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Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park

10-1-2017

Landmarks, 2017 Issue

Jeff Stevenson
Governors State University

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Recommended Citation

Stevenson, Jeff, "Landmarks, 2017 Issue" (2017). *LandMarks*. 11.
https://opus.govst.edu/nmsp_landmarks/11

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DIGITAL
Newsletter 2017 Issue



NATHAN MANILOW
SCULPTURE PARK
...where wonder emerges

Guests gather around Bruce Nauman's *House Divided* (1983), for the wine reception during our record breaking fund raising event: **Sculpture, Wine, and Dine.**

Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park

UPDATE ON DONATED PURYEAR ETCHINGS

(originally published Spring 2013)

The prints are now framed! Thank you to Gary Novak, owner of The Great Frame Up in Homewood, IL, who generously donated the framing. The prints will be installed in the F entrance gallery along with other important artworks from the Foundation's permanent collection.

Shirley Weese Young, widow of longtime gallery owner Donald Young, recently donated two etchings by Martin Puryear to Governors State University's Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park (NMSP). The works, dating from 2002 and 2005, are based upon a small bronze throne, one of several sculptural elements which make up the artist's seminal landscape-based artwork, *Bodark Arc*, part of the NMSP's permanent collection.

Ms. Young chose to donate the works because, in her words, "They seemed to belong with the work that Martin created so long ago."



GSU students Lauren Barns and Greg Austin with the newly framed Martin Puryear prints ready for installation, and the *Granary Project* maquette by Dan Peterman

Inside

- News from the Park
- Focus on Conservation
- Education Updates



Jeff Stevenson, the new Director and Curator of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, pictured above, second person on the right.

Meet the New Director

Jeff Stevenson has more than 30 years of professional experience in the visual arts as a practicing studio artist, arts writer, college professor, curator, and gallery director. As Director of the Art Gallery, Stevenson oversees the exhibition schedule, themes, and activities, presenting a wide range of artists: student, professional, regional, national, international, experimental, traditional, etc. As Director and Curator of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, he oversees programming, presentation, conservation, and acquisition for the park's collection of 29 large-scale artworks.

Stevenson earned a B.S. in Medical Illustration from The Ohio State University and an M.F.A. in Painting from Ohio University. He has served on boards and committees with the Chicago Artists' Coalition, Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, and the Flossmoor Village Art Commission in his hometown, Flossmoor, Illinois.

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ReMarks

There is a lot of news to share from this past year: conservation projects completed, new projects under way, an extremely successful fundraising event, and the retirement of Geoffrey Bates after ten successful years as the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park Director and Curator.

Governors State University's Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park Board

Lewis Manilow, *Founder*
Jeff Stevenson, *Director and Curator*

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Governors State University
Will Davis, *Vice-President Development*

Website: www.govst.edu/sculpture
General Email Address: sculpture@govst.edu
Phone: 708-534-4021
Hours: Dawn until dusk every day
Admission: Free admission to park, some activities have fees.

Send a message with "LandMarks Address" in the subject heading to sculpture@govst.edu

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Please direct questions or comments to **Jeff Stevenson**, *Director & Curator*, Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park and Visual Arts Gallery, Governors State University.

In April 2017, Geoff said his goodbyes and turned over the 33,000 files on his external hard drive to me, as I was serving as the Interim Director and Curator. I'm happy to report that I will be staying on permanently in this role, in addition to overseeing the Visual Arts Gallery. With the help of my colleagues throughout the university, I'm confident about serving in both of these capacities.

Geoff and I started at GSU around the same time and collaborated on many projects over ten years. We co-presented creativity workshops, actively engaged with the Southland Arts, Municipalities, and Business Alliance (S.A.M.B.A.), collaborated on the "Ways of Making: Sculpture" exhibit in the gallery, the iron pour event for an International Sculpture Center convention, and presented "*Somewhere There's Music*," an exhibition honoring Richard Howard Hunt.

The adventures, projects, lunches, and laughs along the way made for a wonderful collegial and cherished friendship, and Mr. Bates—you are sorely missed.

I can say that Geoff left the park in terrific condition, so my goal is to continue his legacy of advancing the park's mission as a prominent refuge for public art and art enthusiasts. His ten years of hard work, deep devotion, and unwavering love of sculpture has inspired us all.

At Geoff's retirement celebration, NMSP Board Member Leona Calvin spoke for the group saying, "*Geoff, looking back on the 10 years you've devoted to GSU, NMSP, and where we are in the annals of outdoor sculpture parks and art, simply said, **we couldn't have done it without you.** Your work, commitment, and passion can never be repaid. Because of you, the sculpture park exists in its splendor! You've made all the difference in every way. Be assured this board will faithfully continue your work in earnest and with great care. You are abundantly appreciated and will be greatly missed.*"

We are standing on the shoulders of giants: the artists, for their visionary works, and those who curated and maintained the collection over the years. A special thank you to all of you—our generous supporters—who make it all possible. Please read on about all the exciting news from your sculpture park!

