EAST MAIN STREET

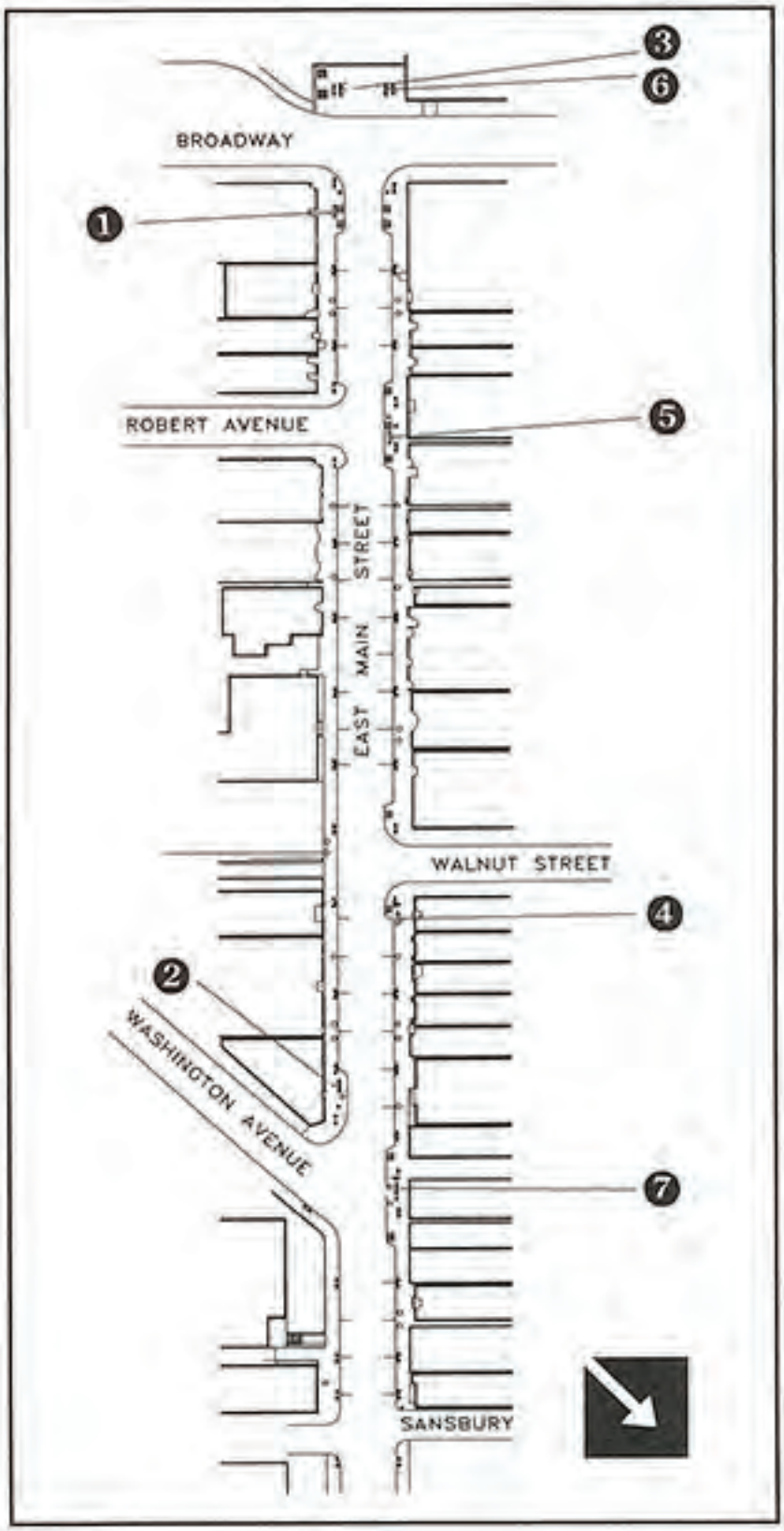
East Main Street Public Art Project

Carnegie, Pennsylvania

PUBLIC ART

Art Directors: Ron Desmett and Kathleen Mulcahy

Project Architect: John C. Laatsch & Associates



East Main Street Renovation Plan 1991, Carnegie, Pennsylvania
John C. Laatsch & Associates

