

Black Engineering Building

title

Carom

artist

Bruce White

Location:
Southeast Entrance
Material:
Aluminum
Size:
22 feet tall by 30 feet long
Date:
1986
Made possible by:
**Iowa Art in State
Buildings Program***



Artist's comments

Carom was conceived after visiting the site of the ME/ESM [Black Engineering] Building and becoming familiar with the nature and extent of studies and activities within the new facilities. I believe this work to be appropriate in that it too deals with material deformation. *Carom* was developed by manipulating (bending, cutting, slicing, stressing and twisting) a single sheet of material. To begin, a rectangle was sliced lengthwise twice, each cut from opposite directions, nearly through, to form a narrow strip down the center. The two large outer planes were then pulled apart and twisted in opposite directions to form the upward narrow spiral. The large horizontal member was folded and the surface planes allowed to shift at the outer end, creating a configuration with a beveled knife-like edge. The spiral connects and stabilizes the horizontal and vertical units. The large upright unit has a subtle longitudinal twist as a consequence of pulling the two primary units in opposite directions--increasing its overall vertical strength, and forming , from an edge view, an acute triangle. As a final accent, the outer edge of the upright has a sharp curled "burr" reminiscent of the cutting burrs which sometimes occur while shearing thin metal for my early sketches. This accent is intended as a relief to the broad surfaces; it also relates to the acute negative voids where the narrow strips join the large units.

Bruce White

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

Lessons

(concerning Bruce White's sculpture, *Carom*)

Who taught aluminum to jive like that?
Who taught aluminum to dance?
Look at it twist and dip and split!
Watch that aluminum prance!

I need to learn some aluminum steps.
I need aluminum grace.
None of my limited, minimal moves
can match aluminum's pace.

How do you limber a sheet of aluminum,
get aluminum into the mood?
Would it improve my ballroom style
if I ate some aluminum food?

What kind of beat makes aluminum shimmy?
What makes aluminum take
such a dangerous, difficult, tango torque,
the kinds my bones can't fake?

Better to let aluminum risk
those bends that could be breaks.

Neal Bowers, 1990
Ames, Iowa

WORLD AS WILL AND IDEA

The idea set a-sail like
a luffed number, a four,
perhaps, or treble clef
unfurling, borne on and
bearing its own breeze,
and ploughing up music
like the sea, taller
than a man can stand.

Anyone tells me again
the body is ninety percent
water, I'll scream.
It's a hydraulic system.
And love is engineering.
Pier and backbone.
Cantilever and torsion.
Dolphin, harp, and anchor.

Imagine her standing here,
tapping her foot in time.
The color of her eyes.
Color of her hair-
ribbon blowing in the wind.

Robert Dana, 1992
Coralville, Iowa

(after Bruce White's, *Carom*)

Art on Campus Poetry

Public Art Poetry has a tradition dating to
Christian and Charlotte Petersen.

Christian, a Danish-American sculptor,
was artist-in-residence at Iowa State University
(then Iowa State College) from 1934-1955, during a time when poetry
inspired sculpture and incorporated words as sculptural elements.

A primary tenet of public art is to have it physically and
intellectually accessible to the public. Placement within the context of
public spaces accomplishes the first goal, however, providing
intellectual accessibility
is the more challenging goal.

Educational programs for public art are imperative.
One educational component that provides access to
understanding the Art on Campus Collection is poetry.

Several years ago, Neal Bowers, a professor of English at Iowa State
University, was commissioned to create poetic interpretations of some of
the Art on Campus sculptures.

He did so, and later he also administered, on behalf of the University
Museums, a program whereby significant Iowa poets were invited and
commissioned to create their own
literary interpretations of the Art on Campus Collection. These literary
interpretations are greatly appreciated, as are the artists who created
them, for they contribute further
interpretative avenues, inspirations, thoughts, reflections and an under-
standing into the Art on Campus Collection.

Jo Knudson and Maxine Charity funded the
Art on Campus Poetry.

CAROM

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Additional information about *Carom*, 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!**