

DES
MOINES
ART
CENTER

JOHN AND MARY PAPPAJOHN SCULPTURE PARK

AN EXTENSION OF THE DES MOINES ART CENTER



WELCOME TO THE JOHN AND MARY PAPPAJOHN SCULPTURE PARK

HOURS

Open daily from sunrise to midnight
Free admission
Free cell phone tours

PRESERVATION

Help us preserve the park for future generations by not touching, climbing, or sitting on the sculptures, with the exception of Scott Burton's *Seating for Eight* (#111 on the map). Although many of the sculptures appear sturdy and durable, touching or climbing will damage the sculptures and their finish.

Occasionally, sculptures may not be on view due to conservation needs.

FOOD AND DRINK

Picnicking is allowed. Please be sure to keep food and drink away from the sculptures and dispose of waste in the receptacles on the perimeter of the park. City park rules prohibit glass bottles and alcohol is allowed by permit only.

TOURS

Tours at the Des Moines Art Center and the Pappajohn Sculpture Park are free.

Guided tours of the sculpture park are available April through October for groups of any size.

Request a tour at least three weeks in advance by calling 515.277.4405 or visiting desmoinesartcenter.org.

Tours are available in multiple languages and for visitors with differing abilities. When scheduling a tour, please include any relevant information regarding mobility, hearing, visual, intellectual, or language needs.

Ugo Rondinone: (LEFT TO RIGHT) **air gets into everything even nothing** 2006; **MOONRISE. east. january** 2005; **MOONRISE. east. august** 2006



The John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park – an extension of the Des Moines Art Center – opened in September 2009 as the realization of a dream by local philanthropists and art collectors John and Mary Pappajohn. They envisioned a space where the entire community could experience sculpture by the world's most celebrated artists, free of charge.

Many of the park's original sculptures were moved to the park from the Pappajohn's yard including Mark di Suvero's **T8**, 1987.



