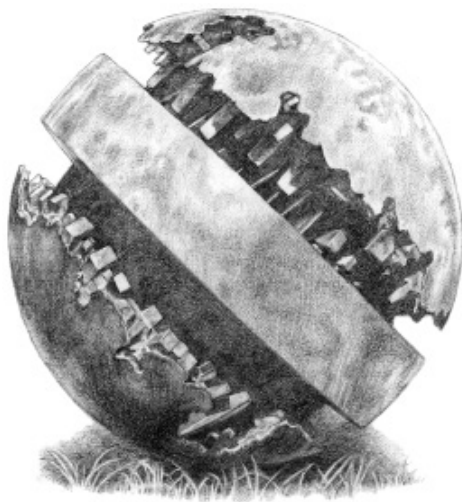


# SCULPTURE

*of Princeton University*

INCLUDING WORKS FROM THE  
JOHN B. PUTNAM JR. MEMORIAL COLLECTION





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Princeton is home to one of the country's most significant collections of 20th- and now 21st-century sculpture. Following in the centuries-old tradition of civic statuary and public monuments, the collection seeks to place extraordinary and durable works of art in the path of everyday life for members of the Princeton University community and visitors to this famously beautiful and historic campus.

At the core of the collection are works assembled for the John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, funded by an anonymous benefactor and named for the World War II fighter pilot and member of Princeton's Class of 1945 who succeeded in 53 aerial missions before dying in a crash in 1944, aged 23.

Like all great works of public art, the sculpture distributed across the Princeton campus embodies the dreams, hopes, and desires of the community in which it appears. Asserting the varied possibilities of meaning in the public realm, subject to the regard of both the novice viewer and the seasoned art scholar, the collection has come to reflect the energies of generations, with new works added periodically to reflect the continuing strivings of many of the greatest artists of the past and present. These sculptures add brilliantly to what Lewis Thomas, Class of 1933, termed "the look and the feel of an institution deliberately designed for thinking and kept that way through the years." As noted by William G. Bowen, president of Princeton from 1972 to 1988, in the first edition of this handbook, "the collection is a source of vitality, a reminder of the possibilities of form, for each of us as we walk on the campus. It is, I think, the ideal complement to the natural beauty of this University, an added pleasure in the daily lives of each of us."

James Christen Steward  
*Director, Princeton University Art Museum*

## *Cubi XIII*

DAVID SMITH, AMERICAN, 1906–1965

Stainless steel; h. 289 cm.

Executed in 1963, installed in 1969

Inscribed on base: *Cubi XIII David Smith Mar–25 1963*

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located between McCormick Hall and Whig Hall

David Smith began to exploit the potentialities of stainless steel as a medium in the late 1950s. He employed this material for the creation of his *Cubi*, a brilliant series of 28 sculptures that were destined to become the capstone of his career.

It was Smith himself who said, “I like outdoor sculpture, and the most practical thing for outdoor sculpture is stainless steel, and I make them and I polish them in such a way that on a dull day, they take on a dull blue, or the color of the sky in the late afternoon sun, the glow golden like the rays, the colors of nature. And in a particular sense, I have used atmosphere in a reflective way on the surfaces. They are colored by the sky and the surroundings. . . . They are designed for outdoors.”

Smith began his career as a painter. He said, “I do not recognize the limits where painting ends and sculpture begins.” Coming to sculpture as a painter, Smith had little propensity for modeling or carving maquettes (preliminary miniatures). Instead, he used a welding torch to execute his sculptures directly, in iron or steel. His large corpus of works was achieved practically single-handedly.





*No. 1*

## *Human Condition* (*Condition Humaine*)

RUDOLF HOFLEHNER, AUSTRIAN, 1916–1995

Iron; h. 250 cm.

Executed in 1960; installed in 1968; unsigned  
Princeton University Art Museum, gift of Stanley J. Seeger, Class of 1952  
(y1968-534)

Located close to McCosh Walk between McCormick Hall and Clio Hall

Rudolf Hoflehner's education set the parameters for his future work as an artist. Hoflehner attended the State Vocational School for Engineering [Staatsgewerbeschule für Maschinenbau] in Linz (1932–1936) and studied architecture at the Technical College [Technische Hochschule] (1936–38) in Graz, before entering the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 1938. His work is infused with a keen awareness of the dangers and promise of industry and mechanization; *Human Condition* grapples with these issues and offers a machine-human hybrid, now reminiscent of science-fiction cyborgs. Yet even as the menacing forms and intimidating strides of this man-turned-machine threaten the individual viewer and humanity at large, the iron statue stands before us rusted and inert, prey to the ravages of time. In this sense, *Human Condition* refuses to concede to either nature or technology.

A few years later, to mark his turn away from the technological and toward the organic, Hoflehner composed several telling lines of verse: "The human is neither architecture nor machine/The human is a human. . . . The body avenges itself/ The goal is the human. . . . Iron is foreign to me/ I struggle with foreigners." In 1960, however, a more ambivalent battle raged within the work of Hoflehner: a battle to understand the human condition not in the absence of industry, but in relation to it. It is a battle that persists into our present and that Hoflehner's *Human Condition* forces us to confront.



*No. 2*

## *Two Planes Vertical Horizontal II*

GEORGE RICKEY, AMERICAN, 1907–2002

Stainless steel; h. 450 cm., each plane 150 x 150 cm.

Executed in 1970; installed in 1972; unsigned

Number 3 of an edition of 5

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located between East Pyne Hall and the University Chapel

George Rickey spent his artistic career investigating the aesthetic possibilities of bodies in motion. Trained as a painter, he turned to sculpture relatively late in life, a transition prompted in part by his experience as an Army Air Corps engineer during World War II. Because of his aptitude for mechanics, Rickey was assigned the task of troubleshooting the crude instruments then being used by B-29 bomber gunners to control their fire against enemy fighter planes. The training awakened his childhood fascination with machined materials and the effects of wind and gravity. After the war, he began to explore these interests artistically. *Two Planes Vertical Horizontal II*—in which a pair of polished stainless steel panels pivot on ball bearings, shimmering as they rotate—is an elegant example of his mature style.

Rickey was profoundly influenced by the artists of the early-20th-century Constructivist movement, a group that included Antoine Pevsner and Naum Gabo (both are represented in the Putnam Collection). Their experiments with kinetic sculpture partly inspired Rickey's exploration of geometric forms in motion. Unlike those artists, however, Rickey eschewed electric power, preferring to let unpredictable air currents dictate the path of his work's moving parts. Indeed, he found poetry in the very tension between the chance elements of nature and his sculpture's mechanical precision.



*No. 3*

## *Public Table*

SCOTT BURTON, AMERICAN, 1939–1989

Cast concrete; h. 83 cm., approx. diam. of base 610 cm.,  
diam. of table 396 cm.

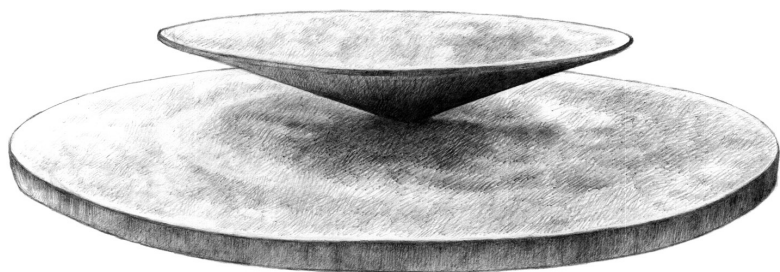
Design executed in 1978–79; installed in 1998; unsigned  
Number 1 of an edition of 3

Princeton University Art Museum, museum purchase,  
with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts  
and a matching gift from the Mildred Andrews Fund (y1980–11)

Located between East Pyne Hall and Murray-Dodge Hall

Scott Burton's chairs and tables call to mind the minimalist objects of artists such as Donald Judd and Robert Morris. Burton, however, took the simple blocks, cones, and cylinders of minimalism and imbued them with functionality. For inspiration, he looked back to the early-20th-century Russian constructivists Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodchenko, artists who made attention to structure, integrity of materials, and potential for social use the hallmarks of their art. These qualities are present in Burton's *Public Table*, centrally located on Princeton's campus. The table—an inverted cone balancing gracefully on a wide concrete base—stands in striking visual contrast to the collegiate Gothic architecture of its surroundings. Yet the table's surprisingly smooth and comfortable concrete surface invites social interaction, as demonstrated by the many students who can be seen relaxing there in pleasant weather.

