

## *American Sculpture*

### Sotheby's *Beyond Limits* Exhibition

Monumental sculpture at Chatsworth since 2006

15 September to 12 November 2017



Education Pack 2017

## Welcome to our education pack for the Sotheby's *Beyond Limits* exhibition 2017.

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year of the *Beyond Limits* monumental sculpture exhibition at Chatsworth this autumn.

This pack is designed to help educational groups make the most of their visit, and may also be found on our website.

If you would like any further information about education visits at Chatsworth please contact the education team on [education@chatsworth.org](mailto:education@chatsworth.org) or call Sara Main or Rachel Parkin on **01246 565300**.

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## There's so much to see and do

We hope you will bring your group to see our Sotheby's Exhibition. Visits can be self-guided, or you can enhance your trip by including one of our range of guided tours or activity sessions available in the house, gardens, farmyard, or woodlands. Admission and activity prices start from £4.90 per pupil; please visit the education pages of the Chatsworth website for more information.

[www.chatsworth.org/education](http://www.chatsworth.org/education)

## Visit the House

### House tour | Allow 1.5 hours

Experience this amazing 300 year old family home, as our friendly guides take you on a journey full of tales about the people and objects that have shaped its history.

Your group will learn about key elements of the house, and compare and contrast what you see to modern life as you know it.

From ancient artefacts to modern art, our experienced guides will bring the house to life through information and stories. The tour can be adapted to suit children from each key stage and will focus on changes made to the house by the 1st, 6th, and the current (12th) Duke.



### See Chatsworth decorated for Christmas

If you plan to visit from 11 November, come and see Chatsworth at Christmas time, generously decorated with garlands and giant Christmas trees throughout the House. Step into the world and works of Charles Dickens, our theme for Christmas 2017.

Guided tours of the house are not available at this time of year, but there will be a trail that groups can use to bring their visit to life. Christmas sessions have very limited availability, so book early to avoid disappointment on 01246 565430 or [visit@chatsworth.org](mailto:visit@chatsworth.org)

## Explore the Garden

### Garden explorers tour | Allow 1.5 hours

The 105 acre garden is full of surprises with waterworks, inspiring sculptures, and amazing plants to discover.

Pupils will explore the landscape with an intrepid garden guide to uncover some of its hidden stories and secrets.

Specialist tours can also be arranged on request, for example to focus on water features, glasshouses, or sculpture tours.



## Get hands on in the Farmyard

All farmyard activities can be booked as a tour, or as a workshop in the Oak Barn. Please select either tour or barn on the booking form.



### Caring for animals | Allow 1 hour

Children will meet our farm animals and learn how we care for them within the context of a working farm. From fluffy chicks to majestic shire horses, pupils will get up close and learn how we look after them. Through 'hands on' activities they will look at health, nutrition, and growth, and make the links between farm animals and the food we eat. In the spring term there may be opportunities to bottle feed a lamb or goat kid as part of the Oak Barn session.

## **New life and growth (Animal lifecycles) | Allow 1 hour**

This session encourages children to get up close to our animals, to learn key words associated with adult and young farm animals, and about their life processes. With a member of the farmyard team, they will look at the differences and similarities between a range of farm animals and how they change as they grow. In the spring and summer terms, there may be opportunities to bottle feed a lamb or goat kid as part of the Oak Barn session.

## **Products and materials | Allow 1 hour**

This tour focuses on the link between the farm and the food we buy and eat. Pupils will learn about where food comes from, how it is processed, and also learn about other natural resources such as leather and wool.

## **Tractor and trailer ride | Allow 0.5 hours**

This exciting trailer ride is a great way to explore the stunning landscape at Chatsworth. A member of our farmyard team will share stories about farming and daily life on the estate, while you enjoy the spectacular views.

## **Get creative with our Outdoor Education**

### **Chatsworth explorers | Allow 1.5 hours**

Follow in the footsteps of Joseph Paxton to search for a very special plant. Use your compass and plant identification skills to journey through Stand Wood and find out the story behind the plant. The session finishes with a surprise discovery and the chance to enjoy a special treat cooked on the campfire.

### **Dens and shelters | Allow 1.5 hours**

Enjoy building dens and shelters with natural materials that are available in the woodland. This session is an engaging way to promote an understanding of the resources and habitats in the woods, while developing teamwork skills and using children's imagination.



### **Prehistory at Chatsworth | Allow 1.5 hours, or 3 hours plus lunch for full day session**

Get outdoors and get hands-on exploring prehistory through a range of activities. Test your survival skills in our Stone Age session, or try building with wattle and daub in our Bronze Age session. Why not make a day of it and compare the lifestyles of Stone Age hunter-gatherers and Bronze Age farmers in our exciting full-day session!

### **Woodland discovery trail | Allow 1.5 hours**

Discover Chatsworth's rich woodland and learn more about the plants and animals that can be found there. This session involves a walk through Stand Wood and a range of hands-on activities, such as measuring trees and searching for minibeasts.