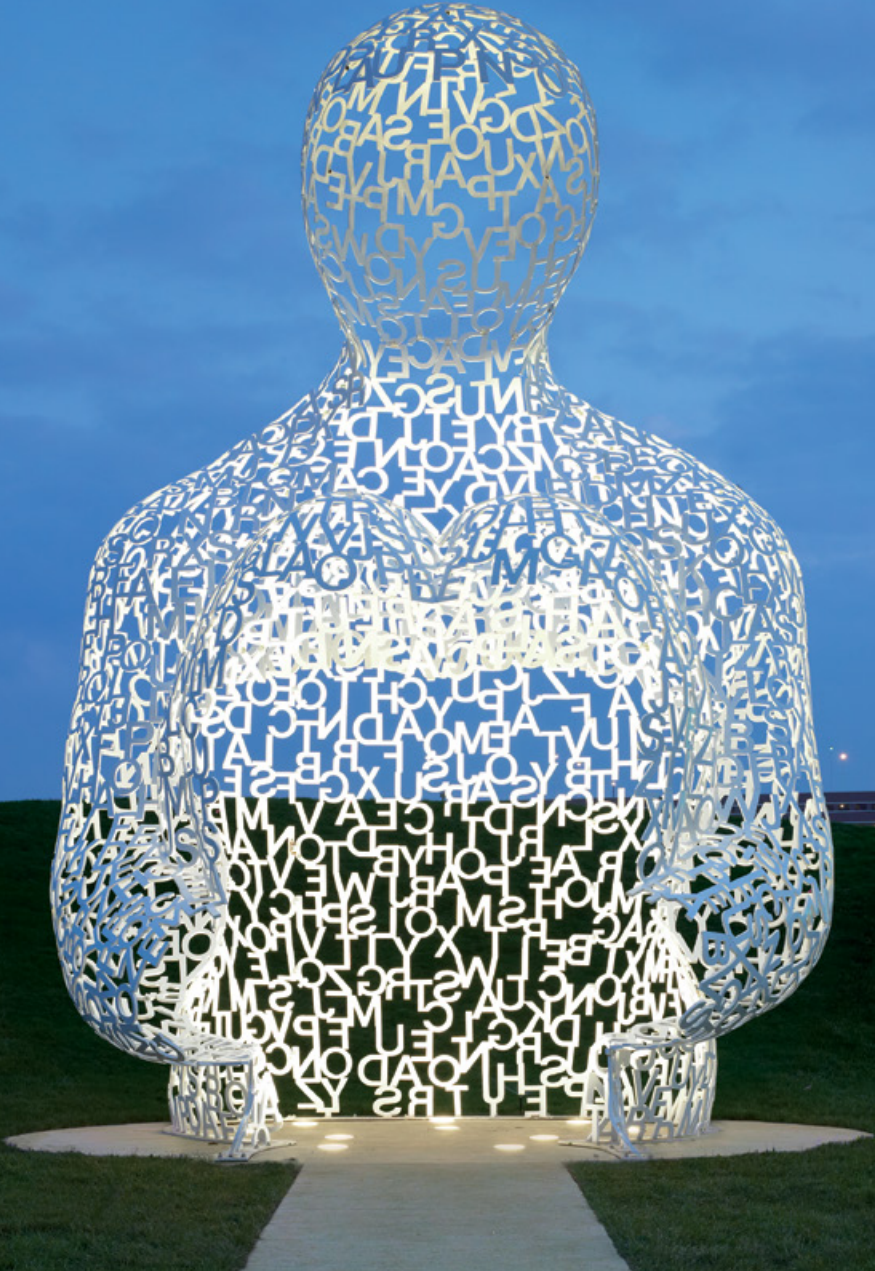


Yayoi Kusama **Pumpkin (L)** / Photo: Molly Wood

The John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park (2009) joined the Richard Meier building (1985), I. M. Pei building (1968), and Eiel Saarinen building (1948) as the fourth distinctive environment for the display of the Des Moines Art Center's renowned collections. Nestled in the heart of the city, this open-air space encourages unprecedented access to the finest sculptures of our time. Whether walking through the park during a peaceful spring dawn or watching the glow of Yayoi Kusama's *Pumpkin (L)* under a fall moonlight, nature provides infinite possibilities for unique art viewing experiences.

The 4.4 acre park is one of the most significant parks of its kind in the United States, attracting visitors from around the city, the nation, and the world.

Jaume Plensa / **Nomade** 2007



VISIT THE DES MOINES ART CENTER



Des Moines Art Center, Maytag Reflecting Pool and Bookey Family Courtyard where three iconic Art Center buildings meet—I. M. Pei building on the left, Eiel Saarinen building in the center, and Richard Meier building on the right. Photo: Rich Sanders, Des Moines

Extend your visit to the Des Moines Art Center, located 2.5 miles due west of the Pappajohn Sculpture Park at 4700 Grand Avenue.

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center has amassed an important collection with a major emphasis on 20th and 21st century art. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by an internationally-renowned architect—Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei, and Richard Meier.

Additionally, the Art Center features outdoor sculptures on the surrounding grounds of Greenwood Park.

FREE ADMISSION

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday & Wednesday | 10 am – 4 pm

