

FALL / WINTER 2020



NEWSCASTING

Grounds For Sculpture's publication for members and volunteers

REMEMBERING
**SEWARD
JOHNSON**

Collection News:
Beverly Pepper

New GFS
Explorers Guides

WELCOME



Michael Unger, Gary Garrido Schneider, Seward Johnson and Eric Ryan

Gary Garrido Schneider | Executive Director, Grounds For Sculpture

On behalf of the staff and board of Grounds For Sculpture, I send warm greetings during this continued time of uncertainty. We here at Grounds For Sculpture began this difficult year with the profound loss of our founder Seward Johnson. The absence of his jubilant presence and creative vision is deeply felt. Within days of his passing, before we could even properly commemorate his life, we were forced to close the park in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The support of our members during this period of closure was critical. Even when you were unable to visit the park, you provided the lifeline of support that ensured we could survive this crisis. We knew the most important way we could honor Seward's legacy was to reopen the park, and we are grateful to our members for making that possible. In this issue of *Newscasting* we remember Seward Johnson, and in spring 2021 we will invite you to join us for a memorial celebration honoring his life and legacy.

Since reopening in late July, we have been busy, even on rainy days, as people actively seek experiences outdoors. Many of you are even getting up early for our Member Mornings and enjoying the park to yourself. We are heartened to see people choosing GFS to spend quality time together after months of being

isolated and living on Zoom meetings. As I walk the park, I observe a sense of joy among guests that is life-affirming. The immersive visceral experience that Seward Johnson envisioned and made a reality could not be more needed than today, especially as we all seek balance and a renewed sense of our humanity.

In the season ahead, you will see an increased focus on our wellness initiatives as we tap the restorative power of art in nature. As we build on our founding value to make art approachable and accessible to all, you will also see increased clarity and intentional focus around issues of equitable access to the wondrous experiences here at GFS. We are thinking carefully about how we, as an organization, can respond to and be responsible in the face of centuries of economic and racial injustice in our country. We believe there is a positive role for art to play in imagining and building a better world, and we welcome your input in making that a reality here at Grounds For Sculpture as we continue to evolve.

While we have work ahead, our reopening has brought with it optimism and the assurance that Grounds For Sculpture will continue to delight, engage, and nourish for generations to come. We look forward to sharing the season ahead with you.

CONNECT WITH GFS!



@GROUNDSFORSCULPTURE

MAKE YOUR FREE MEMBER RESERVATION:

bit.ly/20Joptx

To ensure capacity is managed safely at GFS, all visitors including Members and Guest Passes require a timed reservation to visit.

VIEW OUR LATEST SAFETY GUIDELINES:

bit.ly/2NNUHD1

GFS is committed to the safety of guests, staff, volunteers.

VIEW CURRENT HOURS:

bit.ly/3964HR3

MEMBER EVENTS

MEMBERS-ONLY HOURS

Member Mornings have expanded!

Every Saturday and Sunday through November, members are granted exclusive early access to the grounds at 8 AM, and may stay as long as they wish. Enjoy a quiet start to your day and catch the morning light at GFS before the general public is admitted. At GFS, we believe visiting an oasis of beauty, where art and imaginatively landscaped gardens awaken the senses, enhances well-being, and stimulates reflection. To ensure capacity is safely managed at GFS, Members and Guest Passes require a free reservation to visit. **Reserve:**

groundsfor sculpture.org/timed-admission-tickets

MEMBERS' MUSINGS

December 1, 2020 – February 28, 2021

An annual exhibition at Grounds For Sculpture, this year's *Members' Musings* is the eleventh show featuring artwork exclusively by GFS members. In addition to supporting the arts, many GFS members are gifted artists themselves. This exhibition showcases the diversity of the organization's membership through their varied artistic creations and unique inspirations. This year's exhibition will be online and featured on Grounds For Sculpture's website. **Learn more:**

groundsfor sculpture.org/members-musings-2020

NEW & EXCITING FALL PROGRAMS

Fall Programs return to GFS reimagined with a mix of in-person and online instruction. These hybrid classes combine the experience of exploring GFS with self-guided visit and online instruction and conversation with artists and educators. Special focus is given to wellness and to connecting with our garden and outdoor collection. Highlights include meditation workshops for adults, a nature series with Mercer County Parks Commission, Nature Journaling for beginners, take-home ArtBoxes for families, and Winter Wreath Making.