Burton once described his work as “sculpture in love with furniture.” He devoted his artistic career to blurring the line between the two, drawing out the aesthetic and civic possibilities of the use of simple, refined forms. *Public Table* embodies Burton's aesthetic dictum: that “art should place itself not in front of, but around, behind, and underneath (literally) the audience.”



*No. 4*

## *Oval with Points*

SIR HENRY MOORE, BRITISH, 1898–1986

Bronze, h. 335 cm.

Executed in 1969–70; installed 1971; unsigned

Number 1 of an edition of 6

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located between Stanhope Hall and West College

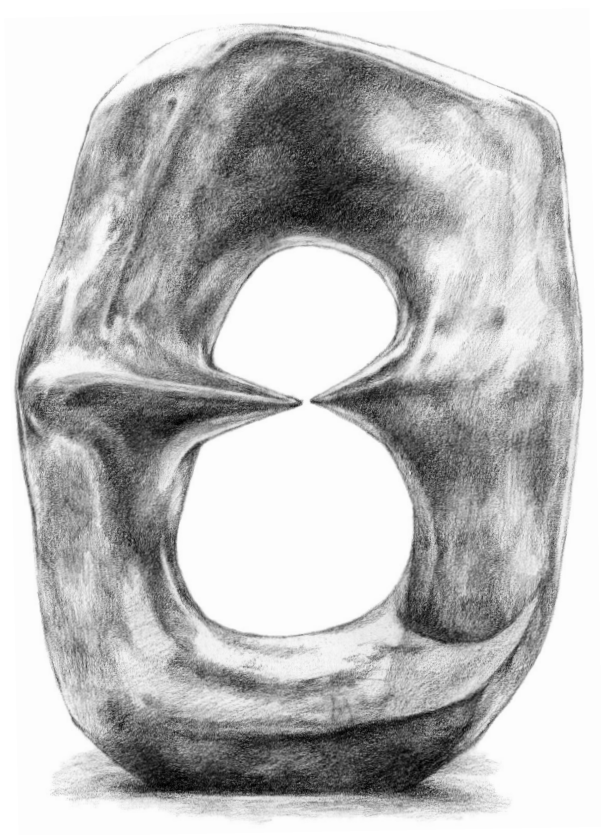
Two years after *Oval with Points* was commissioned, the completed two-and-one-half-ton sculpture was delivered and installed. Within a few short months—to the delight of the sculptor—the interior curves of the oval were visibly burnished, through contact with bodies sitting on or sliding through it.

The sculpture bears a relationship to one of Moore's favorite found objects—an elephant skull acquired in East Africa by the distinguished biologist Sir Julian Huxley (brother of author Aldous Huxley), and his wife, Juliette, which they had placed in their garden.

Sensing the fascination that its “strange brooding presence” had for their friend Moore, the Huxleys gave him the skull. “Henry not only took it to his heart but proceeded to explore its massive outline, its tunnels and cavities, its recesses and blind eye-sockets. . . . [He then] created several pieces of sculpture bearing the unmistakable stamp of his genius fused with an evocation of the skull's construction.”

Patrick J. Kelleher, author of *Living with Modern Sculpture* and former director of the Princeton University Art Museum, recalled being shown the elephant skull in 1969, when he visited the artist's home and studio at Perry Green in Hertfordshire, England. Though Moore himself did not refer to the connection between the skull and *Oval with Points*, definite affinities were apparent between the general form of the sculpture and the subtle undulant surfaces of the skull bones, as well as the suggestive shape of the optical cage, long since devoid of eyes.





*No. 5*

## *The Bride*

REG BUTLER, BRITISH, 1913–1981

Bronze; h. 223 cm.

Executed in 1961; installed in 1970

Signed and numbered on right foot: *RB 3*

Number 3 of an edition of 8

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in the courtyard of Rockefeller College

The site of Reg Butler's *The Bride*—an intimate Gothic courtyard with fine trees—echoes the setting in which the sculpture was created. At his Elizabethan home in Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire, England, Butler had three workshops, which he referred to as his “three fields of cultivation.” One was a garden, in which *The Bride* evolved over a five-year period, from its initial plaster to its final casting. “It was made entirely outdoors in a tree-surrounded garden,” wrote the sculptor. “Although I wouldn’t claim a direct metaphor, *The Bride* probably owes a great deal to the adjacent tree trunks and the leaves around me all the time.”

Of *The Bride* and his method of working, Butler has written, “I work to get things as ‘right’ as I can, but what ‘right’ means in any given instance I can only find out by making. I work on some figures over a very long period of time—for instance, *The Bride* I started in 1956. The studios are always full of sculptures, some beginning, some ending, some soon to be abandoned, others in the early stages of things to be with me for years to come. I have to work obliquely, otherwise everything breaks up. One builds with the edges of one’s vision.”



*No. 6*

## *Atmosphere and Environment X*

LOUISE NEVELSON, AMERICAN, BORN IN RUSSIA, 1899–1988

Cor-Ten steel; h. 640 cm., 487 cm.

Executed in 1969–70; installed in 1971; unsigned

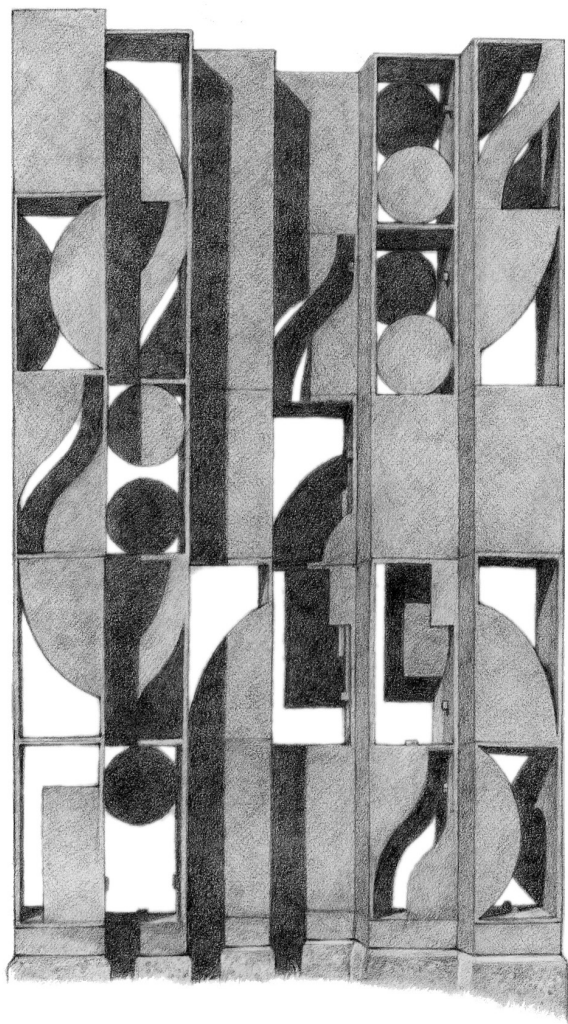
The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located between Nassau Street and Firestone Library

In describing her art, Louise Nevelson wrote, “I do not belong to any movement. As my work is related to the present time, it is bound to be related to that of others, consciously or not. . . .” Her art may be more closely related to her collections of African art, American farm tools, architectural elements, and diverse other fragments of the past, and her attraction to the art and architecture of pre-Columbian Mexico and Central America.

Nevelson had a penchant for the rectilinear format, in which shapes and patterns, rhythms and accents tend toward repetition and read in a narrative fashion. Together with her use of “abstract” non-hues such as black, white, and gold (equivalent to the space-erasing gold backgrounds of mosaics and icons), one finds the influence of the orientalized art of Byzantium and its Russian derivatives. She was well past 50 when she began to create the extraordinary shadow box reliefs and walls of wood that constitute her masterworks; she was nearly 70 when she undertook the Princeton commission for her first monumental outdoor sculpture in Cor-Ten steel.

*Atmosphere and Environment X* is basically a two-dimensional, architectonic screen, increased in depth by projections and setbacks; it achieves its character and magic from the play of natural light over its surface geometry.



*No. 7*

## White Sun

ISAMU NOGUCHI, AMERICAN, 1904–1988

White marble, diam. 72.3 cm.