Thursday & Friday | 10 am – 7 pm


Saturday & Sunday | 10 am – 5 pm

Closed Monday


INFORMATION

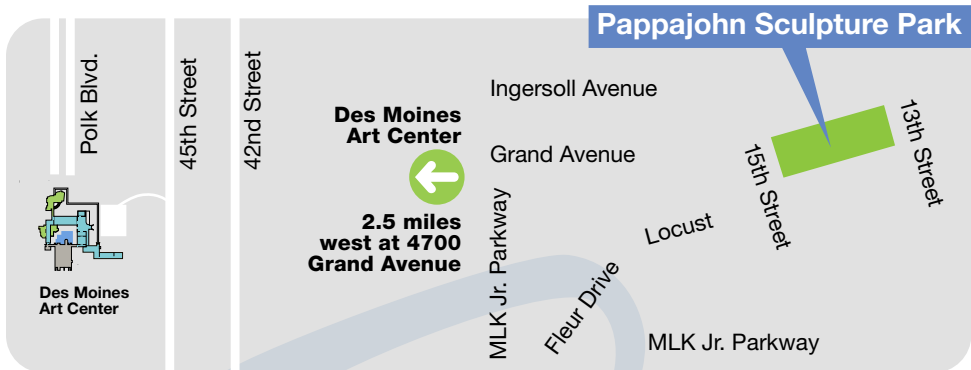
Visit desmoinesartcenter.org

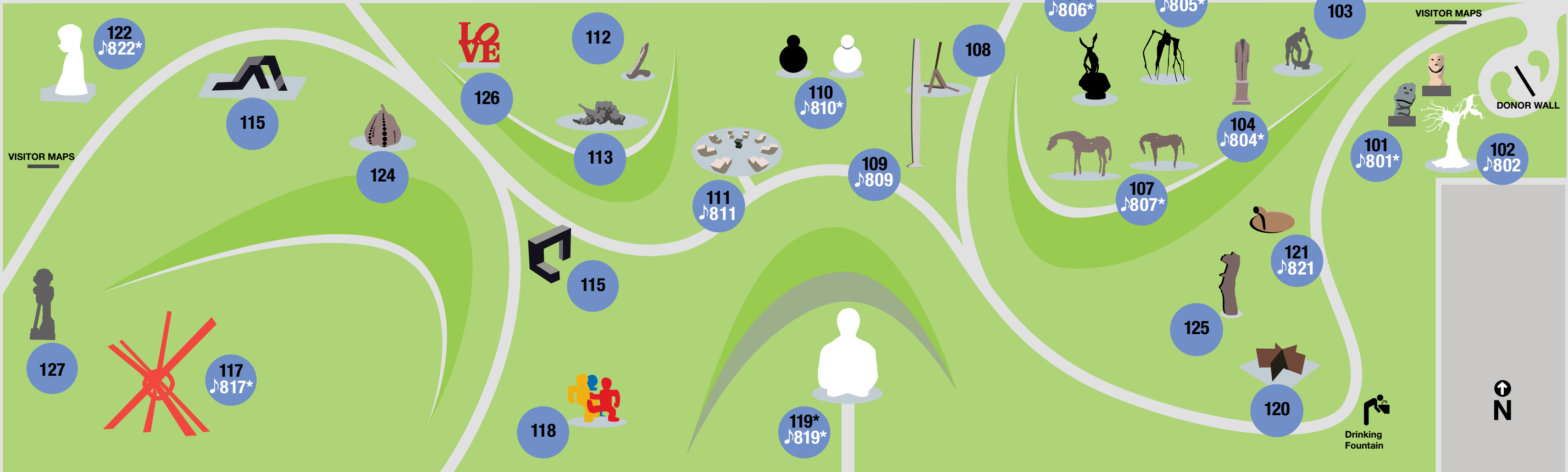
FOLLOW US ONLINE

 [DesMoinesArtCenter](https://www.facebook.com/DesMoinesArtCenter)

 [@DesMoinesArtCenter](https://www.instagram.com/DesMoinesArtCenter)

 [desmoinesartcenter](https://www.tiktok.com/desmoinesartcenter)





GUIDED AUDIO TOUR

Use your cell phone to learn more about each artwork in the Pappajohn Sculpture Park.

Scan the QR code or call 515.657.8264 and follow the steps below.



Step 1 Enter the **black 3-digit code** from the map or from the sculpture title plaque.

Step 2 To proceed to another audio track at any point, press the **# key** on your phone followed by a new 3-digit code.

Step 3 Share your comments. To record your personal interpretation or thoughts about a particular sculpture, press # on your phone followed by *0 and wait for the prompt.

Step 4 You may stay connected as you explore the park or call back as often as you'd like.

SYMPHONY IN SCULPTURE

Listen to musical scores recorded by the Des Moines Symphony for selected works. *Symphony in Sculpture* scores have been created in partnership with the Des Moines Symphony under the direction of Music Director and Conductor Joseph Giunta. The scores were composed by Emmy Award-winning composer Steve Heitzeg.

To access *Symphony in Sculpture* recordings, follow the Guided Audio Tour steps above but enter the **white 3-digit code** designated with a musical note (♫). Enter **#800** to hear Steve Heitzeg introduce the musical selections.



LOCUST STREET ↻

- 101 Ugo Rondinone / **MOONRISE. east. january** and **MOONRISE. east. august**
- 102 Ugo Rondinone / **air gets into everything even nothing**
- 103 Anthony Caro / **In the Morning**
- 104 Judith Shea / **Post Balzac**
- 105 Louise Bourgeois / **Spider**
- 106 Barry Flanagan / **Thinker on a Rock**
- 107 Deborah Butterfield / **Ancient Forest (left)** and **Juno (right)**
- 108 Joel Shapiro / **Untitled**
- 109 Ellsworth Kelly / **Untitled**
- 110 Gary Hume / **Back of Snowman (White)** and **Back of Snowman (Black)**
- 111 Scott Burton / **Seating for Eight** and **Café Table I**
- 112 William Tucker / **Gymnast III**

- 113 Willem de Kooning / **Reclining Figure**
- 115 Tony Smith / **Marriage and Willy**
- 117 Mark di Suvero / **T8**
- 118 Keith Haring / **Untitled (Three Dancing Figures, version C)**
- 119 Jaume Plensa / **Nomade**
- 120 Richard Serra / **Five Plate Pentagon**
- 121 Martin Puryear **Decoy**
- 122 Yoshitomo Nara / **White Ghost**
- 124 Yayoi Kusama / **Pumpkin (L)**
- 125 Ai Weiwei / **Iron Tree Trunk**
- 126 Robert Indiana / **LOVE**
- 127 Huma Bhabha / **Even Stones Have Eyes**