### **Discover the Kitchen garden | Allow 1.5 hours**

Join us on a tour of our Kitchen garden and discover more about how we grow and use our fruit and vegetables. This unique insight into our Kitchen garden will involve seasonal activities to promote an understanding of the life cycle of plants.



# Talking about Art

Encourage your students to engage with art – factually, imaginatively, and emotionally. These open-ended questions encourage a thoughtful response from young people.

- How does the artwork/space make you feel?
- Why do you think the artist chose this material?
- Who/what influenced the artist?
- What do you think the artist was thinking about when they created this artwork?
- Where on the artwork do you think they started the piece, how has it developed?
- Do you think the artwork is based on reality, or imagination?
- Does it remind you of anything else?
- How is it different to experience a piece of art in a gallery or outside, compared to a book/the internet?

## Personal Response

- Do you like/dislike the artwork? Why?
- What do you think it means?
- How does it make you feel?
- What would you change about it?
- If you could talk to the artist about the work, what would you ask them?
- Would you want to take this home, and where would you put it?

## Process, Materials and Technique

- How has the artwork been made?
- What processes have been used?
- What materials did the artist use to create the art work?
- Is it realistic/abstract?
- What kind of marks/textures/details can you see on the surface?
- What tools do you think were used to create it?

## Form, Content, Colour

- Describe the shapes and forms you can see in the artwork.
- Do these shapes and forms remind you of anything?
- Describe the colours you can see.
- Has the artist used a limited or varied palette?
- How would the mood of the artwork change if it contained different colours?

## Factual Response

- Who made the artwork?
- Where was the artist born?
- What date was it made?
- What is it called?
- What is it made of?
- What colour is it?
- How was it made?

## Situation

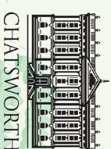
- Does the location of the artwork reflect its themes?
- If the artwork was located elsewhere, how might this affect your response to it?
- If you could display the artwork somewhere else, where would you put it and why?

# AMERICAN SCULPTURE BEYOND LIMITS

15 SEPTEMBER – 12 NOVEMBER 2017

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# American Sculpture : Sotheby's *Beyond Limits* 2017

## Introduction

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the legacy of European Modernism proved irresistible for artists internationally. In the United States of America, critical artistic breakthroughs came after World War II. Abstract Expressionism in painting ushered in a radical break with figuration, in favour of searing abstract immediacy. American sculpture moved beyond the predominantly figurative, even statuary, quality it had assumed in decades past, to assume an undeniable new authority.

This exhibition, the first of Chatsworth's *Beyond Limits* series to feature exclusively American sculpture of the postwar and contemporary periods, showcases an impressive range of monumental works by a number of the most important voices in the history of the medium.

Included in this singular selection is a significant work of 1962 by sculptural pioneer David Smith, *Voltri Bolton X*. Also from 1962 is an important early sculpture by leading pioneer of Minimalism, Robert Morris, entitled *Barrier*. These two works, executed in the same year, illustrate a moment of powerful transition in the trajectory of postwar American sculpture. *Voltri Bolton X* deliberately filters European tradition through the lens of Abstract Expressionism. *Barrier* signals an aesthetic and conceptual shift of seismic proportions, presenting something entirely new. These are the two earliest works in the exhibition, inviting the viewer to take a compelling journey through the development of American sculpture from the postwar period to the present.



### 1. Claes Oldenburg (b. 1929) and Coosje van Bruggen (1942-2009), *Leaning Fork with Meatball and Spaghetti II*, fiberglass painted with urethane, executed in 1994.



Oldenburg met fellow artist and curator Coosje Van Bruggen in 1970, instigating a powerful partnership (both romantic and professional) which lasted until the latter's death in 2009.

Coosje van Bruggen taught fine arts and art history at the Academy of Fine Arts in Enschede, the Netherlands, from 1971-1976. Claes Oldenburg was born Stockholm, the son of a diplomat, and the family lived in the United States and Norway before settling in Chicago in 1936. He studied art, and in New York City met early performance artists, before

displaying familiar objects made out of plaster, in celebration of society's consumption. Oldenburg was at the centre of the shift of Modern art away from Abstract Expressionism by choosing commonplace, mundane objects in bold, exuberant colours, that elevated popular culture to the genre of 'fine art'. Pop art hinges on this conflation of perceived 'low' and 'high' cultures, demonstrating that art can and will derive from any source-even a bowl of spaghetti and meatballs.

The pair's work was a true collaboration described by van Bruggen as 'a unity of opposites'; ideas were conceived jointly, Oldenburg drawing while van Bruggen chose colours, fabricated, and sited their works. Their exuberant, humorous sculpture allowed audiences to drop their guard long enough for Oldenburg and van Bruggen to offer sincere musings on contemporary self-identification and consumerism. Their enlarged objects, such as a fork and meatball, in incongruous settings verged on the irreverent.





## 2. Louise Nevelson (1899-1988), *Tropical Night Disc*, welded aluminium painted black, executed in 1975.



Born in the Poltava Governorate of the Russian Empire (present-day Ukraine), Nevelson emigrated with her family to Maine, where her father worked as a woodcutter and lumberjack before opening a junkyard. She explored Cubism and Surrealism, and found inspiration in Native American and Mayan art, dreams, the cosmos, and archetypes, as well as the Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-García.

