

BARBARA COOPER | RE:GROWTH

BARBARA COOPER

RE:GROWTH

BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM



Published in conjunction with the exhibition
Barbara Cooper, re:Growth organized by Bellevue Arts Museum,
January 16, 2007 – April 22, 2007.

All images © by James Prinz unless otherwise noted.
All dimensions are given in inches, height precedes width precedes depth.

Copyright © 2007 by Bellevue Arts Museum. All rights reserved. No part of
this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means,
electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any other
information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from
Bellevue Arts Museum.

Executive Director and Chief Curator Michael W. Monroe
Exhibition Curator Stefano Catalani
Editing by Sigrid Asmus
Design by Wesley Pierce of piercedesign

Cover: Oculus, detail, 2004
Wood, glue
30 x 45 x 14
Photo by Eileen Ryan

ISBN 0-942342-14-3

Published by Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, Washington.
Printed and bound in Canada by Friesens Book Division.

Bellevue Arts Museum illuminates and enriches
the human spirit through art, craft and design.

Bellevue Arts Museum
510 Bellevue Way
Bellevue WA 98004
Phone (425) 519-0770
Fax (425) 637-1799
E-mail info@bellevuearts.org
www.bellevuearts.org

Support for this catalog was generously provided by
Alfedena Gallery, Chicago, IL.



Partial support has been made possible
through the generosity of ArtsFund,
David Chatt and Ron Cole.

BARBARA COOPER | RE:GROWTH



Buttress, 1999
85 x 40 x 26
Wood, glue

Director's Foreword

Michael W. Monroe

Barbara Cooper's artistic practice is distinguished by a deep and abiding respect for the generative processes of the natural world. The unity and simplicity of the sculptural forms she creates allows them to serve as compelling visual metaphors for the essential order and clarity desirable in a balanced life. Her work evokes the timeless cycles of nature, and reflects our human longing to know our place within the grand scheme of creation.

Cooper's path to understanding form is through drawing. Here, as with her sculpture, we are fascinated by the unique configurations and infinite possibilities each piece offers. The powerful, sensual qualities of wood bring a sense of architectural strength to her references to human movement and gesture and give her sculptures an imposing presence. Here the artist's steadfast study of fluid, organic growth is graced by balance, classical proportion, harmony, and above all, beauty.

To encounter Cooper's works firsthand is to experience a heightened awareness of the torques, turns, and contours so symbolic of unfailing growth and change. Both visually and in the material tension is held in equilibrium, so that in the open interiors we sense an invisible energy that fills and extends the visible form. The artist's commitment to the evolving shapes of natural processes like birth and growth invites her audience to pause and contemplate these moments that symbolize the deep yearning to be at one with the forces that touch us all.

I want to express my appreciation to Stefano Catalani for bringing to my attention the extraordinary work of Barbara Cooper. Stefano's level of enthusiasm is matched by his curatorial expertise and the insights in his essay capture the essence of Cooper's work.

I am particularly grateful to John Brunetti for his essay on Cooper's oeuvre. Brunetti's survey of the artist's sculptural work is penetrating and sharp, his words concise and poignant. I would also like to thank Wesley Pierce for his thoughtful design, and Sigrid Asmus for her editorial review.

Without question, however, our greatest debt is to Barbara Cooper for creating these remarkable works. In their disarming forms we recognize the exceptional unity the artist has evoked, one that encourages a truly restorative experience. For this we are thankful.

This publication, *Barbara Cooper, re:Growth* has been generously made possible by Alfedena Gallery, Chicago, Illinois.

Curator’s Introduction

Stefano Catalani

When I first met Barbara Cooper in Chicago in October 2005 the title of the exhibition was far from being decided, and the checklist of sculptures and drawings still fluid. We met in her studio. In addition to a few tall sculptures cocooned in inaccessible bubble-wrap and amassed in a corner, the large room featured *Surge* (p.24) on the floor, and, everywhere, packed stacks of wood veneer piled on shelves against the luminous white walls. I recall wondering if the veneer had been arranged, by what appeared to be Cooper’s pragmatic collector’s eye, in accordance with all possible theoretical criteria or by such *what-ifs* as the laminated material offered—by type of wood, by color, by size, by thickness, by flexibility, by texture, and maybe even by scent. Whether by chance or deliberately, Cooper had managed to address the matter of her art from our very first meeting. Starting from *scrap* was for me the best introduction to her work.

Featuring a dozen of the artist’s most daring sculptures and mesmerizing drawings, the exhibition *Barbara Cooper, re:Growth* highlights Cooper’s trajectory over the last decade. Employing scraps of veneer discarded by furniture factories and milling plants, the artist returns the wood, layer by layer, to an organic form. Taking its solidity from flexible and fragile veneer, the sculpture grows into the strong and sturdy simulacrum of a tree trunk, a stump, a layered geological formation, and other natural structures. The surfaces appear raw and heavily textured, forcing light, and the eye, to linger on them.

The title *re:Growth* epitomizes in its double entendre the two veins structurally forming and conceptually informing Cooper’s sculptural practice. From one side, we feel the artist’s intellectual fascination with the process of *growth*, as observed in nature and as reflected in the accumulation of thin and fragile layers of cast-out veneer, and as it is then found and transformed into an object characterized by a full spectrum of physical qualities and cultural significances not located in the veneer material per se. From the other, we find the redirecting implications of the prefix “re-” in *re-growth*, so allied with the ebb and flow of trauma and recovery, nature’s foundational state of resilience, and the flurry of allusions to concepts such as reuse and recycling. By implying material adaptation and rejuvenation, these concepts circularly bring us back to what has been called waste—the left over and the cast out that constitute the base of much of Cooper’s art. In this light, Cooper’s sculptures do then resemble trees and natural structures. Yet the vision the artist pursues is not mere imitation of the forms of life, but rather mimesis of the process by which any life form takes its own shape, responding and resiliently adjusting to outside stimuli. From this perspective, Cooper’s concern can be seen as finely divided between the final object

and the narrative of fabrication, so that both are invested with formal references and cultural implications.

