

Michael
For your files -

Betty

draft
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STATE DINING ROOM RENOVATION AND REFURBISHING

The State Dining Room of the White House has been renovated and refurbished at the recommendation of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House. The refurbishing reflects the spirit of the 1902 renovation of the room by the architectural firm McKim, Meade & White undertaken during the President Theodore Roosevelt administration while taking into consideration the current uses of the room at the end of the 20th century. The State Dining Room is the most intact architectural space remaining in the White House from 1902 and many of the 1902 furnishings are still in the room.

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton serves as honorary chair of the Committee for the Preservation of the White House and was involved in the project, working with historians, curators and designers. The room has been painted and new draperies and chair coverings installed. A major component of the project was the preservation and conservation of the 1902 furnishings.

The State Dining Room had not been painted since 1985; the draperies and upholsteries installed 1981 were sun-damaged and worn and the carpets, made in 1974 and 1975, were worn out. Over 1.2 million visitors view the room and over 50,000 guests are entertained there each year.

The following changes have been made:

The oak paneling in the room, the most intact architectural feature remaining in the White House from 1902, was preserved and re-installed during the Truman renovation of 1952 when the paneling was painted light green. It was painted again in 1961, 1970, 1981 and in 1985 when it received an umber glaze. The committee decided to keep the walls painted rather than attempt to remove the paint and restore the walls to the original oak finish. At the committee's suggestion, the walls have been painted a stone color in keeping with the Georgian style woodwork. Paneling was often painted at the turn of the last century. The architectural elements of the frieze and the pilasters have been accented in white.

New draperies have been hung at the five windows. The valances were redesigned to complement the architecture of the frieze. The multi-colored floral silk brocade fabric has flowers, baskets and ribbons on an off-white field. It was specially reproduced by Schumacher for the White House from a documented fabric of 1901. The design was based on 18th century sources popular during the Colonial Revival of the early 20th century. The gold, blue and red floral custom colors are those of the state services used in the room.

The three eagle pedestal console tables, designed by Stanford White and made by the A. H. Davenport Company of Boston in 1902, have been conserved and returned to their original mahogany appearance. They had been painted and gilded in 1961.

The 1902 silverplate chandelier and wall sconces, by the New York firm of Edward F. Caldwell, were gilded in 1961. They have been cleaned, conserved and re-wired. Their gilded appearance is now more compatible with the other gilded objects in the room.

The Queen Anne style mahogany chairs, made in 1902 and 1952, have been conserved and re-upholstered in a gold cotton and wool Scalamandre fabric with an oak leaf design.

A new carpet incorporating elements from the 1902 ceiling design has been designed and will be installed in the room early in 1999. A temporary carpet with a leaf and rosette pattern has been placed on the floor.

Returned to the room are the portrait of President Abraham Lincoln by George P. A. Healy, the gilded bronze plateau and baskets ordered from France by President James Monroe in 1817, an English 18th century gilded pier mirror, a mahogany dining room table made for the room in 1998, and nineteenth century gilded candelabra and other decorative objects from the White House collection.

The White House Endowment Trust, created by the White House Historical Association to support the public state rooms, funded the project.

History

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THE STATE DINING ROOM

In James Hoban's 1792 design for the President's House, the west end of the State Floor consisted of two rooms of equal size flanking the principal staircase to the Second Floor. The first two occupants of the house, Presidents John Adams (1800-1801) and Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809), used the northwest room (now the Family Dining Room) as a dining room. Adams used the southwest room (the southern two-thirds of the current State Dining Room) as a "Levee Room", while Thomas Jefferson used it as his office and cabinet room. It was there that Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis planned the Lewis & Clark Expedition in 1802.

The southwest room was first used as the principal dining room by the Madisons (1809-1814). There hung the full-length portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart which Dolley Madison removed before the British arrived and burned the building in 1814. In 1819, after the post-fire reconstruction, the Monroes installed two new Italian white marble mantelpieces in the southwest room; these were moved to the Green and Red Rooms in 1902.

By 1825, the two western rooms were no longer equal in size because the Madisons had partitioned off the western side of the northwest room. The southwest room became the "Large Dining Room", the northwest the "Small Dining Room". The small northwest corner space became a pantry, as it is today. Even as the "Large Dining Room", the southwest room seated only 35-40 guests at a rectangular dining table. Later the number was increased to 50-65 by adding tables at the ends to create an I-shaped arrangement.

In 1880, access was provided from the State Dining Room into the array of greenhouses which had been erected to the west of the building since 1857. Until 1902, when they were demolished, these greenhouses served as a private retreat for the first families and their guests.

Besides formal dinners for government officials, the diplomatic corps, and other important visitors, the 1886 wedding dinner for President Grover Cleveland, the only president married in the White House, was held in this room. By 1902, however, many large dinners were being staged in the Cross Hall or East Room.

In 1902, the State Dining Room was enlarged and completely redesigned by McKim, Mead & White during the Theodore Roosevelt renovation. The staircase, rendered less necessary by the installation of an elevator in 1881, was removed, and the room was expanded into that space. The removal of a load-bearing wall and the suspension of the ceiling from the timbers above contributed to the structural problems which later prompted the Truman Renovation, 1948-1952.