Nevelson's sculptures were usually created out of wood, multiple intricately cut pieces placed into wall sculptures or independently standing pieces, often 3-D, like puzzles and often painted in monochromatic black or white, in her signature modernist style of the 1950s. For Nevelson black was

Totality... it contained all color. It wasn't a negation of color [sic]. It was an acceptance. Because black encompasses all colors. Black is the most aristocratic color of all. The only aristocratic color ... I have seen things that were transformed into black, that took on greatness. I don't want to use a lesser word.

In the 1960s Nevelson experimented with other materials such as aluminium, plastic, and metal. In the 1970s, when *she* was in her 70s, Nevelson embraced new materials like plexiglas and cor-ten steel, which she described as a 'blessing'.

Nevelson was key to the feminist art movement in 1970s America; a reviewer of her 1941 exhibition had written:

We learned the artist is a woman, in time to check our enthusiasm. Had it been otherwise, we might have hailed these sculptural expressions as by surely a great figure among moderns.

Nevelson said:

I'm not a feminist. I'm an artist who happens to be a woman.

Nevelson's dark, monumental works challenge notions of what types of art women would create, believing that art reflected the individual, not their gender.

By 1975, Nevelson was established as one of the leading figures of contemporary art in America, with a reputation that extended worldwide. The height of *Tropical Night Disc* – standing nearly 3m high – its consuming black colour and disparate angular elements mark the culmination of Nevelson's experiments with form and encapsulate the key themes that characterised her output throughout her career.





### 3. Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), *Soliloquy*, bronze with marble base, conceived in 1962 and cast in bronze in 1985.



Isamu Noguchi was born in Los Angeles, a Japanese-American.

For one with a background like myself, the question of identity is very uncertain. And I think it's only in art that it was ever possible for me to find any identity at all.

Amid prejudice and segregation, Noguchi's American mother took him to Tokyo. Aged 13, Noguchi was sent back to the U.S, to a progressive hands-on school in Indiana, and was known by the name 'Sam Gilmour'. His first art teacher told him, aged 15, that he would never be a sculptor, yet at Columbia University it became clear that he was not meant for medicine.

I think I'm the product of my mother's imagination...she kept hoping I would eventually become an artist.

So began his life as a sculptor, changing his name to Noguchi. Granted a Guggenheim Fellowship to study stone and wood cutting in Paris, he worked alongside Constantin Brancusi, under whose influence Noguchi's highly finished work became abstract and acquired a lyrical expressiveness that is an enduring characteristic of his mature work, including *Soliloquy*.

Noguchi believed that the sculptor's task was to shape space, to give it order and meaning, and that art should 'disappear', or be as one with its surroundings. Noguchi's sculpture reveals a uniquely Japanese appreciation for the innate beauty of even the simplest materials, matching them to the places he worked. He used any medium he could get his hands on: stone, metal, wood, clay, bone, paper, or a mixture of any or all—carving, casting, cutting, pounding, chiselling, or dynamiting away as each form took shape. *Soliloquy* is the artist's abstract interpretation of the act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself or regardless of any listeners, and gives expression to fundamentally human and frequently melancholic themes. The dark colour, reflective surface and manifest weight of the bronze lends *Soliloquy* an ageless and heroic quality.



#### 4. Sol LeWitt (1928-2007), *Three-Sided Pyramid*, Baked enamel on aluminium, executed in 1991.



Solomon 'Sol' LeWitt was born in Hartford, Connecticut to a family of Jewish immigrants from Russia. His mother took him to art classes. LeWitt moved to NYC where he set up his studio on the Lower East Side, in the old Ashkenazi Jewish settlement. LeWitt's studies, magazine design work for *Seventeen*, graphic design experience in an architect's office, and exposure to the community at the Museum of Modern Art where he worked as a night receptionist and clerk in the 1960s, all influenced his later work.

A founder of Minimal and Conceptual art, LeWitt's two and three-dimensional work ranges from wall drawings to monumental sculptures or 'structures' begun in the 1960s, which began in aluminium and wood. In the mid-1980s, he began working with concrete blocks, questioning the nature, form, and meaning of art

by interrupting space.

LeWitt's art demands a sense of humour. He focused on basic shapes, colours and types of lines, organized by specific ideas or instructions; a thought to be contemplated, plans for drawings or actions to be carried out by you—or not. Sometimes LeWitt's plans derived from a logical system, like a game; sometimes they defied logic so that the results could not be foreseen, with instructions intentionally vague to allow for interpretation. Like a composer for the musician, LeWitt, by his methods, permitted other people to participate in the creative process, to become artists themselves.

LeWitt spent the 1980s in Spoleto, Italy, settling finally in Chester, Connecticut where he died. He reflected:

A life in art is an unimaginable and unpredictable experience.