PUBLIC ART

MAP LEGEND

- ● JUDY BARIE
- ● PAT BELLAN-GILLEN
- 1. RON DESMETT
- 2. EDWARD S. EBERLE
- 3. VINCE GILLEN
- 4. MURRAY HORNE
- 5. THADDEUS MOSLEY
- ● KATHLEEN MULCAHY
- 6. THOMAS SHIMROCK
- 7. ANTHONY VITALE

● *Dot size corresponds to size of planter.*

INTRODUCTION

Like many downtown areas across the country, Carnegie, Pennsylvania, is in the beginning stages of a revitalization. The organization devoted to the town's economic development, CARE (Chartiers Area Revitalization Effort), understands that communities can and should *manage* change in the business district, and that art and culture play an important role in the future growth of any town. Because of this belief, CARE created an arts council (The Chartiers Valley Arts Council) which would become a partner in the revitalization effort. This collaboration between commerce and art led to the Public Art Project. The result was the design, fabrication and installation of artist-designed benches and planters.

Those involved—from the conception to the commission and installation—endeavored to give equal weight to both the "public" and "art" aspects of the Public Art Project. In this spirit, the benches and planters are not only functional and aesthetically pleasing but reflective of the cultural heritage of the town as well.

Taking art to the streets has done more than merely beautify East Main Street, Carnegie. The high-spirited street furniture—also known as *"art*itechture"—differentiates the town from others, giving it a unique identity. The vitality of this public art project, however, exists in the interaction between the art and the people. People have been inspired to look at their neighborhood differently, to take pride in their street and ownership of some part of the public space.

This documentation serves as a tour, guided by the artists, of the public art on East Main Street. It reflects the pride and vitality of the region, and the hopefulness for its future. Carnegie is a town in the remaking—and public art is helping to make it happen.

CREATIVITY ABOUNDS IN A STREET MUSEUM

Our town, Carnegie, Pennsylvania, in the southwestern corner of Allegheny County has had the insight to begin a public art project within a government funded public improvement program. To accomplish this endeavor the talents of an architect, ten artists, the borough elected officials and the boards of the Carnegie Area Revitalization Effort and the Chartiers Valley Arts Council, were called into action to create art within a unique partnership. By maximizing public economic development funds, with a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts grant matched by municipality funds, the Chartiers Valley Arts Council developed and activated this program to design, create and install a street museum on East Main Street.

Junia Lee Campbell
Executive Director, Carnegie Area Revitalization Effort

Public Art is the people's art. It exists where we live, work and play. The CVAC Public Art Program is a project designed to bring art to the people. A bench is something to sit on . . . . But when the bench is designed by an artist who is sensitive to materials, function and design, a simple bench becomes something we first see, then touch and finally ease into.

The first two phases of this project, the benches and planters along East Main Street, are the beginning of a museum on the street where the doors will never be locked and guards will never say, "don't touch."

Sarah Tambucci, PhD
President, Chartiers Valley Arts Council

THE SPIRIT OF THE DOING

What has been installed on the sidewalks of Carnegie, artist-designed and made benches and artist-designed planters, is a unique program of public art in that it was initiated by artists. At a design meeting early in our tenure on the CVAC board we proposed that artists enter the process of street renovation with John Laatsch, the project architect and Junia Campbell, Executive Director of CARE. Our combined backgrounds in sculpture gave us insight into the process. We knew artists could create patterns that could be translated onto planter surfaces in low relief. This involved the cooperation of the artists, the planter manufacturer and the architect. There was, we believe, a successful struggle to balance the artists' intentions with the feasibility of creating their unique patterns. We proposed that artists could produce a one of a kind bench at a cost equal to the factory made benches being considered. Each artist, choosing a unique point of departure, developed their ideas using wood, clay, stone, concrete and metal.

As we were installing, we invited a group of children to try out the benches. Their first reactions were of awe—"did someone *really* make this?" They seemed keenly aware of the significance of something made by hand.

We feel especially pleased to have accomplished this project, since this is where we make our home. The fact is—art has a very enriching and positive effect upon our community. Public art is a legacy left to all of us to enjoy for generations.

Ron Desmett and Kathleen Mulcahy
Project Art Directors

JUDY BARIE

Judy Barie, born in 1957, presently works as a painter and printmaker. Her studio is located in Bridgeville, where she lives with her husband and two young sons.

