

Veterinary Medical Research Institute

title *Gentle Metal•phor*

artist **Mark Knuth**

Location:
**Veterinary Medical
Research Institute
(east of Elwood Drive)**

Material:
Steel
Size:
6 feet tall

Date:
1991
Acquired through:
**Iowa Art in State
Buildings Program***



About the Sculpture

"The presence of humanity in this world necessitates that humanity protect the delicate nature between animals, the environment and humanity through education, research, and implementation."

Mark Knuth

Mark Knuth was selected by the Iowa Art in State Buildings Committee to create a work of art that related to the Veterinary Medical Research Institute's function. Knuth realized another sculpture on the Iowa State campus had already achieved recognition as an international symbol for veterinary medicine. This work is of course Christian Petersen's *The Gentle Doctor* (pictured on back). Knuth then played off *The Gentle Doctor* image and created his sculpture with the central image of an abstracted figure overlooking the care of animals. This idea is represented by laboratory animals, rabbits and mice, among the stylized prairie grass at the figure's feet. This theme is much like Petersen's image of a veterinarian taking care of a sick puppy. The puppy is under the direct care of the doctor. The *Metal•phor* is using animals for research - most often resulting in death for the advancement of medical knowledge. Knuth's figure also recalls the hands on hips stance farmers may take as they overlook their animals and crops. The color of the sculpture references the green work overalls some farmers wear. Uniquely, this sculpture is also mounted bearings so that the viewer may actually interact with the art by turning it like a weather vane.

**University Museums/Art on Campus Program
Iowa State University Ames, Iowa**

Artist's Comments

Reference to Christian Petersen's *The Gentle Doctor* is reference to similar spirit and ideals, without being figuratively representational. The predominate form of *Gentle Metal•phor* stands tall, sturdy, and confident, with a gesture of absorbing, caring for, and being aware of nature, which is all around.

Gentle Metal•phor encourages viewer participation through hands on experience. Viewers are invited to turn the sculpture in order to view it in-the-round, without themselves having to walk around the sculpture. Being able to rotate 360 degrees, *Gentle Metal•phor* itself is able to interact with its surroundings from, and in, all directions.

As in our world today, it is essential that we be able to view the effects of our actions from all points of view, with global awareness.

Mark Knuth



About *The Gentle Doctor*

Christian Petersen served as Iowa State's artist in residence from 1934 to 1955. During this time he created many sculptures that still adorn the campus. A work created for the Veterinary College in 1938 is a terra-cotta statue titled *The Gentle Doctor*. Since that time this sculpture has grown to become accepted as an international symbol for veterinary medicine. Petersen's work depicts a veterinarian holding a sick puppy in his arms as the worried mother dog looks on. Currently the original sculpture is located on the first floor of the Scheman Building while a cast bronze replica may be viewed at the Veterinary Medicine Building.

GENTLE METAL•PHOR

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Additional information about *Gentle Metal•phor*, other Art on Campus information sheets, and Art on Campus maps are available at the University Museums office 290 Scheman Building (2nd Floor) 515/294-3342, or visit us online at <http://www.museums.iastate.edu/>

*The **Iowa Art in State Buildings Program** was enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa (Chapter 304A, Code 1979. Sections 8-14) to provide for the inclusion of fine arts projects in state building construction projects in cooperation with the Iowa Arts Council. At Iowa State University, the Art in State Buildings Program is administered by University Museums.

This information sheet is intended to be used in addition to viewing the Art on Campus. At no time should this sheet be used as a substitute for experiencing the art in person!