The 1819 mantels were replaced by a single larger fireplace on the west wall. The walls of English oak paneling were bordered with wild animal heads. Three mahogany eagle-pedestal side tables, Queen Anne style chairs, and silver-plated lighting fixtures were installed and remain in use today. For large dinners, the smaller table used for most meals by the Theodore Roosevelt family was replaced by a broad horseshoe-shaped pine table which could seat 104 and was used during many subsequent administrations.

The walls, first painted in 1952, were repainted in 1961, at which time the eagle tables were painted and gilded and the lighting fixtures gilded to create a white and gold color scheme. The 1902 mantel, removed during the Truman Renovation, was reproduced on a somewhat smaller scale in white marble. A long U-shaped table (seating 90) or E-shaped table (120) for formal dining was replaced for most events by more intimate circular tables which optimize the space (140).

In 1998, the room was refurbished with stone-colored walls, floral draperies, and gold chair upholstery. The side tables were restored to their original 1902 mahogany appearance. The chandelier and sconces were conserved to better show the brilliance of their 1961 gilding.

Office of the Curator
September 1998

At the
White
House:

The *First*
Lady's
Sculpture. *Sawders*

by Mary Lynn Kotz

Sculpture
July/August 1998

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, an avid fan of contemporary art, has quietly introduced 20th-century American sculpture to approximately six million visitors to the White House over the past four years. Since 1994, six sculpture exhibitions from museums across the United States have been prominently on view in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, which is directly across from the glass-walled corridor through which visitors enter the Executive Mansion. The first four exhibitions presented work on loan from art museums in four regions of the country; a fifth featured sculpture from the nation's capital. Currently on exhibition are works by contemporary sculptors of Native American heritage. At least two additional exhibitions are planned: one yet to be announced and a special exhibition commemorating the millennium.

At the first exhibition's opening, Mrs. Clinton expressed her hopes that "this celebration of America's creative spirit will enable each of us to gain a greater appreciation of the rich cultural traditions we share as a nation and as a people."

"I have always loved sculpture," she explains. In her own life, it was Henry Moore who first brought Hillary Rodham and William Jefferson Clinton together as they stood in line to register at Yale Law School. "We started talking and went for a long walk," she recalls, "and we ended up in front of the Yale Art Gallery. They had a Mark Rothko exhibition inside and a Henry Moore exhibition in the sculpture yard. Bill wanted to show me both of them, but we found the doors closed because of a labor dispute." So the innovative Clinton offered to pick up the trash, which he and his young companion did—and enjoyed a private tour of the Henry Moore works.

The idea for the White House sculpture exhibition began with the First Lady's desire to focus official attention on America's artists. "I was trying to make several statements," says Mrs. Clinton. "The first was just how important the arts are as part of our public life, but also as an integral part and contribution to our private lives. And I wanted to celebrate living artists."



Above: Louise Bourgeois, *Observer*, 1947–49. Bronze and white paint, 76.25 x 29 x 10 in. **Opposite, above:** Robert Therrien, *No Title*, 1985. Bronze, 90 x 32 in. **Opposite, below:** Hillary Clinton addresses the audience during opening ceremonies.

The State rooms of the White House itself are off limits to the work of living artists, according to a policy set in 1964 by the Committee for the Preservation of the White House. The idea of contemporary art *outside* the White House was born the day after the inauguration, as Mrs. Clinton and her friend, designer Kaki Hockersmith from Little Rock, talked about bringing art into the living quarters and the Oval Office. "It was very clear we were both fans of contemporary art," recalls Hockersmith. "We went for a walk in the snow to check out the grounds—18 acres of lawn and trees. Hillary said, 'I can't believe there's no sculpture on the grounds.'" Mrs. Clinton's attention soon focused

on the "First Ladies" Garden, conceived by Jacqueline Kennedy and designed for her by Mrs. Paul Mellon with Perry Wheeler, near the East entrance to the mansion. The 120-by-60-foot garden was a sculptural space in itself, with eight niches, like keyholes, in the shrubbery bordering a rectangular grassy lawn. "When I moved in here, and started wandering around the various parts of the house and yards and gardens, I kept coming back to that garden, which I found restful and private," says Mrs. Clinton. "I spent a lot of time there, sitting in the little trellised area, or out on one of the stone benches, and it just looked to me like a garden that should have some sculpture in it. It looked as though at some point someone had landscaped it with that in mind."

She asked Hockersmith to investigate. Working with former White House curator Rex Scouten and current curator Betty Monkman, Hockersmith went first to Arts and Communications Counselors in New York, then helped Mrs. Clinton prepare a presentation for the Committee for the Preservation of the White House. This committee was formed by the executive order of President Lyndon Johnson in 1964, to continue the historic restoration of the mansion begun by Mrs. Kennedy. Committee member J. Carter Brown, director emeritus of the National Gallery of Art, brought his considerable institutional memory to bear. The niches could hold sculpture beautifully, Brown remembers, just as they had for a White House Festival of the Arts, which brought abstract contemporary art to the White House East colonnade and South lawn for the first time in 1965, during the Johnson Administration.

