

BROCHURE

BERKSHIRE HILLS SCULPTURE GARDEN, LLC

Revised Edition, 2025

THE ARTIST'S NOTES ON HIS SCULPTURES

By

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MbY**

**Use These Artist Notes to Enhance Your Experience
As You Take the Photo Tour of the Garden**

***SUGGEST THAT YOU VIEW EACH SCULPTURE
BEFORE READING THE ARTIST'S NOTES***

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#1 DANCE MOTION – I: 13 ft. High, 0.5” Steel Rods, red powder coat.
Completed 2001; the original color was cobalt blue.

This sculpture was my first large steel sculpture. I was trying to capture the *shattered image* that one often senses when viewing ballet or modern dance. Some viewers have seen it as a “bird”. I like all such individual responses.

#2 TAMAR; or “DANCER” : 7 ft. H, Bronze
Cast in 2000

In Chapter 38 of Genesis there is a story about the fateful marriages of Judah’s first and second sons (grandsons of the Patriarch Jacob). After both sons’ died for “displeasing God”, Judah failed to keep his explicit promise to his daughter-in-law, Tamar. By the laws of the tribe, she is supposed to be wed to her deceased husband’s remaining brother to have offspring who would ultimately inherit her first husband’s share of the clan wealth.

Finally, in total frustration with Judah’s deceit, Tamar dresses as a harlot (and covers her face). She sits along the road knowing that Judah will pass. She accepts a solicitation from him. As security for payment, she requests his seal and staff. When Judah sends his servant with payment, he reports back that “the harlot cannot be found”. Three months later, it becomes known that Tamar is pregnant. Judah (the clan’s leader and a widower) hears that his daughter-in-law is pregnant and issues a demand to her to reveal who is the father. Tamar sends the seal and the staff. Judah accepts responsibility and his failure to obey the tribal laws. The story closes with his words:

“You are more righteous than I”.

On my drawing pad for this work, I made clear references to this story of Tamar. At the same time, I was conscious that I was sculpting a Dancer. The original bronze is only 14” high and was cast in 1990. When finished in high polished bronze, the original is called *Dancer I*. When finished in a deep “bronze” patina, it is *Tamar by the Road*.

**#3 DNA or “THE ORIGIN OF LIFE”; 12.5 ft., Stained-Glass and Stainless Steel
Completed in 2016**

In the mid-20th Century, biologists discovered that the basic building blocks of almost all life on Earth are organic molecules in the shape of “double helixes”. The chemical name for these molecules has the well-known abbreviation, DNA. How these structures originated on our planet or whether they came via meteors have been the subject of research and speculation. One theory involves the possible role of electrical charges (lightning bolts) in creating complex organic molecules within the “primordial molecular soup” on our planet billions of years ago. Somehow the DNA thus created found a way to split (reproduce) and become evolving organisms. How is still unclear.

I purposely created this sculpture with “imbalanced spirals”. The asymmetry causes a feeling of motion as one drives past or moves around the piece. The stalks of clear ribbed-glass are the “lightning bolts”. Each piece of stained-glass has a variety of streaky colors. They were chosen to be attractive and to indicate the complexity of organic molecules.

The glass was also selected to see how sunlight (and skylight) would react with a different type of glass than that used on my first stained-glass work, Abstract Tree – Spring. The glass on DNA has “variable translucence”.

As you explore the Garden, see whether you can differentiate how light interacts with the various kinds of stained-glass on the three glass sculptures.

#4 MANKIND EVOLVING: 28" L and 14" H; Bronze

Cast in 1991, modified slightly in 2020.

The Double-Rock Base is a "found object" at this location.

Before you read my "perspective"... What are your reactions to this sculpture?

This is a serious piece... No, it is a joke... or at least an attempt at humor.

Or, is it both?

Well, it started as a fun drawing. I recall trying to capture "*the imitation-monkey- face and playful smile*" of one of my uncles.

But, why did I end up placing his smile on a gigantic tadpole or sperm?

I am a continuing student of science. By the late 1980's, I was well aware of the research-rush that was heating up to "sequence the entire human genome".

The goal was to analyze the genetic code to try "understand everything" about the fundamentals of human biology. Many were dreaming of the capacity to *modify individuals*, to improve our health and even change our "collective destiny" via our genes! The search began.