MUSEUM
ART SCHOOL
SCULPTURE PARK

4700 Grand Avenue | Des Moines, Iowa 50312
515.277.4405 | desmoinesartcenter.org



Ugo Rondinone (Swiss, born 1963)

101

MOONRISE. east. january 2005

Painted cast aluminum on steel plinth

94 3/4 x 47 1/2 x 48 1/4 inches

MOONRISE. east. august 2006

Painted cast aluminum on steel plinth

99 3/4 x 50 1/2 x 52 1/2 inches

These childlike and somewhat awkward faces are two from a series of 12 sculptures titled *MOONRISE*. Each sculpture depicts an exaggerated expression and is named after a month of the year. *MOONRISE. east. january* has a mischievous appearance with its toothy grin, squinty eyes, and pointy nose; *MOONRISE. east. august* has a sympathetic look conveyed through the head's tilt, hum-drum mouth, wide-open eyes, and button nose. A texture resembling finger marks in clay covers each, adding to their youthful charm. Ugo Rondinone created this series in homage to the moon in a time when our day-to-day reliance upon it has waned and its mythic significance has faded. Yet despite modern man's changed relationship with the moon, Rondinone is drawn to it for its universal accessibility and its significance as a marker of the passage of time.



Photo © Fitch Sanders, Des Moines, Iowa

Ugo Rondinone (Swiss, born 1963)

102

air gets into everything even nothing 2006

Cast aluminum, white enamel

155 7/8 x 157 1/2 x 118 1/8 inches

Air gets into everything even nothing further investigates Ugo Rondinone's interest in time, displacement, and the relationship between natural and artificial environments. While this sculpture is at once realistic — it's an exact replica of a still living 2,000-year-old olive tree — it is also a man-made construction fabricated from aluminum and covered with white enamel. Rondinone plays with the idea that the original tree is a living entity with deep, history-rich roots, while this ghostly image has nothing beneath its surface to affix it to a permanent location.



Anthony Caro (British, 1924–2013)

103

In the Morning 1986

Bronze / 42 1/2 x 33 x 24 inches

Anthony Caro is best known for abstract metal sculptures, painted in lively colors and removed from any tie to a pedestal-stature relationship. Having achieved a good deal of success with that work, Caro founded the Triangle Workshop in 1982 in New York and invited 30 artists from the US, Canada, and Britain to join him in the summer months to experiment with ideas and techniques outside of their everyday practice. For Caro, this took him back to a process he had not employed since his student days at the Royal Academy—drawing and modeling from the nude model. *In the Morning* is the result of

the early years of the workshop and depicts a woman stepping into a bath. Facial features are only subtly suggested in favor of emphasizing the posture, movement, and weight of the body. In titling the sculpture *In the Morning*, Caro not only evokes the regular ritual of bathing, but the intimate, everyday nature of its subject.



Judith Shea (American, born 1948)

104

Post Balzac 1990

Cast bronze and stone

110 x 28 1/2 x 28 1/2 inches

The source material for Judith Shea's *Post Balzac* is a sculpture of the famous French writer Honoré de Balzac made by master sculptor Auguste Rodin in 1898. Shea credits Rodin's portrait with marking the beginning of Modernism in sculpture and revisits the theme of modernity 100 years later. Rodin's sculpture depicts Balzac in a commanding gesture actively wrapping himself in his heavy writing robe with his chin proudly raised; Shea's robe stands like an ancient column, completely static and conspicuously empty. Shea offered the following explanation, "I wanted to address how, at the end of the last [19th] century, there was both romance and optimism for the next century. I wanted to ask, 'Where are we a century later?' This century's technical innovations have brought horrors, with the level of destruction we are able to do. The coat is hollow — a metaphor for the condition of the spirit, for emptiness." Viewers should also note the XX inscribed on the pedestal, a reference to the 20th century as well as the double negative.



Louise Bourgeois

105

(American, born France, 1911–2010)

Spider 1997

Bronze / 90 x 88 x 86 inches

Spider confronts viewers with an oversize version of a creature most would view with terror at its normal, tiny size. The knobby joints of the spindly legs are arranged at various heights and imply movement, but the delicate egg sac hanging from this spider's belly is a clue that suggests this creature should be seen as more than the stuff of nightmares. Louise Bourgeois has been using spiders in her work since the 1940s, and in the 1990s began sculpting them into colossal forms like this. Surprisingly, she sees them not as ominous predators, but as a symbol for her beloved mother. The artist's own words explain her intentions best, "My mother, who like a spider, was a weaver. My mother was my best friend. She protected me and was clever. I want them [the spiders] to envelop me and protect me. I want them to be strong and monumental like my mother. But my mother was also ill. They reflect her strength as well as her fragility, since they balance on tiny points."