Mrs. Clinton appointed Brown to facilitate the new White House sculpture exhibitions, and he suggested that only outdoor sculpture from public collections be shown in the garden. Brown brought the project to a meeting of the Association of Art Museum Directors in Seattle, and together with the association's then president, Evan Maurer, director and CEO of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, decided that there should be four shows, one from each region of the country. The series of exhibitions, Brown explained,

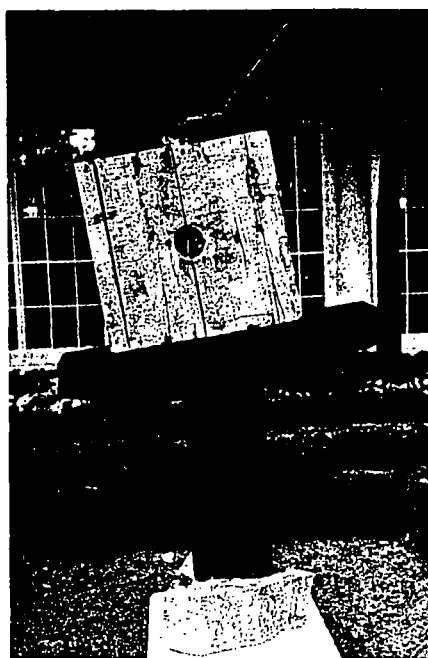


Above: George Rickey, *Two Lines Oblique*, Atlanta, 1969. Stainless steel, 35 ft. high. Right: Lonnie Holley, *Leverage*, 1993. Concrete, found wood, paint, and straw, 79.5 x 45.5 x 17 in.

would showcase the museums of America, in addition to its sculptors. "To initiate the program, we went to George Neubert, the director of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, who is a modern sculpture specialist—and a sculptor himself."

The Midwest was chosen to be first, to represent sculpture collected in the heart of the country and also, Mrs. Clinton surmises, smiling, "because I am from Chicago." In addition to representing the Midwest collections, Neubert also chose to present in the initial exhibition an overview of sculpture in the 20th century. "We looked for the best in American sculpture," he says, "from the early representationalists to contemporary artists such as Ellsworth Kelly...The first consideration was scale—what would fit harmoniously in those spaces and with other pieces?"

In addition to scale, Neubert's aesthetic goals "were to work with the verticality of the formal, French-cut topiary holly trees, and to portray the



human form—in abstraction as well as in representation." He looked for historical development as well as a variety of materials. "There was some anxiety at first," he recalls, "on just how some of these avant-garde pieces would be received—by the press, by the public, and especially by the anti-art forces in Congress."

Some members of the committee and the White House staff worried especially about Gaston Lachaise's *Standing*

Woman, a monumental 1932 bronze nude. "Some on the committee were skittish politically," recalls Brown. The First Lady stood up for the sculpture: "It's obviously very important: a landmark piece in art history and representative of a whole style."

Politically, it was important that no taxpayer money go into the exhibitions. "Traditionally, if one museum borrows from another, the borrower pays," Brown explains. However, few of the museums had funds to ship large pieces of sculpture to Washington and back. A private donor was the answer. The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation of Los Angeles (art collector and patron Iris Cantor had initially arranged for the loan of a Willem de Kooning painting to the Clintons for the upstairs White House living quarters), came forward to pay all the expenses of the exhibitions—including the little four-by-four-inch souvenir catalogues prepared for visitors to the Mansion. Fine arts photographer David Finn donated his photographs of the sculptures. Then Rex Scouten and Betty Monkman supervised the logistics. Along with the National Park Service, which oversees the White House, the curators ordered cranes to remove the heaviest sculptures from their trucks and set them in place on the lawn.

Exhibition 1: The Midwest.

October 1994 through February 1995

The first of the series of exhibitions (collectively titled, "Twentieth-Century American Sculpture at The White House") opened on the Clinton's 19th wedding anniversary, with 10 works in the garden by sculptors Louise Nevelson, Alexander Calder, David Smith, George Segal, Bryan Hunt, Louise Bourgeois, Manuel Neri, Judith Shea, Ellsworth Kelly, and Gaston Lachaise, and, inside the corridor, Paul Manship.

The only logistical problem with the show was the wind caused by the presidential helicopter landing on the South lawn of the White House, which set Calder's *Five Rudders* (1964), a red and black painted standing mobile spinning like an electric blender. "It was a rugged test," recalls Hockersmith. "It usually turns slowly in the wind, but now it was really whirling. We were startled—and almost panicked." But the Calder held up to the turbulence.

The organizers of the show and the White House staff were moved by the reactions of the artists who attended the opening. Even the most acclaimed

of them responded with awe to being in the great house. Ellsworth Kelly, whose work had been in the 1965 White House Arts Festival, nevertheless was touched by the experience of seeing *Curve VIII*, his thin 1974 aluminum sheath standing tall, sleek, and serene between Nevelson's *Tropical Tree III* (1972) and Bourgeois's linear humanoid *Observer* (1974). Kelly, 71 at the time, told Mrs. Clinton, "I wish my mother and father could be here. My mother never really understood what I was doing, and my father died at the age of 56." Kelly added that "A government should recognize the art of the time."

