

# NOAA Western Service Center Art Walk

7600 Sand Point Way NE

The landscape plan for the Western Service Center campus included a public walk along the Lake Washington shoreline which extended westward from Warren G. Magnuson Park. The Seattle Arts Commission guided the jury selection, and the jury chose the artists from a pool of more than 250. In 1982, the artworks caused a stir in the art world, and many of the artists eventually became nationally recognized.

## ***“Knoll for NOAA” (1983)***

**Martin Puryear** (b. 1941, Washington, DC)

After a false start in biology, Martin Puryear earned a bachelor of fine arts degree at the Catholic University of America. Upon graduation in 1963, Puryear joined the Peace Corps as an alternative to serving in Viet Nam, sending him to Sierra Leone. Puryear developed a profound respect for the craftsmen he met in Sierra Leone, learning hand tool techniques applied by carpenters.

After completing his tour with the Peace Corps, Puryear moved to Stockholm, Sweden where he was admitted to the Swedish Royal Academy of Art. The European art world shifted Puryear away from craft and toward sculpture. However, it also began to suggest limits for him and not the excitement he once felt when arriving in Stockholm. In 1968, he returned to the United States, and by fall 1969 then entered the graduate program at Yale University. Graduating in 1971, Puryear's return coincided with radical developments in the history of modern sculpture, such as Minimalism, and played a role in the development of his thinking.

In the 70's and 80's Puryear completed many outdoor sculptures such as the fascinating piece titled

“Box and Pole”. In the late 1980's, Puryear made sculptures that were on a more cultural level, symbolizing objects and artifacts.

Awards include the following: National Endowment for the Arts fellowship; Robert Raushchenberg Foundation grant, Guggenheim Foundation grant, MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant, the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture, and official U.S. representative and grand prize winner at the 1989 Sao Paulo Bienal in Brazil.

## ***“Viewpoint Terrace” (1983)***

**Scott Burton** (b. 1939 Greensboro, AL, d. 1989 New York, NY)

Scott Burton was an American sculptor whose work balanced between art and furniture while evolving into a new kind of public sculpture. Burton received his B.A. from Columbia University and his M.A. from New York University.

For “Viewpoint Terrace” Burton created a terraced–garden viewpoint layout using chairs cut from boulders.

Burton's simple yet eye–catching benches, stools and chairs, cut from smooth and sometimes jagged pieces of granite, could often be found with people sitting on them in several North American cities, including Seattle, Cincinnati, New York City, Portland, Ore., and Toronto. Like many of his contemporaries, including such artists as Vito Acconci, Siah Armajani and Kim MacConnel, he was concerned with dissolving esthetic boundaries, in particular the one between the fine and the decorative arts.

Burton had over 30 solo exhibitions and performances and dozens of group exhibitions nationally and internationally. His work is in numerous permanent collections including the Museum of Modern Art and the National Gallery of Art, Sculpture Garden. In addition to the Sheepshead Bay project, he also worked as a team member on the design of the plaza for the World Financial Center at Battery Park City.

## ***“Berth Haven” (1983)***

**George Trakas** (b. 1944, Quebec, Canada)

George Trakas has devoted his career to creating environmental sculptures which often take the form of bridges, pathways, and docks. His interest in water resource issues, tides, currents, and shoreline construction is manifest in a wide range of projects from *Berth Haven* in Seattle to *Sword Bridge* in Thiers, France.

For “Berth Haven” Trakas created a cedar and steel deck resting on foundations which remained from the site's navy airfield.

A major work in the 2000's is titled *Shoreline Nature Walkway* which is part of the Newtown Creek Water Pollution Control Plant. Located in Brooklyn this artwork made 1,000 feet of shoreline along Newtown and Whale Creeks accessible to the public. Trakas has exhibited his sculptures, drawings, and installation works internationally at such institutions as The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, The San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen.

Among his many awards, Trakas has received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Merit Medal for Sculpture (1996), a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1989), and a Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (1982).

## ***“A Sound Garden” (1983)***

**Douglas R. Hollis** (b. 1948, Ann Arbor, MI)

Doug Hollis is known as a sound sculptor, whose outdoor installations include giant aeolian instruments, singing bridges, and a wind gate for the main entrance of San Francisco's Candlestick Park.

Hollis's "A Sound Garden," consists of steel towers with wind–actuated organ pipes. Of the five sculptures that compose the Art Walk, “A Sound Garden” draws the most attention, achieving something like landmark status in Seattle. While it

undoubtedly got a boost after a Seattle band took his work's name and made it famous, there is something almost spiritual about standing under the weather vanes and listening to the music of the earth.

From an early age Hollis had a deep interest in Native American culture. His experiences traveling in Oklahoma to live with Indian families strongly influenced his life and his art ever since. Hollis began working with natural phenomena and responsive environment structures in the later part of the 1960's. At that time he completed several projects with musicians, dancers, film makers, engineers, and physicists. In the early seventies, he began searching for the forces which affected the landscape. In 1977, he built Sound Site, a number of wind activated sound structures along the Niagara River.

In 1997, Hollis received a citation from the General Services Administration (GSA) in its Art-in-Architecture program for Watersongs, at the Vincent E. McKelvey Federal Building, US Geological Survey, Menlo Park, California.

### ***"NOAA Bridges" (1983)***

**Siah Armajani** (b. 1939, Tehran, Iran)

Siah Armajani received his B.A. from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1963. Armajani has exhibited his work both in one-man shows as well as other galleries and museums across the United States, and in group exhibitions in the United States and Germany.

For "NOAA Bridges" the two terra-cotta concrete bridges are imbedded with quotes from Herman Melvin's Moby Dick.

One of Armajani's abiding artistic concerns has been the creation of a truly public art that unites structure with site and use. His designs for bridges, reading rooms, houses, and gazebos encourage both contemplation and communal activity.

Bridge over a Tree (1970), featured two staircases that led nowhere except up and over a tree. Other permanent constructions include Reading Garden No.1 in Roanoke, VA; Reading House in Lake Placid, NY; and The Louis Kahn Lecture Room at the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial in Philadelphia, PA.

He is one of the major sculptors working in public art and is a seminal artist and theoretician of the public art movement. He is well known throughout the world for his Olympic Tower and Bridge for 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. Having designed and built bridges for pedestrians since 1967 he started producing art that seeks aesthetic, social and communicative significance.

