Society of Minnesota Sculptors

HOW THE SOCIETY GOT STARTED... AND GREW

In 1943 Juliana Force, director of the Whitney Museum in New York, came to the Twin Cities to judge a show at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. She found and commented on a nucleus of sculptural activity in this area. As a result, the enthusiasts---- which included Miriam Bennett, Joan Severson Lauris, Harriet Maas, Graham McGuire, Charlotte Millis, Katherine Nash and Evelyn Raymond-—organized the Minnesota Sculpture Group whose aim was to stimulate interest in creative sculpture.

The following year the combined forces of the newly formed Sculpture Group and the Walker Art Center sponsored a show that brought entries from Nebraska, Iowa, the Dakotas and Wisconsin, as well as Minnesota. To promote interest in the arts the film *Sculpture in Minnesota*—showing the works of ten members of the Minnesota group—was sponsored by the St. Paul Gallery, the School of Art at Macalester College, and the Minnesota Sculpture Group. Warren Mosman, head of the sculpture department at the Minneapolis School of Art, was elected president of the group and John Rood, assistant professor of the sculpture at the University of Minnesota, became vice-president.

Since it was formed, the Society has grown under the leadership of many prominent artists and art educators. In 1951 the Society's original charter was written and signed by Peter Lupori, Kathryn Nash, John Rood, Evelyn Raymond, Elsa Mandell, Foster Keinholtz and Hazel Solhaug. In 1959 the Sculpture Group changed its name to the Society of Minnesota Sculptors. They organized annual shows of members' works, as well as periodic small group shows. They also organized an annual juried competition open to sculptors throughout the state. Periodic meetings were held where members could exchange information and creative ideas. A regular newsletter helped keep members informed of current exhibitions and the achievements of fellow sculptors.

Since it was formed in 1946, it has grown under the leadership of many prominent artists and art educators. Among the leaders was Peter Lupori. Peter was the professor of sculpture and drawing at the College of St. Catherine for many years. Ann Wolfe was then president in the mid 1950s. Later that decade, Peter Lupori served two years as the Society's president.

Said John Rood, one of our founders, ***"Exhibition is at the heart of all programs to promote any phase of art. Not only is it the chief means of awakening public interest and of extending knowledge of the art form, but is essential to the stimulation of the artist to continue this lonely expression and to strive for higher quality."*** To further that end, the Society continues to have an active exhibition program.

Norman Holen, former professor of art at Augsberg College, recalls many Sculpture Society shows through the years. In 1970 the annual exhibit was held at the then NSP building in Minneapolis. In 1979, thirty-eight members exhibited at the Plymouth Congregational Church.

In 1976 and 1977, the society president was Vi Runquist and her vice-president was Betty Wilcox. Vi taught

In the 1980s, juried shows were held at the Catherine C. Murphy Gallery at the College of St. Catherine. In February 1985, the Society held a show in Garden Court at Town Square in conjunction with the St. Paul Winter Carnival. Seven awards were chosen by Michael Price of Hamline University. The three top money awards went to Nick Legeros, Doug Loewen and Scott Brown. The annual show in 1990 was held in the Lutheran Brotherhood Building.

Irv Nielson and Bob Peterson served as president and vice-president in the early 1990s. Nick Legeros took over as president in 1996. He credits belonging to the society as encouraging his career by allowing him to know the larger art community, giving him confidence to approach galleries as a representative of the Minnesota Sculpture Society. He saw that everyone enjoys the benefits and they like to be in a show. "A win, win situation for everyone," says Nick. Nick was followed by Joe Pendergast who served as president for several years.

The people who served the society as officers over the years from 1946 to the present are remembered with great appreciation.

In the fall of 1999 a group of sculptors was asked to lead the Society into the new millennium. Bob Blau, Richards Poey, Cynthia Markle, Jeanne Aura, Julie Choate and Thomas Zahn assumed this task. They first began by redefining the Society's mission.

The mission of the Society of Minnesota Sculptors is to encourage and help member sculptors do their best work, achieve recognition and feel gratification from what they create. With these goals in mind the Society conducts programs that:

l. Provide a platform for members to interact and exchange creative and technical ideas.

2. Help members present their work most effectively and efficiently to the public.

3. Help expand the market opportunity for Minnesota sculptors.

In 2000, Bob Blau served as president, followed by interim president Dick Poey. In 2003, our new president is Tom Zahn and Dick Poey, vice-president. In 2010 Dick Poey was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for service to the Society.

