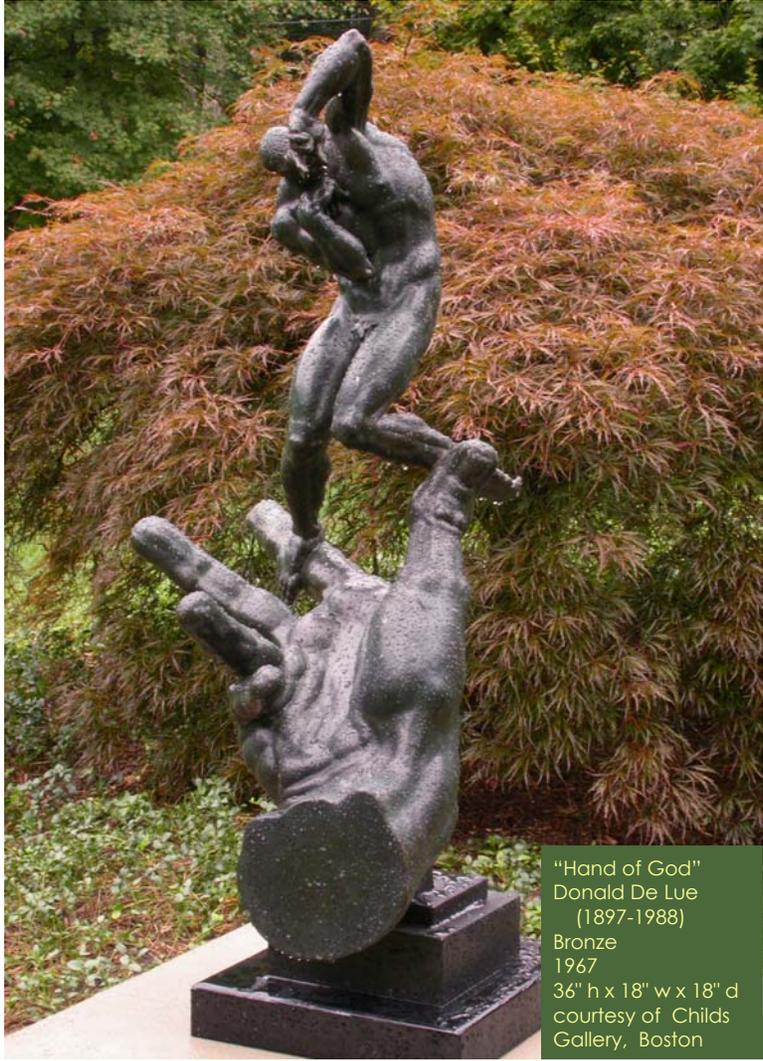


"Flute Boy"
Richard Recchia (1885-1983)
Bronze, 1910
36.25"h x 25" w x 25" d
courtesy of Childs Gallery, Boston



"Circus Horse"
Katherine Lane Weems (1899 - 1989)
Polyester resin replica
Original signed K.W.Lane 1930
21" h x 25" w x 8.25" d
courtesy of
Jonathan and Louisa Fairbanks





"Hand of God"
Donald De Lue
(1897-1988)
Bronze
1967
36" h x 18" w x 18" d
courtesy of Childs
Gallery, Boston





"Elephants"
Katherine Lane Weems
(1899 - 1989)
Resin cast of original plaster
model used for Harvard archi-
tectural frieze, 1931
43" h x 100" w x 2' d
courtesy of Skylight Studios



"Arcadian Idyll"
Albert Wein (1915-1991)
Bronze
1989
48" h x 27" w x 18" d
courtesy of
Childs Gallery, Boston



"Hawaiian Fisherman"
Avaril Fairbanks (1897-1987)
Bronze 1941 23" h x 22" w x 13" d
courtesy of Jonathan and Louisa Fairbanks



"Abraham Lincoln"
Daniel Chester French
(1850-1931)
Bronze, 1916
(posthumous cast)
32" h x 25" w x 27" d
courtesy of
Chitas Gallery, Boston



"Diver"
 Walker Hancock
 (1901-1998)
 Bronze
 1933
 68" h x 21" w x 29" d
 courtesy of
 Childs Gallery,
 Boston

About the Gardens

The exhibits were held in the gardens of a private residence near Boston, Massachusetts. Normally a private space, the gardens were opened to the public for two weeks exclusively for this exhibit. The garden was designed and built by owner Greg Bruell, who has been developing the site since 1992. The landscape design is characterized by rolling green hills and terraced ponds. Although the design shows a strong Japanese influence, it is fundamentally an American garden, built with rock and plant materials local to its site.

The element of water permeates the landscape, with four ponds connected by streams and waterfalls. On still days, colorful koi fish can be seen schooling below the reflections of trees, rocks and sky. The ponds also attract wildlife: turtles loiter on rocks, dragonflies chase about the sky, and frogs and toads populate all the shady corners of the water's edge. Waterfalls were designed as much for sound as for views: some gush, others trickle; sheer drops fall beside shallow steps, creating different pitches. The combined effect is an idealization of the sound of a mountain stream.

The skeleton of the garden is its rocks: granite and schist boulders collected from farms and quarries around the region and arranged painstakingly into outcroppings and islands. Each rock is selected for its interesting shape and for a prized patina of lichens and mosses. Special rocks were saved for years awaiting the perfect placement. Stepping stone pathways, stone walls, and enormous slab retaining walls all serve to blur the distinction between garden and structure, natural and manmade.

If rocks are the sculpture of the garden, then moss is its paint. The manicured moss gardens contain at least 30 different types of native moss. Luxuriant expanses of moss edge the water features, and intimate moss beds are tucked beneath trees to capture dappled morning light.

The horticultural collection is noted for Japanese Maples: over 100 different varieties grow here, ranging from large landscape trees to miniatures only a few inches tall. Numerous dwarf cultivars of white pine echo the native pine forest beyond, but reduced to a human scale. Each tree is thoughtfully pruned, the entire composition designed to lead the eye through lush layers of texture and foliage that fill the view from earth to sky. The complete composition cannot be appreciated from any one view: it unfolds only as one walks through it.

The garden is equally beautiful in all seasons. Flowering trees and shrubs light up a succession of color compositions in spring. An almost monochromatic palette of blue-green makes the garden cool and serene in summer. Maple foliage erupts like flames in the autumn. After leaves fall, the fascinating branch-work of Japanese maples contrasts against the masses of evergreens to produce a lush and scenic winter garden.