With the trunklike forms reaching eight feet in height, and the horizontal pieces extending five or six feet in length, Cooper’s works encompass the scale of the human body and establish a bodily relation with the viewer, one that is, moreover, not exclusively driven by tactility but rather suggestive of embrace. The works also galvanize a host of eloquent bodily references. A repertoire of torsions, curves, clefts, and tumescences bestow upon the pieces both female and male body features. *Surge*’s cleft, or the arched stiffness of *Torso* (p.27), as well as the phallic verticality of many columnar pieces can be seen in this light. At a first reading, such an array of corporeal and sexual shapes seems to imply a parallel between the human body and nature’s body. However, on a deeper level these sexually charged references mobilize in one’s unconscious the abstract association of the generative power of sexual energy with the regenerative power of art. If nature is generator then art is regenerator—of form, of meaning, of process—and in doing so it surges to the role of newly found archetype, in a fecund tension with nature, the original archetype. In such a role, by making things art makes them visible, giving public form to thoughts and feelings, dynamics and processes, memory and future.

By focusing her attention on the residual and the cast out, and by investigating the art process in relation to the process of nature, Cooper informs her artistic practice with the strategies of artists such as Eva Hesse and Giuseppe Penone, who from the mid and late 1960s, made art by recovering readymade materials and industrial detritus, explored the visual potential of repetition, and, in the case of Penone, turned to nature as generator of precultural forms that are constantly re-elaborated by culture.

Barbara Cooper, re:Growth at Bellevue Arts Museum was conceived as opening a place to introduce the elemental importance of process in giving substance and form to an art object. Process, that is a series of actions, steps, or changes taken in order to achieve a particular end, calls into discussion, by its very definition, the performance dimension of both art and craft, one that is often overlooked in favor of the finished, object-driven experience of art. It is my hope that this exhibition will expose more process than objects.



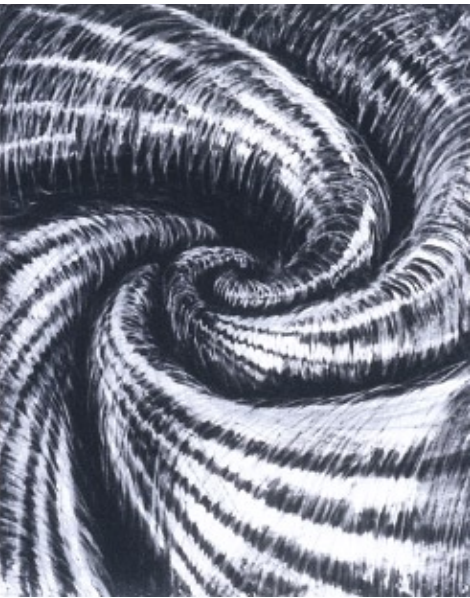
Mast, 2000
85 x 55 x 32
Wood, glue

Barbara Cooper, re:Growth

John Brunetti

Sculptor Barbara Cooper’s ecologically responsive work carries a heightened sense of relevance today, in an era when an individual’s ability to live in harmony with the natural world is increasingly tested by the revelations about catastrophic environmental issues appearing daily in the news. Her sinuous, tactile sculptures, organically assembled from strips of wood veneer, quietly juxtapose numerous conceptual and formal dichotomies, among them the organic and the man-made, the feminine and the masculine, movement and stasis. These oppositions, so deftly intertwined by Cooper, echo the seductive contradictions inherent in nature itself. Despite galvanic turbulence and external appearances that seem chaotic, nature is imbued with rhythmic patterns of order that bring equilibrium back to the life cycle.

These are the patterns, whether found in gaseous, liquid, or solid states, that are paramount for Cooper, who sees in the natural world an elegant model of self-sustaining efficiency. As she reflects, *I am not convinced that we as a society are operating under the most optimum model. We are abusing our resources rapidly and we are leaving behind a lot of debris that is inert or dangerous to us. Nature is brutal, and things are frequently destroyed, but in nature things break down and regenerate into some other kind of form.* Even the title of this survey of Cooper’s work, accomplished from 1997 to 2004—*re: Growth*—reflects the conundrum of looking to an environment that has been tampered with and reengineered for society’s own purposes, yet which nonetheless continues to provide centuries-old solutions and, in the process, optimism, for both planetary and personal rejuvenation.



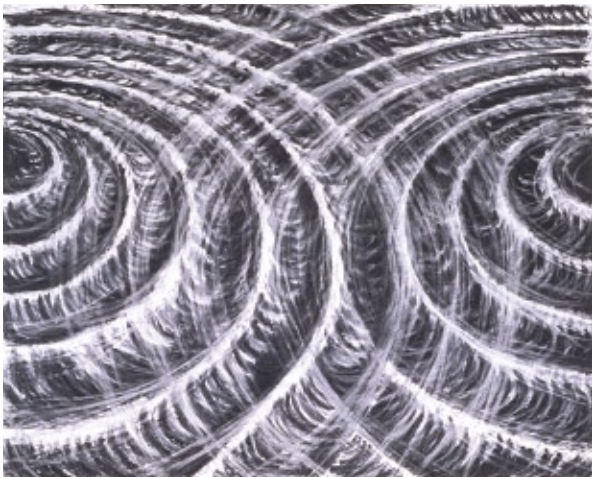
Currents 8, 2000
42 x 30
Charcoal
Photo by Barbara Cooper

Absorbing Influences

Cooper’s sculptures, a distillation of her meditations, reflect the synthesis of two major influences on her life: growing up the daughter of a scientist in Cleveland, Ohio, and the formative training she received as a fiber artist in the pivotal era of the women’s movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Her first introduction to the elemental beauty and spiritual order of the natural world came from her father, Cecil Cooper, a former biochemist and

professor at Case Western Reserve University. His scientific approach to understanding the natural world would have an appreciable effect on Cooper's development as a person and as an artist. Summers spent hiking with her parents in the wilderness and visits to anthropological sites in foreign countries emphasized to the young Cooper the importance of firsthand interaction with the natural world. Cooper would continue to expand these early lessons in observation during her future artist's residencies in unusual locations. In addition, her father's expansive home library also held vital seeds from which her interest in organic designs would grow. As she recalls, *I think much of my interest in the relationship between form and function in the natural world comes from a book that was at our house, called Animal Architecture, by Karl von Frisch.* In this book, now a prized possession in her own library, she discovered key visual, structural, and conceptual components basic to an understanding of the geometry of the organic world that would become integral to her own working methods. Pictures demonstrating how spiders construct webs and wasps build hives struck a chord with her. Both insects use the simplest of geometric shapes and processes of incremental growth, ultimately to transform the fragile and the insignificant into something of strength and resilience. Models of this kind would become central to Cooper's formal and conceptual philosophy as a sculptor.