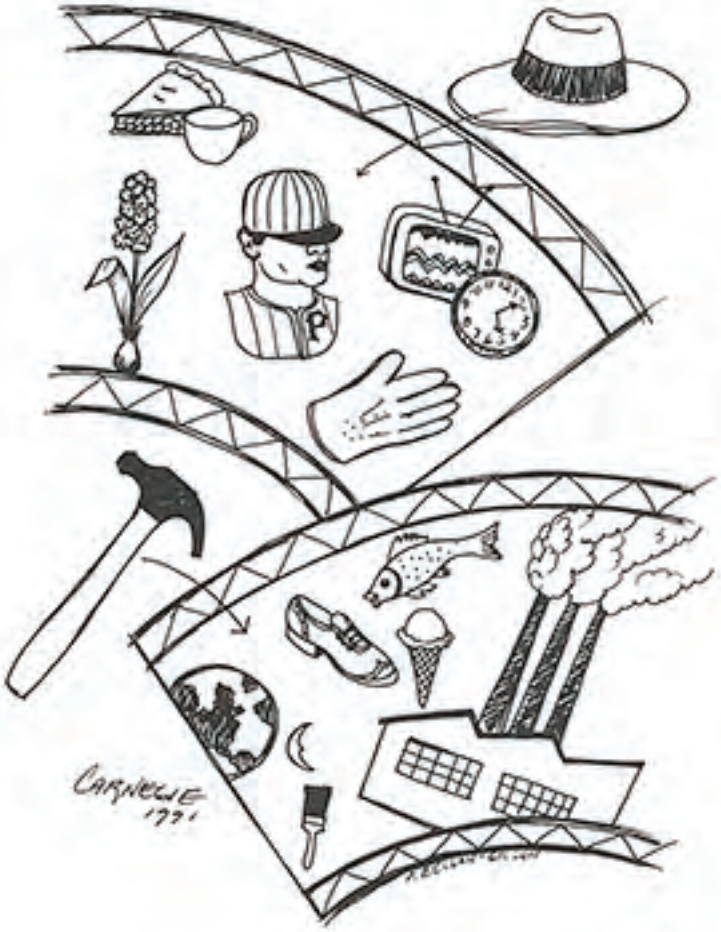
She received a BFA from West Virginia University in 1979 and in 1980 studied at Atelier 17, a post graduate printmaking workshop in Paris, France.

Barie's work is represented by private galleries in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Dallas, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Her work has been placed in many private and public collections including, Burrows Corporation, General Motors Corporation, Westinghouse Corporation, Alexander Julian Shops and Prudential Insurance.

STATEMENT

I was enticed by the possibility of designing a large outdoor planter. My recent paintings contain abstract imagery of our natural environment and I was anxious to transfer these shapes onto a three dimensional surface. Working on the design became a challenge. There could be no use of color, the paramount element in my work. Concentrating on Carnegie's neighborhood atmosphere, the final design includes a combination of distorted street forms with an intertwined floral pattern.

Functional art in our society is a movement I strongly support. It would be a real asset to all people if other neighborhoods and cities would follow Carnegie's example and commission original artworks for public places.