5. Joel Shapiro (b. 1941), *Untitled*, painted bronze, conceived in 2011 and cast in bronze in 2017.



Joel Shapiro was born in Queens, NYC, and travelled extensively serving in the Peace Corps 1965-7:

My two years in India were more influential than anything else in my decision to pursue my own work. I think being away from my own culture and immersed in another, and seemingly free from my own history, was a very present and liberating experience. I was able to rid myself of assumed ideas of what others thought I should be. I really decided what I could be, and that was an artist.

From 1980 Shapiro began making larger scale sculptures, and is an artist of international prominence. *Untitled* is a joyous expression of Shapiro's mature work; abstraction is weighed against figuration, and monumentality is balanced with agility, seeming to defy gravity. Shapiro's developing artistic vision seeks to ground his works in the world, paradoxically liberating them from their physical surroundings, eluding the heaviness associated with monumental bronzes. The characteristic energetic movement of his sculptures is contingent not on their size, but on their articulation which lends vitality to the figurative element.

I've not been terribly interested in the repositioning of found objects. I was more interested in the reconfiguration of and repositioning of relatively known, simple geometric forms. As long as the work was bound up by architecture or predicated on architecture, you know, it would only have limited possibility. I wanted to overcome that.

Shapiro lives and works in NYC.





## 6. Beverley Pepper (b. 1922) *Curvae in Curvae*, cor-ten steel, executed in 2017.



Beverly Pepper was born in Brooklyn, NYC to parents who were the children of Jewish émigrés. Her mother volunteered for the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*. Forward-thinking Leftist attitudes within her household shaped Pepper's ambitions.

There was nothing I ever thought would limit me because my mother and grandmother were very strong women.

Pepper studied advertising design, photography, industrial design, and art theory, and worked as a commercial art director. Over-awed in Cambodia by the way in temple and earth seemingly grew from the ground together, she said

...in 1960, I walked into Angkor Wat a painter and I left a sculptor.

Pepper first sculpted tree trunks, but was soon one of only three women invited by a curator to take part in an exhibition metal sculpture in Spoleto, Italy, in 1962.

...one thing I learnt growing up in Brooklyn is that if you're offered an opportunity, take it. You don't have to be qualified. You just have to have the chutzpah [gumption] to face all the possible downfalls...I never thought of myself as a 'female sculptor'.

From the later 1970s, Pepper was one of the first artists to work with Cor-ten steel, marrying the exposed rusted surfaces of this industrial material with nature, and inviting the viewer to be part of the work – towards a 'total environment'. Pepper is not spiritual, but her art taps into the monumentality of ancient totems and sacred sites, and evokes emotion from her modern materials.

You cannot be an artist and be dominated by your material she says. It's a dictatorship.

Pepper has enjoyed a career of over fifty years, and by distancing herself geographically from the art world she has forged her own path. Since the 1970s Pepper has lived between Todi, Umbria, Italy, and the USA. *Curvae in Curvae* is testament Pepper's continuing status as a pioneering sculptor at the age of 95.



## 7. Julian Schnabel (b. 1951), *Gradiva*, bronze with paint, conceived in 1986.



Born to a Jewish family in Brooklyn, NYC Schnabel became fascinated with Catholic, Meso-American, and Mexican culture when his family moved to Texas when he was 13. The new landscape ignited his senses and imagination, and it began a lifelong fascination with different cultures and lifestyle choices. Schnabel's work continually explores the theme of identity and self-identification.

Schnabel's works have been defined by a compelling sense of breadth and scale; they are impossible to categorise, veering from abstract to figurative. A multimedia artist, his work also spans music, photography, and film, as well as sculpture, referencing secular and religious symbols indiscriminately.

Schnabel found interest in the bronze casting process and pursued sculpture as a separate and parallel discipline 1982-1991. His sculptures can be understood as a documentation of the working process, a revolving creative system in which one sculpture provides feedback and input for the next:

I kept recycling the forms and materials of sculptures.

Imposing and dramatic, with an almost ancient religiosity, Schnabel's works maintain a sense of humour.

Since his first solo exhibition in 1979, Schnabel has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions worldwide, including retrospectives. He currently lives and works in NYC and Montauk, Long Island.

### *Gradiva*

The mould of *Gradiva* became *Golem*, which may be seen particularly by the difference in surface texture. The cold bronze of *Gradiva*, too, is literally lightened by the liberal splash of white paint.

## 8. Julian Schnabel, *Joe*, bronze, 1983, conceived in 1983.



*Joe* is a manifestation of Schnabel's 'mummy' shape, with the addition of foundry ladles that function like arms, making a cross. The sculpture was named after Schnabel's long term friend Joe Glasco, the American painter and sculptor.

## 9. Julian Schnabel, *Golem*, bronze, 1986, conceived and executed in 1986.



A *golem* is dust or earth brought to life by Hebrew incantations, a creature who in some stories threatens its creator as it runs amok, and in others becomes a helper, a companion, or a rescuer of an imperilled Jewish community. In modern Hebrew, *golem* means 'dumb' or 'helpless' and has passed into Yiddish as *goylem* meaning someone clumsy or slow. The mould of *Gradiva* became *Golem*, and the strengthening of the outside of the mould 'the tartan it is wearing'.