As evinced by this quote, Bourgeois mines her personal biography, particularly her childhood memories, as the basis for her artwork. The allusion to her mother as a weaver refers to the Bourgeois family's tapestry restoration business, in which her mother was the chief seamstress. The statement also reflects the untimely death of Bourgeois' mother who passed away when the artist was just 20 years old.



Barry Flanagan (British, 1941–2009)
Thinker on a Rock 1997
 Bronze / 156 x 103 x 79 inches

106

Barry Flanagan is best known for his dynamic, often monumental, bronze hares performing all variety of human feats, from thinking to playing music to using technology. Of his use of the rabbit Flanagan said, “The idea of the hare as an alter ego evolved. It wasn’t inevitable when I started. But once you abstract from the human like that, it opens a window in the mind — it allows your imagination to roam.” In many cultures, the hare or rabbit has mythological significance as a trickster or mischief-maker, an aspect that also appealed to Flanagan. *Thinker on a Rock* riffs on French artist Auguste Rodin’s *The Thinker*, a sculpture from the late 19th century of the poet Dante Alighieri contemplating his work *The Divine Comedy* (1308–1321). In Flanagan’s version, the writer is replaced with the hare engaged in the act of earnest contemplation resulting in a light-hearted and humorous work. The quirky tone set forth by the hare presents an intriguing contradiction to the seriousness of the traditional technique — bronze casting. Just as Rodin’s *Thinker* was cast in metal, so is Flanagan’s, which challenges the classic concept of the heroic bronze figure.



Deborah Butterfield
 (American, born 1949)

Ancient Forest 2009
 Cast bronze / 110 x 144 x 52 inches

Juno 1989
 Cast bronze / 76 x 68 x 88 inches

Deborah Butterfield’s inspiration is the horse, and two of her trademark sculptures are featured here. In comparing the works here, one is struck by the difference in scale and the distinct personalities of the animals. The larger sculpture, *Ancient Forest*, was commissioned by John and Mary Pappajohn for this park. Notice its forthright and assertive neck and head, suggesting the animal is confident and content with our presence. *Juno*, on the other hand, has a more bashful manner, shown through the introspective, lowered neck position.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Butterfield’s sculptures is their ability to fool the eye with the materials from which they are made. The horses are created through a meticulous process that takes nearly three months to complete. The artist begins by selecting a handful of substantial branches that are individually cast in bronze and reassembled to form the basic shape for each horse. Butterfield then attaches real sticks to the bronze armature until she achieves the gesture and demeanor she wishes to portray. The sculpture is then thoroughly photographed and disassembled so the individual wooden elements can be cast in metal. Finally, the metal branches are reattached to the armature and a patina is applied to the bronze to mimic the look and texture of wood.

107



Joel Shapiro (American, born 1941)
Untitled 1985
 Bronze / 87 x 99 x 46 inches

108

Joel Shapiro adapted the rigid, geometric shapes of the Minimalist movement to create his interpretation of the human figure. In this work, rectangles, rather than soft, organic masses, come together to create a form that almost seems human, despite the lack of naturalistic detail. Shapiro’s figures are often posed awkwardly, appearing off balance or in an ungraceful motion. This ungainliness lends the work personality and a warm, human vulnerability. Shapiro himself says the sculpture is “definitely about stretch and compression; about reach and contraction.”



Ellsworth Kelly (American, 1923–2015)
Untitled 1994
 Stainless steel / 240 x 22 x 2 inches

109

Ellsworth Kelly initially emerged as a leader of the Hard Edge group of Color Field painting in the 1960s with his large, bright shapes that contrasted with sharp, rectangular color-plane backgrounds on his canvases. Kelly moved to shaped canvases, which eventually led to freestanding sculptures. His sculptures present geometric shapes like those in his paintings, although created on an environmental scale and constructed of industrial materials like steel.

Untitled is an elegant obelisk that is surprising to walk around and see its relationship to the park. When viewed straight on, it is a soaring shape with gently sloping edges. Moving around the sculpture, it appears as a thin band of steel, nearly disappearing into its surroundings. The site of this piece in the center of the park is well considered, encouraging viewers to actively notice the environment of the park and its urban context.



Gary Hume (British, born 1962)
Back of Snowman (White) 2002
 Enamel on bronze / 120 x 88 x 88 inches

110

Back of Snowman (Black) 2002
 Enamel on bronze / 120 x 88 x 88 inches

Gary Hume’s art is distinguished by bright, expressive colors, luscious surfaces, and simplified forms. While the human figure and face have often been the subject of his work, imagery from childhood such as bears, rabbits, and the snowmen that make up these two works are also common themes. Hume is a painter as well as a sculptor, a fact suggested by the glossy, smooth surface of these sculptures that is unlike any other work in the park. The title *Back of Snowman* plays a clever joke on the viewer, in which no amount of circling will reveal the snowman’s front.