I was both excited and frightened. The Hubris of Homo Sapiens was so clear. I believed that genetic manipulation would eventually get out of control. I feared that no organization or nation would be capable of enforcing any real research limits or genetic modification norms.

In general, there appears to be no way to stop our species' *Lust for Knowledge*... or, so called, "technical advances." Our need to break all frontiers is insatiable!! Moral and spiritual concerns are ignored, or at least eventually swept aside by someone.

^First, we invent Nuclear Weapons that threaten to destroy life on earth.

^Then, Climate Change from human growth is forecast to devastate our planet.

^Now, we may face the challenge of trying to control groups or countries who will want to "improve" Homo Sapiens in some way... make a "*Better Being*" !

So, I shaped a Humanoid flying through space like a comet or a modified sperm, lusting for *something*... It may end in a collision, an explosion, or an orgasm!

With its strange Eye peering only forward... Almost no Ear to hear.

Atoms exploding out of its head... And...then there's the Smile.

**#5 ABSTRACT TREE-SPRING: 15.5 ft. H; Stained-Glass and Stainless Steel
Completed 2013**

My first idea for this sculpture was very different. The model had plates with square and triangular facets made of *“polished chrome”* at different angles. My concept was to capture nature and have it reflected back to the viewer all broken up... a form of “sculptural cubism.”

A few years later, my wife Jean and I were in Paris inside the famous Sainte Chapelle chapel with its magnificent stained-glass windows. *Suddenly, clouds covered the sun.* The glass went dark. We sat there for about ten minutes stunned. Finally, we left. In that stunned silence, I asked myself, “why have I never seen stained glass outside on a sculpture in a park?”

Thus, was born the quest to figure out how to build such a sculpture. Over three years I experimented with steel, glass and adhesives. I searched for methods of holding the glass in place while an adhesives cured. I knew that the structure had to withstand wind and the glass must not blow off. Gradually, after many experiments, each problem was solved.

I found a very knowledgeable local stained-glass retailer and teacher in Pennsylvania about a half-hour from my workshop. I provided templates. She cut most of the glass for this first of my stained-glass sculptures. The color selection was totally mine. I used glass similar to the stained glass often found in church windows: rich colors that are *Transparent*. However, I decided to use a *Semi-Transparent* iridescent milky white glass for the “flowers” on the top of the Tree.

You will notice that most of the Stained-Glass colors on this sculpture will get dim or darker if a cloud covers the sun. The white “flower glass” is the main exception. I learned from. *the Flowers on the TREE*, that one of the advantages of Semi-Transparent stained-glass is that, when displayed outside, they will glow in muted light. This fact heavily influenced the glass chosen for DNA.

To the best of my knowledge, no one else has made similar works out of Stained-Glass and Stainless steel.

**#6 COMET: 16 ft. H, painted steel.
Completed 2024**

Imagine a large ball or rock of ice about $1/10^{\text{th}}$ the size of the moon streaking through space with tails of icy particles flying for thousands of miles behind it. This sculpture was inspired by such events observed by astronomers. Maybe it is more like a meteor with tails at the moment of its impact on the planet Earth. Or, imagine anything else you wish to imagine...

**#7 DANCE MOTION – II, A & B: 10 ft. each; 0.5" Steel Rods, painted silver.
Completed 2002-04**

The "Dance Motions" are linear sculptures and are best seen from the side. I decided that in order to fully explore *the dance motion idea* (the blur of arms and legs), there needed be two sculptures dancing together at oblique angles. So, I made "twins".

DANCE MOTION II-A was made in my workshop in PA. Its sister, DANCE MOTION II-B, was made by the staff at a friend's workshop in Brooklyn under my supervision. I have also complete one in stainless steel for a commission.

These two have *danced together* in four shows: at Ramapo College in Northern NJ, in front of a hospital on Long Island, at an outdoor gallery show in Concord, NH and for two years at Art-Scape near the center of Pittsfield, MA.