VENUES FOR RECENT SOCIETY EXHIBITIONS

Premier Gallery, Minneapolis, MN
Art Resources Gallery, Minneapolis, MN
Master Framers, St. Paul, MN
Minnetonka Center for the Arts, Wayzata, MN
Edina Art Center, Edina, MN
Bloomington Center for the Arts, Bloomington, MN
Hopkins Center for the Arts, Hopkins, MN
Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chaska, MN
Nick Legeros' Blue Ribbon Sculpture Studio, Minneapolis, MN
The Phipps Center for the Arts, Hudson, WI
Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association, Minneapolis, MN

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thomas Zahn, president, membership
Richards Poey, vice president/newsletter editor
Cynthia Markle, secretary/treasurer
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Today, the Society of Minnesota Sculptors boasts over 85 members across the State. We publish a quarterly newsletter, Highlights and Shadows; have our own website (mnsculptors.com) which provides free gallery space to members, lists opportunities for sculptors across the country, and serves as a guide for sculpture resources. Also, the Society holds periodic workshops to enhance our members' technical and marketing skills.

Support, encouragement, and learning are some of the benefits of belonging to the Sculpture Society, not to mention being able to have our sculpture displayed in colleges, churches and prominent places of business throughout the State.

WHO WAS JULIANA FORCE?

Juliana Force was imperious, homely and witty, with an erratic eye, a terrible temper and an absolute commitment to her cause. According to Avis Berman's convincing account in Rebels on Eighth Street: Juliana Force and the Whitney Museum of American Art, she deserves as much credit as Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney for establishing the Whitney Museum. The effort was joint: Whitney supplied money, and Force energy.

Juliana Force was born Juliana Rieser in 1876, in Doylestown, Pa., and moved to Hoboken, N.J., when she was 10 years old. She attended an evangelical girls' boarding school and taught at a business school. In 1907 she became private secretary and later assistant to the heiress Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.

A modestly successful sculptor, Whitney felt profoundly sympathetic to artists. Force's first task was to help arrange two exhibitions at the Colony Club, a conservative bastion, where Whitney showed work by members of the radical group known as The Eight. Moreover, as Ms. Berman, a freelance writer on the arts, points out, ''Gertrude understood that these were the paintings of democrats, and collecting them was an act of engagement.''

Whitney and Force became allies. Increasingly, Whitney delegated authority and funds to Force, who eventually directed all of the heiress's enterprises: the Whitney Studio, the Whitney Studio Club, the Whitney Studio Galleries and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Ms. Berman's book is not biography but social history. It is meticulously researched and documented, but, for example, Force's marriage to the dentist Willard Force, is only lightly sketched. She is most vividly shown at her work. Of a reluctant artist she urges: ''Try him again . . . make him show. I'd rather him sorry he had an exhibition than sorry he hadn't. He may never have another chance. If he paints better in the future it will have been worthwhile; if he gets worse he will, at least, have shown at his peak. . . . Give him whatever help is necessary; do whatever you can.''

For four decades Juliana Force did whatever she could for her vast and needy brood. She found them grants, jobs and studios; she entertained and fed them, encouraged them, gave them exhibitions and bought their pictures. She defended her exhibitions, her acquisitions and her ethics. At the end of her life she defended the Whitney Museum against the threat of incorporation into the larger Metropolitan Museum of Art. There are plenty of villains here, and Ms. Berman is unforgiving to Force's foes. (For example, Alfred Stieglitz, who worked all his life for the cause of modern art, receives only criticism for his trouble: apparently he and Force did not get on.) Ultimately, the roles of patron and museum are not entirely compatible. The patron's duty is to support the artists by buying widely, the museum's to collect only the best. Recognizing the risks entailed in judging new art by old criteria, Force and Whitney tried to avoid judgment altogether. ''The aim was to be pro-artist, regardless of styles or schools'' - or merit, at times. (Force once told the young woman who was measuring her for a dressmaker's model form to get up off the floor - that she was a sculptor.) Whitney and Force bought extensively, and most of what they bought went to the museum. The quality of their purchases varied widely and much did not stand the test of time.
A significant amount does stand up, however, and, in any case, putting together a safe and valuable collection was not the point. They were true rebels, and their attitude differentiated the Whitney from other museums. The difference remains controversial today. Gertrude Whitney and Juliana Force chose to bear witness to the struggle, to celebrate the continual forces of change: a brave effort, and one that deserves this sympathetic chronicle.

ABOUT SOME OF OUR FOUNDERS

(If you have corrections or additional information, contact Richards Poey. poeyart@comcast.net.)

KATHERINE NASH

Katherine Flink Nash was born in Minneapolis in 1910 to Carl and Elizabeth (nee Peterson) Flink. Katherine attended public grammar and high school in Minneapolis before enrolling in the Minneapolis School of Art in 1926 where she studied for two years. Katherine then enrolled at the University of Minnesota in 1928 where she eventually earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Art Education in 1932.

