The University of Oklahoma
FJJMA
Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art

OUTDOOR SCULPTURES
Selected works:
1. Interlocking Triptych
2. Sphinx
3. The Sacrifice of Isaac
4. Big Walking Eye Flower 1
5. Reclinada Chac
6. Tango
7. Circular
8. Pastoral Dreamer
9. Needle Woman with Two Flowers
10. Moonscape Bench
11. Huguenots
Interlocking Triptych, 1993

Jesús Bautista Moroles  
(U.S., 1950-2015)  
Oklahoma granite  
Gift of Ellen and Jerry Westheimer, 1994

Jesús Bautista Moroles began working with granite during his undergraduate career at North Texas State University. After graduation, Moroles was an apprentice under Luis Jiménez, an accomplished Mexican-American sculptor whose 8-foot blue Mustang is a popular work in the museum’s permanent collection. Influenced by Jiménez, as well as trips to Italian marble quarries in the 1980s, Moroles was drawn to large-scale works that contrast raw and carved stone.

The Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art commissioned Interlocking Triptych in 1993, and it was gifted by the Westheimer family the following year. A triptych is a work of art that is divided into three sections or compartments. The scale and architectural form of this sculpture is reminiscent of ancient monuments created by the Maya and Aztec cultures, although the similarity was not the artist’s intention. Moroles used different tools such as diamond saws, grinders, chisels, and mallets to carve into the hard surface of the granite. This 14-foot work weighs in at an incredible 15 tons, or 30,000 lbs.

DID YOU KNOW?

Triptychs originated in early Christian panel paintings or altarpieces, but the term is commonly applied today to works of art that use three parts or images to create a narrative.
Fernando Botero is a Colombian painter and sculptor. His career has taken him all over the world to places including Madrid, Paris, Florence, and several cities around the United States. Throughout Botero’s career, he studied the Old Masters, such as Peter Paul Rubens and Albrecht Dürer, along with Impressionists Édouard Manet and Pierre Bonnard.

Since the age of 13, Botero developed a passion for the arts and an interest in both Pre-Columbian figures and 17th-century Spanish painters. It was not until later in his career, however, around the mid-1950s, that Botero became known for his exaggerated caricatures. His paintings and sculptures feature inflated figures like the 10-foot *Sphinx*, which balloons the classically sleek monster of Greek mythology. Unlike the Egyptian version with a human head and lion body, the Greek sphinx has the haunches of a lion, the wings of a bird, and the head and bust of a woman. This 10-foot work weighs around 1.5 tons, or 3,000 lbs.

*Sphinx, 1995*

Fernando Botero  
(Colombia, b. 1932)  
Bronze  
Gift of Jerome M. Westheimer, Sr., 2006
Menashe Kadishman became fixated on the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in 1982, the year his son came of age to join the army. He created *The Sacrifice of Isaac* three years later, after his home country of Israel was torn apart by war. The artist drew connections between the famous Biblical story and his personal struggles with destruction and loss. The account portrayed in *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, however, is not canonical. In this sculpture, the ram sacrificed in Isaac’s place in the Biblical account is victorious while Isaac hangs defeated, implying that Abraham carried out God’s test to prove his loyalty though the sacrifice of his son.

This interpretation resonates in a painful wartime experience described by Kadishman, when he came across the body of a young boy that he could not identify as Arab or Israeli. This encounter deepened the connections he drew between Abraham’s sacrifice to God and the boy’s sacrifice to war and government as a higher power.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Until 2006, the 15-foot Kadishman sculpture was mistakenly installed with the base buried underground. The artist preferred the base to be visible as it is now.
James Surls is an award-winning artist whose work has been featured in prestigious museums around the United States. Since graduating from Sam Houston State College in Huntsville, Texas, in 1968, then teaching as a professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Surls has maintained an immense appreciation for his native Texan roots.

Sources of inspiration include flowers, rock formations, and the human body. More recently, Surls has become interested in the microcosmic worlds of neurons and molecules. By working primarily with wood, steel, and bronze, his sculptures morph into dynamic hybrids that fuse man-made materials with the natural world.