## 10. Julian Schnabel, *Si tacuisses*, bronze with paint, conceived in 1990.



The tribal association of *Si tacuisses* is looser than in *Lentweyler for BB* [below]. Schnabel noticed that the existential pilgrims who travelled to North Africa spent an inevitable night with the American composer, author, and translator Paul Bowles, who became symbol of elective migration living in Tangiers, Morocco.

Upon hearing yet another tale of a visitor's dinner with Bowles, Schnabel invoked the saying attributed to the late fifth and early sixth century philosopher Boethius *si tacuisses philosophus mansisses*, which translates as 'if you had been silent, you would have remained a philosopher'. Schnabel's choice of the palm tree in the sculpture may have predated this sign; Schnabel loves how palms represent the South, reminding him of his Texas childhood, and of Mexico.

## 11. Julian Schnabel, *Lentweyler for BB*, bronze, conceived and executed in 1989.



Looking at the world from the Australian coast in 1985, Schnabel began to collect South Sea figures, wooden constructions, with mystic value. Schnabel included these tribal figures in his sculptures cast in 1989, including *Lentweyler for BB* made to look like a South Sea drum. The form is the outside of a cast, like *Gradiva*.





## 12. Joel Shapiro, *Untitled*, bronze, executed in 2013. [For more on the artist see 5.]



Shapiro worked among a group of Post-Minimalist artists who refined aesthetic and unitary repetitions of minimalism, and reconnected them with the artist and the body. Minimalists had rejected self-expression, deliberately distancing themselves from the subjective, individualist tendencies of Abstract Expressionism.

Shapiro's work though was intended to communicate something of the artist's emotional state, and though his sculpture retains an abstract and scaled-down aesthetic, it achieves a suggestive, often anthropomorphised figuration.

I am interested in those moments when it appears that a figure is a figure, and other moments when it looks like a bunch of wood stuck together...

*Untitled* (2013) exemplifies Shapiro's virtuosity. The rectangular bronze pieces appear arbitrarily connected, but reveal the deliberateness of their construction upon closer inspection. Developed from Shapiro's scaled wooden models then cast in bronze or aluminium, his sculptures retain the animated dynamism of this methodology and the grain of the wood. Suggestive of a reclining figure, the inherent instability of *Untitled* evades definition, shifting under the eye, and eliding the gap between configuration and disfiguration.



## 13. Mark di Suvero (b. 1933), *The Cave*, steel, executed in 2015.



Mark di Suvero was born in Shanghai, China, the son of an Italian naval attaché. With the outbreak of World War II, he moved to San Francisco, California. Frustrated in his philosophical studies, di Suvero began to sculpt, and in 1957 moved to NYC to pursue his career. He worked part time in construction, using wood and metal salvaged from demolition sites to build dynamic sculptures that matched the paintings of the Abstract Expressionists in exuberance and size.

Ahead of his first solo exhibition in 1960, di Suvero almost died in an elevator accident at a construction site, suffering severe spinal injuries that left doctors questioning whether he would ever walk again. In rehabilitation, di Suvero learned to use an arc welder that would be critical to his later work, and by 1965 he could walk again unassisted.

di Suvero's sculptures began with large outdoor pieces using salvaged materials, but have transformed into a focus on H-beams and heavy steel plates, swinging and rotating elements, fabricated and installed by the artist, often using a crane. The movement of his sculpture is naturalistic and anthropomorphic.

*The Cave* is constructed from geometric steel beams and panels, with a pair of organic hanging shapes; a manmade structure offers up natural form for consideration. This work draws together the structural rigour of Cubo-Constructivism, and the gestural expansiveness of Abstract Expressionism, with kinetic art and surrealism, fusing the excitement of the momentary through movement, with the gravity of timeless geometry.

di Suvero lives in Astoria, Queens, NYC.



**14. Richard Serra (b. 1938), *Lock*, hot-rolled steel, in 5 parts, executed in 1976-77; this work is unique.**



Richard Serra was born in San Francisco to a Mallorcan father, a pipefitter at a shipyard, and a Russian Jewish immigrant mother who nurtured her son's creative talent: Of his childhood, Serra has said:

I grew up poor but the atmosphere was rich.

Serra studied English literature and art, supporting himself working in steel mills:

All the raw material that I needed is contained in the reserve of this memory which has become a reoccurring dream.

From 1970, Serra pioneered monumental outdoor sculpture that dwarfs the observer, challenging viewers' perception of their bodies in relation to landscapes, encouraging movement in and around his sculptures, each viewer creating the sculpture for themselves by being within it. Serra typically begins a sculpture by making a small maquette (or model) from flat plates at an inch-to-foot ratio, then consulting a structural engineer, who specifies how the piece should be made to retain its balance and stability. The weathering steel takes 8-10 years to develop its characteristic dark, even patina.

*Lock* is formed from five separate steel parts, elements that are not fused in any way; rather Serra relies on the forces of gravity and a careful balancing of the relative weights to achieve stability. The process of viewing *Lock* demands a passage through and around the work; it is an experience that must take place as a duration therefore forcing the viewer to contemplate the passing of time.



