

PRESS RELEASE

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The State of Sculpture 2019: Opening Reception

Montpelier – *The State of Sculpture 2019 . . . an overview of Vermont Sculptors* will be dedicated this week in the Vermont Arts Council Sculpture Garden. Every two years the Sculpture Garden is transformed through the creative vision of a new curatorial team. This year Matthew Perry and Joe Chirchirillo have selected works from seven sculptors. A dedication and reception for the curators and artists will be held Thursday, September 12, from 5 to 7 p.m.

"As curators we want to showcase a wide variety of materials and techniques. The works represent the traditional skills of stone carving and woodworking, as well as casting and fabrication using stainless steel, iron, and concrete. Most importantly, we are committed to creating an intimate environment for the public, one that is friendly and engages you to sit, rest, and reflect."

The exhibit includes works by: Ria Blaas, Joe Chirchirillo, Clark Derbes, Peter Lundberg, Chris Miller, Andrew Hamilton Reiss, and Gregory Smith. The exhibit will be on display through August 2021.

The State of Sculpture 2019 . . . an overview of Vermont sculptors

Opening Reception

September 12

5 to 7 p.m.

Vermont Arts Council Sculpture Garden

136 State Street

Montpelier

About the Curators

Matthew Perry lives in North Bennington and is a visual artist and the executive director and co-founder of the Vermont Arts Exchange (VAE). For more than twenty-five years he has managed numerous exhibitions and performances for VAE, a nonprofit community arts organization. Many of his exhibitions reflect the community approach he takes to engage the public. VAE's work has taken him to exhibit in vacant parking lots, fire stations, schools, town halls, farms, alongside a river cleanup, and into traditional settings like galleries and museums.

Joseph Chirchirillo is a North Bennington sculptor and has curated for the past seven years the North Bennington Outdoor Sculpture Show (NOBOSS), now in its twenty-second year. In addition, he is currently has pieces in eight outdoor shows around New England. He is interested in the democratic nature of outdoor sculpture and hoping to engage those who are interested in art and those who are not.

About the Artists

Ria Blaas lives in Norwich. She works mainly in wood, also often exploring stone, bronze, clay, and two-dimensional mediums. Her studies began overseas in the early 1970s. Since then, her pieces been exhibited up and down the East Coast. While Ria has employed different approaches to art-making over the years, her output remains distinct and significant. Three of her sculptures were included in Fleming Museum's exhibition In Grain: Contemporary Work in Wood, Burlington's Flynndog gallery in 2014, and the Helen Day Art Center's 2011 Exposed outdoor sculpture showcase. Ria's larger sculptures are seen year-round at the Path of Life Sculpture Garden in Windsor.

Joe Chirchirillo lives in North Bennington and mainly works with steel and concrete. He began creating sculpture in the early 1970s. After attending college he moved to the New York Metro area and settled in Jersey City, New Jersey. He was among the first wave of artists moving to this outpost across the Hudson and building the budding art scene there. He relocated to Vermont twelve years ago and has mainly focused on outdoor sculpture since then. Joe has participated in many exhibits and has curated the North Bennington Outdoor Sculpture Show for the last seven years. He has also received many commissions and is in numerous private collections in North America and Asia.

Clark Derbes lives in Charlotte. He has, for over a decade, salvaged large hardwood trunks from arborists working in the area surrounding his studio. He carves the trunks with his chainsaw, honing them into raw shapes, then meticulously paints them using a variety of complex visual systems, patterns, and patina processes. Clark asks his viewers to question their perceptions and remain constant as the separation between the public and the personal is dissolved by the joy of color and the delight of the unexpected. Clark earned a bachelor of fine arts degree at Louisiana State University and exhibits extensively throughout the U.S.

Peter Lundberg lives in Bomoseen. He studied sculpture under Brower Hatcher, receiving a master of fine arts degree from Bennington College in 1985; he had graduated from Skidmore College in 1983 with a bachelor's degree in mathematics. In 1986 he bought his current home, and in the 1990s apprenticed sculptor Mark di Suvero for seven years. Since 2000 Peter has focused on private and public commissions in cast concrete or cast bronze. The concrete works are made in earth molds, often built onsite. He has won the Nord Art Prize in Germany and the top prize at Sculpture by the Sea in Australia twice. He has public works of art in China, Australia, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Canada and the United States.

Chris Miller lives in Calais and works in granite, wood, and marble. His work, for indoor or outdoor installations, is figurative and representational. Chris began carving in 1976. Although largely self taught, he studied art in college and then anatomy and sculpture with the late Lothar Werslin of Sandgate, drawing and anatomy under Billy Brauer of Warren, and worked alongside and collaborated with several of the country's top stone sculptors in nearby Barre. His recent sculpture adorns the State House dome in Montpelier.

Andrew Hamilton Reiss works primarily in metal and wood, using salvaged materials exclusively and bringing a crazy wisdom in sculptural beauty to the world that bridges form and function. Andrew has a background in landscape design, bilingual studies, business, and education. His love of the natural world and eye for unbridled form brought him to begin creating sculpture and artisan furniture, a true artist evolving out of a practical life in the trades.

Gregory Smith lives in North Pownal. He began his sculpture studies with Isaac Witkin and Brower Hatcher at Bennington College, then later studied with Paul Aschenbach at the University of Vermont. Gregory has worked with wood, clay, and bronze, but his media of choice is welded steel and more recently, copper. His sculptures are at once whimsical and entirely serious; reserved, yet resonant. His use of line creates a sense of solidity while letting the space breathe, setting up a dialogue between the line and the negative space, and his use and application of color give an added sense of depth and dimension.

About the Sculpture Garden

The Arts Council and the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services maintain an exhibit at the Council offices at 136 State Street in Montpelier—next door to the Capital Region Visitors Center. The Garden is a public/private collaboration featuring rotating two-year showings of contemporary work created by Vermont artists. Designed in 2002 by Burlington landscape architects H. Keith Wagner and Associates, it offers a place to picnic or engage in quiet reflection in Montpelier's downtown.

About the Vermont Arts Council

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a Vermont where all people have access to the arts and creativity in their lives, education, and communities. Engagement with the arts transforms individuals, connects us more deeply to each other, energizes the economy, and sustains the vibrant cultural landscape that makes Vermont a great place to live. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. www.vermontartscouncil.org.

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