Just short of nine feet tall, Big Walking Eye Flower 1 is one of multiple sculptures in the artist’s Walking Series. The artist uses the term “walking” to imply a sense of purpose and motion, as though the piece is moving itself and the viewer to a deeper understanding of the world beyond the here and now. Surls expands on this idea of natural creation and growth by giving attention to the power of physics: the study of matter in motion.
Reclinada Chac, 1990
Felipe Castañeda
(Mexico, b. 1933)
Bronze
Gift of President David L. Boren and Molly Shi Boren, 2006

Felipe Castañeda is a master sculptor who has exhibited all around the world. Originally from Mexico, Castañeda started his career by working in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. During this time, he met Francisco Zuñiga, a famous sculptor who would eventually become Castañeda’s mentor. Under the guidance of Zuñiga, Castañeda learned to mold plaster and clay.

Eventually, Castañeda moved on to marble, onyx, and bronze. These materials, traditionally used in classical and late antiquity, are notoriously difficult to work with. The inspiration for his works comes from his appreciation, fascination, and respect for the female body and mind. Motherhood and fertility are dominant themes. The artist takes ordinary poses such as sitting, standing, and in this case, reclining, and elegantly transforms them into something deeper and more complex.

DID YOU KNOW?
The name of this work is likely inspired by chacmool, a term attributed to reclining Mayan sculptural figures (possibly symbolizing fallen warriors) that held sacrificial offerings.
Sophia Vari is a Greek artist whose career started in Paris, where she attended the École des Beaux-Arts in 1958. She is well known for painting, jewelry design, and sculpture. Working primarily in painted bronze, Vari’s sculptural works are complex combinations of form and balance. While she focused primarily on figurative works and started to explore sculpture in the late 1970s, Vari moved steadily toward abstraction throughout her career. Contemporary works suggest the human figure and often are highlighted with colorful paint. Her sculptures manifest on an intimate and monumental scale, with the latter often appearing in public installations outdoors.

Vari’s work is composed of multiple parts that create a sense of movement, dynamism, and cohesion. In Tango, Vari uses complimentary forms to interweave two figures into a dance. The artist’s influences come from a variety of unexpected sources, including ancient Olmec and Cycladic art, with Modernist influence from sculptors such as Henry Moore and Joan Miró.

**Tango, 2011**

Sophia Vari  
(Greece, b. 1940)

Bronze and black patina  
Gift of Thomas and Nancy Hester, 2013

DID YOU KNOW?

Two unexpected people encouraged Vari to pursue her dreams: opera singer Maria Callas and Winston Churchill, who discussed his passion for watercolors with the artist.
*Circular, 1971*

James Henkle  
(U.S., 1927-2015)  
Painted steel  
Acquisition, 1972

James Henkle is a well-known and respected sculptor and former University of Oklahoma professor. Before attending school and creating a successful career in art, Henkle’s father pressured him to pursue a degree in engineering. Henkle considered this, but after further reflection, he realized that his true calling was in the arts.

Henkle went on to study under the famous sculptor Alexander Costello. Costello was a constituent of the Bauhaus, which was the most influential modernist school of art in the 20th century. Operational from 1919 to 1933, the Bauhaus was a German art school famous for its harmonious combination of aesthetically pleasing form and functional design. Henkle also studied under Eva Zeisel, who preferred organic abstraction, a style characterized by rounded, abstract forms found in nature. Zeisel was a Hungarian-born American artist known for her abstract pottery and ceramics.

These two opposing expressions of art are reflected in Henkle’s piece *Circular*. The museum also owns 30 other works by the artist, including several furniture models.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Henkle taught at OU for almost 40 years and served as the acting director of the School of Art from 1961 to 1962.
David Phelps is an internationally-recognized sculptor whose works deal with the human form’s relation to space and landscape. Phelps is known for using bronze, cast concrete, and fabricated steel to create monumental works. He graduated with an MFA from the University of Oklahoma in 1984.

*Pastoral Dreamer* seems to melt into or be enveloped by the surrounding landscape, which creates a surreal effect. Surrealism refers to an art movement that combined contradictory images from dreams and reality. Many of Phelps’s works have been inspired by his dreams. The term “pastoral” references a simple, rustic lifestyle that defined the artist’s youth. He grew up on a farm on Roberts Island, just outside of Stockton, California. His preference for “sinking” his sculptures is an effort to make them less intimidating, while also allowing viewers to fill in the gaps with their imaginations.