Scott Burton's *Seating for Eight* and *Café Table I* are the only sculptures in the park that visitors are allowed to touch and function as a central resting place.

111

Scott Burton (American, 1939–1989)

Seating for Eight

designed 1985, fabricated 1989–90
Polished Deer Island granite
32 x 34 x 18 inches each

Café Table I designed 1984, fabricated 1992
Polished Absolute black granite
28 x 22 x 22 inches

Like many artists of the 1960s, Scott Burton was interested in blurring the line between art and everyday life. His approach to achieving this was to make sculptures that function as furniture and place these pieces in public spaces where people would be invited to use them. His artwork begins with refined, immaculately constructed furniture, like this table and chairs, but only becomes complete when visitors actually use the pieces. Thus, *Seating for Eight* and *Café Table I* are the only sculptures in the park that visitors are allowed to touch and function as a central resting place. The cool, smooth, granite seats form a democratic circle as opposed to a hierarchical “head of the table” arrangement. The sleek lines and balanced curves of the work reveal Burton’s elegant sense of design, as well as the influence of the Minimalist art movement of the 1960s and ’70s. Burton was also conscious of the inherent beauty of the marble he chose as his medium, polishing it to a high sheen that highlights the grain and color of the stone.



William Tucker
(British, born Egypt, 1935)

Gymnast III 1985

Bronze / 87 x 58 x 32 inches

This abstract, rough-surfaced sculpture is inspired by the movement of the human body—specifically gymnastics, as the title states. Created in 1985, the year after the Los Angeles Olympics, William Tucker cites the athletes on the rings and parallel bars as a visual source for this work, with a particular interest in the way gymnasts’ bodies become simplified into two moving and rigid halves. *Gymnast III* is not concerned with rendering the body realistically or the nuances of skin, muscle, and bone. Instead, Tucker attempts to manifest the body’s physical sensations, such as fatigue, pain, exertion, stretching, or the force of hard landing. The work resides in a space between object and gesture, suggesting the body’s most elemental shapes as well as its most visceral feelings.

112



Willem de Kooning (American, born Netherlands, 1904–1997)

Reclining Figure 1969–1982

Bronze / 68 x 140 x 96 inches

Along with Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning was a central figure in the American art movement Abstract Expressionism. He is best known for his abstract figure paintings on the theme of “woman” created in the 1950s and 60s. On a trip to Rome in 1969, when de Kooning was 65 years old, he modeled his first sculptures and over the next five years made about 25 bronze figures using the same gestural techniques and expressionist style of his earlier paintings. *Reclining Figure* captures the immediacy of the artist’s hands pushing the clay around, implying action, emotional energy, and the gestures of the human body. While highly abstract, a figure can be seen in the suggestion of an arm propping up a body and a leg kicking in the air.

113



Tony Smith
(American, 1912–1980)

Marriage designed 1961, fabricated 1989
Painted steel / 120 x 144 x 120 inches

Willy designed 1962, fabricated 2005
Painted steel / 91 1/4 x 224 x 135 inches

Tony Smith’s earliest sculptures date to his days spent quarantined from his family while he recovered from tuberculosis. The ample supply of medicine boxes used to treat his illness provided the medium for his small-scale models and his imagination. Smith’s long career in architecture was also highly influential on his output as a sculptor.

Marriage and *Willy* are among Smith’s important early large-scale works. In both sculptures, Smith masterfully combines abstract geometric forms with human characteristics. The works’ titles, a dominant cultural institution and a person’s name, imply specific interpretations for each of the sculptures. Formally, *Marriage* offers an arch for the viewer to pass through,

115

and presents a dialogue between the various connecting rectangular blocks. *Willy* involves more complex polyhedral shapes. Here, the flat black planes of steel twist into each other with less geometrical order, suggesting an anthropomorphic (or human) form. The title comes from a Samuel Beckett play, *Happy Days* (1961), in which the character “Willie” crawls submissively around his wife, who is buried waist deep in the mud.



Mark di Suvero
(American, born China, 1933)
T8 1987

117

Painted steel / 343 x 288 x 444 inches

Mark di Suvero’s monumentally-scaled abstract sculptures are made primarily of industrial I-beams and heavy gauge metal. He creates his sculptures by working directly with the materials, without the use of scale-drawn plans or models. He is able to work this way because he operates everything from the crane and anchor to the torch and hammer. Of the relationship between fabrication and composition he says, “Just as poetry can’t happen if you don’t know how to use words, you have to handle all the methods in order to reach the moment when you can do the dreams.”