Sincerely,

Jeff Stevenson

Director & Curator, Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park and Visual Arts Gallery



www.govst.edu/sculpture

NEWS FROM THE PARK

Farm-to-Table Fundraiser A Monumental Success

On September 9, Honorary Chairs Gary and Denise Gardner (of Know Your Chicago) and The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park Board presented **Sculpture, Wine, and Dine**; a fundraising event to sustain the park's community and educational programs. Together with host Wayne Johnson, from NBC5 Wayne's Weekend, Chef Molly from Limelight catering, Chicago's first "green caterer," sponsors, and 200 guests, the park celebrated the three pillars of its mission—Art, Conservation, and Education. A special thank you to the event's sponsors: lead sponsor BMO Harris Bank, Bimba Manufacturing, Karpowicz Studios, First Midwest Bank, Mesirov Financial, Capital Strategies Investment, Inc., social media sponsor AT & T, and generous individual donations—the park is pleased to report a **net profit of over \$35,000!**



"The new farm-to-table format was a hit with guests and perfectly dovetailed with the park's mission," says Director and Curator Jeff Stevenson. "We wanted to bring visitors something new, distinguished, and welcoming. A community table set in the midst of our collection with Chicago's first 'green caterer' seemed like the perfect event to showcase our art and our values." The locally-sourced menu included abundant family style platters of hangar steak, grilled chicken, basil infused mashed potatoes, wild mushroom risotto cakes, and more.

Attendees were also some of the first to preview *Searching for Lady Day: A Portrait in Steel*, a film documentary celebrating the work of sculptor Mark di Suvero. Di Suvero's monumental *Yes! for Lady Day*, (1968-69) with its distinctive railroad tank car and steel I-beam construction, is a favorite among park visitors and was a gift from philanthropist Lewis Manilow.

SAVE THE DATE for next year's event!
Mark your calendar for September 15, 2018.

Take a Walk with OTOCAST

The free **Otocast app** is your personal tour guide. Explore the park with the voices of multiple renowned sculptors leading the way. Look for it in your app store on your phone, and use it at destination attractions all over the world.



Good for Business

BMO Harris Bank has supported the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park since the beginning of its fundraising efforts seven years ago and continues to do so today. Paul King, Director, Senior Portfolio Manager for BMO Harris Bank, said, "It's good for business—not just our business, but businesses in the region."

We couldn't agree more. All across the country you can find examples of how communities rely on artists, arts organizations, and cultural centers such as the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park to **drive economic development and build communities in which people want to live.**

The collection is worth supporting in its own right. These are masterworks by internationally recognized artists. However, what is even more striking is that it is a nationally-recognized destination, bringing visitors from around the world. The service the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park provides to surrounding communities cannot be overstated: welcoming school children to experience something truly unique, providing fitness and outdoor enthusiasts trails across the prairie with inspiring views of monumental masterworks of art, satisfying art devotees with a collection that stimulates and challenges the mind, and reassuring GSU students that here, you are living in the midst of art—and that a liberal arts education prepares students for life, not just a career.

Join the Success

We invite you to join BMO Harris Bank in helping The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park continue to provide a truly unique cultural and educational experience for Chicago Southland residents by:

► **Joining, Renewing or Upgrading Your Pathfinders Membership:**

This group of trailblazers help sustain the park as a vital community resource for future generations. Pathfinders love art, nature, and the intersection of the two. They are adventurous with their time; they explore new avenues to ignite their imagination. Benefits vary by level.

► **Becoming a Volunteer Docent:**

Not all contributions are financial. Docents give of their time to serve our community and students in leading educational tours and themed explorations of the park. If you'd like to be a docent, please let us know! Training will be provided and docents may sign up for tours that are convenient for their schedule. Contact Kathleen Enright for details at kenright99@govst.edu.

► **Joining The Bill Dodd Prairie Restoration Effort:**

The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is one of the few outdoor sanctuaries in the south suburbs of Chicago where the natural landscape is strikingly beautiful throughout all four seasons. As such, one of our core values is to conserve and expand the natural prairie land. Prairie Restorers join humanist and scholar Bill Dodd in his mission to leave the landscape better than we found it. Donations augment the Bill Dodd Memorial Fund and are allocated towards this conservation ethic.

► **Donating Online at govst.edu/donate**

Visit Govst.edu/sculpture for details on all giving opportunities and ways to get involved.

