

title

Whirlwind

artist

Andrea Myklebust and Stanton Sears



Location

South entrance to the Memorial Union

Media

Bronze

Date

2008

About the Sculpture

Whirlwind is an elongated cyclone encompassing sweeping imagery and activities prevalent at the Memorial Union high into the air. Students may picture themselves at the base of the columnar sculpture, a tiny Iowa landscape shown on a bubble-shaped patch of land, and imagine the history, energy, and enthusiasm of campus life sweeping them into the towering tornado.

Artists Stanton Sears and Andrea Myklebust envisioned an array of imagery before choosing the twisting column. The cyclone, of course, has ties to Iowa State athletics as well as a prevalent role in Iowa weather. In the beginning, however, the artists envisioned a shape more familiar to coastal communities—a rope. Using knots, rope, and other nautical imagery, the artists began to layer meaning within the idea of a twisted form. For Sears, a personal interest in the form overlaps iconic imagery, and students are encouraged to look beyond the sight that they find familiar to investigate new meanings in the woven, twisting shape.

About the Sculpture (con't)

High atop *Whirlwind's* structure are tiny forms, or “debris”, visibly being swept into the center of the twister. These include items with special meaning at the Memorial Union and Iowa State. Hands, for instance, represent the networking, teamwork, and social activities always present within a building so central to student life. A horse skull represents a time early in Iowa State history when the hill where the Memorial Union now sits was home to the College of Veterinary Medicine. Flying swans are reminiscent of nearby Lake LaVerne’s residents—swans Lancelot and Elaine. A gold star reminds viewers of the purpose of the Memorial Union, an ever-changing memorial and tribute to those who have served our nation. On another level, these reminders of student life give students and alumni a common ground—a chance to remember that on a changing campus, each visitor to Iowa State has a shared experience.

The miniature landscape from which *Whirlwind* springs forth is the artists’ homage to another artist represented on Iowa State’s campus, Grant Wood. The mass and round edges of trees, crops, and a tiny ISU campus remind viewers that the Art on Campus tradition is collaborative and cumulative.

About the Artists

Andrea Myklebust and Stanton Gray Sears are sculptors with a long-standing interest in the integration of art and architecture. Over the course of more than ten years of collaboration, they have been drawn to durable sculptural materials which reflect the practical realities of creating artwork for cities' shared spaces: cast bronze and glass, carved and cut stone, concrete, fabricated steel, and other materials selected for their toughness, beauty, and ease of maintenance. Their projects are made meaningful by reflecting the unique histories and functions of the places they inhabit.

Andrea and Stanton's work is sited in communities throughout the United States. Current projects include: a monumental sculptural work in stone for the University of Wisconsin-Madison department of Microbiology; art for a light rail station in Los Angeles, California; a stair railing in cast glass, bronze, and steel for a library in San Jose, California; and design work for the Minnesota World War Two Veterans Memorial at the state capitol in Saint Paul.



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www.museums.iastate.edu

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