T8 confronts viewers with somewhat familiar, industrial materials, but in di Suvero’s hands the rigid seriousness of the steel has been transformed into a lithe, energy-filled structure. This vitality is enhanced as the viewer walks around and through the work, taking in the composition from multiple angles. While the sculpture stands on four legs firmly planted on the ground, these appendages become entangled in a knot of activity as they move skyward, and what formerly appeared stable and balanced, morphs into a burst of animated energy. The work is painted in the artist’s signature bright orange-red color, creating maximum contrast against the blue sky.



Keith Haring
(American, 1958 – 1990)
Untitled (Three Dancing Figures, version C) designed 1989, fabricated 2009
Painted aluminum / 120 x 135 x 125 inches

118

As a social activist and artist, Keith Haring focused on creating an accessible and public form of art that could be enjoyed and understood universally. Haring went through traditional artistic training, but shunned conventional techniques and instead found inspiration in graffiti, animation, and the chaos of New York City. The human figure, reduced to basic lines and bright colors, was his primary subject, and is often portrayed brimming with energy and dancing, as in this sculpture. “For me, the most effective public sculpture would function as visual and physical entertainment,” Haring wrote. “I think public art (unless there is a specific political or ideological message) should make people feel comfortable, and brighten their environment.”



Jaume Plensa
(Spanish, born 1955)
Nomade 2007

119

Painted stainless steel / 324 x 204 x 216 inches

Jaume Plensa uses letters as the basic components of much of his art, which explores communication issues whether they be between individuals or cultures. This work depicts a crouching, anonymous figure, with a “skin” composed of letters from the Latin alphabet. The sculpture exemplifies Plensa’s ongoing interest in ideas presented in written text. He has described individual letters or symbols as components that have little or no meaning on their own, but blossom into words, thoughts, and language when combined with others. Plensa’s screens of letters offer a metaphor for human culture, in which a person alone has limited potential, but when formed into groups or societies, becomes stronger. *Nomade* engages the viewer on many levels, from our recognition of the letters that form the shape, to our own physical interaction with the work as we view it from afar or from inside the work’s interior space.



Richard Serra (American, 1939–2024)
Five Plate Pentagon 1986

120

Steel / 60 x 72 x 113 inches

Despite steel’s well established use in 20th century sculpture, Richard Serra chose to work with this medium in part because he felt the ubiquitous metal art of the time was not using the material for its inherent qualities—qualities he understood because of his early jobs at steel yards. Of this he said, “It had not been used for its weight, its counterbalance, not for its cantilever nor its stasis nor gravitation load. It had not been used in the way that it had been in the Industrial Revolution in terms of building processes and procedures. Instead what they had done was to cut and fold it and use it as kind of a three-dimensional surrogate for painting.”

Five Plate Pentagon is a sculpture comprised of five unpainted steel plates, assembled together in a manner resembling playing cards delicately balanced against one another. While it can be tempting to look for a narrative inroad into the piece, the artist is not concerned with conveying any specific story or emotion. Instead, the work is about the formal properties of the unadorned steel, the lines in space that are carved out by the plates, and the viewer’s interaction with the sculpture in a given moment.



Martin Puryear
(American, born 1941)
Decoy 1990

121

Cast iron / 41 inches x 108 inches (diameter)

Martin Puryear’s work often deals with interior and exterior spaces, and his sculptures excel at drawing viewers into them. *Decoy* achieves this with a periscope-like protrusion emerging from a circular base. While the work at first seems relatively innocuous and modest, further investigation reveals an ominous suggestion of something lurking underneath the security of the horizontal plate, reminding us that a decoy is not what it seems.

Puryear's sculptures combine the simplicity and gravity of Minimalism's basic geometric shapes presented on a human scale with a biomorphic quality derived from his use of organic forms and unique craftsmanship. As a youth, Puryear studied woodworking and learned to build things like guitars, furniture, and canoes. While this sculpture is made from cast iron, the grain of the original wood form is still evident, adding tactile warmth to the cool, industrial metal.



