

Update

Save Outdoor Sculpture!

A joint project of Heritage Preservation and the Smithsonian American Art Museum

SOS! Exhibit Traveling Your Way

With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, SOS! is developing a traveling exhibition, tentatively titled *Preserving Memory: Americans and Their Public Sculpture*, available for loan after Sep-

tember 2002. Through images and text on lightweight, flexible banners, the exhibition will examine the motivations, conflicts, and collaborations that create sculpture and show how public sculpture prompts reflection and examination of the past. A traveling exhibition, public programs, and education activities for kids in troop meetings and classrooms and on the Web will elevate the subject of monuments and sculpture, give it a public forum for discussion, place local sculpture in social and historical contexts, and prompt interest in preserving local sculpture.

The SOS! exhibition will encourage citizens 8 to 80 to observe obvious messages and to consider the omitted or less obvious messages of public sculpture. The sto-

ries and pictures of sculptures elsewhere in the United States will help visitors reflect on their own community's origins memorialized through its public sculpture. While geographically accessible to a broad population, typically the monuments are intellectually inaccessible, and their original meaning has been lost or reshaped. Their value as community cultural assets is diminished.

In *Preserving Memory: Americans and Their Public Sculpture*, sculptures with intriguing stories will engage a visitor's curiosity; explanations of who and what achieves

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tember 2002. Through images and text on lightweight, flexible banners, the exhibition will examine the motivations, conflicts, and

NEA Project Begins

Between 1967 and 1992, the National Endowment for the Arts, Works of Art in Public Places (APP), made more than 400 awards to support creation of permanent outdoor sculpture. With support from the NEA through fall 2002, SOS! is working with communities in 44 states plus the District of Columbia that received those grants to fully document the resulting artworks. All will be surveyed; 75 will receive on-site condition assessments. The rest will complete the form used by Inventory of American Sculpture, with an additional section about current condition. The information and current images will be provided to the Inventory at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Although these sculptures are not chronologically old, many are considered at risk by the conservation profession because their sculptors often experimented with materials that have proven vulnerable to weather and routine wear and tear. For example, painted steel was commonly used and is today seen

as a fragile material. With the addition of time, deferred maintenance, and vandalism, these artworks are endangered, many in urgent need of care.

Letters inviting NEA-APP grantees' participation were sent in September. To learn more about this program, contact Adrienne Stone at 888-767-7245 or astone@heritagepreservation.org, or visit our Web site at www.heritagepreservation.org. ■



Prairie Tetons (1975) by Frederic M. Rennels.

Photo: Mary Alberly, Iowa State University

“monumental status” will replace a veil of mystery with insight and appreciation. How do Americans commemorate war and catastrophe, their heroes and victims? How do we celebrate ourselves in our public spaces today? What is deemed “memorable” by today’s Americans? Who is left out? The exhibition will also explain some of the most common physical threats to outdoor sculpture and feature some communities that have taken steps to preserve their local and national treasures.

A set of 21 banner-scrolls, each approximately 65 by 24 inches, in full color, will feature an estimated 45 artworks. Of the 21 banner-scrolls, the entry one will feature a public sculpture from the town or region in which the exhibition is shown. That first banner-scroll will introduce the concept that local sculpture is part of a national collection and celebrate its place in the world’s largest collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century outdoor sculpture, a veritable

museum of outdoor art and history. The general text will be written for adults who are novices in the area of monuments and public sculpture. Seven sections will be uniquely designed and written for children.

Although no objects will travel with the exhibition, local groups will be encouraged to sponsor auxiliary exhibitions. Libraries might feature books about sculptors and local history depicted in sculpture. Preservation leagues could sponsor walking or bike tours. Art leagues could discuss the process of commissioning public art today. In Athens, Pennsylvania, during conservation of *Protection of the Flag* (1902) by G. Brewster, military objects like those depicted in the monument were displayed at a local museum.