Executed in 1966; installed in 1970; unsigned

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in the lobby of Firestone Library

Drawing on both Eastern and Western cultural traditions, Isamu Noguchi's sculptures appear to possess "effortlessness," a virtue Chinese artists once valued above perfection.

Together with the numerous individual sculptures that emerged from Noguchi's various studios throughout his long and distinguished career, the artist was involved in major environmental projects, especially beginning in the early 1950s. Among the most notable is the *Sunken Courtyard* of 1960–64, fashioned in dazzling white Vermont marble, which accompanies Gordon Bundshaft's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. The Putnam Collection's *White Sun* is related to this work, as Noguchi explained: "Within this composition . . . [was] a [disk] representing the sun. . . . The sun gave me the most bother. . . . There must have been at least a dozen of them that I made—more or less complex. . . . The *White Sun* at Princeton is one of the other studies that I made. This was carved by me in Italy at the same time that I made a somewhat different version of the study which is at the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington [National Museum of American Art] . . . in gray marble. . . . One [other study] . . . is in front of the Seattle Art Museum and was carved in black Brazilian granite in Japan. It has been my conceit to think that I have spanned the continent with a giant *White Sun* in the East and *Black Sun* on the western shores of America. May I say that Princeton's *White Sun* is among my favorites."



*No. 8*

## *Song of the Vowels*

JACQUES LIPCHITZ, AMERICAN, BORN IN LITHUANIA, 1891–1973

Bronze; h. 304 cm.

Executed and installed in 1969

Inscribed on top of the base: 7/7 J. Lipchitz 1931–1932

Number 7 of an edition of 7

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located between Firestone Library and the University Chapel

*Song of the Vowels* is one of a succession of sculptures produced by Jacques Lipchitz over almost two decades—the others are *The Harp Player* (1928), *Harp Players [or Harpists]* (1930), and *Benediction* (1945)—in which he explored his “obsession” with the motif of the harp, inspired originally by the symphony concerts in Paris: “Invariably—the music contributing—the peculiar shapes of the harps, their strings vibrating in the light, veritable columns binding earth, transported me into a world from which I, in turn, had to make my way back under pain of losing myself there.”

He once described *The Harp Player*, the first of this series, as “a sculpture made entirely of cords—a ‘transparent’ sculpture that can be seen and affects us from all sides at once.” From there, he went on to fully realize Cubist principles of structure and form in Princeton’s *Song of the Vowels*. According to his vision of “transparency,” the sculpture produces spatial tensions through open penetrations, which puncture the blocklike mass of bronze to create a sense of lightness and soaring elegance.

Lipchitz commented in 1946 on the poetic title of the sculpture: “The title has no connection with the famous poem of Rimbaud, but rather with a legend of ancient Egypt, according to which it appears there existed a prayer, the ‘Song of the Vowels,’ which the priests and priestesses made use of to conjure up the forces of nature.”





*No. 9*

## *Abraham and Isaac: In Memory of May 4, 1970, Kent State*

GEORGE SEGAL, AMERICAN, 1924–2000

Bronze; h. 210 cm., l. 300 cm., w. 120 cm.

Executed in 1978–79; installed 1979; unsigned

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University,  
partial gift of the Mildred Andrews Fund

Located between Firestone Library and the University Chapel

George Segal, who taught sculpture at Princeton from 1968 to 1969, is best known for his tableaux of anonymous ghostly figures cast in white plaster and posed in banal, real-world settings. In 1978, he was commissioned by Kent State University to create a memorial to the four students killed by members of the National Guard during an antiwar demonstration on the campus on May 4, 1970.

Segal found a metaphor for the tragedy in the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac as recounted in the Book of Genesis. In Segal's version, Abraham, dressed in contemporary clothing, looms over a college-aged Isaac, who is stripped of his shirt and bound with rope. Abraham's knife, aggressively positioned at his waist, offers a powerful comment on the darker dimensions of patriarchal authority.

The work was originally commissioned for a site on the Kent State campus, but university officials there refused it, interpreting it as a politically volatile depiction of a murder of a younger man by an older one. According to Segal, however, this was to misunderstand the memorial: Rather than "Right Wing versus Left Wing polemics," the theme was in fact "the eternal conflict between adherence to an abstract set of principles versus the love of your own child." Segal selected the site for the sculpture, near the University Chapel, subtly reinforcing the work's biblical associations.



## Moses

TONY SMITH, AMERICAN, 1912–1980

Painted mild steel; h. 457 cm., l. 350 cm.

Model executed 1967–68; fabricated and installed in 1969; unsigned

Number 1 of an edition of 2

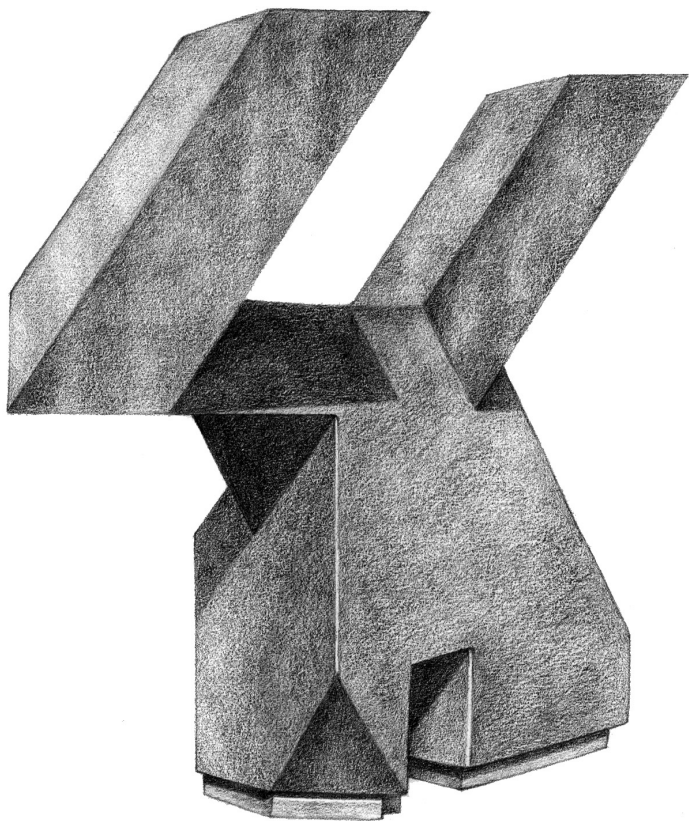
The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located on the lawn in front of Prospect House

Tony Smith worked first as a toolmaker and a draftsman while studying painting and drawing. After serving as a clerk for Frank Lloyd Wright, he managed his own successful independent architecture practice for almost two decades, until discovering his love for sculpture in the early 1960s.

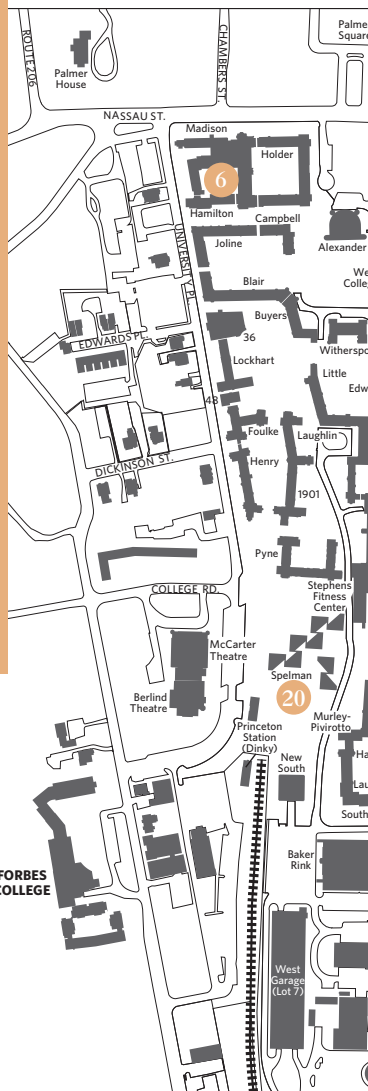
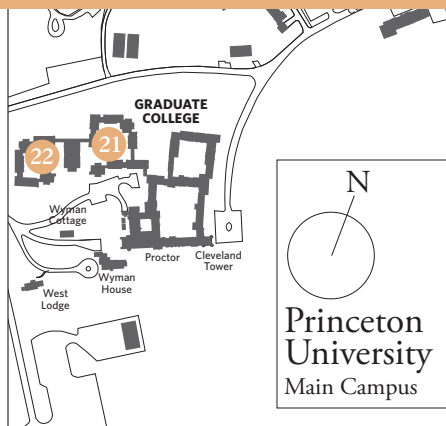
Smith is notable for his strong preference for “mild” steel, in contrast to the Cor-Ten steel more often seen in Princeton’s sculpture. He was attracted to mild steel’s affinity for the welding process, resulting in a greater unity of the joining planes. Its less wavy texture also makes it easier to manipulate into exactly level planes.