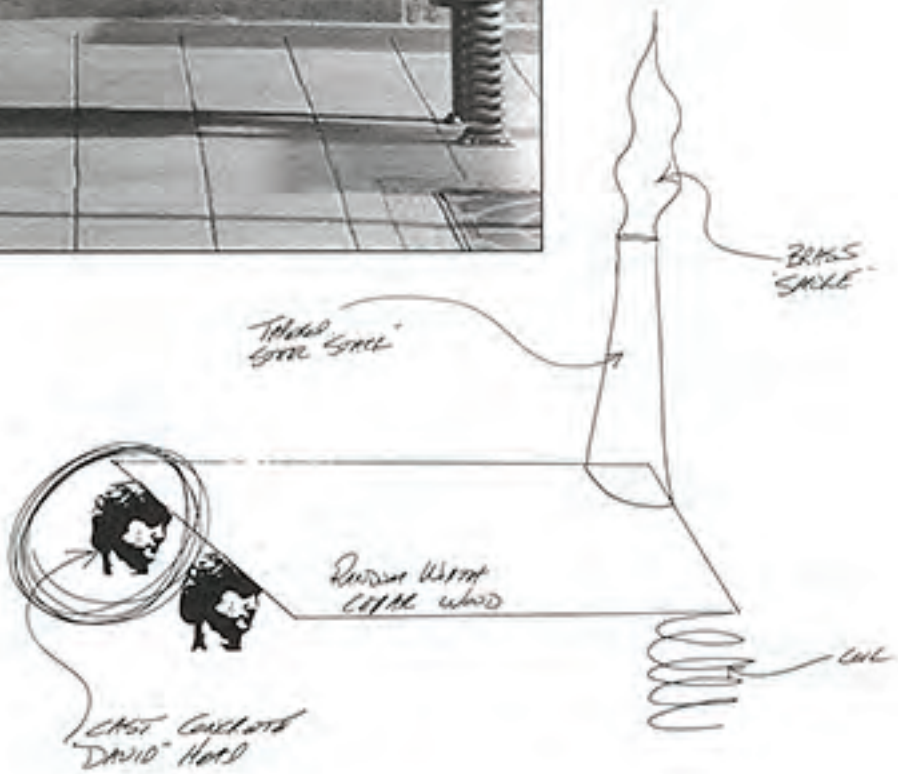

CARNEGIE
1991

PAT BELLAN-GILLEN

Pat Bellan-Gillen, an artist from Burgettstown, Pennsylvania, was born and raised in Beaver Falls. Her prints and paintings have received local, regional and national awards. She has been honored with two Individual Artist Fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Bellan-Gillen authored and illustrated My Signing Book of Numbers and illustrated My First Book of Sign for Gallaudit University Press. She is currently Associate Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University.

STATEMENT

I was very excited to hear about the Carnegie Public Arts Project, and honored to be asked to participate. Because it is unique to find a small city willing to put forth the imagination and time to carry through such a project, I wanted my planter to be unique and special to Carnegie. I originally conceived a planter with drawings representing the history, the flavor, and businesses of Carnegie; hats, fish, gloves, wrenches, clocks, steel mills, aprons, pies, cups, churches, footballs, Honus Wagner, macaroni, pets, and Andrew Carnegie populated my drawing. After consultations with the project architect, the original design was refined and simplified becoming a collaboration true to the spirit of Carnegie and this special project.