Explore the program calendar:

groundsfor sculpture.org/calendar

ARTBOX

ArtBoxes are designed for children 5-12 years of age can be completed with family and friends at GFS, school, home or traveling. Each month will offer a new theme and supplies for you to explore. **More info:**

groundsfor sculpture.org/artbox-6



DIGITAL MEMBER LOUNGE

Challenge yourself with member puzzles, view artist talks and videos from the archives, and more! **Stop by the Digital Member Lounge:**

groundsfor sculpture.org/digital-member-lounge



GIFT MEMBERSHIP

GFS membership is the gift that lasts all year, sparking the imagination and encouraging wellness through art and nature. **SHARE GFS:**

bit.ly/join-gfs

For more information or to register for any of the listed events, call **609.586.0616** or visit groundsfor sculpture.org



With son, John Johnson and daughter-in-law, Susan Short at *That's Worth Celebrating: The Life and Work of The Johnson Family* GFS opening, 2017



Seward Johnson, *Out to Lunch*, cast bronze, 38 in x 60 in x 42 in, Gifted to Palmer Square, Princeton, ©1975 The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc.

REMEMBERING SEWARD JOHNSON

Honoring a Vibrant and Thoroughly Creative Life



With wife, Cecelia Joyce at GFS's *Seward Johnson - The Retrospective Gala*, 2014

John Johnson

My dad was born in 1930 into a world reeling from the Great Depression and ramping up to World War II, and in a way, his childhood mirrored the confusion, isolation and conflict taking place around him on a larger scale.

While his family wasn't lacking material comforts, all of the markers that we today think of as constituting "happiness" (e.g. a loving family, positive role model caretakers, a sense of safety and stability) were largely missing. My dad had a childhood that was anything but happy and filled with love. He told me his mother used to say, "Seward came out of the womb with his middle fingers up."

Painfully shy, an undiagnosed dyslexic and destined never to fit in, he survived service in the Korean War, a firing by his uncle at J&J and a disastrous first marriage. Deeply isolated, he was ready to tell all who would reject him or ask him to be something other than himself, to "go to hell."

After my dad met his soulmate in my mom – a moment he described as his major turning point in life – he found painting and became a father who brought the warmth and tenderness he had always longed for into his family's lives. Later, based on a suggestion from my mother (who noticed his mechanical interests) he began sculpting at thirty-eight years of age.

As he went to get his first pieces cast he discovered that as an artist, he was barred at the foundry door – this was to protect fabrication trade secrets. He, like every other sculptor who needed casting, was disconnected from this last, very important stage in the development of his artwork. My dad's response to being alienated from his own work was to establish the Johnson Atelier, a school and foundry where artists could stay intimately connected with their work and learn for themselves the techniques of casting and finishing, thereby expanding their own artistic practice.

The artworld's tendency toward a cold, conceptual appreciation of art combined with a "Do not touch!" imperative in so many museums and parks

helped inspire him to establish Grounds For Sculpture. Here he sought to reconnect everyday people who had been alienated by the art establishment, with sculpture and the moments of vivid aliveness that the best art experiences can bring.

What a healing process the park initiated! Not just for the industrial wasteland that the Fairgrounds had become, but for the countless families and individuals who, thanks to the carefully crafted experiences my father designed, found themselves in a relaxed and meaningful relationship with art for the first time in their lives.

In life as in art, I believe my Dad was most compelled by a desire to connect and to wake us all up from the trance that tells us our ordinary moments are not special and worthy of celebration. He considered himself a warrior against propriety and the way it can reify that trance, and worse, distract us from true morality which is the way of the heart.

Of all the organizations he founded, led or supported, perhaps his favorite was "the Naughty Club" whose membership consisted of his grandchildren and of which he was "Chairman". As he grew older, he repurposed the raised middle fingers -- and turned them, paradoxically, into a means of growing closer. He used them for "building intimacy" as he would say (with a twinkle in his eye). Some may remember him making a playful entrance at the Thursday night sing-alongs at GFS, dancing as he entered, middle fingers raised high in what he called "The Naughty Club Salute"!

While my dad lived a life mind-bogglingly full, it was not the adventures, too numerous to count, that made it full. It was his quest for connection with all his fellow humans, and finally, himself that defined his life as whole. Maya Angelou wrote, "You can only become truly accomplished at something you love." What my dad loved was forging connections from his heart to the hearts of others, through his sculpting and through the Grounds For Sculpture.