George Segal had not been to the White House since Lyndon Johnson's inauguration. At the Sculpture Garden opening he said he was surprised and impressed by Mrs. Clinton, who he described as "articulate and well informed about the art being shown." "As an artist and a person," Segal said, "I find myself in enormous sympathy with the way they [the Clintons] are interpreting their job. The federal government is to be praised for expressing interest in the needs of ordi-

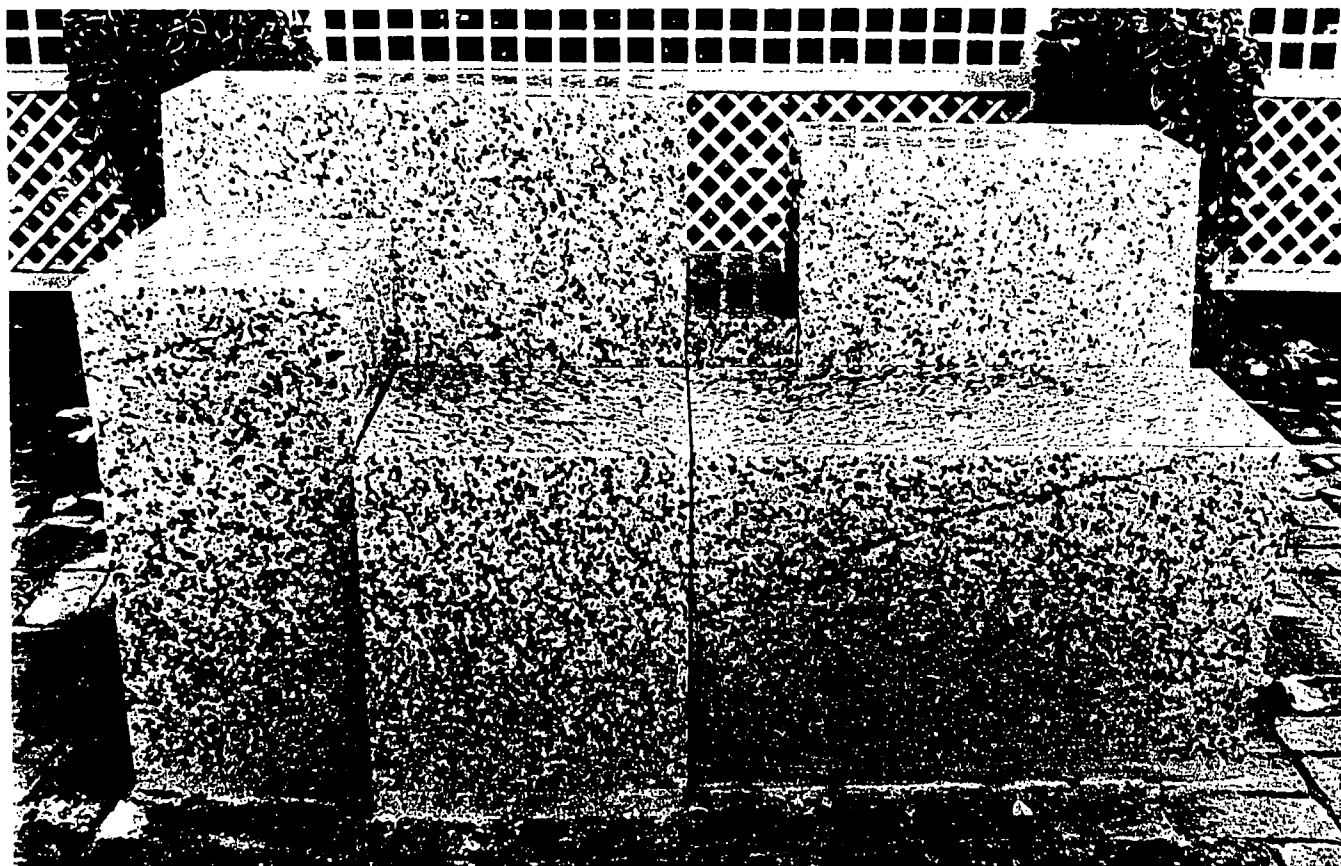
nary people." Segal and many of the artists viewed the exhibitions as meaningful to them personally as artists and citizens, and also stated that the First Lady has established an important precedent for both government and the private sector.

Exhibition 2: The Southeast.

April 1995 through September 1995

The regional vane turned South for the second exhibition, again recognizing the first family's history. Townsend Wolfe, director and chief curator of the Arkansas Art Center, was chosen by Brown and Maurer to select sculpture from museums throughout the South. "Since the overview had been presented, my concept was to show works made since 1965," says Wolfe. His criteria were hard to fulfill: works by living artists that exemplify racial, ethnic, and gender diversity, as well as diversity in geography and materials—all in outdoor sculpture within a scale that lends a human dimension to the collection.

Below: Scott Burton, *Granite Settee*, 1982–83. Granite, 36 x 65 x 35 in.



DAVID FINN
DAVID FINN

Logistics then became the biggest challenge. New Orleans artist John Scott's brightly colored *Target I* (1993), with polychromed steel humanesque figures standing behind a circle of welded steel, almost did not make it in time for the opening on April 3. "The large piece was so long (116 by 75 by 5 feet) it had to be loaded on a flatbed truck," says Wolfe, "and of such a size that the truck could only travel through certain states and on certain days!" That colorful, arresting sculpture was placed to face the walkway where tourists first enter the mansion, showing its black-and-white "checkerboard" side, described by Wolfe as a "humane comment on racial equality."