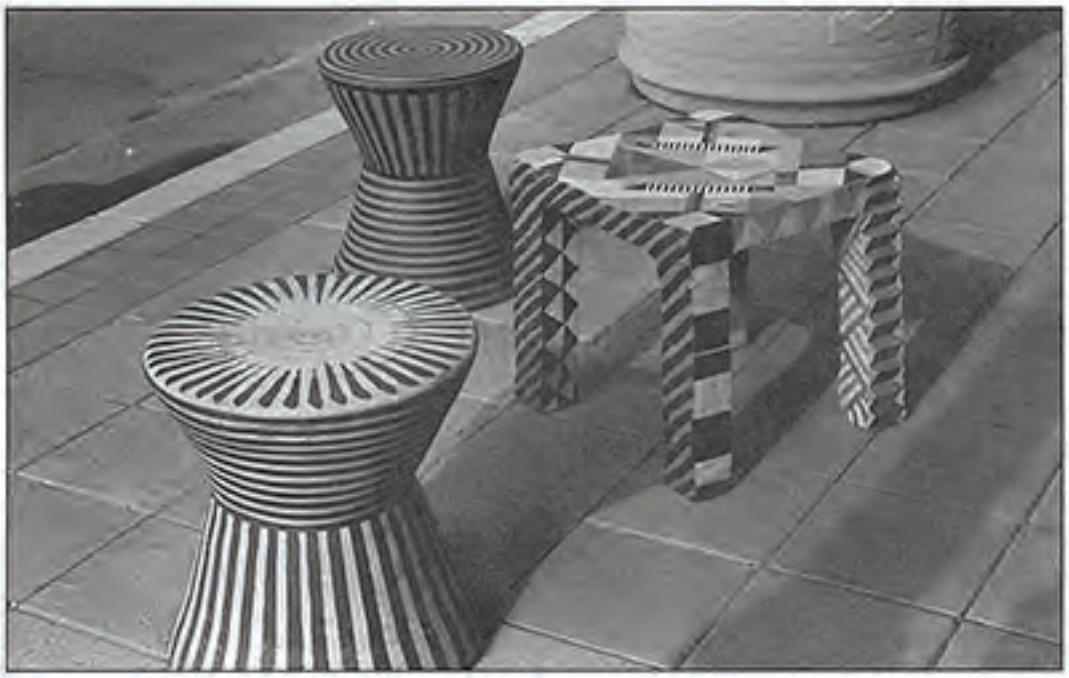

BRASS "SACKLE"
TAPERED STEEL SPIKE
RUSTICATED CEDAR WOOD
COIL
CAST CONCRETE "DAVID" HEAD

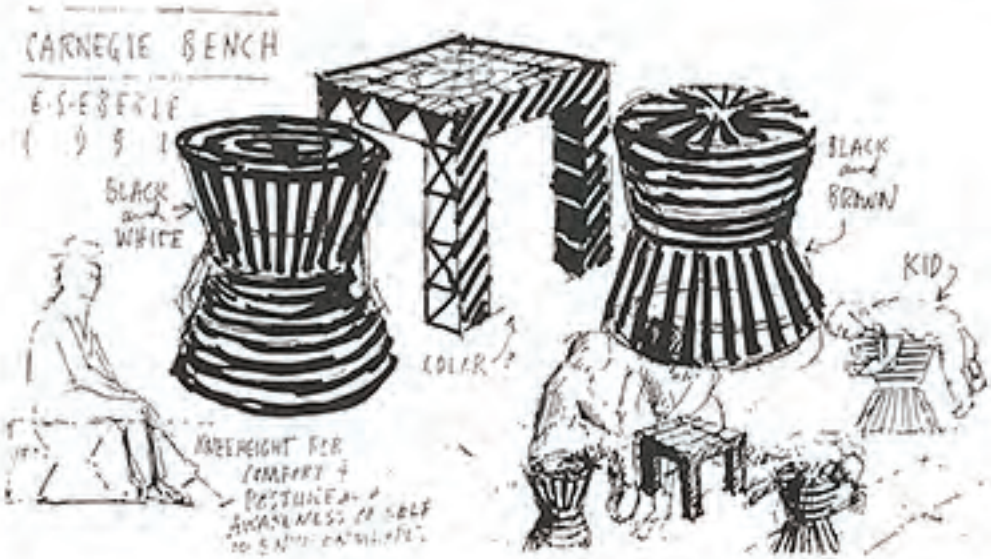
RON DESMETT

Ron Desmett was raised in the *Rubber Capital of the World*, Akron, Ohio. After graduating from the University of Akron he had a successful ceramics business before moving to Pittsburgh to attend Carnegie Mellon University, where he received a Master's of Fine Arts. Desmett has been awarded three Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Fellowships for sculpture. His work is included in many private and public collections throughout the country. In collaboration with Kathleen Mulcahy, Desmett created Improvisations for Pittsburgh an illuminated glass wall of drawings, color and light in the Steel Plaza Station of Pittsburgh's Light Rail Transit System. Desmett is a board member of Associated Artists of Pittsburgh and the Chartiers Valley Arts Council. He built his sculpture studio in Oakdale, Pennsylvania, where he works full-time.

STATEMENT

The Carnegie Bench . . . Longing for a time past . . . Apprehensive about the present . . . Anxious about the future . . . Trying to strike a balance of reverence for history without romanticizing it. The ability to see the past for what it was, sifting through the ruins to find the essence of a time and place . . . Trying not to put the future into the old "wine skins" of the past . . . The future is different . . . Spring into it with a sense of excitement . . . These are someone's "good old days."




CARNEGIE BENCH
E·S·EBERLE
1 9 9 1
BLACK and WHITE
BLACK and BROWN
KID
COLOR
AREEIGHT FOR COMFORT + POSTURE + AWARENESS OF SELF