Left Page: Seward Johnson, *Stainless Girl*, 1969, cast stainless steel, 15 in x 30 in x 40 in, 1/8, Collection of The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc., ©1969 The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc.; Seward Johnson, *Safety in Seas: Edwin Link*, cast bronze, 32 in x 42 in x 36 in, Collection of The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc., ©1976 The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc.; Seward Johnson, *My Sixteen-Year-Old Jazz Dreams*, 2016, cast bronze, 72 in x 252 in x 168 in, 1/8, Collection of The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc., ©2016 The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc., Photo: Paula Stoeke.; Bottom Right Photos: David W. Steele. Right Page: Right Photo: David W. Steele



[With daughter, India Blake Johnson]

India Blake Johnson

MY FATHER

Anything strong and vibrant was you to me.
 A statement of beauty and a little crazy,
 Wrapped in meaningful layers of complexity!
 Yes, you are complex in the most wonderful sense,
 A true salute to how to enjoy life
 And make waves as you tread!
 You spoke your mind clearly and wisely
 And guided yourself through a labyrinth of difficulty
 To where you could breathe freely and be yourself and
 Have the space to create a life of relevance with those
 You chose to surround you.
 Your family and the man on the street;
 You would embrace us all equally,
 With the same smiling acknowledgment
 Of love and grace.

AKUBRA

I picture you, my father, in your moss green suede jacket
 and your Akubra hat with the detailed band.
 You are walking down the long length of road on the farm in Hopewell.
 You stop to say hello to the horses, grazing in the field
 underneath the three tall dark pines.

The largest of the horses, Noble, strides over to meet your open hand,
 you're ready to give him a warm pat on his long chestnut neck.
 A smile spreads through your entire being! Interactions with animals and people
 is what life is all about, communicating an intrinsic connection,
 communicating love!

You are at ease with yourself and the vastness of the outer rim of existence.
 The thin line between here and now and the felt edge of something beyond.
 You touch it, then let it go,
 Knowing you will be a part of the mystery one day.

Left Photo: India Blake Johnson

Eric B. Ryan | Trustee and Board President, Grounds For Sculpture

My first visit to what would become the Grounds For Sculpture could not be considered to be auspicious. My uncle Seward Johnson invited me to see what he enthusiastically called his dream, but which, at that moment looked more like King Augeas' stables. The Domestic Arts Building was home to several hundred pigeons and the blanket of guano testified to decades of habitation.

The buildings were not just filthy, they were actively decaying. Scars in the earth punctuated the landscape as excavators pushed debris into piles and plans were made to preserve what could be preserved and to transform the rest into a showcase of fantasy and celebration. I vividly remember the twinkle in Seward's eyes as he described his vision. He was not merely energized, he was effervescent and, perhaps, a bit disappointed in me as my astonishment at the breadth of his ambitious vision may have revealed that I was incredulous.

He did not let my doubts temper his enthusiasm and our tour of the nascent Grounds continued: Here would be the site of a three-star restaurant. Here would be planted with Maples in an allée reminiscent of Provence. Here would be water gardens and artist studios over there. The details were all worked out in his mind and, while I struggled to keep up as best I could, I could only be caught up and carried along by his inspiration and enthusiasm.

Over the next decades I watched the rapid unfolding of Seward's dream and was invited to participate in guiding the development of the Grounds For Sculpture from its private foundation roots to being the sustainable public institution it is today. I was able to celebrate with Seward in 2014 with the retrospective of his life as a sculptor and the emergence of the park as a vital cultural institution and manifestation of Seward's visionary philanthropy.

Seward's lifelong predilection for dreaming big did not desert him in his later years. Visiting with him in Nantucket in 2018 I found him captivated by the idea of a last, great artistic gesture.

He was actively planning a sculpture of over one hundred life size historic figures. He wasn't sure yet who he was going to include but the "Walk of a Hundred Great Men and Great Women" was intended to present these figures walking together in conversation. He intended to present Thomas Jefferson as being harangued by a French philosopher for being a slaveholder, Martin Luther King in conversation with Ghandi, Suffragettes and abolitionists all in an evolving historical conversation.

It saddens me to know that Seward was not given the life energy to complete this work, but it was such a gift to know that he left us still effulgent with creative impulse.