At the opposite end of the garden stood George Rickey's *Two Lines Oblique, Atlanta* (1969). The 35-foot stainless steel sculpture, a kinetic parallelogram that Mrs. Clinton described as "not unlike a television antenna," was built to explore the essence of nature—the "waving of branches, trembling of stems," explained Rickey. It moved

slowly in the wind, and quivered mightily with the helicopters' propeller wash. The sculpture mesmerized its hosts. "We would sit there and watch it," recalls Mrs. Clinton. "Bill and I sometimes had meals out there—or we'd just sit there and we'd watch it, those arms just swinging in the wind. I loved it. I love that whole idea of moving sculpture." Rickey's sculpture, adds the First Lady, was among her favorites in the series of exhibitions—along with another work in the same show, *Vertical Void* (1994), by Carol Hepper, among the younger sculptors shown. Hepper's undulating sculpture, made of copper tubing and steel wound in a spiral, recalls the twisting, bound strands of willow branches—one of the organic materials used by Hepper in her native South Dakota. "I first stood in front of it for four or five minutes at a time," said the President's wife. "I loved the way it looked."

Exhibition 2: The West.

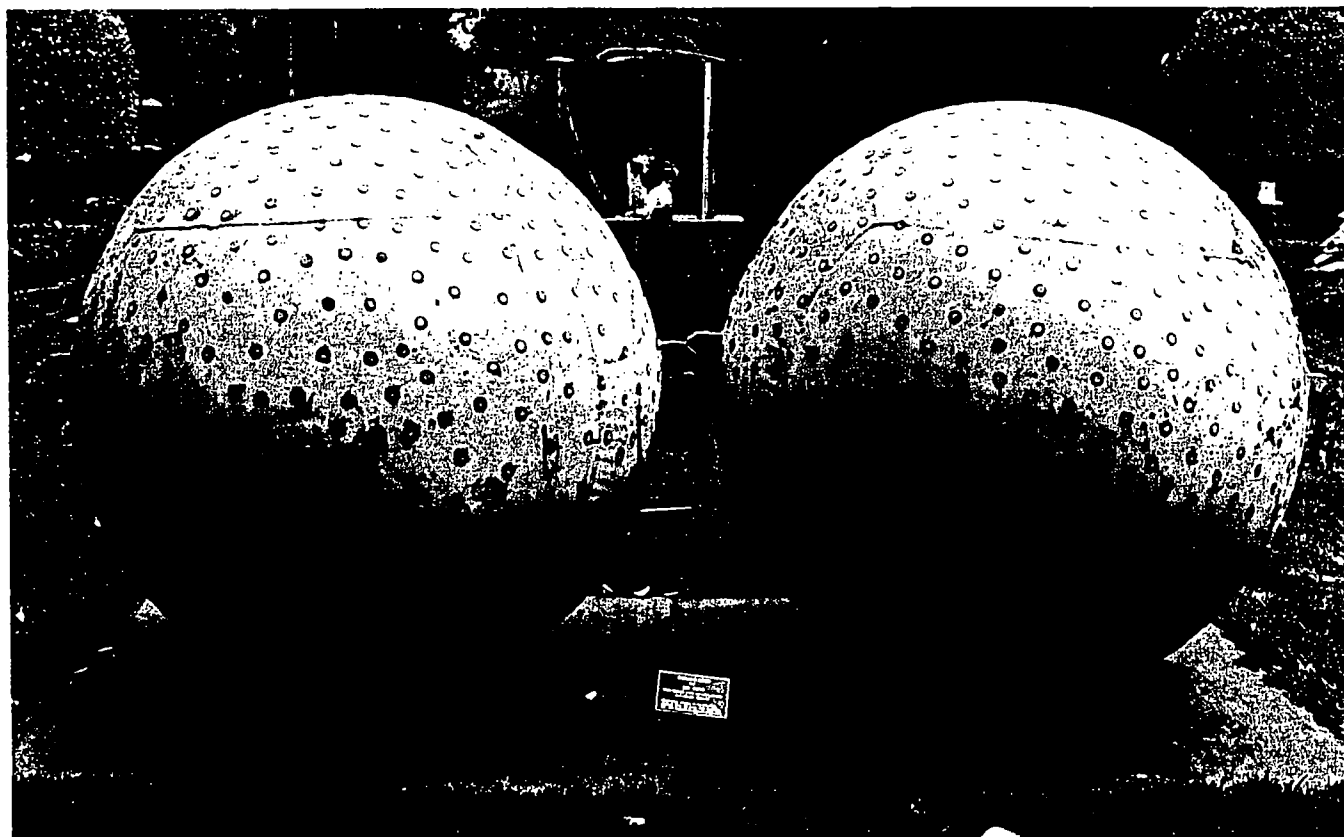
October 1995 through March 1996

Peter C. Marzio, director of Houston's Museum of Fine Arts and organizer of the third exhibition, said that the White House Garden "is quite wonder-

ful for mid-size sculpture—if it were any smaller, it wouldn't be worth it; and bigger, it would be too big." He adds that "The fact that the White House took it seriously elevated the project." Marzio and curator Alison de Lima Greene tracked down sculpture that had Western reference—as well as work in museums from Texas to California that "has transcended regional designation."

