

**title*****Alcove*****artist****Harriet Bart***Alcove, detail***Location:**

Carrie Chapman Catt Hall  
(exterior niche and grand  
stairway)

**Material:**

bronze, limestone

**Size:**

variable

**Date:**

1995

**Artist's Statement**

*Alcove* is intended as a place for quiet contemplation, for reading a book, or a place to meet and visit with a friend. The materials used in the building of Carrie Chapman Catt Hall convey a sense of solidity and permanency. The materials I've chosen for the sculpture also speak of solidity, timelessness, and even, nobility.

The installation work is sculpture, it is a place and it is a kind of architecture. The four elements that create and describe this area are:

- 1) Three bronze pilasters, cast from altered and textured books; incorporated into vertical stucco walls of the niche. They are the primary focus of the installation.
- 2) On the floor, an inscribed rectangular border containing text in bronze letters defines the space. The text is *Pay Attention to What They Tell You to Forget*, a poem from *Double Ode* by Muriel Rukeyser.
- 3) One limestone bench provides seating and visually contains the space. Stacks of two to four casually placed cast bronze books are permanently affixed on each bench. On the grand staircase, the words *invent*, *discover* and *remember* are engraved on three step risers.

*Harriet Bart, 1995*

## Checklist

### Pilasters

Bronze cast books  
Approximately 7 feet tall

The bronze pilasters function conceptually and visually as part of the supporting architecture of the wall. The symbolic representation of books refers to the ideal that this building, this university, is supported by academic inquiry and achievement, the wealth of knowledge gleaned from books.

### Bronze Lettering in Concrete Floor

Concrete, tooled border lines, bronze letters  
Inscribed border approximately 6 feet X 11 inches X 6 inches, width between inscribed parallel lines 3 inches  
2 inch bronze letters

The inscribed parallel lines bordering the floor on the three sides define the space. Bronze letters set within the border will contain a text appropriate to the setting.

### Benches

Limestone benches, bronze book/objects  
Each bench 18 inches X 48 inches X 18 inches

The limestone bench provides seating and visually completes the rectangular space. A stack of 2-4 cast bronze books, casually placed, are permanently affixed on each bench. These could become the touchstones of this reflective place.

### Staircase Inscriptions

INVENT, DISCOVER, REMEMBER is engraved in the south exterior staircase of Carrie Chapman Catt Hall. The engravings were done on the risers of the steps, counting from the bottom up to the 5th step is the word, INVENT, the 16th step, DISCOVER, and the 26th step, REMEMBER.



Alcove, details

## About the Artist

### ***"Everything ends up in a book" - Stephané Mallarmé***

My work is conceptually based. I transpose and transform text and context, form and content, exploring the presentation of the cultural artifact as signified sculptural object. I understand architectural forms to reflect cultural grammars. My installations are cultural recontextualizations that comment on national structures. I seek to consecrate a place, mark an event, or comment on forms of memory in culture.

I am interested in the alchemy of the word, the iconography of text, the labyrinth of the book, the book as poetic object. I use books in combination with found objects and architectural fragments. I create an architecture and archeology of history and memory by re-forming books as walls, passage-ways, foundations, and enclosures.

### *Harriet Bart, 1995*

Harriet Bart was born in Duluth, Minnesota and raised in San Francisco. She returned to the midwest to receive her BA from the University of Minnesota and did further study at Macalester College, St. Paul, MN and California State University Fullerton, CA. She also studied privately with Spanish artist Josep Gran-Garriga.

Bart has been exhibiting her work since 1975. She has participated in more than 40 group and solo exhibitions in the United States, Germany and Japan, and has work in the collections of over 15 corporate institutions as well as private collections in the United States, Germany and Japan. One recent commission (1996) was for the Weisman Art Museum Sculpture Plaza in Minneapolis, MN. This installation, entitled *Harvest*, addresses the agricultural origins of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota, and the University's role as a land-grant institution. The creative process and relationship for this project began with her travels and involvement with Iowa State University during her commission for *Alcove*, Iowa State also having an important historical and traditional place as a leading land-grant institution.

## **Alcove**

**Art on Campus accession number U95.62a-e**

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