NEH underwriting will also support small grants for a local host’s choice of public programs from a menu offered by SOS!, including humanities-oriented lectures and tribute in song and words to

women’s roles in the American West. The SOS! interdisciplinary teaching kit, *Inside Outdoor Sculpture*, now in nationwide testing with upper elementary and middle school students, and SOS!4Kids Web site will supplement youth-related text in the exhibition.

The physical equipment and design of the exhibition were selected for greatest flexibility. The banner-scrolls can be lined up in a hall 50 feet long or set up around the perimeter of a room approximately 12 by 12 feet. Other possibilities are to arrange the panels snakelike around a room or group them throughout a public area.

Libraries, schools, city halls, courthouses, historical societies, and cemetery buildings are possible venues. The space must be enclosed, but security needs are nominal. The panels will be lightweight; installation will be easier than assembling a child’s wagon. Storage space for shipping cases will be minimal.

Each site may have the exhibit for up to eight weeks. Borrowers will be expected to cover the cost of shipping between venues, estimated at \$100. No site may charge admission to the exhibition or for SOS!-sponsored public programs. For more information or to discuss booking the exhibition, contact Rose Stapp at 888-767-7285 or rstapp@heritagepreservation.org.

The traveling exhibit implementation grant builds on an NEH consultants grant in which scholars, educators, and conservation professionals worked with SOS! staff to develop themes and formats to meet the exhibition’s goals. Maggie Wood, an American studies major at The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., has joined SOS! as an intern through January 2002 to assist with the traveling exhibit.

Consultants for the implementa-

Addendum: Another View of Bronze Sculpture Treatment

In September 2000, SOS! published Dennis Montagna’s article, “Bronze Sculpture Benefits from Expert Conservation Techniques,” in *LodeSTAR*. In this technical leaflet, Montagna, a program manager of the Monument Research and Preservation Center at the National Park Service Philadelphia Support Office, discusses the history of bronze sculpture treatment techniques, the challenge of long-term maintenance, and his experiences with the bronze sculptures in the Gettysburg National Military



Park.

Montagna’s article prompted a response from Mark Rabinowitz, conservation professional at Conservation & Sculpture Co., focusing on current treatment techniques. The *LodeSTAR* Mark Rabinowitz’s letter, and a short response from Dennis Montagna are on our Web site

Conservation Treatment Award Update

An additional round of SOS! Conservation Treatment Awards, courtesy of Target and the National Endowment for the Arts, was made in April, bringing the total number of awards to 123. As of August 2001, 42 percent of the funded projects have completed the conservation phase nationwide. During this busy conservation season quite a few projects were wrapped up, including two that were only awarded their grants this spring! Following are a few highlights of recent conservation treatment completions and rededication ceremonies.



Photo: Ron Sheetz

tion along the famous Rose Bowl Parade route.

Totem Pole Park, unknown date(s) and artist(s)—Klawock, Alaska

In the second phase of an ongoing conservation effort in the area, wood conservator Ron Sheetz and other conservation professionals were welcomed in July to work on 21 totem poles. Using a bucket truck courtesy of the Alaska Power and Telephone Company, the poles were cleaned of accumulated vegetation and treated with waterproofing and preservative chemicals.



Courtesy Albuquerque Public Art Collection

Southwest Pieta, 1987, Luis Jimenez—Albuquerque, New Mexico

In a more southern climate, Dale Kronkright of the Kronkright Center for Cultural Materials, Inc., conserved this colorful contemporary fiberglass sculpture. The artist col-



Photo: Clifford Craine, Daedalus, Inc.

Joan of Arc, 1922, Anna Hyatt Huntington—Gloucester, Massachusetts

On September 2, *Joan of Arc* was rededicated with sensitive creativity. Citizens of all ages participated. This WWI memorial received its much-needed conservation mostly due to the efforts of Girl Scout Troop #137. The girls handled everything, from conducting a town referendum on whether the

sculpture should be turned around on its base to designing the rededication celebration. The conservation firm was Daedalus, Inc.