Their selections were on view in the garden and adjacent foyer. The works included Joseph Havel's *Exhaling Pearls* (1993), Jesús Bautista Moroles's *Moon Ring 3* (1982), Scott Burton's *Granite Settee* (1982–83), and William Tucker's *Track* (1981). The exhibition's opening had to be postponed from its scheduled November 1995 date; the federal government was shut down by an appropriations impasse. When the celebration finally took place on January 5, 1996, Mrs. Clinton pointed to the "difficult and challenging time in Washington and in our country," adding that contemplating sculpture can "make our spirits soar, reminding us of life's possibilities...and gives viewers a chance to think about what their own lives mean."

Below: Donald Lipski, *The West*, 1987.
Painted steel, corroded pennies, and silicone adhesive, two elements, each 60 in. dia.





Left: Chakaia Booker, *Repugnant Rapunzel (Let Down Your Hair)*, 1995. Rubber tire, wood, and metal, 35 x 25 x 22 in.

sculptors whose work had not been shown in the previous exhibitions.

From nine museums from New York to Maine, Tucker selected works made from 1971 to 1995 by internationally recognized artists as well as younger artists. Visitors entering the mansion were first greeted by the late Nancy Graves's 1984 *Dallaleve*. Maren Hassinger's *In a Quiet Place* (1985) is an excerpt from an installation in the Studio Museum in Harlem—a garden of wire, rope, and concrete, which refers to grass, weeds, limbs, and other natural elements.

"Landscape, myth, body, and spirit" were the subjects of the works, according to Tucker. Ed Shay drew from nature in his bronze *Acadian Gyro* (1987). The skeleton of a boat, with a fish head where the head of a maiden might be, was cast from latex and plaster molds found in Shay's own back yard. Shay says: "The work can be read as a sort of ancestral gyroscope; we are in part determined by who our ancestors were."

Also rooted in nature were Joel Fisher's *Seed (Egg Man)* (1986–87) and Chakaia Booker's *Repugnant Rapunzel (Let Down Your Hair)* (1995), a fairy tale character whose automobile tire tresses cascade down from the statue's sleek metal head. Robert Lobe, who worked in construction jobs to support his early sculpture work, created *Harmony Ridge #26* (1990) with anodized, hammered aluminum molded like clay to become a fictional rock. Melvin Edwards shaped his *Gate of Ogun* (1983) in silvery stainless steel. Like a shrine or altar, the piece is spiritually evocative.

Progress in the exhibition almost came to a halt when *The West* (1987), Donald Lipski's massive bronze globes studded with pennies, was stopped at the White House gates. "The Secret Service thought it looked too much like two land mines," said Carter Brown. "They said they had to be sure there were no explosives inside." Amused, Lipski said, "They wanted to bore holes to look. I didn't mind." But the Metropolitan Museum of Art, owner of the piece, would not hear of it. Th

Deborah Butterfield's bronze equine *Hina* (1990–91) perhaps most strongly signified the West for White House visitors. Butterfield says that being in the show gave her a greater understanding of the past and her connection to her Western forebears. "Being from Montana, I was moved by how much of a presence the West has in the White House...My sculpture was right outside the window from works by Fred-eric Remington and Charles Marion Russell," she says. "They seemed to be looking out at my horse. I felt connected to Remington and Russell in a way I'd never felt before." Butterfield says that *Hina* has its sources as far west as the country gets, being made from mountain driftwood gathered and assembled in Hawaii. The artist welded a bronze armature around the sticks, which were burned away in the casting—but the open-work effect leaves their

history, so that the work combines the earth's flora, fauna, and metal.

Joel Shapiro's bronze *Untitled* (1982), an abstract, geometric rendition of a human figure with limbs akimbo, stood in precarious balance in the garden across from Martin Puryear's *Decoy* (1990), which aimed its arched neck or snout at its neighbor, Robert Therrien's *No Title* (1985), a bold, sleek minimalist dunce cap.

Exhibition 4: The Northeast,

April 1996 through September 1997

For the final regional exhibition, representing art in the Northeast, curator Marcia Tucker, founding director of the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City, chose more avant-garde, adventurous work. Her aim was to focus on the way artists use physical material and conceptual boundaries in sculpture—and to find

sculpture was trucked out to the X-ray facility at a government ordnance plant in Maryland. "It passed inspection, and was allowed to enter the show...where it didn't bomb," laughs Brown.

Exhibition 5: The Nation's Capital, October 1996 through October 1997

The Committee for the Preservation of the White House had planned for only the four regional exhibitions during the first term of the Clinton administration. After the Clinton victory in 1996, however, Mrs. Clinton stated emphatically that she wanted to continue the series. Knowing that every tourist would not have a chance to see every museum in Washington, she had asked Earl "Rusty" Powell, director of the National Gallery of Art, to select the dozen best examples of outdoor sculpture in town. The exhibition included Willem de Kooning's *Seated Woman on a Bench* (1972), a heavy bronze figure gnarled as if in anguish, which was centered in the row of art between the trees. Mrs. Clinton says that she could not resist touching Harry Bertoia's 1977 *Tonal Sculpture*, which would set the work into motion and cause its tall, reed-like beryllium copper rods to produce sound.