**15. David Smith (1906-1965), *Voltri-Bolton X*, steel, executed in 1962; this work is unique.**



David Smith was born in Indiana, and in 1921 moved with his family to Paulding, Ohio – which one commentator has called ‘Nowheresville’, USA. Smith’s mother was a schoolteacher, his father an engineer, and he recalled:

...we used to play on trains and around factories. I played there just as I played in nature, on hills and creeks.

Aged 19 he worked at the Studebaker automobile factory in South Bend, Indiana as a welder and riveter, developing a deep respect for iron and steel. Dropping out of university after a year, in 1926 he enrolled in the Art Students League in NYC, training as a painter and gaining exposure to European modernism.

Smith’s work captures the spirit of America’s transition from a rural and agricultural society to an urban and industrial one. As this new age of mechanisation took hold, Smith believed that artists should also embrace industrial materials and techniques. During the war, Smith refined his welding and riveting techniques when he worked for the American Locomotion Company assembling trains and tanks. Discussing steel as a medium, he said:

What it can do in arriving at form economically, no other material can do. The metal itself possesses little art history. What associations it possesses are those of this century: power, structure, movement, progress, suspension, destruction and brutality.

A contemporary of the Abstract Expressionists, Smith was arguably the father of post-war American sculpture and had huge influence on a subsequent generation of artists – many of whom are included in *Beyond Limits*. His work placed an emphasis on use of new and unusual materials, industrial techniques – especially welded iron and steel. The monumental scale and lack of sculptural density of Smith’s open, linear structure can seem disconcerting. Smith pioneered welding in sculpture and is best known for his innovative and remarkably diverse large-scale metal pieces, constructed from used machine parts, abandoned tools and scrap metal, almost like a paper collage. His work was initially inspired by Surrealism and Constructivism, but later works demonstrate a myriad of stylistic influences.

Early in his career, Smith was influenced by the work of European sculptors such as Pablo Picasso, Julio González and Alberto Giacometti, assimilating some of their techniques into American sculpture for the first time. By the early 1950s he had developed his own unique vision, which he pursued for nearly 15 years. In 1962 Smith was invited by the Italian government to make two sculptures for a festival in Spoleto. He was given access to an abandoned welding factory in the town of Voltri in Italy, and he set up a studio there. Inspired by his surroundings he made a series of 27 sculptures over the thirty days that he spent there using scrap metal, found objects, and anything else that came to hand– rusted bits of machinery, steel wheels, rudders, chains. The resulting works – which include *Voltri Bolton X* were shown to great effect in the amphitheatre of Spoleto and its surrounding streets.





**16. Wendell Castle (b. 1932), *Big M*, gel-coated fiberglass, automobile paint, wire, steel tubing, executed in 1971; this work is unique.**



Wendell Castle was born in Kansas. He studied industrial design, fine art, and sculpture. In the late 1950s Castle made his first piece of furniture – a coffee table to furnish his student flat. He disagreed with a tutor who told Castle that furniture was a waste of his time:

I thought why can't furniture be as important as sculpture?  
Why can't it be an art form?

In postwar America, crafts emerged as a popular artistic trend. By the late 1950s innovators in wood, ceramics, and metal had advanced beyond the previously accepted emphasis on traditional materials and function in the crafts.

Castle taught himself woodworking, moving in the early 1960s to Rochester, New York. His work challenges artistic conventions, breaking down the barriers that have traditionally separated design and fine art. Castle often names and signs his furniture, giving them the attributes of works of art. His bold, graceful sculptural pieces are often expressed with bright colour, taking reference from natural forms by rejecting straight lines in favour of free forms.

*Big M* was Castle's first fully realized large sculpture weighing over one thousand pounds. To make this sculpture, Castle created an armature out of steel rods, wrapped them with metal mesh, applied a sprayed-on fiberglass skin, and then coated the piece in reddish-orange polyurethane paint.



**17. Sam Francis (1923-1994), *Untitled*, cor-ten steel, conceived in 1979 and executed in 2003.**



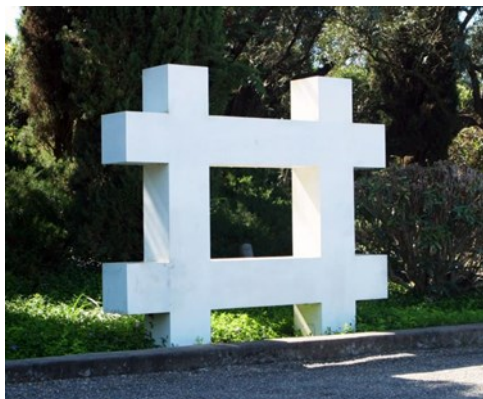
Sam Francis was born in California. Serving in the US Air Force during World War II, Francis was injured during test flight manoeuvres and began painting in 1944 after being diagnosed with spinal tuberculosis. Francis never settled for one discipline, rather reinventing and renewing his work, absorbing cultures and politics, and mastering new techniques. He kept studios in Bern, Paris, Mexico City, Tokyo, and NYC.