Yoshitomo Nara (Japanese, born 1959)
White Ghost 2010
Painted stainless steel and fiberglass
144 x 102 x 96 inches

122

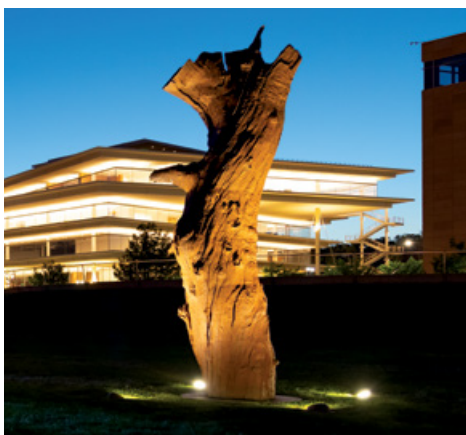
Yoshitomo Nara came to international attention during the 1990s when Japanese Pop art gained worldwide notice. Influenced by both Japanese anime and manga, and Western animation and comics, Nara's art seems to portray a playful world of vulnerable cartoon characters. However, his figures usually carry a dark or somber tone alongside their innocence and this subversive mixture of darkness and youth plays a critical role in Nara's art. These knowing innocents, or "demon children" as they have been called, are often little girls. *White Ghost* may refer to the artist's own personal history — his parents expected him to be a girl, and he lost an older sister at birth. "Emotionally," he says, "part of me resembles a little girl."



Yayoi Kusama (Japanese, born 1929)
Pumpkin (L) designed 2014,
fabricated 2018
Bronze / 94 7/8 x 92 1/2 x 92 1/2 inches

124

Yayoi Kusama's family ran a seed and plant nursery in her native Japan, and the artist grew up surrounded by fields of plants. As a result, pumpkins, usually covered in the artist's signature fields of polka dots, have appeared in her art since she was a young girl. "It seems pumpkins do not inspire much respect," Kusama once said. "But I was enchanted by their charming and winsome form. What appealed to me most was the pumpkin's generous unpretentiousness." These words also seem an apt description of *Pumpkin (L)*, an eight-foot bronze celebrating the undulating curves of a ripe pumpkin. Accentuated with trails of polka dots, the giant gourd looks like it might come from a fairytale landscape. As is the case with most fairytales, uncanny or even menacing undertones may be found in this sculpture, evident in its large scale, dark colors, and the vining, fertile nature of the pumpkin itself. Many viewers will make associations with playful Halloween celebrations and the autumn harvest, lending the work a familiarity and "unpretentiousness" that can be found in much of Kusama's work.



Ai Weiwei (Chinese, born 1957)
Iron Tree Trunk 2015
Cast iron / 198 x 39 x 77 inches

125

This sculpture is a huge, life-sized cast of a tree from the Jiangxi province of China. It refers to the tradition of contemplating rock and landscapes

in Chinese culture. Ai's use of iron also refers to the tumultuous period in Chinese history called "The Great Leap Forward," when families were encouraged to make steel in their homes to help industrialize the country. Most of it became unusable "pig iron" as the ability to make iron in a home setting was problematic. The trees were used as fuel for the backyard furnaces to meet government quotas and resulted in a treeless landscape. This tree exemplifies the tension between industrial and cultural China, a recurring theme in Ai's work.



Robert Indiana (American 1928–2018)
LOVE 1966–1999

126

Polychrome aluminum / 96 x 96 x 48 inches

Between 1964 and 1966, American artist Robert Indiana developed the simple composition *LOVE*. Spelled with fire engine red letters, two stacked over two and the letter "o" tilted at a buoyant angle, *LOVE* became one of the most iconic symbols of the 20th century. With the universality of the word and subject in mind, the Museum of Modern Art selected his image of *LOVE* as its Christmas card in 1965, and the US Postal Service created a stamp with the image in 1973. Installed in 2019 in honor of the Pappajohn Sculpture Park 10th anniversary, the Art Center's *LOVE* joins over 70 large-scale *LOVE* sculptures around the world. Often incorporated as the background for a social media post or a marriage proposal, the sculpture is beloved by Des Moines.



Huma Bhabha (Pakistan, born 1962)
Even Stones Have Eyes 2023
Bronze / Height: 12 feet

127

This 12-foot-high bronze female figure by Pakistani-American artist Huma Bhabha draws inspiration from past representations of the human form, such as Paleolithic, Egyptian, or classical sculptures of ancient Greece, as well as imagery taken from today's cartoons, horror films, and science fiction. This figure has one arm and stands on a peg leg, suggesting that while she is monumental, she is also vulnerable. Bhabha's sculptures often have an unsettling appearance that speaks to the cycle of growth, destruction, and the potential for restoration. Her forms are meant to appear both ancient and contemporary; here the dark patina of the bronze suggests the passage of time. Bhabha often explores dualities in her work, drawing upon multiple perspectives from humanity's shared history. The sculpture invites contemplation from various angles, reflecting the mythological Roman god Janus, the god of transitions, doors, gates, and abstract dichotomies such as life and death.

All photographs © Cameron Campbell unless otherwise noted.
Printed February 2025