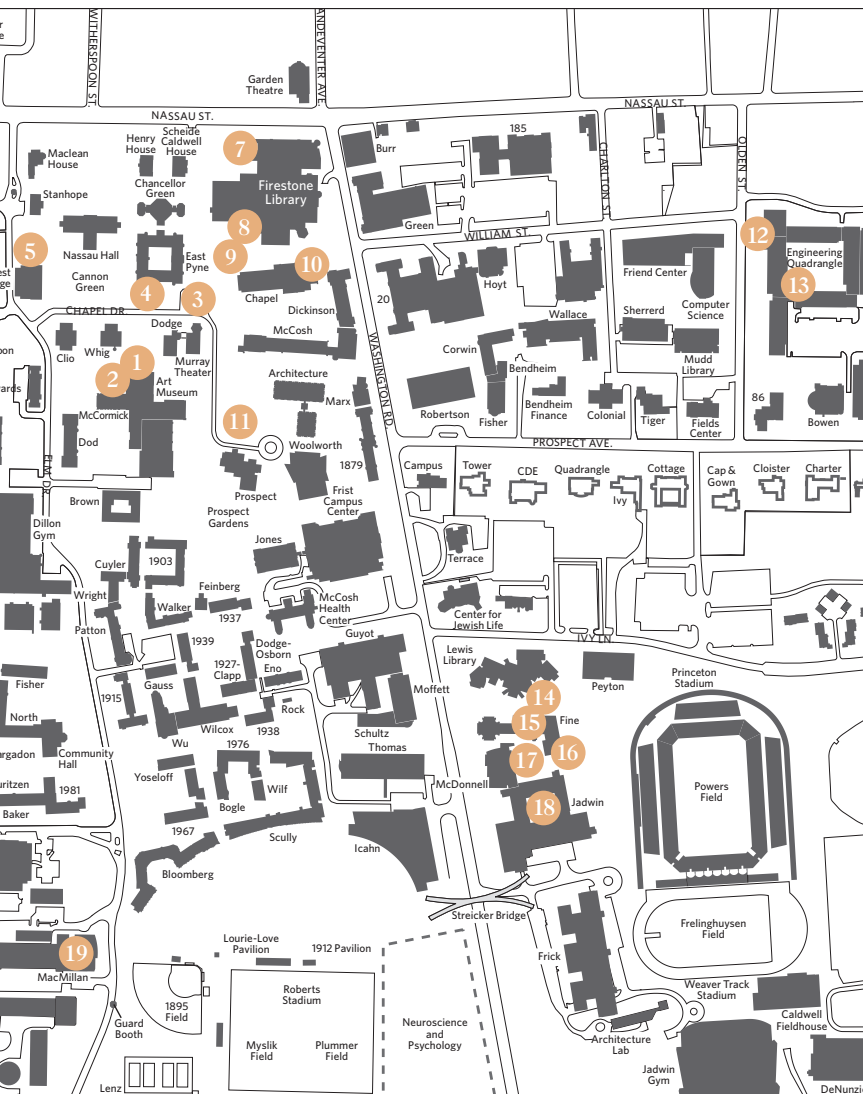
In reply to an inquiry about the relevance of subject matter in his work and the significance of the title *Moses*, Smith wrote, “My sculptures are always conceived and developed as abstract geometric structures. . . . They were given titles only after a maquette (at least) had been made. In some cases the work had already been put together as a full-scale mock-up or fabricated in steel before its image became clear and it was named. Occasionally titles . . . came to me all at once. *Moses* is an instance of the latter. The parallel uprights suggested the horns in Michelangelo’s *Moses*. We know that these strange attributes were the result of a misunderstanding by the Latin Vulgate of the Hebrew word ‘shone,’ derived from the word meaning ‘horn,’ and used figuratively to denote rays or flashes of light proceeding from a luminous object, for example, the head of Moses. . . . Mistranslation resulted in Michelangelo’s peculiar presentation of a horned Moses. My sculpture, without previous intent, perpetuates this curiosity.”



*No. 11*

1. Cubi XIII, *David Smith*
2. Human Condition, *Rudolf Hoflehner*
3. Two Planes Vertical Horizontal II, *George Rickey*
4. Public Table, *Scott Burton*
5. Oval with Points, *Sir Henry Moore*
6. The Bride, *Reg Butler*
7. Atmosphere and Environment X, *Louise Nevelson*
8. White Sun, *Isamu Noguchi*
9. Song of the Vowels, *Jacques Lipchitz*
10. Abraham and Isaac: In Memory of May 4, 1970, Kent State, *George Segal*
11. Moses, *Tony Smith*
12. Upstart II, *Clement Meadmore*
13. Stone Riddle, *Masayuki Nagare*
14. The Hedgehog and the Fox, *Richard Serra*
15. Professor Albert Einstein, *Sir Jacob Epstein*
16. Five Disks: One Empty, *Alexander Calder*
17. Sphere VI, *Arnaldo Pomodoro*
18. Construction in the Third and Fourth Dimension, *Antoine Pevsner*
19. Mastodon VI, *Michael David Hall*
20. Head of a Woman, *Pablo Picasso*
21. Northwood II, *Kenneth Snelson*
22. Floating Figure, *Gaston Lachaise*





## *Upstart II*

CLEMENT MEADMORE, AMERICAN, BORN IN AUSTRALIA,  
1929–2005

Cor-Ten steel; h. 640 cm.

Executed in 1970; installed in 1973; unsigned

Number 1 of an edition of 2

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located at the entrance to the Engineering Quadrangle

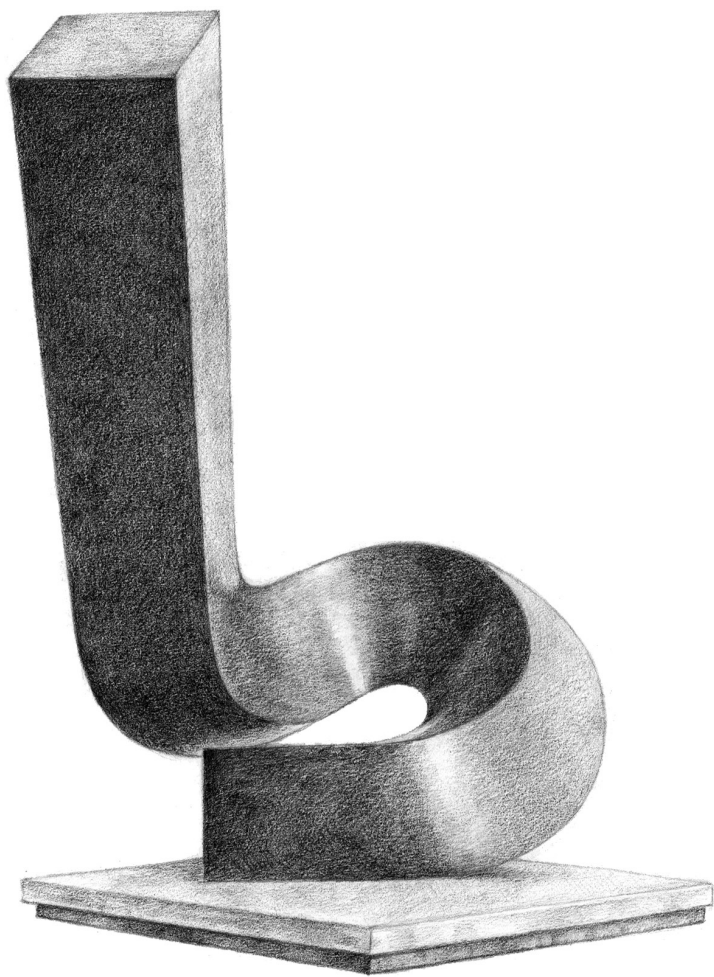
*Upstart II* is characteristic of the Minimalist movement, through which strict economy of means produces purity of image. Minimalists reduce the language of art to “its sparest and barest element . . . to secure a maximum of expression at the very boundary separating art from non-art” (Hilton Kramer).