EDWARD S. EBERLE

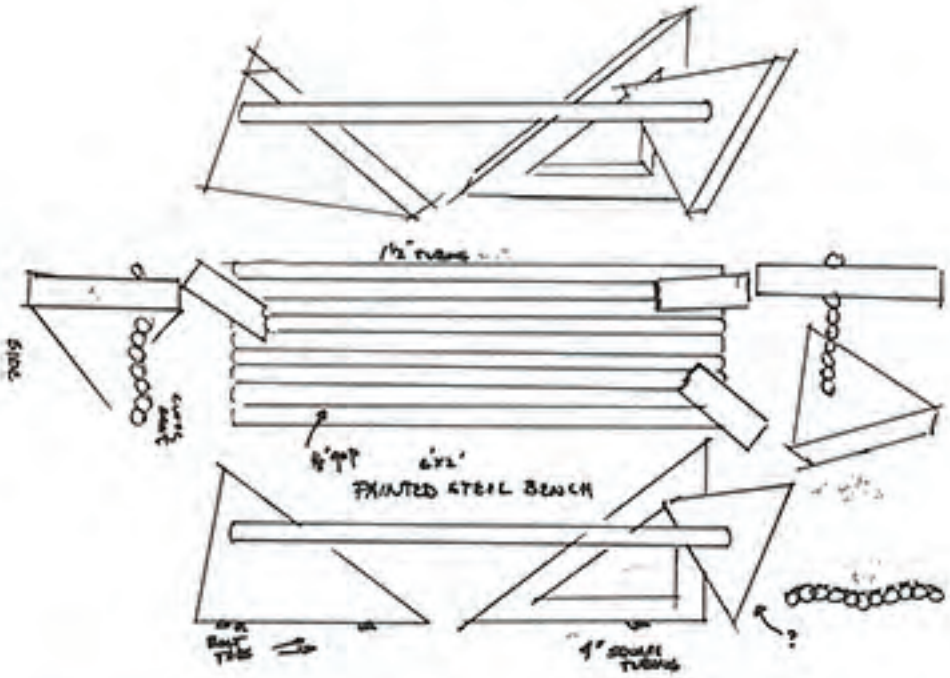
Edward S. Eberle is a ceramic artist who currently lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with his wife and two sons. Born in 1944, he received his MFA in Ceramic Design from the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. An Associate Professor of Ceramics at Carnegie Mellon University until 1985, Eberle works full-time as a studio artist. His work has been presented throughout the country and is included in numerous private and public collections. In addition to several juried awards, Eberle received the prestigious Visual Artist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1987, and has twice been awarded Individual Fellowships from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

STATEMENT

Special Experience . . . is the operative phrase for me. The project offers a chance to make sitting, or a brief respite from shopping, or a place for conversation, or just the visual experience alone, a special experience—one out of the ordinary, beyond the obvious.

I know, after having made many, that sitting on a clay bench or stool is a special experience. I would hope that the positioning of my benches in the installation will promote a special experience of intimacy and discussion—a different, special point-of-view. As I have considered them, the stools should be a special experience for children to drape themselves over, to stand on, to climb up and down.

Sitting and resting on East Main Street in Carnegie will be, from now on, a special experience.


PAINTED STEEL BENCH

VINCE GILLEN

Vince Gillen was born in Roscoe, Pennsylvania in 1948. He received a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from California University of Pennsylvania in 1970. Since graduation Gillen has been teaching in the Burgettstown Area School District. Gillen says "although I love teaching, art has always been at the surface in my life." For the past ten years, Gillen's primary medium has been stained glass, which he has taught at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Touchstone School of Crafts and West Virginia Northern Community College. He was an artist in residence at Art Park in 1981 and received a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in 1983. His most recent work includes commissions for the Temple Rodef Shalom and the 1st Allegheny Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. He is a member of the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh.

STATEMENT

I was excited about this commission because it was my first public art piece. I enjoyed the challenge of a functional art piece, made to withstand the elements and the daily wear and tear of human traffic. I wanted the bench to be fun and colorful. A lot of my work contains geometric shapes so the triangles were a natural for me in the project. As a reflection of my 20 years of elementary teaching I wanted the bench to have a whimsical feeling. I hope it makes kids smile.

6'
14.5'
3cm = 3'

MURRAY HORNE

Murray Horne was born in New Zealand and decided to become a sculptor upon seeing Rodin's "Balzac" in Melbourne, Australia. He received his BFA from the University of Christchurch, New Zealand and his MFA from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. His works have been exhibited across the country and have been included in shows at the Chicago Art Institute, the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Carnegie Mellon Art Gallery. He is currently Director of Exhibitions and Programs at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts.

STATEMENT

This bench is the first public work that I've designed. It was inspired by the Duomo in Siena, Italy, a black and white, soaring structure that has an intense public presence. A bench is not a cathedral, though. Its function is secular rather than sacred; it hugs the ground rather than stretching upward; and it serves a few people at a time rather than a congregation. Nonetheless, I wanted to blend the grandiose with the mundane and at least borrow the complexion of the cathedral—thus, the stripes. The terra cotta color of the insert refers to this world, the earth, as well as referring to Italy in particular where it is prevalent in everything from roof tiles to cookware. In an indirect way, this connection with domestic European culture in an object that sits in Carnegie, Pennsylvania also acknowledges the whole rich experience of emigrant America. This bench is a resting place for all those who have struggled, successfully and unsuccessfully, to make a life here.