Image by Esme

Memorial Flagpole, 1927, Lee Oscar Lawrie—Pasadena, California

With Donna Williams of Williams Conservation, Inc., leading the way, another WWI memorial was recently conserved. The rededication is scheduled for Veterans Day 2001.

This has been a highly visible project, due to its loca-



Courtesy Midwest Conservation Services

laborated on the conservation.

General Philip Sheridan, 1905, Carl Heber—Somerset, Ohio

A challenge to approach, due to its location on a traffic island, the general was cleaned and repatinated in May by Midwest Conservation Services. Careful historical research by both the conservator and several citizens revealed that the artist had intended the

A Personal Reflection

by Kealoha Sugiyama

Born in 1938, I grew up at the waterfront where our camp had only seven homes. We were all one family. On occasion my dad would take our family to visit his mom and dad near the Kohala Sugar Mill, about 15 miles away. It was a real treat. We got to go for a car ride, passing through the towns of Hawi, Kapa'au, and Halaula.

One of the highlights of that journey was passing the gigantic statue of King Kamehameha I. Dad would make a special stop at the statue site. I would run up the stairs and stand before the statue in wonder. What did Kamehameha do during his life time that made him such a great king? At that time, I knew only that King Kamehameha was the conqueror of the Hawaiian Islands.

In 1994, I retired to Hawai'i Island after 32 years of service with Hawaiian Airlines in Honolulu, Oahu. On my return, I volunteered to help with the annual Kamehameha Celebration. Each June 11th, the State of Hawai'i honors the king with special ceremonies at the statue site, singing, ancient hula dancing, lei draping, gift offerings, a parade, cultural artisan demonstrations, entertainment, and food.

Unlike any other bronze, our *King Kamehameha I*s painted. One day as I stood before the statue, I concluded that the faded paint needed a fresh look befitting a king. I asked the county and State of Hawai'i to take care of that matter before celebration day. Both agencies replied that they did not have the manpower available and that if I would provide the labor they would provide the paint. For a moment, I was shocked that they would neglect



Photo: Christopher Buchanan

Kealoha Sugiyama (left) and Glenn Wharton with a puppet of Wharton from a presentation written for the statue's rededication.

their responsibility. Then I realized that if it is to be, it is up to me.

I went before the statue. In silence, I told the king that I was going to give him a fresh coat of paint and make him look brand new. As I finished that thought, I found myself across the street in our public library. I was confused. I had more pressing things to do. However as I was in the library, I borrowed books on Kamehameha to write an article for the local paper. The next day, as I stood in front of the statue, deliberating what to do, again I found myself across the street in the library. For two more days, when I stood before the king's statue, I ended up in the library. As I continued to browse, I came across a book about the royal feather cloaks of the Hawai'i kings. Flipping through a book, I found the picture of Liloa, another famous king of old Hawai'i whose sash had great power. It was passed on from king to king.

The enlightening thing about the

picture was the color of Liloa's feathered sash, red and yellow. Our statue was all yellow, even the sash. The sash on the statue in Honolulu is all gilt. In my excitement I checked out the book and dashed to the statue. "Is this why you've been sending me to the library," I asked, "to realize the true colors of Liloa's sash?" Yes, was the feeling that I got after I was able to complete the paint job, using the red and yellow colors of the royal cloak and sash.

It is now 2001 and good things have happened to our statue. A conservation project has just been completed. Twenty-plus layers of house paint were removed. New paint was selected and applied with advice from our sculpture conservator, Glenn Wharton. Our maintenance team knows what to do and when to call Glenn. I am so grateful for all the people and organizations from near and afar who have come as family to care

SOS! Update

SOS! Director Susan Nichols

Editor Diane L. Mossholder

Save Outdoor Sculpture! (SOS!) is a joint project of Heritage Preservation and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. SOS! volunteers provided information and images to create a comprehensive database of the nation's outdoor sculpture and focus attention on preservation of public sculpture and monuments. Major contributions have been provided by Target Stores, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Getty Grant Program, the Henry Luce Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

SOS! Update reports on the project's progress and activities related to outdoor sculpture in the United States. Readers are encouraged to reprint or duplicate *SOS! Update*. Credit should read: "Reprinted with permission of Save Outdoor Sculpture!" Visit the SOS! Web page at www.heritagepreservation.org/programs/sos/sosmain.htm.