*Upstart II* creates a precise, optical experience. Despite its actual mass and weight, the sculpture creates an impression of material lightness. It aggressively elbows out the surrounding atmosphere as it makes its ascent.

The artist’s working method of achieving much with little first involves the execution of a small-scale maquette, made of polyurethane. When completed, this model appeared to have been formed simply from an attenuated bar that had been twisted, bent, stretched, curved, coiled, and knotted according to the sculptor’s whim. From the miniature, working model of *Upstart II*, Meadmore executed a reduced version, measuring 64.7 cm. high, in an edition of four strikes.

Meadmore was among the first sculptors to recognize the potential of Cor-Ten steel, which he found to be particularly thick, hard, and durable. Its nonreflecting surface also proved appealing in its versatility: when painted, it held color well; when left bare, it slowly developed a rich, dark-brown patina.





*No. 12*

## *Stone Riddle*

MASAYUKI NAGARE, JAPANESE, BORN 1923

Granite, h. 163 cm., l. 93 cm.

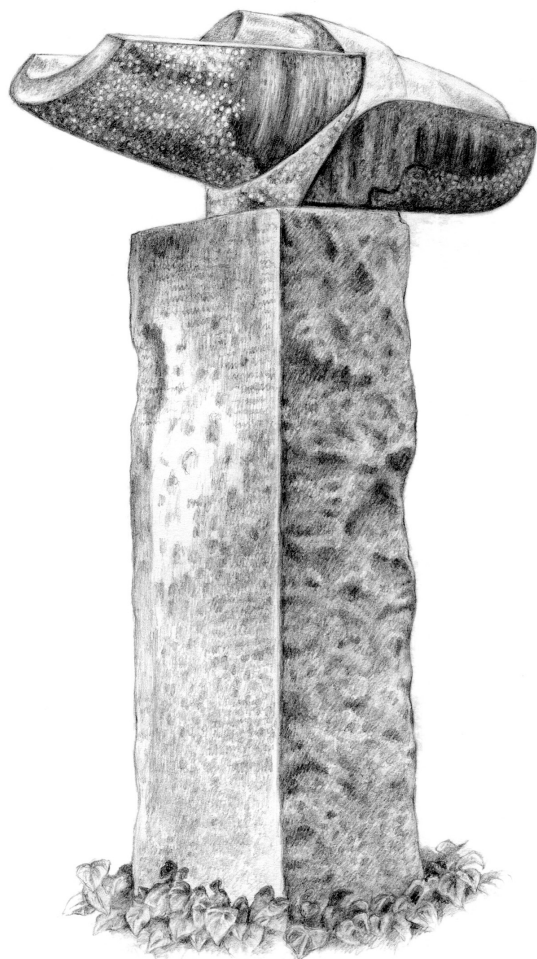
Executed in 1967; installed in 1972; unsigned

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in the Engineering Quadrangle Courtyard

Born in Nagasaki, Masayuki Nagare is an artist deeply committed to the culture and traditions of Japan. As a young man, he learned the customs of the samurai and studied with a master swordsmith. During World War II, he served as a fighter pilot in the Imperial Japanese Navy. The destruction and hypocrisy of the war left him disillusioned, leading him to wander the northern coast of Honshu Island. It was there, Nagare recalls, that he first encountered the mysterious power of stone. For his initial stone sculptures he drew inspiration from the craftsmen he had admired as a boy, men who had spoken to him of “bringing a stone to life.” Nagare soon found an audience among Western art collectors, who understood his strong, simple forms as similar in spirit to the work of European and American Modernists.

Nagare cites Zen Buddhism and Shintoism, the indigenous religion of Japan, as major influences on his work. Of particular importance for the artist is the yin-yang principle, the belief that an opposition of male and female forces held in perpetual harmonious tension animates the world. This sense of harmony is evident in *Stone Riddle* in the contrast between the smooth planes of the horizontal stone and the rough chisel marks on its base. Nagare has termed this contrast *warehada*, “broken texture,” and considers it a means for bringing out the essence of each surface.



*No. 13*

## *The Hedgehog and the Fox*

RICHARD SERRA, AMERICAN, BORN 1939

Cor-Ten steel; h. 457 cm., l. 28.65 m.

Installed in 2000; unsigned

Princeton University, gift of Peter Joseph, Class of 1972 and

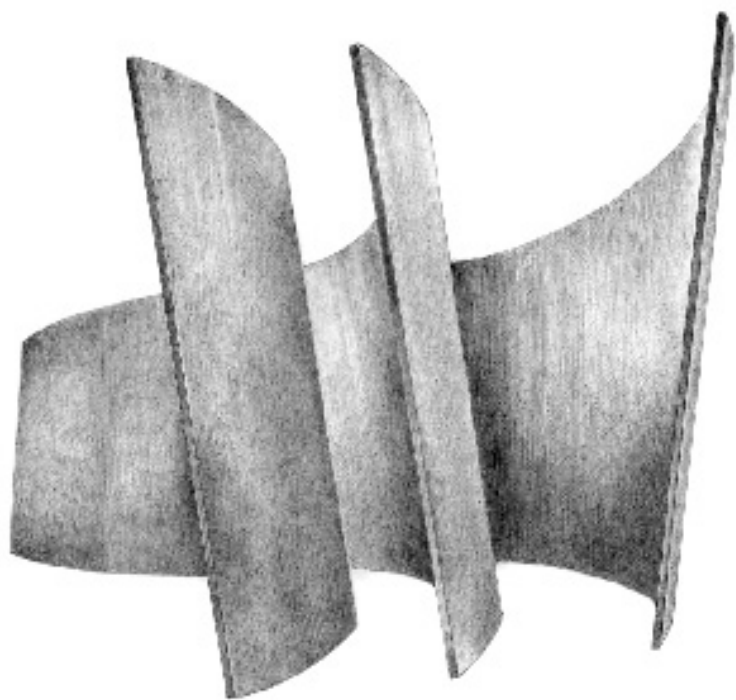
Graduate School Class of 1973, in honor of his children,

Danielle and Nicholas

Located between Lewis Library and Fine Hall, next to the Princeton Stadium

The name of the sculpture, *The Hedgehog and the Fox*, refers to an essay by Isaiah Berlin, who quotes from the Greek poet Archilochus: “The fox knows many things but the hedgehog knows one great thing.” Richard Serra explains, “It points to how scholars either become free thinkers and invent or become subjugated to the dictates of history. This is the classical problem posed to every student.”

But the sculpture’s physical presence is much more powerful than are its academic parables. As Hal Foster, Princeton University’s Townsend Martin Class of 1917 Professor of Art and Archaeology, maintains, Serra has “extended the space of sculpture more creatively, and explored the experience of sculpture more critically, than any other artist in the post-war period.” Composed of long sinuous bands of rusted steel, *The Hedgehog and the Fox* eliminates any decoration or allusion that could lessen the intensity of the encounter. Like other works by Serra, which have a reputation for demanding interaction and reflection, the sculpture is understood not merely by viewing, but by walking through it—encountering different glimpses of sky and light and experiencing new spatial sensations. The viewer becomes a participant in the work of art, and the artwork, in turn, directly challenges its surroundings. Serra concludes: “I think that if sculpture has any potential at all, it has the potential to work in contradiction to the places and spaces where it is created. I am interested in work where the artist is a maker of [an] ‘anti-environment.’”



*No. 14*

## *Professor Albert Einstein*

SIR JACOB EPSTEIN, BRITISH, BORN IN AMERICA, 1880–1959

Cast bronze; h. 42 cm.

Executed in 1933; acquired in 1970; signed, indistinctly, on back: *Epstein*  
The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in Fine Hall Library

In 1933, Albert Einstein renounced his German citizenship in protest against Hitler's rise to power and fled to America, where he became a founding member of the School of Mathematics at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. On the way, Einstein took refuge in England, where he was the guest of Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson at the latter's retreat near Cromer. Shortly after the arrival of the great physicist, the sculptor Jacob Epstein was engaged to make a portrait. Epstein humorously recounts: "I worked for two hours every morning, and at the first sitting the Professor was so surrounded with tobacco smoke from his pipe that I saw nothing. At the second sitting I asked him to smoke in the interval." In addition to making a strong psychological impression on Epstein—"his glance contained a mixture of the humane, the humorous, and the profound. This was a combination that delighted me"—Einstein's visage called forth an artist from the past: "He resembled the ageing Rembrandt." This similitude is hardly inconsequential, as no work by Epstein bears the formal traces of Rembrandt more than his portrait of Einstein.