Cooper's mother, Frances, spurred her daughter's early exposure to the visual arts through frequent museum trips and the adult art classes she took. In fact it was the use of fiber in her mother's weaving classes that introduced Cooper to her most influential medium. But the tactile pull of weaving would not fully capture the young artist until she took electives in her undergraduate art courses at the Cleveland Institute of Art. In the weaving studio, surrounded by the palpable potential of spools of thread as well as raw and fibrous materials-and, serendipitously, the instructor's collection of numerous plants-Cooper intuitively felt the direction that her work would take. As she embarked on her professional career, focusing on fiber studies in the graduate program at Cranbrook Academy of Art during the mid-'70s, Cooper also socialized with artists in the sculpture department, and was looking seriously at new work by women sculptors such as Eva Hesse and Jackie Winsor, who were at the forefront of the women's art movement of the late '60s and early '70s. These artists turned the macho identity of sculpture on its head by emphasizing the formal and conceptual potential of soft, pliable materials and organic forms as opposed to the prevailing sharp angles and cold industrial materials of minimalist sculptors such as Donald Judd, Carl Andre, and Tony Smith. To Cooper's eye, already influenced by the



Currents 2, 2000
32 x 40
Charcoal
Photo by Barbara Cooper



Tree Trunk, detail
Photo by Barbara Cooper

linear methods of fiber construction and the patterns of interlocking line found in nature, Hesse's and Winsor's own powerful three-dimensional vocabularies, which used line in the form of wrapping, binding, and coiling, established influential precedents. As she recalls, *At that time, 1969-1974, the world of sculpture was a pretty hard-edge world-it was bronze and steel. At that point in my life I was much more focused on the excessive, effusive nature of things. Eva Hesse and Jackie Winsor came out of minimalism but had a feel for materials. This pairing of minimalism and the organic really charged me. Any material could become sculpture.*

It was also particularly prescient that Cooper was drawn to Hesse's practice of transforming industrial materials into forms with somatic resonances. Manufacturing waste would become the signature raw material in Cooper's future work and deftly extend the relationships between the artificial and the organic so poetically examined by Hesse.

Collaborating with Materials

I really feel half of a piece of sculpture comes from me and half comes from a dialogue with the materials. To get to what we don't know we have to be receptive to the question "What if?" –Barbara Cooper

In 1986, after living and teaching in Bozeman, Montana, for seven years, Cooper moved to Chicago. This was a pivotal move for her, both professionally and personally, because it coincided with the beginning of her relationship with the material that would define her sculpture for the next twenty years—wood veneer. For an artist who was always highly responsive to her surroundings and for whom the natural terrain of Montana had become an inseparable part of daily life and the artistic practice, Chicago initially seemed an inhospitable and alien landscape. Yet Cooper, trained well by her scientist father in observation and deduction, began to look at the urban environment, seeking out what it had to offer in man-made rather than natural resources. A visit to a nearby home-remodeling store prompted the discovery of narrow strips of wood veneer. Capable of creating both a line and a plane in space, the flexible material presented an immediate attraction to someone who, in her own words, was never comfortable with the precision of measuring. Explains Cooper: *I think my interest in the veneer as a material came out of my background in the fiber world where multiple loose fibers come together to create line, and then with those lines construct something else. It is a much more organic system of building and that suits me well.* Veneer's commercial applications also provided an unanticipated conceptual tension in Cooper's sculpture. Manufactured to create a facade, veneer uses a thin surface to represent substance

and natural richness beyond its actual material weight and composition. But the artist's construction methods using interlocking lines do not hide, they reveal. Cooper: *Part of being an artist is uncovering who you are and trying to stand on your own for that. I want to mirror that in my building process.*

Too expensive and precious in its retail quantities, Cooper's new raw material required her to explore Chicago's greatest resource, its factories, for larger quantities of veneer. She located several companies that allowed her to haul away scraps of veneer that were too small or thin for their commercial purposes but were still much larger than she had previously been able to purchase. Best of all, the scraps were free. Recycling this discarded material through her working methods became an important issue for Cooper. Addressing the relationship between society's habits of consumption and the sustainability of natural resources is a core issue of her work. By resurrecting a new life from industry's discarded waste, Cooper mirrors nature's own regenerative efficiency.

Larger stockpiles of veneer allowed Cooper to take greater risks in her work, and her pieces became expansive in scale and more intricate in their complexity. Beginning with forms that are essentially hollow, Cooper intuitively builds her sculptures from the inside out as she glues and staples the veneer strip by strip into undulating arcs of rhythms that are both languid and convulsive. The process is deceptively simple, belying the effort involved. She builds and cuts off, often discarding as much veneer as she uses on a specific piece. Her prosaic tools—tree pruners, clothespins, a staple gun, scissors—would seem too plain to construct the elaborate forms Cooper creates. Often the process requires her to invent new implements, such as the bicycle-tire inner tubes she uses to clamp and hold the tightly coiled forms found in the sculpture *Fragment* (p.20). Yet her most important tools, her hands, glue covered and calloused, reveal how much physical labor is invested in a single work. And it is the invisible caress of her hands that is palpable in each work, transforming the crisp, machined pieces of veneer into mottled surfaces that evoke the irregularities of organic extrusions. The extended time it takes Cooper to create each sculpture itself is strongly related to the conceptual underpinnings of her work. She seeks to embed time within each sculpture, in much the same way its history is embedded in a thousand-year-old tree or the strata of rock spanning eons. For Cooper, this quality of time, extending far beyond our own life span and what we can know, is fascinating because it is undeniable yet beyond our comprehension.



Currents 9, 2000
40 x 32
Charcoal
Photo by Barbara Cooper



Brace, 2000
84 x 44 x 28
Wood, glue
Photo by James Prinz

Striving for Equilibrium

Teaching figure drawing for over twenty-five years, Cooper has been keenly observant of how the human body's gesture and posture reveal an individual's physical and emotional history. The spinal column is a powerful metaphor for maintaining equilibrium amid the environment's tumultuous conditions. Abstracted into an armature with somatic, architectural, and organic references, the spine assumes its most prominent role in Cooper's *Column* series.

