

Synapse

Sculpture by Jane Manus



Harn Museum of Art
Gainesville, Florida



Spellbound, 2005, painted, welded aluminum, 72 x 72 x 34 in.
(182.88 x 182.88 x 86.36 cm.), lent courtesy of the artist

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Four metal sculptures by Jane Manus are positioned in three outdoor locations: the east, west and north sides of the Harn Museum of Art. Even though these works are separated geographically, their dynamic energy leaps from one space to another, like the synapse or junction between two nerve cells or neurons. Synapse also refers to the creative link between the work of Jane Manus and the work of the pioneers of geometric abstraction. On view for two years, the installation represents the first exhibition of outdoor sculpture at the Harn Museum of Art, located at the University of Florida Cultural Plaza in Gainesville.



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cover: *Homage to AI*, 2008
painted, welded aluminum
148 x 40 x 40 in.
(375.9 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm.)
Lent courtesy of the artist

Photography by Randy Batista

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The Artist

International artist Jane Manus has created a significant body of abstract geometric sculpture. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Manus' sculpture is also included in the public collections of the Lincoln Center/List Collection, New York; the Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, Georgia; the Sagamore Collection, Miami Beach, Florida; the Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, Florida; Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida; the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida; and the Flint Institute of Art, Flint, Michigan.

The Work

Manus has many antecedents in the arena of abstract geometric sculpture. Consider artists such as Tony Smith, Mark di Suvero, Ronald Bladen, Joel Shapiro and George Rickey. One of few female artists working in this genre, Jane Manus provides a refreshing alternative to massive and overpowering steel sculpture created by some of her male counterparts. Manus' sculpture is light and playful. Made from aluminum, they are painted in bright and bold colors. Her work avoids symmetry or predictability and is simultaneously simple and complex.

Exit Row, 2006, painted, welded aluminum, 168 x 72 in. (426.72 x 182.88 cm.)
Gift of Elayne and Marvin Mordes



The Interview

Interview with the artist, Jane Manus, by Kerry Oliver-Smith, Curator of Contemporary Art at the Harn Museum of Art

What interested you in becoming an artist?

When I was young, I always enjoyed drawing. Ultimately, I studied at Rollins College and the Art Institute of Boston and had my first one person show in 1976.

How did you discover your talent in metal sculpture?

In high school I worked with clay and had a kiln in my room. That was before my parents removed it for fear of burning down the house. Drawing, printmaking and painting were always part of my life. Eventually, I became interested in doing more monumental work and started working with wood constructions. However, I always found a problem with warping, so I turned to steel.

What do you enjoy about working with metal sculpture?

I like metal sculpture because of its permanence, and because you can see immediate results. You can tack or weld parts together to see what the work will look like. I like working with aluminum, because there are no rust problems and it is lighter. You don't need a hoist or crane. I am free to work on my own.



Extended, 2005, painted, welded aluminum, 72 x 136 x 48 in. (182.88 x 345.44 x 121.92 cm.), lent courtesy of the artist

Are there any specific historical or contemporary artists that you admire or who have influenced you?

The constructivists, Mondrian, Mark di Suvero and David Smith. Women sculptors who have inspired me include Louise Nevelson, Louise Bourgeois and Beverly Pepper.

Can you describe your creative process?

I begin with a rough sketch and then create a cardboard maquette. There are no writing pads with cardboard backings left in the house. Next I make a metal maquette, and then I begin work on the larger piece.

How would you describe the energy and movement in your work?

Movement is very important for me. You can look at my work from multiple views, and it will always be different. All of the angles are equally important.

What can you tell us about the relationship of your work to architecture?

Architecture has always inspired my work. Part of that comes from growing up in a house designed by Alfred Browning Parker.* In a different life, I would have gone to architecture school.

*Designer and builder Alfred Browning Parker is a famous leader in the tropical modern architectural style. Influenced by the "organic architecture" of Frank Lloyd Wright, Parker is well known for his homes in South Florida, where artist Jane Manus grew up. Manus' sculpture *Homage to Al* is dedicated to Parker.