Though the artist did not have the chance to carry the work to completion, the expressive molding of Einstein's features coupled with a marked mastery of surface textures has ensured that Epstein's bust of Einstein remains among the most memorable portraits of the great scientist and humanitarian.

The sculpture can be found immediately upon entering the basement library in Fine Hall, accessible from Washington Road via an outdoor staircase just south of the building.



*No. 15*

## *Five Disks: One Empty*

ALEXANDER CALDER, AMERICAN, 1898–1976

Mild steel, painted black; h. 800 cm.

Executed in 1969–70; installed in 1971

Signed and dated on foot: AC 70

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in Fine Hall Plaza

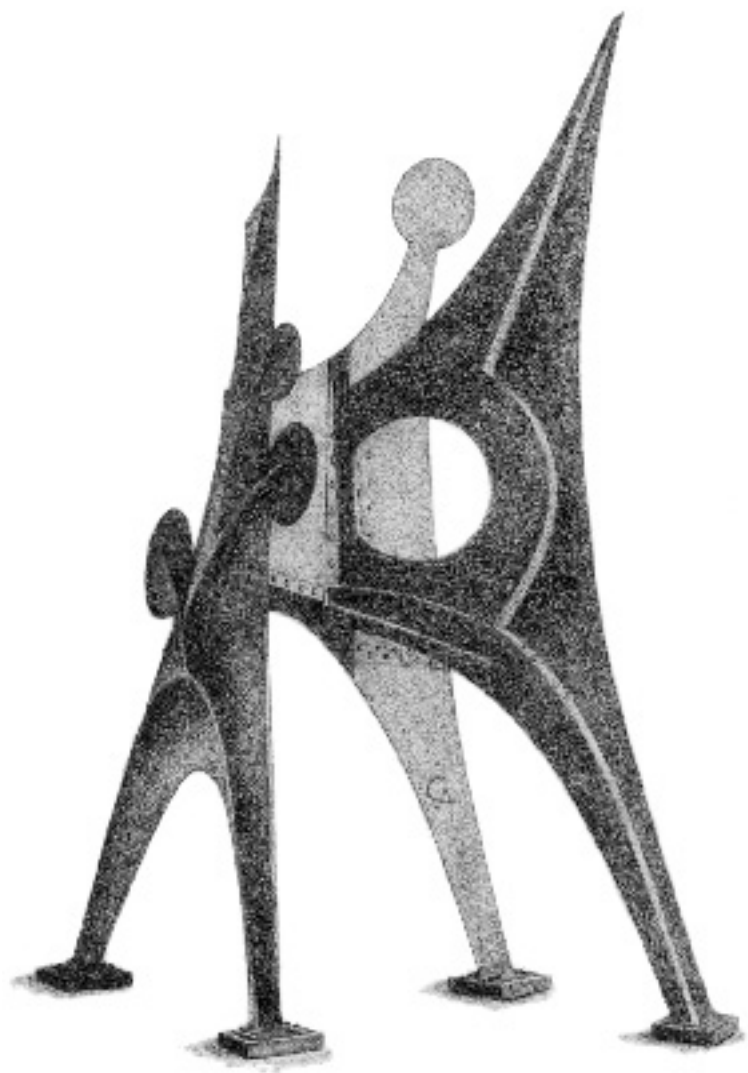
Alfred H. Barr Jr., Class of 1922, a member of the Putnam Selections Committee and a longtime friend of Alexander Calder, first approached the artist directly to discuss a monumental work designed especially for Princeton. Early in 1969, Calder replied that he was preoccupied, but that he would find it “fun to make something especially for you, and quite big. . . . So [I hope you will] bear with me, and I will evolve you something.”

By early summer he was free enough to write, “I feel that now I can try to conjure something up for Princeton.” *Disks and No Disks* was the title of what evolved.

Barr suggested one or more of the disks be painted orange to honor the colors of “Old Nassau.” A wary Calder replied, “After my initial reluctance to paint anything orange, I think *all* three disks might be good.” A few weeks later he amended this and said, “I suggest that you paint the smallest *Orange*.”

In anticipation of the artist’s visit to Princeton in November 1971, all four solid disks had been painted orange. Surveying his sculpture with a shrewd eye, Calder walked through and around the stabile to scan the work from various angles of the plaza and from the top of the 13-story Fine Hall tower. He then gave quiet instructions to the painters, and the four orange disks were gradually blacked out, one by one. To an inquiry about a new title for the stabile, he replied without hesitation, “*Five Disks: One Empty*.” Clearly he had anticipated the denouement from the beginning.





*No. 16*

## *Sphere VI*

ARNALDO POMODORO, ITALIAN, BORN 1926

Polished bronze; diam. 121 cm.

Executed in 1966; installed in 1969; unsigned

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

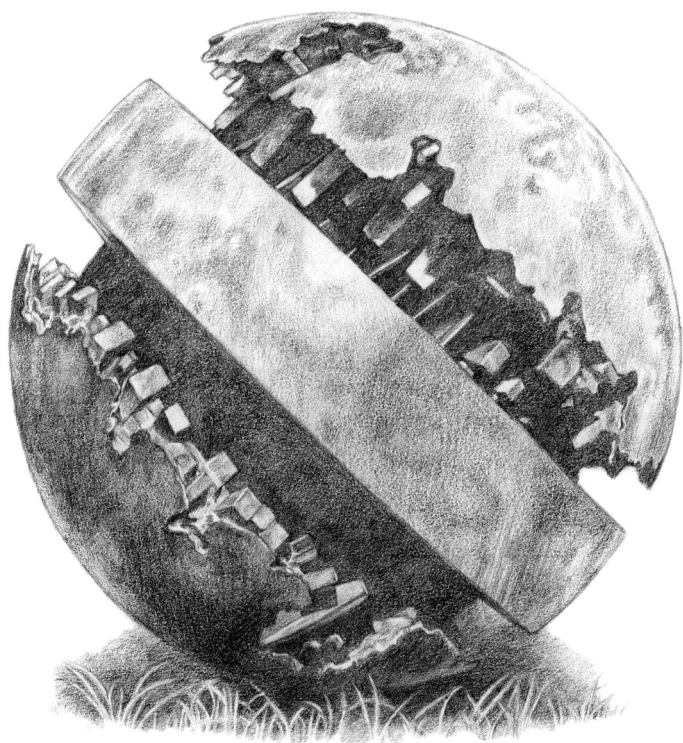
Located outside the entrance of Fine Hall Library

Between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s, Arnaldo Pomodoro perfected his technique of casting in the negative/positive process, in which the artist works initially in clay or plaster, carving or gouging out his motifs as negative images; when cast, these elements are reversed and transposed into the positive forms of the final sculpture. Pomodoro first developed the technique in his elegant cast jewelry.

The *Spheres* of the 1960s were all characterized by an imagery of a pure form sundered, violated, and partially eaten away by internal erosion. Beneath the flawlessly polished or natural skins of the exterior surfaces, multiple motifs of recessed and repeated dentils, ribs, and hatching became for the artist “an expression of an interior movement.”

While an artist in residence at Stanford University, Pomodoro evolved the first of his new spheres, the *Rotanti* or *Rotors*, of which the Putnam Collection has one of the earliest examples. The distinguishing characteristic of the *Rotors* lies in their potential mobility. Thus Princeton’s elegant *Sphere VI* (*Rotante Primo Sezionale*), though pinned to the earth for reasons of security, is otherwise vested with an inherent mobility.

In a 1974 interview Pomodoro said, “I can enjoy my sculptures in a park, in an ancient public square, like Pesaro, or on a great university campus. . . . I like to see people lean their bicycles on the sculptures, and pigeons come to rest, to see them humanized.”



## *Construction in the Third and Fourth Dimension*

ANTOINE PEVSNER, FRENCH, BORN IN RUSSIA, 1886–1962

Bronze; h. 312 cm.