Because I do not draw, I have no preliminary or finished drawings of the bench. I usually design or shape everything (mainly sculpture) mentally. I draw lines on the stone and carve them away in a complete reduction process.

THADDEUS MOSLEY

Born in New Castle, Pennsylvania, Thaddeus Mosley is a self taught sculptor who works mainly in wood. Mosley has been showing professionally since 1960 in many exhibitions throughout Western Pennsylvania including Associated Artists of Pittsburgh and Society of Sculptors, *Black Images* at the University of Pittsburgh in 1989. In 1990, Thaddeus was selected for a one person exhibition at the Three Rivers Arts Festival. His work has been purchased by the Carnegie Museum of Art for their permanent collections. He has served as president of Society of Sculptors and Group A, and vice president of the Associated Artists of Pittsburgh. His occupation is Postal Clerk for the City of Pittsburgh.

STATEMENT

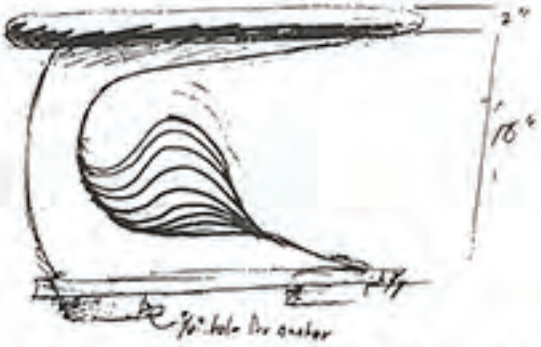
I chose stone because of outside use. Following the dimensions suggested by the guidelines, I then searched for materials. I wanted to reflect my sculptural ideas in a utilitarian project. My approach to sculpture is an attempt to capture the essence of African tribal art—vitality, power and mystery—in the framework of contemporary design. My primary influences are Brancusi, Noguchi, and African tribal art.

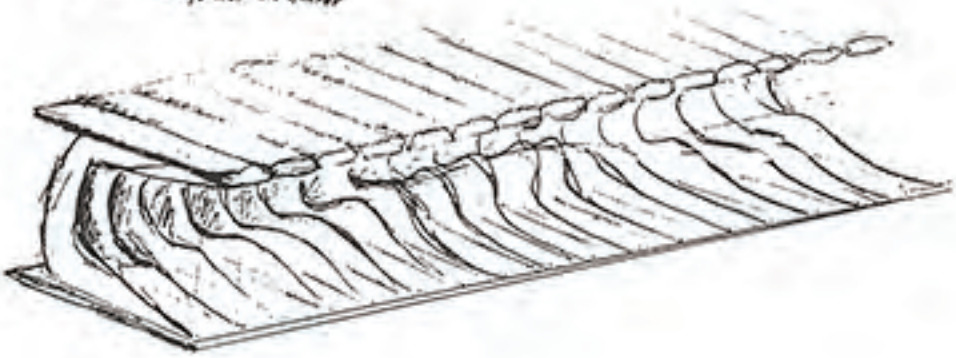
KATHLEEN MULCAHY

Kathleen Mulcahy is a glass artist living in Oakdale, Pennsylvania. She received a BA from Kean College of New Jersey in 1972 and an MFA from Alfred University in Glass Art and Three Dimensional Design in 1974. She has been the recipient of many awards for her work including the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts Award in 1979, two Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Awards in 1981 and 1983, and the Lusk Memorial Fellowship for research in Italy in 1984. As Associate Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University, she directed the glass art program until 1989 when she left to pursue her art full-time at her studio in Oakdale. That year Mulcahy's glass forms were selected for Crafts Today/USA, organized by the American Crafts Museum in New York City to travel for three years to 22 countries. In 1991, she was an artist in residence at the Creative Glass Center of America, Millville, New Jersey and was chosen as 1992 Artist of the Year by the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts.

STATEMENT

The melting pot—pouring out a life to the region. Ron Desmett and I designed this planter together. We chose the crucible pouring steel as our final design. We had drawn a larger motif of the crucible pouring to form the Chartiers Creek that surrounds the town of Carnegie. Steel tools and gears floated past on a back drop of Celtic patterns merging into a hand forshadowing a group of people with arms outstretched, flowing back into the crucible. In the end we thought the crucible was the most fitting image that could be repeated around a planter—spilling life back into Carnegie.