The large scale of this sculpture is not uncommon in Phelps’s work, with many pieces featured in parks, malls, and museums: locations large enough to accommodate his sizable sculptures. *Pastoral Dreamer* is one of 15 castings made in this edition by the artist.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

While the museum owns a small maquette of this work called *American Pastoral* (1997), this outdoor sculpture is not officially in the museum’s collection.
Needle Woman with Two Flowers, 2000

James Surls
(U.S., b. 1943)

Bronze and steel
Gift of Mark Landrum, 2013

James Surls specializes in the creation of hybrid sculptures that are inspired by nature and its many forms. Speaking on these themes of nature, harmony, and hybridity in depth, Surls describes his work as an expression of the interrelation of sculptural materials and their connections to the structures of neurons, molecules, and plants. Surls’s art pieces rely on explorations into realities seen and unseen.

The artist has been known to use different theories seen in physics, philosophy, and psychology to express the meaning of his work. Needle Woman with Two Flowers is an exploration of nature and the human form that also reveals a recurring theme for the artist. The needle, which has appeared in several works since at least the 1970s, represents the female force that binds humanity together.

Speaking about his artistic intentions, Surls said, “I want my art to engage the spectator in a mental conversation. I want people to work at it. I want to make my art as complicated as possible…” Because much of his symbolism is highly personal to the artist, the full meaning of his work remains a mystery to many viewers.

DID YOU KNOW?

Surls was featured as the museum’s Distinguished Visiting Artist in 2015. Four of his sculptures were temporarily installed on campus for the exhibition, including Big Walking Eye Flower 1, which was then purchased for the museum.
Moonscape Bench, 2007

Jesús Bautista Moroles
(U.S., 1950-2015)

Texas pink granite

Gift of President David L. Boren and Molly Shi Boren, 2013, Collection of Dr. Simon Levit

Moonscape Bench is from a larger series of works, the first of which was created for a 1989 exhibition in Houston. The inspiration for the bench series came from the artist’s desire to sit on one of his circular, rocking disc works (see Disc Ruin, a piece on the south oval of campus that was donated by the Class of 2007). His interest in making the work more interactive implies that the bench may rock left or right on its rounded base.

The name of the series was spontaneous, not unlike its conception. The rough granite reminded the artist of the moon’s landscape at night, which is made up of lunar rocks. In the process of working with granite, Moroles often “tears” the rock by driving wedges into the surface, which force the stone to separate in unpredictable ways. The raw stone left behind, visible on the seat of Moonscape Bench, contrasts man-made production with natural geologic processes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Moroles referred to granite as “the heart and core of the universe.”
**DID YOU KNOW?**

Massee often attached rings to the ferroglyph works, citing their kinetic quality. When asked about their function, he said they were “to tie your boat to.”

---

**Huguenots, 2005**

John Massee  
(U.S., b. 1951)

Steel

Gift of Everett Foundation Affiliated Fund, in Honor of Alice Allen Everett, 2005

Originally born in Washington, D.C., John Massee resides in New Mexico, where his main studio is located. Throughout Massee’s career, he has been featured in more than 10 solo exhibitions and his work has been shown in 25 different venues. Massee’s sculptures frequently depict large groups of people with crudely outlined bodies. *Huguenots* is one in a series of steel monuments that depicts large groups of people with crudely outlined bodies. The artist refers to these works as “ferroglyphs,” a mashup of Latin and Greek root words meaning “metal pictures.”

*Huguenots* is divided into three rows containing trios of figure groups. In this chaotic scene, some of the figures appear to have broken limbs, which may connect to the work’s title. The Huguenots were a large group of French Protestants famously and violently persecuted for their faith in the 16th and 17th centuries. The structure of this sculpture is reminiscent of a stele, a large wooden or stone slab erected for funerary or commemorative purposes. Because the figures are cut out rather than carved, the artist emphasizes their absence and ephemerality.
Love sculpture?
Look for these other works on the North Oval!