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Art Installation Unveiled at Fish Culture Station in Roxbury

MONTPELIER, VT— The Vermont Arts Council, in partnership with the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, announce the installation of a sculpture by Vermont sculptor Sean Hunter Williams at Vermont’s oldest fish hatchery, the Roxbury Fish Culture Station.

The sculpture features a single spawning female wild brook trout enlarged six times its average size. The green granite chosen for the sculpture is polished to the same deep green hue as the ridge of the wild brook trout and its surface is etched to reflect the signature camouflage pattern of the wild brook trout’s back.

Titled “The Origin of the River,” the sculpture honors both the creative, feminine energy in nature and the proud heritage this native species represents to Vermonters. By embodying the confluence of biology, conservation, and outdoor recreation, the work symbolizes the Department’s mission and celebrates a species that was raised at this location for the first time in the state over 125 years ago.

The work was commissioned in 2017 by the State of Vermont through the Vermont Art in State Buildings Program (<http://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants-and-services/artists/art-in-state-buildings>), which supports the creation of site-specific works of art in designated state construction projects. A local art selection committee comprised of community members and representatives from the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department worked with Williams to develop and finalize the design for the site. The work was installed in the fall of 2020.

Williams was selected from 15 applicants to the project. He is a second-generation stone carver based in Barre, Vermont. He graduated with a BFA from the University of Pennsylvania after transferring from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. After graduating, he lived in Berlin, Germany for four years to explore the arts and culture scene before moving back to Vermont to apprentice with his father, Jerry Williams, at the Barre Sculpture Studios, where he learned the craft of stone carving. After a four-year apprenticeship, Williams now does both public and private commissions as a freelance stone carver operating out of Barre Sculpture Studio. His work on the trout sculpture pushes the boundaries of stone carving by utilizing varying stages of surface polishing.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, a celebration of the new facility is postponed until 2021.

“We add value to our community when we integrate public art into our public spaces,” said Vermont Arts Council Senior Program Manager Michele Bailey. “Sean’s work reflects the important work of the Fish Hatchery and enhances our civic pride in the site, the community and the State. We look forward to celebrating both the art and the new facility when we can gather again in person.”

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. Learn more at vermontartscouncil.org

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