2"
10"

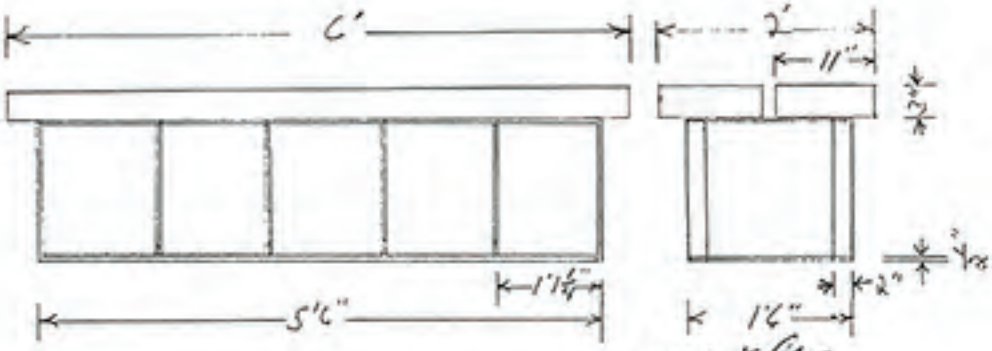


THOMAS SHIMROCK

Thomas Shimrock lives in the mountains of western Maryland with his wife Dana and son Jesse. He is owner of Wood Art; a woodworking studio concentrating in designing and building original furniture and sculpture. An art teacher at Beth-Center Schools in Fredericktown, Pennsylvania, Shimrock graduated from Edinboro State College in 1973. He began as a production potter exhibiting in many shows throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. In 1980 he turned to stained glass, attracted by its pure light properties, to create custom windows. In 1984 he became interested in working with wood following a collaboration with a woodworker. In his own words wood "captured my heart."

STATEMENT

For me, the bench project presented an opportunity to bring art and function together in public. The idea of giving a community an opportunity not only to observe but to participate in the function of a piece of art seems to me to bring things to a complete circle. The fact that all the benches are so different in form and concept, yet share the same function, gives the community the opportunity to relate to each in their own way. My piece was constructed of wood and steel. I felt the need to use steel as the main structure for strength and durability and the fact that steel lies in the history of this community. Northern white cedar was used for the seat for its warmth and resistance to the elements. The substructure is made up of 18 cantilevered pieces forming a gentle wave which helps to lighten the mass of the 675 pound piece. The pieces were cut from 3/8 inch steel, welded to a 3/4 inch steel base and arranged diagonally. The wooden top was rounded to soften the lines and easily shed water.



G.R. Vitale
3-23-91

ANTHONY VITALE

Anthony Vitale began his artistic career in 1968 after his first exposure to contemporary art at the Three Rivers Arts Festival. This triggered a long held desire to do something creative with steel. With his background in the Army Engineers, and his experience as a welder, Vitale began creating pieces in steel, copper and brass. He has exhibited at Studio Z, Birmingham Lofts, Carson Street Gallery, and Lafond Gallery in Pittsburgh. Vitale belongs to the Society of Sculptors and the Pittsburgh Society for Artists. His public art work for the City of Pittsburgh, Aquarius, located at John Stark Park, is a twenty-eight foot mobile sculpture constructed of Corten steel featuring a unique aspect of Vitale's work—independently moving wind-driven sections.

STATEMENT

"Have a Seat." So many members of my family have said these words to so many people of Carnegie that I jumped at the chance to create a permanent "seat" for the town.

My parents and uncles ran several restaurants here in Carnegie that are now gone. Those booths and bar stools are just memories. Installing this bench on Main Street will allow their long-standing presence in this community to continue in some small way. The bench's clean simple lines and solid construction reflect the wholesome food, friendship and support you encountered when you went to the Waterhole, the Spotlight or Vitale's Restaurant. Hopefully, sitting here will help those memories linger just a little longer. Listen carefully next time you sit on this bench. Maybe you will hear Frank and Mary, Joe and Ruth, or Paul and Mary say . . . "Have a Seat."

Project Credits:

Project Art Directors: Ron Desmett and Kathleen Mulcahy

This Public Art Project was made possible by funding from: Allegheny Department of Development, Borough of Carnegie and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

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And to Ron Desmett and Kathleen Mulcahy for their development of, and dedication to this project and for their continued committment to Public Art Projects for Carnegie and the region.

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And to every artist that participated beyond the project bounds with drawings and statements. Their thoughts are sure to help all of us understand and appreciate their efforts.

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