Several of the garden sculptures represented the old guard of 20th-century sculpture, including Calder's *Nenuphar* (1968), David Smith's *Agricola I* (1951-52) and *Voltri XV* (1962), Alexander Archipenko's sleek *Le Gondolier* (1914), and Isamu Noguchi's *Great Rock of Inner Seeking* (1974). More recent works included Joel Shapiro's *Untitled* (1989) and, inside, Immi Storrs's *Five Horses* (1988) and Roy Lichtenstein's solid brass *Untitled Head I* (1969-70).

Mrs. Clinton invited the artists to a closing celebration in September, though Roy Lichtenstein and de Kooning had died during the exhibition's time. Judith Shea, whose *Shield* (1990) had been in the first show, came to the White House for the first time to see her *Post-Balzac* (1991) in this exhibition. That piece, a stately bronze coat, empty and austere, is normally on view at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, also home to Rodin's famous *Monument to Balzac* (1898). "I wanted to address

how, at the end of the last century, there was both romance and optimism for the next century," says Shea. "I wanted to ask, 'Where are we a century later?' This century's technical innovations have brought horrors, with the level of destruction we are able to do. The coat is hollow—a metaphor for

Below: Harry Bertoia, *Tonal Sculpture*, 1977. Beryllium copper and bronze weights, 212 in. high, 48.33 x 48.33 in. base.



the condition of the spirit, for emptiness." Shea adds that "to present American art in the context of the White House—to show visitors, heads of state—is a great contribution."

Exhibition 6: Honoring Native America, October 1997 through October 1998

In the five previous exhibitions, Mrs. Clinton had praised the diversity among the sculptors, by race, ethnic origin, and gender. But she had noticed there were no Native American sculptors represented. Were there, she wondered, Native American sculptors working in contemporary fine arts, who would comprise an excellent exhibition?

"Several years ago I met Allan Houser," says Mrs. Clinton, "And I adored him. He was a sunbeam—just this wonderful, joyous, open look on his face. He had a really magnificent, very large sculpture of a warrior that he wanted to give to the White House. This was before I'd gotten permission to do the sculpture garden. He eventually wanted it to go to the Museum of the American Indian, which we were supposed to be building on the Mall. I wanted to take the sculpture because he very much wanted to give it to the government. He was quite sick at the time. And so I called the Vice President and said, 'How would you like to just temporarily have on your grounds this rather large Indian warrior sculpture?' Allan Houser has since died. It was so important to me that he be represented in this exhibition."

Houser's sculpture, *Earth Song* (1978), a figurative Apache carved from Alabama marble, sits like a tribal elder at the east side of the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, an honored position for the "Grandfather of Contemporary Native American Sculpture." The artwork, on loan from the Heard Museum in Phoenix, was selected by the Heard's curator of fine art, Margaret Archuleta, who "would have chosen Houser's work to open the show even if Mrs. Clinton hadn't requested it," because of Houser's influence in bringing Native American culture into 20th-century art.

"My personal and professional goal is to include Native American art in the mainstream art world," says



Above: Truman Lowe, *Bird Effigy*, 1997.
Aluminum, 42 x 240 x 132 in.

Archulera, herself of Hispanic and San Juan Pueblo heritage. "Contemporary sculpture is a very new medium for Native American artists," she continues. "Only a handful work in sculpture, and even fewer are working on large-scale pieces that can be placed outside. Also, to be eligible, all the sculpture must be in a public collection. The challenge was quality in a field that was narrower than most."

In this exhibition, Allan Houser's student, Doug Hyde (Nez Perce/Assiniboina/Chippewa), echoes Houser's curvilinear traditional style with his Tennessee pink marble *Flag Song* (1983) made to commemorate tribal veterans on Veterans Day. Houser's son, Bob Haozous (Haozous is the family's original Apache name) departed from his father's style by working in stainless steel, employing a sleek, European-based rendering of line for *Woman In Love* (1983).

Sculpture by the youngest artist in all the exhibitions, Roxanne Swentzell, 35, of the Santa Clara Pueblo, was shown in the foyer. Her figurative sculpture, *The Emergence of the Clowns* (1988), in mixed-media clay, is derived from ancient effigy figures and shaped in the coil and scrape method of pot building. The sacred clowns, or *Koshares*, are shown in partial human form, as if emerging from the earth.

Also reflecting the Native American cultural heritage as well as contempo-

rary sculpture influences is another work in aluminum, *Bird Effigy* (1997), by Truman Lowe (Winnebago), an art professor at the University of Wisconsin. The sculpture was inspired by the ceremonial mounds in the shape of birds found along the Ohio, Wisconsin, and Mississippi rivers. Lowe was commissioned by the Heard Museum to make the piece in time for the White House exhibition. "On the University of Wisconsin campus, there's a bird-mound with a wingspan of 50 feet and a length of 30 feet, head-to-tail," he said. "I wanted to create something out of respect for that particular culture, from 2,000 to 3,000 years ago." But Lowe's White House sculpture is also rooted in the 20th century. Fabricated of curved two-inch solid aluminum rods, the open metal frame of his bird effigy, hovering above the ground, suggests the 20th-century re-interpretation of the bird as airplane, flying low like a stealth bomber. "I wanted it to be visible from the Presidential helicopter," said Lowe. "We're in the present," he added, "and peering into the future. The new technologies allow us to re-interpret our past. We don't create new forms; it's just using the information we have—and how we think about ourselves."