Executed in 1962; installed in 1972

Inscribed on one wing: *Pevsner 3/3*

Number 3 of an edition of 4 cast in 1971

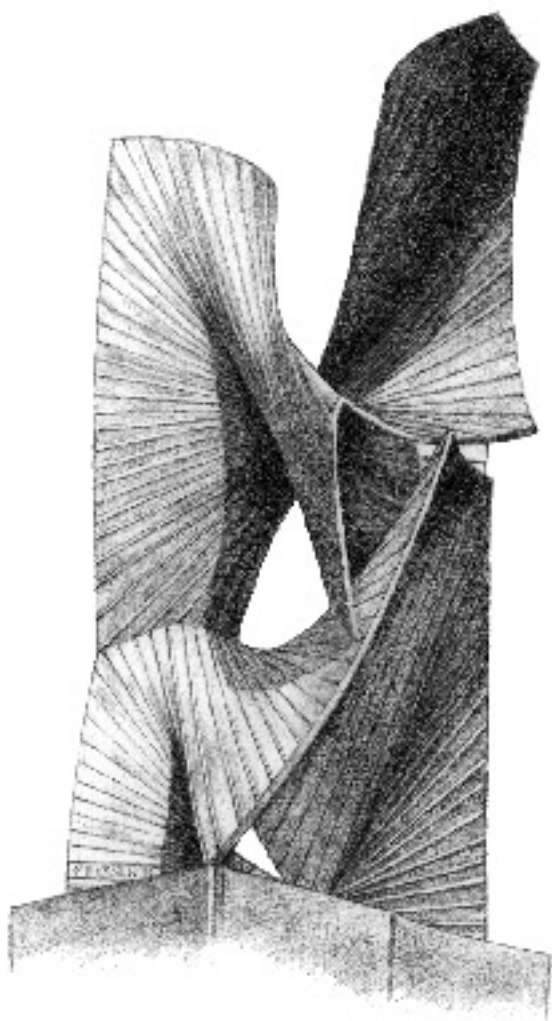
The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in the courtyard of Jadwin Hall

*Construction in the Third and Fourth Dimension* is one of the last major works of Antoine Pevsner, elder brother of Naum Gabo [see page 42] and collaborator with him in the creation of the Constructivist movement in Russia during the 1920s. Pevsner had become absorbed with the concepts of space employed in the icons of Orthodox churches and monasteries while studying at the academies of Kiev and St. Petersburg, and was subsequently attracted to the Impressionist and early “School of Paris” paintings. Arriving in the French capital in 1911, during the heyday of Cubist invention, he was especially impressed by the engineering magic of the Eiffel Tower.

One major trademark of Pevsner’s own sculpture was his exploitation of the contortion of flat metal planes, theoretically capable of indefinite projection. Linear striations on the surface of the planes allow for the enjoyment of both spatial and temporal experiences simultaneously while suggesting the possibility of infinite continuity.

The Putnam Collection’s work, with its handsome black granite pedestal (also designed by the sculptor), serves as a memorial to the Danish scientist and humanist Niels Bohr (1885–1962), who had long-standing personal and professional ties with colleagues in the Department of Physics at Princeton. A quotation from Bohr’s 1950 letter to the United Nations, enunciating the policy of an open world, flanks the paving stones at the base of the sculpture.



*No. 18*

## *Mastodon VI*

MICHAEL DAVID HALL, AMERICAN, BORN 1941

Aluminum and bronze; h. 94 cm., l. 225 cm., w. 60 cm.

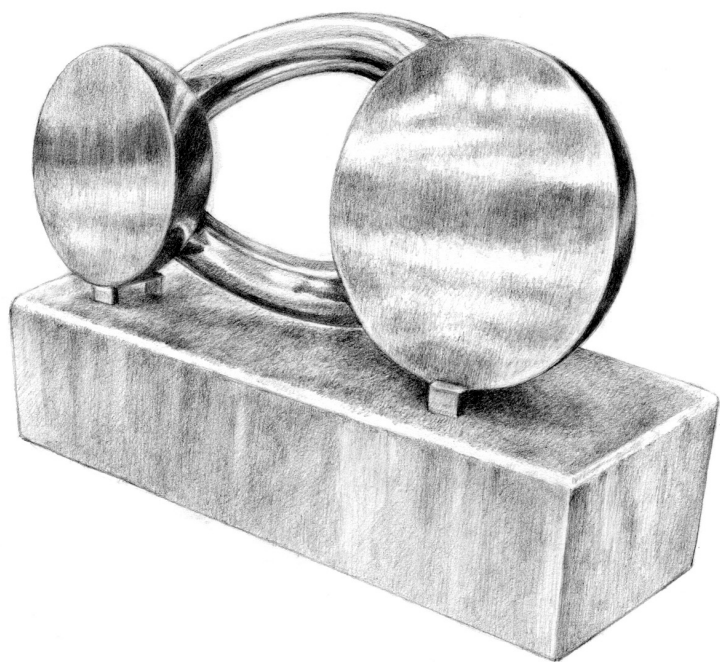
Executed in 1968; installed in 1969; unsigned

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in MacMillan Building Courtyard

As an artist, collector, and writer based in Michigan, Michael David Hall has long been an eloquent promoter of American regional art. The aluminum-and-bronze *Mastodon VI* dates from a period when the artist was creating works inspired by the Midwestern American farm gate. In light of this, *Mastodon VI*, which consists of two hemispheres held together by a pair of horizontal bronze bars, can be seen as a powerfully abstracted gate reduced to its barest essentials. When encountered in person, the hazy mirrored surfaces of the two hemispheres register and reflect the viewer's body. Such attention to the physical space of the viewer is a feature of much of the artist's work.

Hall was living in Lexington, Kentucky, when *Mastodon VI* was fabricated. Its title may well have been inspired by the artist's proximity at the time to Big Bone Lick State Park, the site of numerous exhumations dating back to the 18th century of mammoth and mastodon skeletons. Living in Kentucky, Hall developed an interest in American folk art and self-taught artists, eventually becoming one of the most significant collectors in the country of such art. In its plainspoken severity, Hall's sculpture brings to mind both the tradition of Modernist abstraction and the symmetry and simplicity of much folk art.



*No. 19*

## *Head of a Woman*

PABLO PICASSO, SPANISH, 1881-1973

Cast concrete; h. 487 cm., l. 365 cm.

Executed by Carl Nesjar in 1971 from Picasso's maquette of 1962; unsigned  
The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

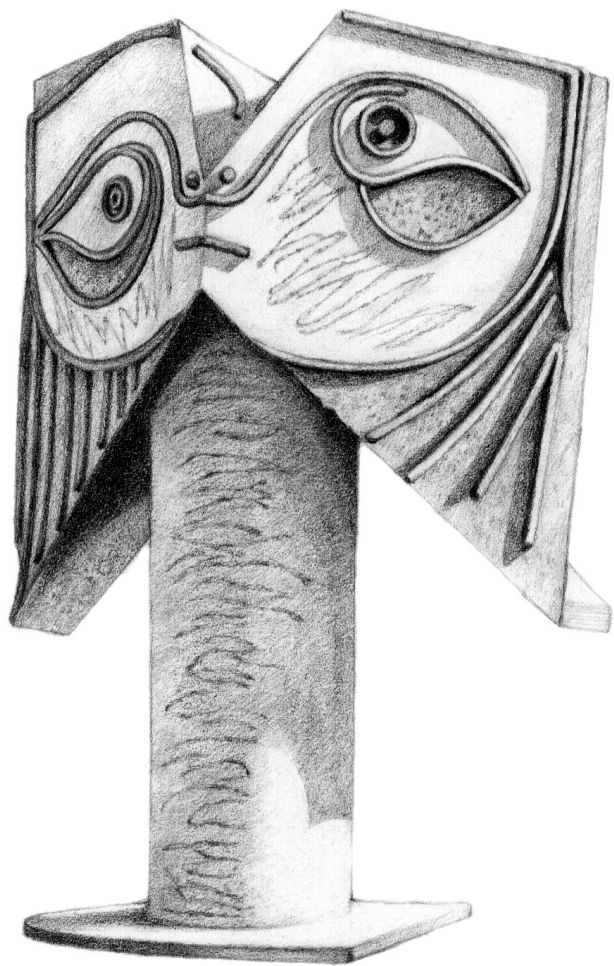
Located on the lawn between Spelman Halls and New South Building

Pablo Picasso's piece, titled *Head of a Woman*, was actually only slightly larger than one foot high and constructed of folded and painted sheet metal. Princeton's monumental version was assembled by another artist entirely: Carl Nesjar, a Norwegian, who served as an intermediary between Picasso and the Putnam Collection. Armed with site plans of its original location in front of McCormick Hall, *in situ* photographs of a composition-board mock-up, and a letter of request from Princeton President Robert F. Goheen, Nesjar visited Picasso at his home in the south of France in November 1969 and received his approval. A photograph of the mock-up, signed and inscribed "Bon à tirer pour Nesjar. Picasso. le 18.11.69," formed the contract between the artist and the University.