On March 21, 1934 Katherine married attorney Robert C. Nash. In 1937 Robert Nash began working for the U.S. federal government as a Special Investigator for the Internal Revenue Service's Enforcement Branch of Alcohol and Tobacco Tax (Robert continued to work for the for the government until his retirement in 1964). Katherine and Robert Nash did not have any children. In a 1976 interview, Nash commented about her choice not to have children: "Personally, with the energies that I feel I have, I don't believe I could have been a successful mother and really worked on my art hard enough. It isn't that I wouldn't have tried."

From 1939-1944 Katherine Nash took courses at the Walker Art Center School where she studied new sculpture and painting techniques. There is no information in the collection about the early years of the Nash's marriage or Katherine's art activities.

In 1948 Robert Nash was transferred to Lincoln, Nebraska. Katherine was hired as an instructor at the University Nebraska, Lincoln (and eventually rose to the rank of Assistant Professor). While at the University of Nebraska, Katherine enrolled in welding, foundry work, pattern making and jewelry making classes. Katherine taught and took courses at the University of Nebraska until 1953 when Robert was transferred to Omaha, Nebraska. Katherine then became head of the exhibitions program at the Joslyn Art Museum and continued teaching at the University of Nebraska.

The Nashs returned to Minneapolis in 1957. Shortly thereafter, Katherine received an invitation to head the art department at San Jose State College (an offer she apparently declined). Robert accepted a short-term transfer to Washington D.C. and Katherine began teaching at the Minnetonka Center for the Arts (and would continue

the San Jose State College for a semester. These work-related separations proved to be temporary and by 1963 both Katherine and Bob had permanently relocated to their home on St. Alban's Bay, Lake Minnetonka near Excelsior, Minnesota (a home that they had purchased in 1940).

Katherine began her professional association with the University of Minnesota in 1957-1958 when she agreed to serve as the acting director of the University Art Gallery (now the Weismann Art Museum). Katherine then taught as an adjunct professor in the University's Studio Arts department beginning in 1961 (in 1963-1964 she was made Associate Professor and hired on as faculty).

In addition to her university teaching and museum work, Nash continued to paint and sculpt. Sculpture gradually became her primary means of artistic expression. Nash sculpted in almost every medium from clay, plaster, concrete, stone and wood to cast bronze, aluminum and plastics. Nash is best known for her work with direct and arc welding and her use of found and salvaged materials.

Most of Katherine Nash's sculpture is non-representational. She crafted most of her pieces from combinations of metals and worked on both casting and welding projects. Examples of Nash's work can be found at various locations at the University of Minnesota (including the Wilson Library on the West Bank, the Weismann Art Museum on the East Bank and on the grounds of the President's mansion, Eastcliff).

Throughout her life, Nash worked and exhibited tirelessly. The 1960s and 1970s brought Katherine acclaim and recognition. Doane College (Crete, NE) awarded Katherine Nash an honorary doctorate of fine arts in 1964. The University of Minnesota awarded Nash the 1975 Horace T. Morse award in recognition for excellence in teaching. In addition, the University re-named the West Bank Union Gallery the Katherine Nash Gallery in 1979. An event that Nash described as "the most exciting thing that has happened to me outside of my wedding" (Minneapolis Star Tribune obituary, 1982).

The following years proved to be challenging. In 1976 Katherine retired in order to care for her ailing husband. Robert Nash died in 1978 and Katherine was forced to give up their home on Lake Minnetonka. She moved into a high-rise apartment building near the University of Minnesota's West Bank and lived there until her death. Katherine had struggled with a kidney condition her entire life and in 1982 she died from complications of renal failure.

JOHN ROOD

John Rood was born 22 February 1902 near Athens, Ohio, the son of George D. and Frances E. (Snedden) Rood. He left school at the age of twelve to help his widowed mother support the family, and educated himself in painting, music, and writing. Two years in Europe fostered these interests. Several years' work in printing and publishing culminated in the literary periodical Manuscript, published at Athens from 1934 to 1936, and edited by Rood and his first wife, Mary Lawhead. However, Rood had begun to sculpt in 1933, and as he devoted more time to his sculpture, the publishing venture was abandoned.

In 1937 Rood had his first one-man show in New York; more than a hundred one-man shows followed in venues across the United States. His principal medium was wood, a preference reflected in his Folk Music Series and his books Wood Sculpture (1940) and Sculpture in Wood (1950). In the late 1940s he took up stone carving; during this same period, he and Lawhead divorced and Rood married his second wife, Dorothy Bridgman Atkinson (1948). Later he moved to metal, using welding tools; his book Sculpture With a Torch was published in 1963. In 1965 Rood had his first exhibition in Europe, at Milan and Rome. Later phases of his work included "structachromes" of wrought iron and stained glass and, in the 1970s, painted wood constructions.