The twisting, truncated forms of *Columen* (p.17), *Columella* (p.16), *Columna* (p.19), *Buttress* (p.2), *Mast* (p.6), and *Brace* are a fusion of three sources—human spine, tree trunk, architectural column—that embody the relationship between internal and external supports for maintaining balance in ever stressful times. Inspired in part by the towering, sixty-year-old Siberian elm trees in her urban backyard, the sculptures in this series emphasize the degree to which Cooper abstracts her sources; it is a resonating transformation, not the reproduction of nature that one might assume at a cursory glance. Cooper describes her process: *I go in cycles between getting close to reality and then pulling back and moving into abstraction. I was working with the thought of going back to the human form. To me these column sculptures are gestures; this is a twist, this is leaning back. They have the gesture of the body. It is revealing a history of what it went through as it grew.* She is fond of a Buddhist expression that sees a similar parallel in the human body: *If you want to know what your experiences were like in the past, examine your body now. If you want to know what your body will be like in the future, look at your experiences now.*

Cooper dramatically severs the tops and bottoms of these sculptures, whose clean horizontal edges emphasize the isolation of these thrusting forms from their surroundings. Metaphorically, spines without brains and limbs, columns without trusses and floors, and trunks without leaves and roots, these sculptures internalize their energy as the normal outlets for sustenance are removed. Cooper: *The column of the tree is this transportation system between the roots which are gathering liquid and the leaves which synthesize food. When they are cut off, we cut off parts of our environment.* The twisting, fibrous bundles of veneer that Cooper builds for each column make tangible the unseen forces threatening their upright stance. *Buttress* graphically demonstrates this through a leaning X shape of two entwined trunks that bear each other's weight. This evocation is inspired in part by her observation of how nature finds its way around the obstructions and intrusions that impede growth. The particularly distorted trunk of a tree in her Chicago neighborhood has become

an evocative reminder of the tenacity of nature’s power to heal itself—a lesson Cooper views as applicable to individuals as well.

The bodily references in Cooper’s inherently sensual columns are lent an unusual edge as she combines masculine and feminine traits in single works. The male physique of *Columen*’s broad shoulders is subtly altered with a vertical slit that alludes to the female anatomy. Such works are indebted to images of fecundity Cooper observes in her garden as well as to the provocative eroticism of sculptures by Eva Hesse. But Cooper emphasizes the generational difference that informs the representation of sexuality in her work: *Many of the women who were very radical in the early ‘70s, who pushed to the far extreme to make a point, made it possible for artists like me to be in the middle. The balance between the masculine and the feminine, the rigid and the soft, is important to me.*

The Column series is also invested with the presence of the modernist sculptor Constantin Brancusi, particularly in works such as *Bird in Space* and *Endless Column*. The resonance is not incidental, because Brancusi has been a constant source of inspiration to Cooper throughout her career. What attracts her to his oeuvre is his use of abstraction to pare a form down to its essentials. To Cooper, this tenet of abstraction dovetails with the models from the natural world from which she has always drawn personal meaning. As she explains, *The spiral is a form that I love. I feel that my evolution as an artist is a spiral. I start out wide, and as I grow and mature with my work the spiral gets tighter and tighter as I find the core of who I am and what is essential.*

Reflecting Fluid Processes

Water and its fluidity, its ability to move around obstacles, is a model of how I might live my life. –Barbara Cooper

Movement is a quality that recurs throughout nature and whose signature repetitive patterns leave their marks on materials as diverse as stone, sand, wood, water, and air. Cooper: *A form reflects the fluid process through which it was made, and in so doing records the process of changing from one condition to another, in response to its environment.* Visiting the volcanic landscape of Iceland in 2000, Cooper had the opportunity to observe a country whose identity has been shaped by the fluidity of



(top)
Vatnajökull glacier, Iceland
Photo by Barbara Cooper

(above)
Currents 7, 2000
40 x 32
Charcoal
Photo by Barbara Cooper



Rock formations (Basalt)
Jökulsarglúfur National Park, Iceland
Photo by Barbara Cooper

tectonic forces. For Cooper, who has always been drawn to movement, encountering the geological history that surrounded her in Iceland was a profound experience. As she describes it, *When I was living in Akureyri, Iceland, I was immersed in a landscape that exudes the force of its coming into being. Schist* (p.22), so titled after a metamorphic rock characterized by laminated, parallel layers of flaky minerals, a sculpture later completed in the studio, was directly influenced by her witnessing the geological fractures caused by the shifting and pulling apart of massive land-forms. The double, upward-thrusting prongs of *Schist* echo the bodies of works in the Column series with their truncated tops, but the smooth texture that the artist has given this elegantly tapering work speaks to the compressed and crystallized lava she experienced in the Icelandic landscape.

While *Schist*’s vertical orientation was a familiar approach for Cooper, the reference to landscape would make its presence felt in the horizontal alignment of works such as *Surge* and *Span* (p.28). *Surge* creeps across the gallery floor, evoking the lateral movement of incrementally melting ice as it veils and reveals the terrain beneath it. Line, always a signature element for Cooper, becomes more graphic in *Surge* as compressed bands of veneer create crevices that appear to literally draw lines in space. The tumbling form of *Span* also emphasizes movement in its most liquid state as Cooper translates eddies of the sea along the island’s coastline into one of her most lyrical constructions. Both of these sculptures turn the smooth facade of her early veneer surfaces literally and metaphorically inside out as the edges of the wood veneer create flaked, seemingly unstable strata. While the physical pulling apart that occurs in *Surge* and *Span* evokes the geological stresses Cooper experienced during her residence in Iceland, these works nonetheless retain the corporeal character of all her work as they evoke a sense of the straining muscle fibers of the human body, a reminder that the energy that flows through all living things is universal.