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CONSERVATION

Everyone who is familiar with the Illinois weather—the polar vortex winters, blazing hot summers, and everything in between—will understand that anything left out in that weather really takes a beating. The masterworks in our collection are made to last, but conservation, restoration, and maintenance is still an ongoing part of our role as stewards of the collection. *Illinois Landscape No. 5* by John Henry was repainted and restored in 2013, bringing it back to the vibrant yellow the artist intended.

More recently, Martin Puryear's *Bodark Arc* had some termite damage to the wooden "gate." The wooden element of this land art piece had to be removed to a conservator's studio for treatment and repair. The insertion of a stainless steel rod and plate system, a solution approved by the artist, guaranteed the structural integrity of this focal point for the next several decades, while maintaining the artist's original vision for the piece. This past summer we had the return of the gate stabilized by Andrzej Dajnowski, principal for Conservation of Sculptural Objects Studio, Inc. (CSOS), one of the premier agencies for conservation in the United States.

This important piece is shown here in Chicago's Public Art plan, showcasing the prominence of our collection both regionally and nationally.

Martin wrote of his inspiration for *Bodark Arc* in 2012, the 30th anniversary of its creation, stating, "Since there were already numerous enormous sculptures distributed over the fields, I decided to try to do something that would have less of a monumental character, something which would be nearly invisible until you were right up on it, and which would be about discovery, and would make you aware of the extraordinary place you were moving through as you walked from one sculpture to another."

**



Bodark Arc



Flying Saucer

The Jene Highstein sculpture, *Flying Saucer* (1977) had developed cracks over the decades. Although some might expect space aliens to emerge from the structure, the cracks really meant that moisture was able to penetrate the interior of the object and eventually would compromise the steel framework within.

The concrete layer was removed, wire mesh and concrete replaced, and once dry, a fresh coat of the matte black paint was applied, giving it the ominous presence the artist intended. *Flying Saucer* looks good now and will look great for years to come while it waits for the return of the mother ship.



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CONSERVATION

Bronze is a classical art material that has been in use by artists for centuries. One of its characteristics is the patina it develops as it oxidizes over time. Although this is a natural process, it can lead to the eventual deterioration of the artwork, so best conservation practices include periodic treatment of the bronze objects to protect and conserve them.

Two of the bronze works in the collection are the throne element of *Bodark Arc* by Martin Puryear, and *Untitled* by Joel Shapiro. In this photograph the green oxidation is evident on the left, and the waxed and preserved, bronze is demonstrated on the right.

Another bronze work in the collection is *Lanleff-Demeure No. 4* by Henri Etienne-Martin, which is in need of cleaning, waxing, and relocating. Currently, it is languishing alone in a remote location of campus no longer in use by the university. Watch for an exciting student-led fundraising campaign coming up early next year!

**



Lanleff-Demeure No. 4

Throne, Bodark Arc



Untitled

Yes! For Lady Day by Mark di Suvero is next on our list for conservation, restoration, and painting. Some rust in the tank car parts needs to be addressed, and the paint is showing its age. Part of the money raised at our **Sculpture, Wine, and Dine** event will go towards this project.



Yes! For Lady Day

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EDUCATION

Yes! You can touch the artwork, but please be gentle. Personal interaction with art and nature is what the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is all about. The NMSP's *Outdoors@theNate* program is a low-cost, four-hour program that engages students in activities highlighting the disciplines of S.T.E.A.M.: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math, in a three-phase experience. Students collaborate with one another to come up with solutions to problems, think critically, be active, all while having a fun hands-on learning experience!

The park has hosted over 600 students from schools in the south and southwest suburbs this season. The team that leads *Outdoors@theNate* is comprised of an art educator and a group of very devoted volunteers who are retirees and graduate students. We were fortunate to have beautiful weather, perfect for exploring this summer and fall. While in the park we discussed how S.T.E.A.M. principles surround us with the 29 large-scale



sculptures that we currently have in our collection. In the fall, we identified plants and seeds like Milkweed, Cornflower and Blue Bigstem, by the Mary Miss sculpture *Field Rotation*. The students, also learned about the wildlife that inhabits the prairie. We viewed the beaver lodges out in the water and on land adjacent to *Bodark Arc* by Martin Puryear, admired the cranes and finches, and one group of students even found animal bones! Back in E-lounge the students challenged each other to a "build off," using craft materials such as wooden cubes, popsicle sticks, clothespins, and binder clips. They collaborated to create the tallest, strongest, and most creative sculptures.

Now that the weather is getting cold and damp, we have begun scheduling student groups for the spring. We hope to see as many students as possible at *Outdoors@theNate* 2018!