For more information, contact SOS!, Heritage Preservation, 1730 K Street, NW, Suite 566, Washington, DC 20006. Call us at 888-767-7285 or 202-634-1422, or fax 202-634-1435, e-mail SOS!@heritagepreservation.org.

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A Conservator's Perspective

by Glenn Wharton

In 1996, with funds from SOS!, I launched what I assumed to be a standard-fare condition assessment of the bronze sculpture *King Kamehameha I* (1880) by Thomas Ridgeway Gould on the Island of Hawai'i. My charge was to develop a mechanism for removing bright-colored paint that had been applied to the surface and return it to its original patina and gold-leafed appearance.

I photographed the sculpture and extracted small samples for analysis. All was going to plan until I walked across the street to purchase a souvenir postcard. The shopkeeper implored me not to strip him of his brilliant paint. She told me that local people paint *Kamehameha* in life-like colors so they can relate to him as a human being. She described annual celebrations on the statewide Kamehameha Day in which Hawaiian chants are offered at sunrise, 13-foot leis draped over his shoulders, and a community parade held in his honor with participation by all the Hawaiian Islands.

I was not prepared for this. Rarely do people confront me with such strong feelings about the preservation of their cultural heritage. Here was a situation in which a community had physically altered a work of art. Was painting the sculpture a sacrilege like adding a mustache to the Mona Lisa? Or was it a local custom that should take priority over the artist's original expression? Who was I, an outsider, to recommend that layers of paint and history be stripped away?

Four years later, we have just

completed a community-based conservation project. I worked with the Hawai'i Alliance for Arts Education in participation with the King Kamehameha Celebration Commission and local community groups. Before we began the preservation, we engaged local citizens in a conversation about conservation. We asked: Do you want the sculpture painted or



Photo: Christopher Buchanan

gold-leafed? Do you want to honor the nineteenth-century decisions made by the artist and commissioning agency or do you want to honor the modern tradition of painting the figure in life-like colors?

These questions stimulated public dialogue about how best to tell the story of Kamehameha I and how best to remember the Hawaiian past. We mined public memory to learn of the layered meanings embedded in the scul-

ture that evolved over time.

Public engagement in the project took on a life of its own. Students researched the history of *Kamehameha I* and made art projects featuring the sculpture. Girl Scouts earned SOS! patches for learning about conservation. A local hula group performed a puppet hula about the conservation project.

The high school debate team held a public forum to discuss the issue of paint versus gilding, and local kupuna, or elders, were consulted for their wisdom. On December 8, 2000, ballots came in from a community-wide vote. The result was 71 percent in favor of continuing the painted tradition.

After further meetings with community leaders and kupuna to choose the paint colors for skin, cloak, and helmet, we stripped off the paint in March 2001. With the help of local citizens, we treated the oxidized bronze surface with a corrosion inhibitor and repainted it with an industrial paint system. All preservation was performed in situ. Maintenance training was held for community members. A festive rededication celebration was held on Kamehameha Day, June 11, 2001.

On reflection, the project has altered the way I think about my work. We were successful in using the conservation process as a tool for public dialogue about the past. While our community-based model may not be appropriate for all conservation work, perhaps other projects can capture public interest in a similar manner and lead to new ways of learning from the sculptures and monuments we

Presidential Sculpture: Looking for Lincoln

As long as there have been presidents, Americans have been honoring them in art. Of the some 570 outdoor sculptures of United States Presidents, over 200 honor Abraham Lincoln. It is little wonder that Lincoln should be a favorite subject for artists, particularly sculptors. Although often called “homely,” Lincoln’s face was a work of art in itself, sculpted by time and experience. The deeply carved lines and meditative character of his face bespeak the trials and triumphs of a self-made man who led his country through one of its greatest crises, the Civil War. With public sculptures honoring Lincoln in at least 37 states (and Edinburgh, Scotland!), one can appreciate his visual eloquence.