Drawing Parallels

When I approach something new I have to figure out how to draw it.
–Barbara Cooper

Accompanying Cooper’s sculptures in the exhibition *re:Growth* are evocative charcoal drawings that have consistently been an important part of her creative

process. Here, unlike some sculptor’s drawings that are executed as blueprints for the construction of an envisioned sculpture, it is clear that these are entities of their own, combining the intense focus of scientific field journals with the spiritual rhythms of modern abstraction. As a medium with great fluidity, drawing has been integral to Cooper’s interaction with the natural landscape at the residencies she attends. Taking large rolls of drawing paper to isolated locations, she uses drawing as a means of furthering her own understanding of the way the natural world functions rather than as a mere vehicle for illustration. This approach echoes a philosophy she absorbed from observing her father’s scientific perspective. As she explains, *In the scientific process you work with the known to find the unknown and I think there is a parallel in the art process.*



Entanglements 1, 2001
32 x 40
Charcoal
Photo by Barbara Cooper

Cooper never draws the landscape in a literal way. For all her years of drawing and her demonstrated skill, she still sees herself as learning to draw anew whenever she encounters unique environments. This manifests itself in images that are both familiar and disorienting. The drawing *Entanglement 1* was completed by Cooper when she was in Costa Rica and is based on her observations of a leaf that was crumpled in on itself. Yet the simple description of how the drawing began contrasts with the vigorous muscularity that is the result of her skillful observation. The composition obscures any overt reference to the original source and instead heightens the galvanic vortex created by the textured concavities of the foliage, rendered in dramatic tonal contrasts. Works from the *Flow* and *Currents* series emphasize the continuing importance of water as a subject in Cooper’s art. Works in the *Flow* series were the result of her daily observations of the tumultuous Atlantic Ocean in the month of January during a residency in Newfoundland. The water inspiration for the *Currents* series was more subtle, as Cooper studied the figured patterns in a piece of wood veneer and drew parallels between these and the way water flows around rocks. In *Currents 7* (p.12) and *Currents 8* (p.7), the delicacy of the wood grain’s pattern has evolved into tubular arteries. Here, as in her sculptural work, the intense somatic vitality emphasizes how intrinsically and intimately the human body and the natural world, the internal and the external, are physically and psychologically entwined.

John Brunetti is an art critic based in Chicago, Illinois.
All Barbara Cooper quotes are from an interview with the author, August 2, 2006