The purpose of the Sculpture Garden (as it is now informally called) is, in Mrs. Clinton's words, "to make a statement about the importance of art." Through all the exhibitions, Mrs. Clinton reports, the

public reaction has been positive. "We have been deluged with comments, reviews, and anecdotal evidence about how much it has meant." For the million-and-a-half people who walk by every year, she says, "It has provided a conversation piece. It's given people a chance to talk about art while they wait in line to see the rooms in the White House."

Of her opportunity to highlight American sculpture, the First Lady is even more hopeful of an impact: "The pieces themselves were so well showcased that a lot of museum curators and art patrons would come to our various exhibitions—and come away more positive about outdoor sculpture," she says, noting that many museums have little space outdoors.

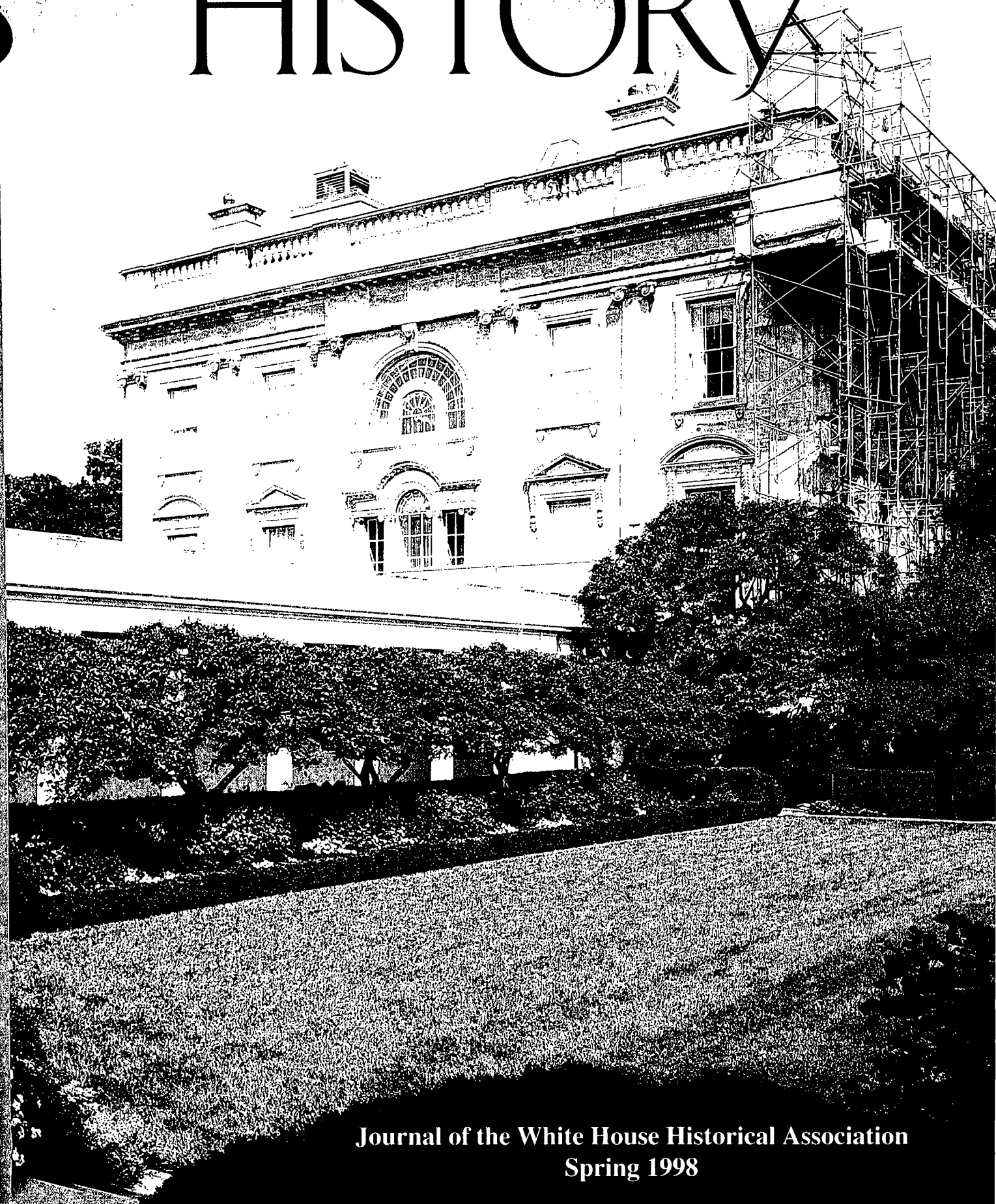
With two more exhibitions ahead, Mrs. Clinton would like to see the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden continue to feature sculpture, even into the future—and is dreaming about an endowment that might make it possible. "Obviously, whoever is here next will make whatever decisions they want to make about the sculpture garden. I hope they'll really pay attention to what it has meant and how it has finished off the look of that garden, and what it has meant to the people walking through the East Colonnade," she says. "And what it has meant to the artists, the museums, and the patrons of art—to art lovers around the country."

Mary Lynn Kotz is a writer based in Washington, D.C.

Michael -
These are
all
Clinton
acquisitions.

— Betty
Montman

WHITE HOUSE HISTORY



Journal of the White House Historical Association
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