While Nesjar created the sculpture on the green in front of the art museum, he conducted a unique, outdoor seminar. The process involved building wooden forms to establish the basic shapes of the columnar pedestal and then a similar structure for the head itself. After completion of the wooden form, a mixture of crushed stone (imported from Norway) and iron tie-rods was packed within, and liquid concrete was injected, under pressure, from the base. Nesjar later sandblasted the outer skin to expose the colorful aggregate. The opportunity this process gave to the students, to observe and participate in the on-site recreation of a master's work, has long been touted as a prime example of the ways in which the Putnam Collection contributes to the Princeton experience.

In 2002 *Head of a Woman* was moved to the lawn to the southeast of Spelman Halls.





## Northwood II

KENNETH SNELSON, AMERICAN, BORN 1927

Stainless steel; h. 250 cm.

Executed in 1970; installed 1973; unsigned

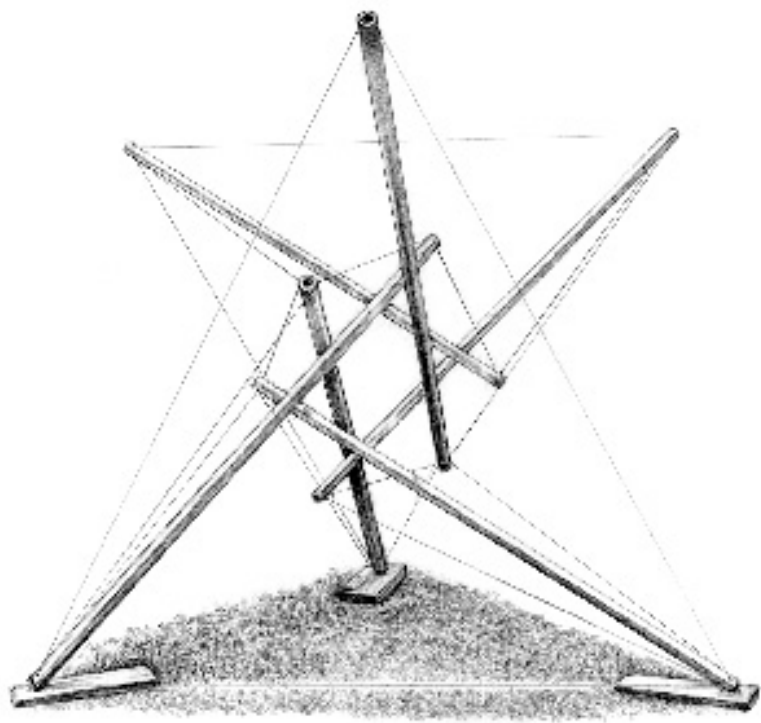
The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

Located in the East Dormitory Courtyard of the Graduate College

The definitive event in Kenneth Snelson's artistic formation came with his enrollment at Black Mountain College, North Carolina, in 1948. There he studied art theory with Joseph Albers and met Buckminster Fuller, whose theories of structural design not only persuaded Snelson to pursue sculpture, but exerted a lasting influence on the latter's artistic production. In order to realize more fully the aesthetic potential of structural design, Snelson took engineering courses at Oregon State College the following year.

At this point, Snelson found his artistic voice: an aesthetic based on the fundamental forces of tension and compression. At first glance, the polished tubes and taut metal wire appear as the apotheosis of Constructivist sculpture (compare, for example, the work of Antoine Pevsner, whose *Construction in the Third and Fourth Dimension* belongs to the Putnam Collection; see page 32). Snelson's highly complex execution—which often leaves professional engineers baffled—distinguishes him from his Constructivist peers, though his work is not merely a product of mathematical formula. Rather, aesthetics and engineering interpenetrate: each contributes to an artistic whole that, in turn, can never be separated into its constituent parts.

Snelson has remarked, "I want to build a universe." Indeed, his works appear as self-contained microcosms, abiding by their own aesthetic and physical laws. *Northwood II* exemplifies these complementary strands and offers a glimpse into the alternative world imagined and constructed by the artist. As he has stated, "from my view it may be that artists are the last of the speculative philosophers."



## *Floating Figure*

GASTON LACHAISE, AMERICAN, BORN IN FRANCE, 1882–1935

Bronze; h. 131 cm., l. 243 cm.

Executed in 1927; installed in 1969

Stamped on left calf: *Lachaise Estate*, inscribed 4/7

Number 4 of an edition of 7

The John B. Putnam Jr. Memorial Collection, Princeton University

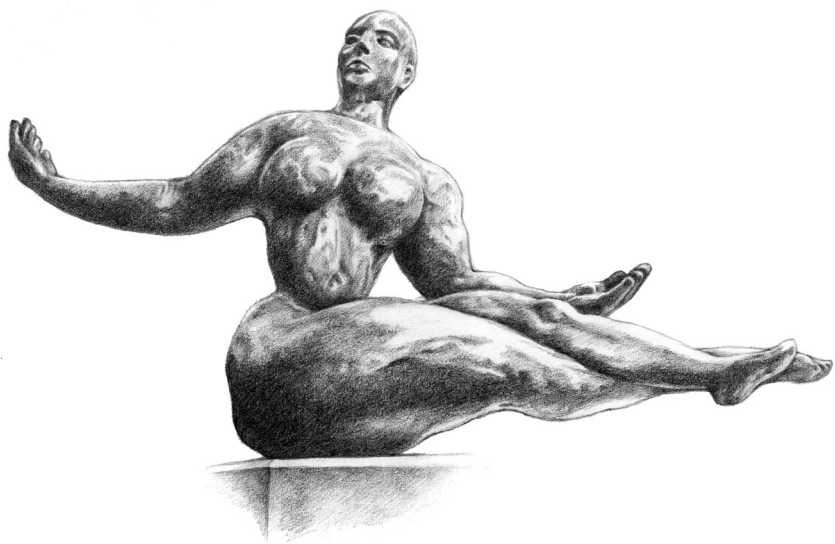
Located in Compton Court, Graduate College

Acceptance of modern sculpture as a major art form came slowly in America between 1915 and 1935. Gaston Lachaise, with the support of a small but influential group of artists, critics, dealers, and intellectuals, was the chief protagonist in the struggle for its recognition, and he emerged from the fray as a figure of significant rank in American art.

His life and art would be unimaginably different without the presence of Isabel Dutaud Nagle and the visual image he created of her. She became for him a Galatea, model, wife, and eternal mistress.

*Floating Figure* has been described by Gerald Nordland as “rising in the air, balanced with an exuberance, lightness, and originality. . . . The proliferation of rounded breast and buttock shapes create a fantasy of sexually laden forms that communicate in the most forceful manner, while transfigured in the myth-making process into an extrawordly spirit. . . . As one sees the figure, one has no sense of weight or mass, but only the qualities of serenity, strength, and exalted womanhood.”

The first authorized strike of *Floating Figure* was presented to the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and was a glory of the museum’s sculpture garden.



## *Lieutenant John B. Putnam Jr.*

1921-1944

John B. Putnam Jr. was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on January 20, 1921. After early education in schools in Cleveland and Switzerland, he entered Princeton University in the fall of 1940. Leaving the University at the end of his sophomore year to enlist in the United States Army Air Force, he received his wings in late 1943 and was sent to the European theater of operations in April 1944 as a pursuit pilot.

Named flight leader of a Thunderbolt fighter squadron, Lieutenant Putnam flew nine combat hours over the Normandy beaches on D-Day, June 6, 1944, and had completed 53 combat missions before crashing to his death in England on July 19, 1944, at the age of 23. He wrote in his diary, "Courage is not the lack of fear but the ability to face it."

During the last two and a half months of combat flying before his death, John B. Putnam Jr. was awarded the Air Medal, six silver leaf clusters, and, posthumously, the Distinguished Flying Cross "for extraordinary achievement and heroism in aerial combat."

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