PLATES



Columella, 1998
86 x 17 x 26
Wood, glue

16



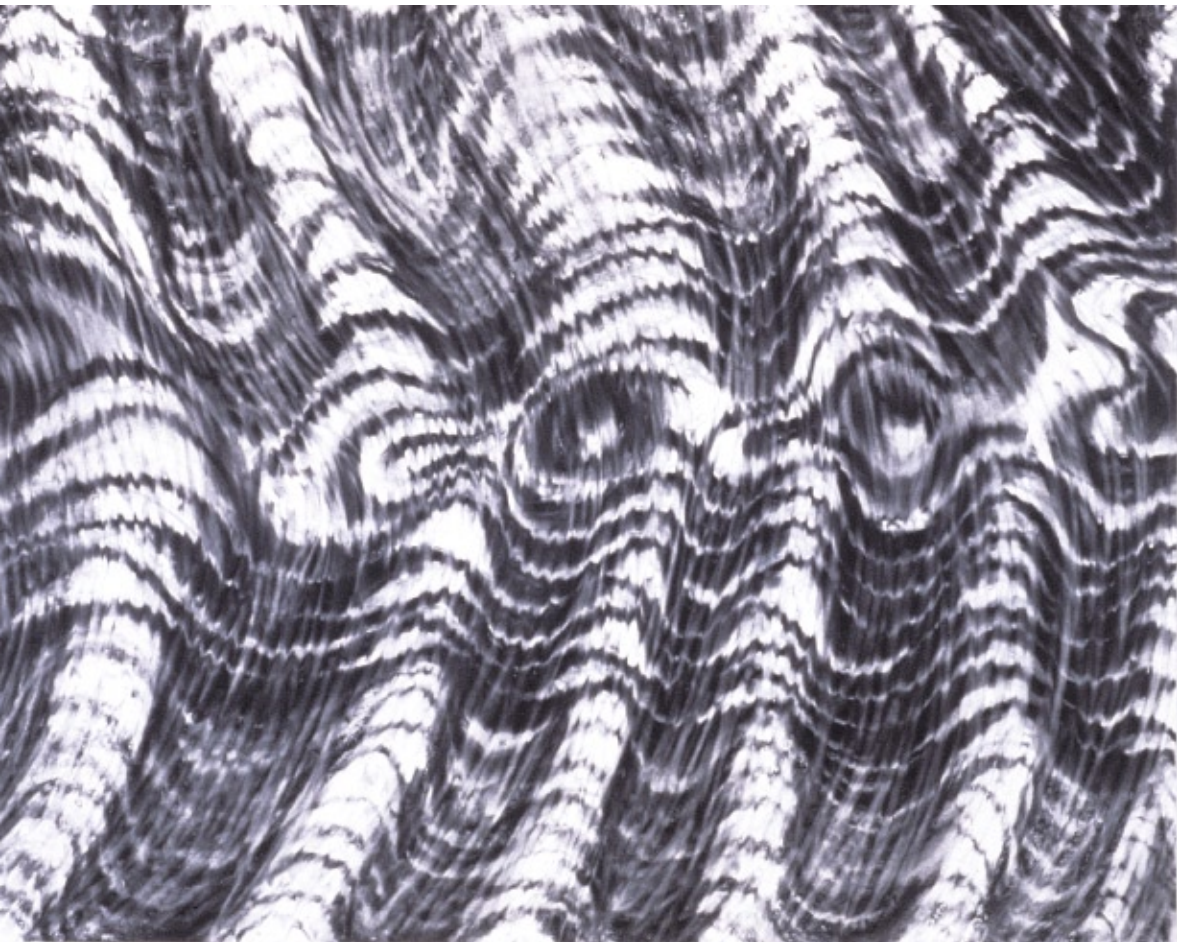
Columen, 1998
85 x 19 x 23
Wood, glue

17



Columna, 1998
22 x 22 x 77
Wood, glue

(opposite)
detail



(opposite)
Fragment, 1999
 18 x 24 x 24
 Wood, glue

Currents 3, 2000
 32 x 40
 Charcoal
 Photo by Barbara Cooper



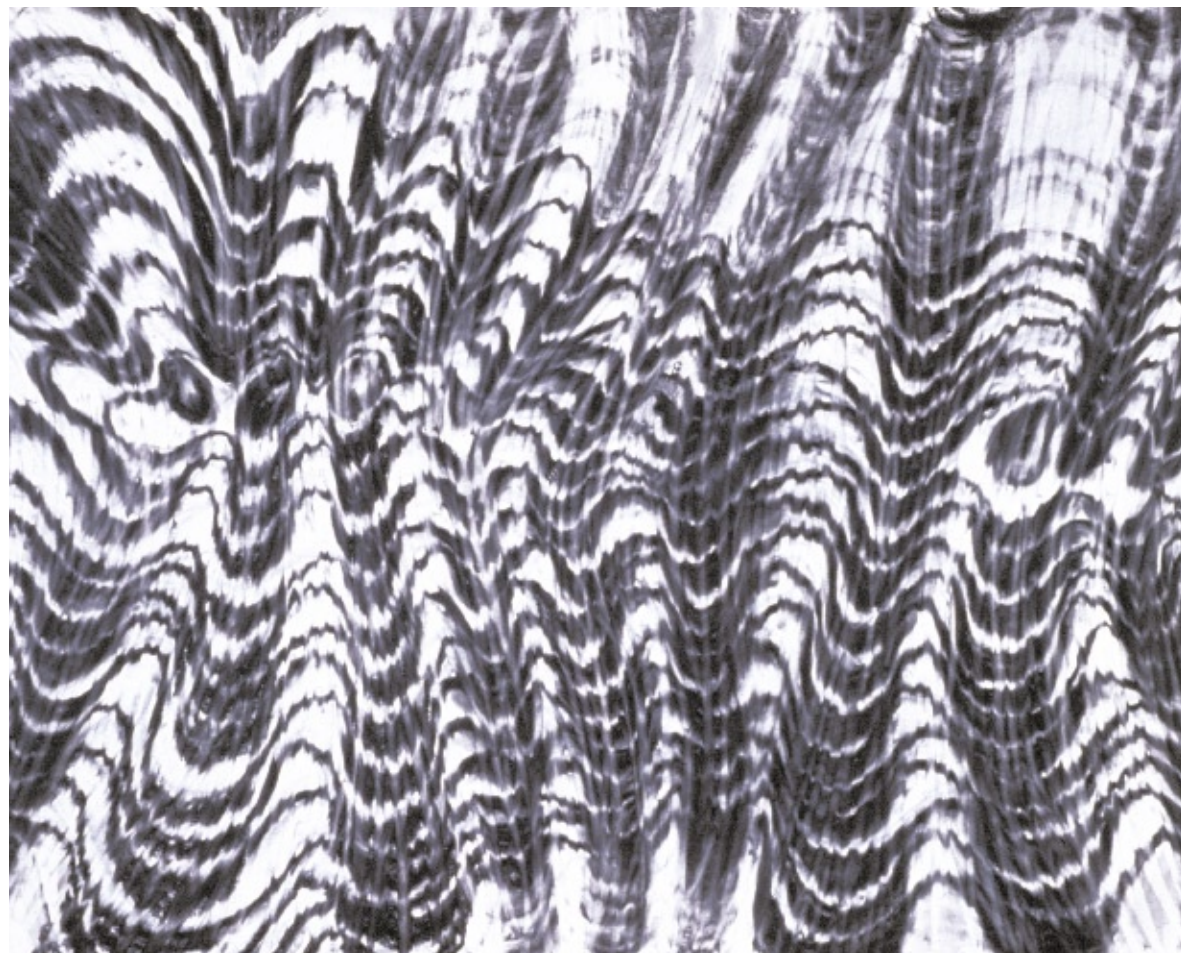
Schist, 2000
82 x 39 x 32
Wood, glue

22



Folia, 2000
84 x 32 x 28
Wood, glue

23



Currents 4, 2000
32 x 40
Charcoal
Photo by Barbara Cooper

(opposite)
Torso, 2002
50 x 30 x 20
Wood, glue
Photo by Eileen Ryan

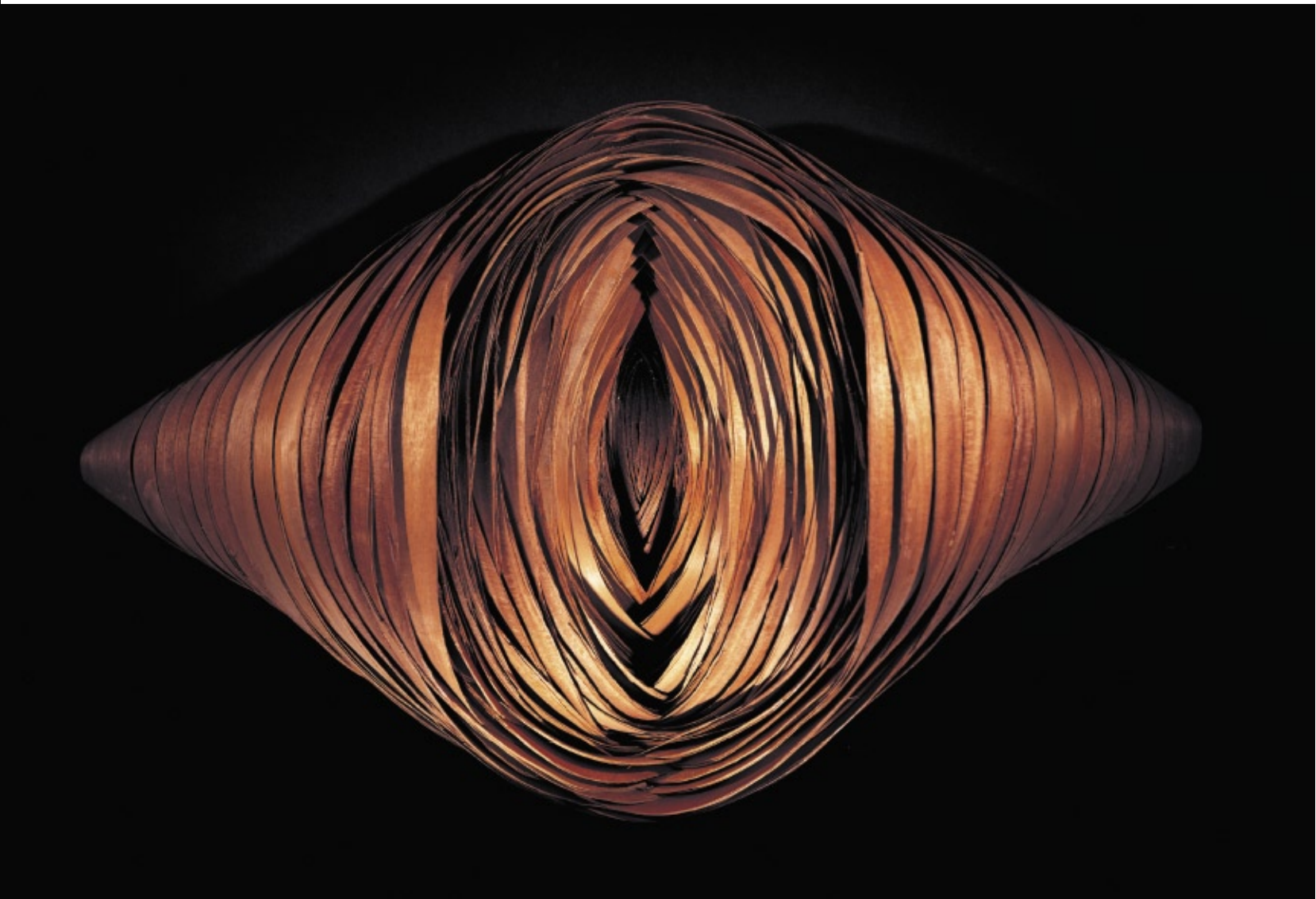




Surge, 2002
 21 x 24 x 66
 Wood, glue
 Photo by Eileen Ryan

(opposite)
 detail





(opposite)
Span, 2003
 18 x 30 x 80
 Wood, glue
 Photo by Eileen Ryan

Oculus, 2004
 30 x 45 x 14
 Wood, glue
 Photo by Eileen Ryan

Chronology, Awards, and
Selected Bibliography

Barbara Cooper

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1949
Resides in Chicago, Illinois

Education

- 1975-77Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, MFA
- 1969-74Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, BFA

Selected One-Person Exhibitions

- 2006Cultural Center, Chicago, Illinois
- 2004,2006John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin
- 2003Hafnarborg Institute of Culture and Fine Art, Hafnarfjörður, Iceland
- Southwest School of Art and Craft, San Antonio, Texas
- 2000Fassbender Gallery, Chicago
Indiana University, Northwest Gallery for Contemporary Art, Gary, Indiana
Sybaris Gallery, Royal Oak, Michigan
- 1999Southeast Missouri State University Museum, Cape Girardeau, Missouri
- 1998Fassbender Gallery, Chicago
Riverside Arts Center, Riverside, Illinois
- 1997Joanne Rapp Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona
- 1996Sybaris Gallery, Royal Oak
Fassbender Gallery, Chicago
- 1995Northern Illinois University Art Museum, DeKalb, Illinois
- 1994Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago
Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2006Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico: *Ink, Clay, Wood, Stone, and Steel*
Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago: *Material Difference*, curated by Polly Ullrich
Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph, Michigan: *Biennial Sculpture Invitational*
- 2005Herron School of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana: *Biennial Sculpture Invitational*, site-specific outdoor piece
Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC: *High Fiber*
The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, Hawai'i: *Selected Works from the Collection*
Lemberg Gallery, Ferndale, Michigan: *Inherent World*
- 2004Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago: *Soft Edge*, curated by Staci Boris
Museum of Fine Arts, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida: *Terrestrial Forces*, catalogue
Zolla / Lieberman Gallery, Chicago: *Onward and Upward*
City of Chicago Parks District, Chicago: *Art in the Garden*, catalogue
Flatfile Gallery, Chicago: *Earth*
Racine Art Museum, Racine, Wisconsin: *Drawing from the Collection*
Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan: *100 Treasures of Cranbrook Art Museum*, catalogue

- 2003Racine Art Museum, Racine: *Introducing RAM: The Building and Collections*
Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe: *Affinity to Form: Artists Working in Wood*
- 2002Evanston Art Center, Evanston, Illinois: *Ingrained*
Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest, Clermont, Kentucky: *In the Spirit of Nature*
Elmhurst Art Museum, Elmhurst, Illinois: *Sculpture: Beneath the Surface*
- 1999–2000British Crafts Council, London: *Contemporary International Basketmaking*; exhibition traveled to Manchester, London, Bradford, Gateshead, catalogue
- 1999Sherry Leedy Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri: *Opening Celebration Exhibition*
Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest, Clermont: *Recent Works*
- 1998–99Illinois State Museums, *From Limb to Limb*: traveling exhibition throughout the state, catalogue
- 1998Fassbender Gallery, Chicago: *Sculpture Today*
Cardinal Stritch University Gallery; Milwaukee, Wisconsin: *Nature as Composer*
Snyderman / Works Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: *Modus Operandi*
Leedy Voulkos Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri: *Sculpture: Balsteri, Cooper, Fay, Gillespie, McCoy*
- 1997Fassbender Gallery, Chicago: *Then and Now, Developmental Changes*
- 1996Snite Museum, South Bend, Indiana: *Survey of Contemporary Sculpture*

Awards

- 2006Public art commission, Avalon Branch Library, Chicago
Kohler Arts / Industry Program, three-month residency fellowship
- 2005Vermont Studio Center, one-month residency fellowship
- 2004Eastern Frontier Society, Norton Island, Maine, three-week residency fellowship
- 2003Hafnarborg Institute of Culture and Fine Art, Hafnarfjörður, Iceland, one-month residency fellowship
- 2002Fellowship and Residency Award, Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest, Clermont, Kentucky
Artist's Fellowship Award, Illinois Arts Council
- 2001White Artists Colony, Costa Rica, one-month residency fellowship
- 2000Artist's Fellowship Award, Illinois Arts Council
Gilsociety, Akureyri, Iceland, one-month residency fellowship
- 1999Dorland Mountain Arts Colony, Temecula, California, one month residency fellowship
- 1996Pouch Cove Foundation, Newfoundland, one-month residency fellowship

Public Collections

Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest, Clermont
The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu
Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills
First National Bank of Columbia, Columbia, Missouri
John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan
Johnson County Community College, Overland Parks
Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, California
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
Racine Art Museum, Racine
Smithsonian National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC
Sprint, Kansas City, Missouri
William Rainey Harper College, Palatine
Wright State University, Dayton
Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings

Selected Bibliography

- Abell, Jeff. "Barbara Cooper: Fassbender Gallery, Chicago." *"C" International Contemporary Art Magazine*, Issue 60, November 1998, p. 44.
- Apel, Dora, ed. *Cranbrook Art Museum: 100 Treasures*. Bloomfield Hills, MI: Cranbrook Art Museum, 2004, pp. 242–243.
- Bates, Geoffrey. "From Limb to Limb." *The Living Museum*, Vol. 60, No. 1, 1998, pp. 9–12.
- Castro, Jan Garden. "St. Louis Review." *Sculpture Magazine*, November 1999, p. 65.
- Craig, Gerry. "Barbara Cooper," *Sculpture Magazine*, December 2000, pp. 69–70.
- Fariello, M. Anna, and Paula Owen, eds. *Objects and Meaning: New Perspectives in Art and Craft*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004, p. 197.
- Hixson, Kathryn. "Chicago in Review." *Arts Magazine*, February 1989, pp. 106–107.
- Howard, Martha. "The Tension of Containment: A Sculpture Invitational." *New Art Examiner*, January 1992, p. 35.
- Jacob, Mary Jane. "Undulating Memories of Time." Sybaris Gallery Brochure, April–May 2000.
- Leucking, Stephen. "Blomorphs: Organic Abstraction and the Mechanics of Life," *Sculpture Magazine*, January–February 2000, pp. 38–43.
- Miro, Marsha. "Sculptures by Barbara Cooper." *Fiberarts*, January–February 2001, pp. 56–57.
- Nelson, Hal. *The Presence of Absence*. Chicago: Collectors of Wood Art, 2006, pp. 7, 12.
- Nouvelle Objet VI*. Seoul, Korea: Design House Publishers, 2001, pp. 28–31.
- Palladino-Craig, Allys, and Preston McLane. *Terrestrial Forces*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts, 2004. Exhibition catalogue, pp. 18, 19, 36–37, front and back cover.
- Rice, Robin. "Modus Operandi." *American Craft Magazine*, February–March 1999, pp. 66–69.
- Sheply, Carol Ferring. "Basketry: A View from the Outer Edges." *Fiber Arts Magazine*, September–October 1995, pp. 56–57.

- . "Innovations in Textile Art." *Fiber Arts Magazine*, November–December 1999, pp. 53.
- Shermeta, Margo. "Contemporary Sculpture: A Question of Elegance." *Fiberarts*, Summer 1991, pp. 22–27.
- Snodgrass, Susan. *An Art of Essence: The Sculpture and Drawing of Barbara Cooper*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Art Museum, August 1995. Brochure.
- Sundell, Ivy. *Living Artists*. Evanston, IL: Crow Woods Publishing, 2005, pp. 58–59.
- Ullrich, Polly. "From Limb to Limb: Extended Review from Chicago." *New Art Examiner*, December–January 1999–2000, p. 46.
- . "Barbara Cooper: Layering Time." *American Craft*, February–March 2000, pp. 66–69.
- . *Material Difference*. Chicago: Chicago Cultural Center and Friends of Fiber Art, 2006, pp. 12, 34.
- Thodos, Diane. "Barbara Cooper." *New Art Examiner*, April 2001, p. 52.

Exhibition Checklist

<p><i>Flow 7</i> 1997 32 x 40 Charcoal Collection of Yvette & Darren Frankel Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>	<p><i>Currents 3</i> 2000 32 x 40 Charcoal Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>	<p><i>Schist</i> 2000 82 x 39 x 32 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by James Prinz</p>
<p><i>Columella</i> 1998 86 x 17 x 26 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by James Prinz</p>	<p><i>Currents 4</i> 2000 32 x 40 Charcoal Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>	<p><i>Entanglement 1</i> 2001 32 x 40 Charcoal Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>
<p><i>Column</i> 1998 85 x 19 x 23 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by James Prinz</p>	<p><i>Currents 7</i> 2000 40 x 32 Charcoal Collection of Jorge Martinez Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>	<p><i>Surge</i> 2002 21 x 24 x 66 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Eileen Ryan</p>
<p><i>Columna</i> 1998 22 x 22 x 77 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by James Prinz</p>	<p><i>Currents 8</i> 2000 42 x 30 Charcoal Collection of Olivia Smith Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>	<p><i>Torso</i> 2002 50 x 30 x 20 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Eileen Ryan</p>
<p><i>Buttress</i> 1999 85 x 40 x 26 Wood, glue Collection of Amy and Barry Baker Photo by James Prinz</p>	<p><i>Currents 9</i> 2000 40 x 32 Charcoal Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>	<p><i>Span</i> 2003 18 x 30 x 80 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Eileen Ryan</p>
<p><i>Fragment</i> 1999 18 x 24 x 24 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by James Prinz</p>	<p><i>Folia</i> 2000 84 x 32 x 28 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by James Prinz</p>	<p><i>Oculus</i> 2004 30 x 45 x 14 Wood, glue Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Eileen Ryan</p>
<p><i>Currents 2</i> 2000 32 x 40 Charcoal Courtesy of Alfedena Gallery Photo by Barbara Cooper</p>	<p><i>Mast</i> 2000 84 x 55 x 32 Wood, glue Collection of Greg Eitelman Photo by James Prinz</p>	

Bellevue Arts Museum

Board of Trustees 2007

President: Keith Gormley Baldwin

Carol Auerbach
Diane Babbitt
June Bartell
Ron Bayley
Al Berger
Richard Collette
Susan Edelheit
Alexandra Muse Ehrlich
John Frank
George Grubb
Mark Haley
Lawrence Hebner
Jerry Hendin
John Hepler
Mark Horiuchi
Peter Horvitz (Emeritus)
Norma Klorfine
Anna Littlewood
Larry Metcalf
Valerie Piha
Kevin Schemm
Frank Statkus
Angela Sutter
Cappy Thompson
Susan Thurston

Docent President: Anne Kilcup
Docent Representative: Frances Taylor
Guild Representative: Meredith Adami

Staff

Michael Monroe *Executive Director/Chief Curator*

Stefano Catalani *Curator*
John Carmack *Director Resource Development*
Janet Ellinger *Chief Financial Officer*
Renate Raymond *Director External Affairs*

Larry Asmann *Facility Manager*
Nora Atkinson *Exhibitions Curator*
Chanta Chhay *Admissions Associate*
Barbara Diferrente *Retail Sales Associate*
Sayaka Ito *Marketing Assistant*
Donna Keyser *Graphic Designer*
Clint Kincaid *Development Coordinator*
Meredith Langridge *Artist Manager*
Kathy Lindenmayer *Membership Manager*
Alice Mellinger *Special Events and Volunteer Coordinator*
Kathleen Pendleton *Admissions Associate*
Diana Riddle *Retail Manager*
Marta Sivertsen *Admissions Associate*
Marguerite Stanley *Finance and Operations Manager*
Elisabeth Wahlers *Fair Manager*
Vincent Warner *Head Preparator*
Robyn Winters *Retail Assistant Manager*
Lyn Ziskind *Retail Sales Associate*

ART | CRAFT | DESIGN
BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

ISBN: 0-942342-14-3