What follows are some highlights of Lincoln statuary found in the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s Inventory of American Sculpture.

One of the earliest outdoor sculptures honoring Lincoln is at Sharon Township Hall in Michigan, the *Lincoln Memorial and Soldiers Monument*. The sculpture, executed in 1866, does not actually depict Lincoln but was erected to honor him and local soldiers who served in the Civil War. According to *The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C.* by James M. Goode, the first sculpture commissioned after Lincoln’s death is the full-length marble figure at the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, dedicated in 1868. Philadelphia boasts one of the earliest seated depictions of Lincoln in a work by Randolph Rogers, executed in 1870.

Lincoln’s gift for public oratory is memorialized in several sculptures. A young, barefoot Lincoln gives his first political speech in a sculpture by Anthony Vestuto in Lin-



Abraham Lincoln (1868) by Lot Flannery.

Photo: Nicolas F. Veloz, Courtesy D.C. Courts

coln Square, Decatur, Illinois. Erected in 1968, this work depicts a 21-year-old Lincoln, his shirt sleeves rolled up and his right foot on a tree stump. In Illinois in 1858, Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas engaged in a series of debates when they were opposing Senatorial candidates. Douglas won the election, but Lincoln ultimately won the presidency. Full-length statues of a speaking Lincoln stand in Taylor Park, Freeport, and Knox College, Galesburg, sites of two of the debates. A large relief plaque by Lorado Taft, installed in Washington Park, Quincy, depicts the debate scene, with several figures, including Douglas and Mary Todd Lincoln, in attendance. All these works were dedicated on the anniversaries of the debates.

Lincoln delivered his famous Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863, during the dedication of a burial ground on the battlefield. He now delivers his speech in bronze in Cleveland, Ohio. The sculpture was a gift of Cleveland schoolchildren who funded it with their pennies. Lincoln holds his text in his left hand while the wind blows his coattails behind him. A

bust of Lincoln and a plaque bearing his words stand near the spot where the event occurred at the National Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Lincoln statuary also appears in unexpected forms. Dorothy Riester’s *Young Lincoln* formerly an outdoor sculpture, is an abstract figure in the lobby of Chase-Lincoln Bank in Syracuse, New York. The figure is elongated, recalling Lincoln’s great height, with emphasis on the gangly yet graceful limbs. Lincoln revisits Gettysburg and welcomes a twentieth-century tourist to the town square in J. Seward Johnson’s *Return Visit*. Each figure wears the costume of his time: the tourist casual in his sweater and slacks and Lincoln dignified in his long coat. His left hand holds his famous stovepipe hat aloft as he looks down at the text of the Gettysburg address held by the tourist.

One of our greatest sculptures of Lincoln, Daniel Chester French’s *Lincoln Memorial* continues to inspire into the twenty-first century. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., like Lincoln known for his oratory, gave his “I Have a Dream” speech there. Senator Smith gains hope and inspiration during a late-night visit to the memorial in the 1939 film *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. With a slight alteration to the species of the sitter, director Tim Burton makes French’s *Lincoln* fit right in with his simian co-stars in this year’s remake of *Planet of the Apes*.

To locate additional sculptures of Lincoln and other U.S. Presidents, search the online Inventory of American Sculpture database (www.siris.si.edu). Use the keywords “occupation political president outdoor sculpture.” ■
Susan Raposa, a former cataloger with the Art Inventories at Smith

A Program that Works—Fairmount Park Art Association's Maintenance Program

by W. T. Chase

In 1982 the Fairmount Park Art Association began a pilot program for outdoor sculpture conservation in Philadelphia with funding from the Mabel Pew Myrin Trust. Steven A. Tatti, S.A.T., Inc., was chosen as the conservator for the project. A conservative, reversible treatment of hot wax was selected with a commitment to ongoing maintenance. Twenty-nine sculptures of historic and artistic significance are now in the program; 19 bronze, 5 stone, 2 weathering steel, 1 wood, and 1 both stone and bronze. After 18 years, this is the longest continuously operating annual maintenance program of its kind in the United States. As a senior conservator with long-term interests in outdoor sculpture, I was hired at the end of 1999 to perform an independent assessment of the program, concentrating on the bronze works.