**#8 GABRIEL, THE LONG BLAST (*Tekiah Gadolah*) 24" H, Bronze
Completed in 1989**

Spirals have always intrigued me. I don't know what they may "mean" exactly but you will find them throughout my works. Spirals always imply motion. Spirals exist in the shapes of many galaxies with their billions of stars. Spirals exist in sea shells and snail shells. The double helix structures of DNA are spiral chains of molecules. Large ram's horns are often spirals. Actually, these appear to be a "double-helix" with a spiral on the surface of a spiral.

A ram's horn (in Hebrew, "shofar") is blown on the Jewish High Holidays. For many years I was the person in my congregation who had the honor of blowing the one hundred notes. Sounding the Shofar is not a "performance" but rather an awesome responsibility.

It was not easy to try transmute that very personal experience into a sculpture. After all, the commandment is for the Community "to HEAR the blast of the shofar" and Not for people "to see" the one who sounds the ram's horn. I actually destroyed two earlier attempts in clay before creating this sculpture.

At "the end of days" a Great Horn will be sounded... by the angel Gabriel. One can imagine the notes (the blasts from the synagogue service) being played over and over ...announcing the Messianic Age... with a final Long Blast that will be held for.... an endless moment in time.

**#9 THE LOVERS 8 ft. L x 44" H; painted Fiberglass
Completed in 2020**

The original of this sculpture is a small piece completed in the late 1980's in high polished bronze, 9" Long and 4" High.

My inspiration was a floating image that can be found in a number of paintings by the 20TH Century British artist, Francis Bacon. We know that he used as his "model" a photograph of two nude men wrestling printed on graph paper by the famous photographer, Muybridge. Bacon had the photo tacked to the side of his easel while he painted. He repeated the same image in slightly different forms in at least three paintings.

(See on the next page a black and white print of one of Bacon's paintings with the photo of two men wrestling.)

In this large sculpture, I tried to portray the intimacy and spiritual bonding of two people in love through soft lyrical shapes. The two are deeply "interconnected."

**#10 DANCE MOTION III: 12.5 ft. H; 0.5" Steel Rods, painted gold
Completed in 2004**

This sculpture shows dance motions alternating in two directions. Originally created with only three layers of steel rods (instead of four), it suffered wind damage due to a whipping *rhythmic motion* that I could not have anticipated even in moderate winds of less than 20 mph. After one effort to repair and reinforce, there was a second failure. I decided to add two additional "layers" of steel rods to the bottom section to try to stop the rhythmic motion. The change worked and the sculpture has survived now for over ten years.

One learns to respect the power of the wind in planning outdoor sculptures!

**#11 ACROBAT: 15.5 ft. H; Painted Steel;
Completed 2022**

By this time in your tour of the Garden, it should be clear that the artist is often inspired by thoughts about motion and dance and with shapes floating in air. This sculpture was inspired by gymnastic flips and the twisting in motions of Olympic divers. *ACROBAT* is just one possible catchy name. Is the primary motion up or down? You decide.

A professor of mechanical engineering helped me make critical structural decisions. He created computer simulations and tested for metal fatigue with assumptions several wind velocities...up to 90 mph. One may note the different layers and thicknesses of the steel.

**#12 RIBBON: 14.5 ft. H; Stained-Glass and Stainless Steel
Completed 2019**

This work differs from the previous two sculptures with stained glass. It is structurally dependent upon rising curves of Stainless Steel Pipes that have been welded together around the shape of an imaginary cylinder. Most importantly, it uses three different types of glass. The first two are the Translucent and Semi-translucent Glass that were purchased and cut by me and my team to fit the *RIBBON's faceted geometry*. The third type is "Baked" or "Fused Glass" that was designed by me and executed with the advice and assistance of my tutor, Jane Bruce, at Urban Glass in Brooklyn. (Learning to fuse glass has become an exciting new art-form for me.)

The mixture of three types of glass gives it a particular sparkle in sunlight and it has a glow on cloudy days as well. Much of the fused glass is *Semi-Transparent* with layers of colors as well as white.

I considered projecting "a specific unified message" within the shapes inside the fused glass tiles. Instead, I decided to create various floating or flying objects such as birds, moons, meteors and leaping dolphins. See them in the diamonds

and in the circles. Maybe you can find some meaning in interaction of these designs as the ribbon thrusts upward.