Most of Rood's career was spent in Minneapolis, and examples of his work are abundant in the Twin Cities area. His affiliation with the University of Minnesota began in 1944 as resident artist, and he won successive promotions until his appointment as professor in 1957. He spent a few years in Washington, DC but returned to Minneapolis, where he died in March 1974.

EVELYN RAYMOND

Evelyn Raymond was St. Louis Park's most recognized artist in residence. Born on March 20, 1908 in Duluth, she studied at the Minneapolis School of Art and Design until she quit over a staff mandate to discontinue doing abstract art. She and some fellow students pooled their meager Depression resources and rented a studio in downtown Minneapolis.

She really made her reputation as a WPA artist, teaching sculpture for 25 cents an hour "to everyone from garagemen to executives. It was like the Renaissance. Those days were really fun, "she recalled in a 1991 article in the Sailor. She was the head of the sculpture department at the Walker from 1938 to 1951. During the 1940's, she founded and served as President of the Minnesota Sculpture Society.

In 1951 she created a studio and apartment at 4501 W. 38th Street (3730 Monterey Drive) at the corner of Excelsior Blvd. and Monterey. [She was an active member of the community, contributing a recipe for salt pork potatoes to the Dispatch in 1960.] Her students were primarily women, which she attributed to the fact that her classes were in the morning when usually women could attend. She did feel that women had a better feel for sculpture than men.

Evelyn Raymond was best known for her bronze "Maria" which was commissioned for Minnesota's Centennial in 1958. It would be displayed at Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol. She had won the honor among 12 contestants who vied to create the statue of Maria Sanford, "Minnesota's First Lady of Pioneers." It was the first statue of a woman in the Capitol, and Raymond was the first female sculptor represented at the Capitol.

Other pieces around Minnesota include:

• "The Family," a 3,200 pound copper sculpture, was created in 1959 for the front of the MSI Insurance Company at 1919 University. In 1979 the company moved, and donated the sculpture to the College of St. Thomas. The bas-relief piece is about 21 ft. wide and 18 ft. high. It was mounted on the east wall of the college's T. Merritt and Katherine Coughlan Field House.
• International Falls Stadium – cement bas-relief of athletes – 1941-42
• Farmer's Exchange Building in South St. Paul – six walnut figures – moved to Sanex Building
• Sebeka High School
• St. Joseph's Church, Hopkins
• Church of the Good Shepherd, 48th & France, Edina - 1949
• Fairview Southdale Hospital – "Time for Love"
• St. Olaf College – Busts of Mr. and Mrs. Skoglund
• University of Minnesota Field House – sculpture of Bernie Bierman – commissioned in 1976 by 276 of his former players.
• Minneapolis Public Library – Alabaster pelican (lost?)
• Church of St. Austin, Minneapolis – Hammered copper piece of St. Austin
• Walker Art Museum – "The Doors"
• Minnesota Historical Society – "Erg"
• Timothy Lutheran Church (7814 Minnetonka Blvd.)
• St. George's Episcopal Church (5224 Minnetonka Blvd.) Victory cross was sold to a church in the Dominican Republic. A small crucifix is in St. George's lobby.

• Raymond's final legacy to St. Louis Park is the "Celebration of Peace" sculpture that was dedicated at the Rec Center in 1997. Her desire was to create a piece that would represent the birds that were displaced when Wolfe Park was developed.

Evelyn Raymond passed away on April 25, 1998.

PETER LUPORI

Recipient of a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Peter Lupori holds an M ED degree from the University of Minnesota. He joined the faculty at the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, in 1947, and taught studio art to undergraduates and adult education students there for 45 years. He was named full professor and artist in residence in 1961, served a term as chair of the art department, and retired as professor emeritus in 1992. Recipient of more than 40 awards, Lupori has exhibited locally, regionally, and nationally.

He is represented with commissioned work in churches, hospitals, schools, and other public institutions in many parts of the country. Twin Cities examples include a ceramic bas-relief frieze of the history of medicine in the lobby of Fairview-
Southdale Hospital in Edina; in Minneapolis, ceramic circular sculptures of the Seven Days of Creation in the ambulatory of Westminster Presbyterian Church, and a life-size kneeling statue of St Joan of Arc outside the entrance to St. Joan of Arc parish. In St. Paul examples include five bronze sculptures in the Grotto adjacent to the St. Paul Seminary on the campus of the University of St. Thomas; a seven-foot bronze Madonna in front of the chapel at St. Catherine University; ceramic Stations of the Cross at Holy Childhood Church; and a six-foot ceramic relief of St. Rose of Lima, St. Rose of Lima Church, Roseville.

Active in arts organizations during all his career, Lupori has taught in community art centers and has been a frequent judge of art work for local and regional exhibitions. He currently teaches classes in hand-built ceramic scultpture at Northern Clay Center, where he has been since the fall of 1992.