*Untitled* is a superb and rare example of Sam Francis' investigation into the possibilities of three-dimensional art. Francis made his first foray into sculpture in 1965; this coincided with his decision to spend an increasing amount of time in Japan. Francis' inclination towards Eastern thought and the spirit of Zen had a significant impact on his work, which values empty space, and light, as much the materials with which it is articulated. The concept of *Satori*, one of the first steps on the path to becoming Buddhist, refers to the idea of attaining enlightenment and self-understanding, and Francis's later works approach the unification of man and the elements which is essential if one is to achieve *Satori*.

Francis died in Santa Monica and was buried in Olema, California.



**18. Robert Morris (b. 1931), *Barrier*, cast white painted steel, conceived in plywood in 1962 and executed in painted steel in the 1980s; this work is unique.**



Robert Morris was born in Kansas City, Missouri. He studied engineering, art, and philosophy, interrupting his studies to serve with the US Corps of Engineers in Arizona and Korea 1951-2. Initially a painter influenced by Abstract Expressionism and its proponents living in California, the idea that art making was a record of a performance by the artist in the studio led to an interest in dance and choreography.

In 1960 Morris' work underwent a dramatic change; he moved to NYC to study sculpture, and became an early exponent of Minimalism and one of its key theorists. Morris produced a body of

work that employed a minimalist aesthetic, combined with a conceptual and performative practice, as a means of engaging with and challenging traditional notions of art.

Dating from 1962, *Barrier* is an important example of his minimalist practice from this period. It is one of the earliest manifestations of an idea that Morris pursued persistently over three decades. His 'frameworks' interrogate the conventional relationship between the frame and it's notional content, and between the frame and it's surroundings. Morris has said:

Simplicity of shape does not necessarily equate with simplicity of experience.

The minimalist simplicity of the design – in this case four intersecting white lines – belies a conceptual complexity. *Barrier* relates directly to another 'framework' from 1961, a wooden doorframe known as *Pine Portal*; the two works together provide a new spatial and theoretical environment for sculptural works. Interactivity, a central tenet of Morris' practice, provided the basis of what became arguably one of the most notorious exhibitions to be held at Tate Modern, London.

In 1971 Morris installed a series of works that encouraged the physical interaction of the viewer – from climbing ramps to balancing on large spheres – with the aim of reducing the 'self-importance' of the object, and emphasising the spectatorial experience. The show was forced to close after four days following a largely negative audience response and a media furore. The public of 1971 was not ready for Morris' vision; when the show was reprised in 2009 it was much more successful, reflecting the extent to which an audience now expect to be involved as viewers. This same involvement is demanded by *Barrier* which, in providing a physical impediment for its audience to negotiate, exemplifies the radical and visionary nature of Morris' art.



**19. George Rickey (1907-2002), *Column of Four Squares Excentric Gyrotory III*, 4 stainless steel squares, executed in 1990; this work is unique.**



George Rickey was born in South Bend, Indiana where the counterintuitive workings of the window latches in his historic home sparked his fascination with movement. This early spark of curiosity found expression in many of his later works, where the axes of motion give unexpected movement to the rectilinear forms of his work. Rickey's family moved to Glasgow, and he was later educated as a historian at Balliol College, Oxford, where he made frequent visits to the Ruskin School of Art, later finishing his studies in Paris. From NYC, Rickey was drafted and his experiences with aircraft and machinery fed his interests in all things mechanical, informing his practice as a kinetic sculptor.

Rickey saw his challenge as a sculptor in harmonising all turbulences to a 'sorted balance'. Instability and balance are often interpreted as a message of *catharsis*, or release from the stresses of time and velocity.

I have worked for several years with the simple movement of straight lines, as they cut each other, slice the intervening space and divide time.

The precarious and unpredictable alignment of the squares of *Column of Four Squares Excentric Gyrotory III* creates a pervading sense of physical instability and unrest. All Rickey's mobiles and kinetic sculptures perform their movements without any motor power, using instead the laws of nature, wind power, and gravity.

Like David Smith [no. 15], Rickey works all surfaces of stainless steel with an angle grinder so that the polishing marks bore themselves like notches into the 'skin'. Rickey explains:

I do want the surface to be sensitive to light, but the grinding is random, it does not bear any significance and does not cause an enlargement of the plane, neither colourfulness.

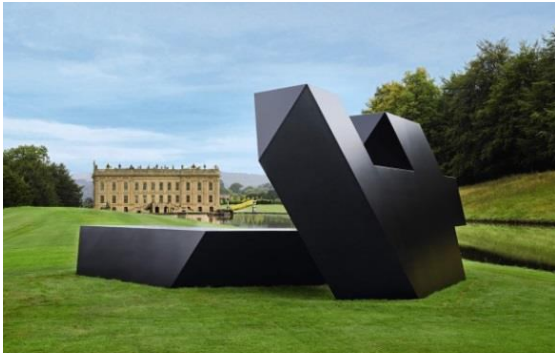
The mounted bodies, interconnected through hinges and bars, have to bend to the movement only.