13 AHAB: 14" H; Bronze with cupric patina

Cast in 1990

This sculpture was created in the late 1980's after I re-read Moby Dick. In Chapter 28, Ahab is described for the first time through Ishmael's eyes. My drawings for the sculpture were made as I struggled to internalize Melville's words, in the

"His whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mold, like Cellini's cast Perseus."

"So, powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me, and the livid brand which streaked it, that for the first few moments I hardly noted that not a little of this overbearing firmness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood."

"I was struck by the singular posture he maintained...."

"There was an infinity of firmest, fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable willfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance."

In addition to Ishmael's vivid description, this bust tries to capture Ahab at the critical moment after the penultimate battle with the *White Whale*.

Ahab (with inner mutterings) begins to realize that he is doomed. (Chapter 134)

The "shaman" Parsee is missing and the meaning of that starts to sink in...

(He was the only person on board pushing Ahab to find the infamous whale.)

You may gain some insight into Ahab's mental state by looking inside the sculpted head. Then, follow the dialogue between First Mate Stubb and Ahab...

"The Parsee!" cried Stubb—"he must have been caught in ----"

((Ahab))

"The black vomit stench thee!—run all of ye above, below, cabin, forecastle—find him—not gone—not gone!"

But quickly they returned to him the tidings that the Parsee was nowhere to be found.

“Aye, sir,” said Stubb---“caught among the tangles of your line---I thought I saw him dragging under.”

((Ahab))

“My line! My line? Gone? ---gone? What means that little word? What death-knell rings in it and old Ahab shakes as if he were the belfry. The harpoon toss over the litter there,--d’ye see it?—the forged iron, men, the white whale’s—no, no, no,---blistered fool!”

((Two paragraphs later Ahab again speaks))

*“The things called omen.... The Parsee ---the Parsee---gone, gone? And he was to go before:--but still was to be seen again ere I could perish---
There’s a riddle now...like a hawk’s beak it pecks at my brain...”*

One really must stand in awe at Melville’s dramatic poetry.

#

The boat on which AHAB is mounted is a “skiff” that was constructed and owned by a master boat builder who lived and worked in Newport, RI.

His name, Jon Heon.

The boat was no longer fully sea worthy and in need of a serious repairs.

Jon, a friend of my cousin Aaron Jasper, offered it to me and was going to help prepare the bow for mounting the sculpture.

Tragically, he had a stroke in January 2020 and he died two weeks later at 65 years old. His widow decided to keep Jon’s commitment and sold me the skiff.

I am honored to have his hand-crafted boat to help display AHAB here in the Garden.

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REGULATIONS, RULES, WARNINGS AND AMENITIES

BERKSHIRE HILLS SCULPTURE GARDEN, LLC

STAY ON THE PATHS; Do Not Walk Across the Meadows to Visit the Sculptures.
The Meadows may have Ticks.

DO NOT GO INTO HEDGE ROWS OR CLIMB ON ANY ROCKS – It is Dangerous.
There is still some “hidden” Barbwire from farm fences. The wire is rusty !

DO NOT GO INTO THE WOODS -- Out of sight, no one can help you.

DO NOT TOUCH THE FENCES -- RESPECT ALL BOUNDARY MARKERS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SCULPTURES MAY NOT BE SOLD OR PUBLISHED WITHOUT PERMISSION. SHARED PHOTOS MUST RESPECT THE ARTIST’S COPYRIGHT.

REMEMBER:

YOU ARE HERE AS GUESTS. *PLEASE SIGN THE GUEST BOOK IN THE SHED*

THOSE UNDER 18 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT OVER 21.

NEVER TOUCH THE SCULPTURES. NEVER CLIMB ON THE BASES

NO FOOD OR PICNICKING ON THE PROPERTY

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN WATER

PLEASE LEAVE NO GARBAGE.

CARS, BIKES AND OTHER VEHICLES ARE NOT ALLOWED ON THE GROUNDS.

AMENITIES:

**A PORTO-TOILET IS AVAILABLE; Walk Up the Road Past the WELCOME SHED.
Children Should Use Them Too. THANK YOU !**

**PLEASE
RETURN
THIS BROCHURE
TO
THE WELCOME SHED**

THANK YOU

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR VISIT TO THE GARDEN

BERKSHIRE HILLS SCULPTURE GARDEN, LLC