Figure 1. Kurt Solmssen renewing the wax coating on Albert Wolff's *The Lion Fighter* (1892 cast) in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, May 23, 2000.

Annual maintenance consists of:

- inspecting the condition of the monument
- washing with medium-pressure water and detergent
- rinsing and allowing the sculpture to dry overnight
- cleaning further with mineral spirits if necessary
- reforming existing wax coat with a torch, adding more wax to thinned or rubbed spots as necessary
- letting the wax set overnight, then buffing.

Annual maintenance is performed each May. Technician Kurt Solmssen does the maintenance (Figure 1), and Tatti, Solmssen, and Laura Griffith, assistant director, Fairmount Park Art Association, make a final inspection and update records.

For the assessment, I inspected sculptures, conducted interviews, observed the maintenance program in May 2000, and performed tests of coloration and dirt accumulation in the wax. It was clear that the annual maintenance procedure cleans the sculptures and restores their sheen. Graffiti are removed and scratches and imperfections in the wax coating are minimized. It is not so easy to know how well the annually maintained wax coating protects the underlying sculptures.

We asked Solmssen (after consultation with Tatti) to remove the wax coating entirely from a portion of *Stone Age in America* (1887) by John J. Boyle, which has been outside for over 100 years. The bronze surface is extensively deteriorated, with a pattern of buttes and valleys. This pattern was present in 1982, before treatment (Figure 2, top). A photograph of the same area, taken in



Figure 2. Two views of the face of the child in *Stone Age in America*, taken almost 20 years apart and showing no change.

June 2000 after wax removal, reveals no significant differences (Figure 2, bottom). When the wax was taken off, the black and bright green mottled appearance of the sculpture returned. We confirmed that the initial treatment with hot wax followed by routine annual maintenance arrested deterioration and is indeed reversible.

I recommended that the program be continued for the next five years, with a schedule to completely remove and reapply the wax on a five-year rotation basis for the 19 bronze sculptures in the program. The wax does pick up dirt, which is embedded more deeply by heat from the sun and torch, creating an opaque appearance over time. Periodic removal and reapplication of the wax should restore more transparency to the coating and make the sculpture more vibrant. ■

W. T. Chase, *Head of the Ethical Laboratory at The Freer Gallery of*

Monumental Notes

Tips, Tales, & Testimonies to Save Outdoor Sculpture addresses topics from collection care to public awareness. This compendium brings together basic information gleaned from others' experiences— anecdotes, documents, references, and other resources—tested by people who have worked to save their local sculpture. *Tips* suggests you consider your community's collection of monuments and public sculpture as an outdoor museum, in need of care, display, research, and education. *Tips, Tales, & Testimonies to Save Outdoor Sculpture* will be available in January 2002. Check the Web site, www.heritagepreservation.org, or send us an e-mail at SOS!@heritagepreservation.org.



Credit: Martha Seelenberger

Citizens from around New York City have been congregating at the *Firemen's Memorial* (1912) and leaving mementos. The sculpture, by Attilio Picirilli and H. van Buren Magonigle, is in New York City's Riverside Park. The City's Parks Department scheduled a team of public and private workers and supervised volunteers, including two conservation students, to address standard maintenance needs as well as specific requirements due to veneration of the site, namely lots of candle wax. City Parks Foundation monuments conservation staff joined Central Park Conservancy stone masons and the city's monuments crew. Conservation professional Mark Rabinowitz donated his services to oversee and coordinate the effort. An annual ceremony, typically attended by several thousand uniformed firefighters and the mayor, was scheduled for October 10 but postponed indefinitely, as the magnitude and severity of recent events have overwhelmed normal activities.



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