Just like the painter deals with colours, the kinetic artist works with movements that are bound to certain periods of time.





## 20. Tony Smith (1912-1980), *Source*, steel painted black, executed in 1967.



Tony Smith was born in New Jersey. Confined with tuberculosis, he began to form constructions from the cardboard boxes in which his medicines came.

During the Depression, Smith attended evening courses in anatomy, watercolour, drawing, and painting, later studying architecture and working for Frank Lloyd Wright's Ardmore Project, Pennsylvania. Smith worked briefly as an architect in his own right.

While teaching a basic design course, Smith asked his class to make maquettes out of cigarette box cardboard, and then to increase the scale of their design by five using regular cardboard, with astonishing results that informed Smith's sculptural practice which began in the late 1950s. Smith's body of work defies categorisation: he was contemporary to and friend of the Abstract Expressionists, while the geometry and discipline of his forms share more overt affinities with Minimalism. He contemplated mass, balance, and volume; Smith would never begin a work with the end point already conceived of, but rather achieve his forms through experimentation.

In fact, *Source* was created from the dismantling of the maquette for an earlier work entitled *Gracehoper* (1962). *Source* is emblematic of Smith's output: imposing, multi-faceted, in his distinct black finish. The opportunities for shifting perspectives set a sense of order alongside disorder. The title is drawn from an 1864 painting by Courbet, *The Source of the Loue*, which long held fascination for him:

When I saw my sculpture I thought of this great flood gushing from the rock face.



**21. Robert Indiana (b. 1928), *Zero through nine*, Cor-ten steel, conceived in 1980 and executed in 1990.**



Born Robert Clark, in Indiana, his studies included a spell at Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland, before returning to NYC.

Indiana changed his name to reflect his home state in 1958, and incorporated materials and inspiration from his mid-Western landscape into his work – from simple wooden beams salvaged from demolition sites near his studio, to wheels, text, and numbers using abandoned stencils, to road signs, route numbers, and billboards. Indiana's work resonated as an exploration of contemporary identity exploring themes such as the illusory American Dream, and the universality of Love.

Indiana is one of the most significant members of the new generation of Pop artists who overturned conventions and eclipsed their established contemporaries.

Numbers always loomed large for Indiana.

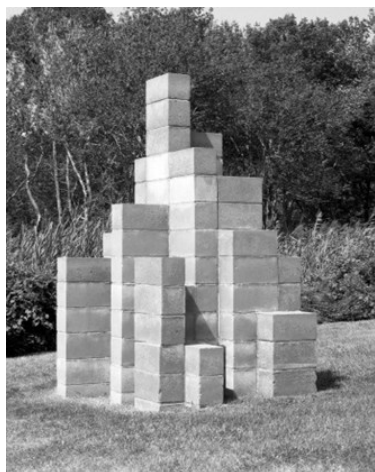
Numbers fill my life...even more than love. We are immersed in numbers from the moment we are born...by creating them, I've invested those numbers with a quality they have never had before.

Adopted as an infant during the Depression, by the age of 17 Indiana had lived in 21 homes. In the 1980s his *Numbers* series, including *Zero through nine*, saw numbers lead his assemblages. In its linear progression, 1 to 9 signifies the sweep of a human lifespan, with 0 the final point. His 6-foot-high numbers were exhibited in their coloured iteration along Park Avenue in NYC in 2014, as part of 'Art in the Park'; later that year they appeared in London as part of 'Sculpture in the City'. This is only their second public outing, where the material's distinctive rusty hue brilliantly contracts with the verdant surroundings, and picks up on the concept of found and re-appropriated materials so crucial to Indiana's famed assemblages.

In 1978, Indiana chose to remove himself from the New York art world. He settled on the remote island of Vinalhaven in Maine.



**22. Sol LeWitt (1928-2007), *Certificate for Irregular Progression*, a paper certificate, concrete and mortar once constructed, conceived in 2001. [For more on the artist see 4].**



*Certificate for Irregular Progression* comprises 111 concrete rectangular blocks which remove the artist's intervention from the process of creation. LeWitt emphasises the dismantling of their traditional use, focusing on the use of each block to redefine 'architectural space without the resort to objects'.

LeWitt redefines the relationship between artist and artwork in the most radical way. He uses raw, unpainted concrete, machine-made objects, assembled to create structural support.

Each block of the 'structure' is placed according to a specific plan LeWitt has drawn out, like an instruction manual for industrial construction. The creative act lies in the conception rather than the execution - a tenet of LeWitt's corpus of works.



## THANK YOU

We hope you have enjoyed exploring *American Sculpture* in the Garden; please do send us any feedback to [education@chatsworth.org](mailto:education@chatsworth.org)

We look forward to welcoming you to our Education House Preview ahead of our 2018 opening, from 3.30pm on 22 March; to attend please contact [education@chatsworth.org](mailto:education@chatsworth.org)

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information, or assistance in planning your educational visits to Chatsworth; we will be delighted to help you get the most out of your visit.