[With nephew, Eric Ryan]



Property prior to Grounds For Sculpture Construction, Mid-1980s



Grounds For Sculpture sculpture court currently

Bruce Daniels | Project Manager, The Atlantic Foundation

The phone rings... "Hello, it's Seward..... Seward Johnson." (... as if somehow, maybe, there was another Seward.) It was April 1984 and I was the newly minted Property Supervisor of the Atlantic Foundation. "We just bought the twelve acres behind the Atelier along with the three old Fairgrounds exhibition buildings. I want you to secure the property and stabilize the buildings." I didn't know it then, but this was the phone call that would change my life. The phone has been ringing ever since, spanning several decades, reverberating into a new century, and covering a technological era from answering machines and pagers all the way to iPhones.

In 1985 Seward called with a request that I set up an architectural design competition for the creation of a sculpture park on the twelve-acre parcel. Where most people (okay, all people, myself included) saw a rubble strewn ruin of what used to be the New Jersey State Fairgrounds, he somehow imagined a garden full of art. The architects presented early the following year, and Brian Carey of AC/BC Associates in New York City was selected as the project architect. His minimalist model would serve as the backbone of the sculpture park, but phone calls from Seward would inspire its evolution.

"Hello, it's Seward..... Seward Johnson."

"Hi Mr. Johnson. How are you?"

"I'm fine, thanks. I just wanted to let you know that I've come up with a name for the sculpture park. We're going to call it 'The Park for Corporate Art' or maybe 'The Corporate Art Park'. Set up a meeting with Brooke (Brooke Barrie, the Park's first Director and Curator) and Brian. I want to show you all a sign I drew up for the main entrance."

Sometimes Seward's phone calls weren't exactly thrilling. Sometimes, as in this case thankfully, they turned out to be evolutionary dead ends.

But most were anything but dead ends. Most of Seward's phone calls brought dynamic, interesting projects to life.

"Hello, it's Seward..... Seward Johnson. I think the park should have a gazebo."

"Hello, it's Seward..... Seward Johnson. I want to turn an iconic French Impressionist painting into a three-dimensional landscape with painted bronze figures. I want people to be able to walk around inside the painting and see it from different angles."

"Hello, it's Seward..... Seward Johnson. I think the park needs more amenities. Please ask Brian to redesign the Domestic Arts Building. I want it to include a café and a museum shop, more exhibition space, offices, and more bathrooms."

"Hello, it's Seward..... We should have a Water Garden like MoMA; a Helipad; a Greenhouse; Peacocks; another large scale Impressionist painting; sculptures like bread crumbs leading you in from the new railroad station; new foundation offices; a restaurant we're going to call Rat's; a watercourse; a Dance Pavilion; a Gypsy Wagon; Monet's bridge; Artist Studios; more large-scale Impressionist paintings; a Warming Hut."

"Hello..... We're going to make John Martini's sculptures 20' tall and I want you to install them out on the Interstate Highway. And by the way we just purchased the brick building across the street from the park. I want you to move Fairgrounds Road."

"You want me to do what????!!!" (Okay, I never said that, ever.)

"Hello..... a new main entrance arbor; another pond; an Event Facility; more gallery space; an Education Center; a Visitors Center; an Auditorium; a Library & Resource Center; a new Museum Shop; another Café... with Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' revolving on the ceiling; and The Cecelia Joyce and Seward Johnson Gallery."

Now the calls have stopped... And the silence is simply enormous.



With Bruce Daniels in Key West

Michael Unger

Chief Administrative Officer, The Atlantic Foundation,
The Seward Johnson Atelier and Johnson Art & Education Foundation

Seward sometimes described the visceral moment to me as that moment when your reaction is so honest and of the moment that primeval emotions can bubble up from deep within. This was how he hoped people experience his art. It was also how he hoped people would experience Grounds For Sculpture, which I think he thought of as one of his artworks.

Seward was a visionary and a builder. He sought the company of others who shared his sense of mischief. Building the park grew from his desire to share his sense of fun by creating a place where you could be yourself, lose yourself, or find yourself – sometimes all at once. His early struggles seemed to manifest themselves in a commitment to create a place where he, and by extension others, could experience something for the first time. He built a community of artists and designers. He challenged us to take liberties that others might not have taken.

"Seward had a deep sense of what it meant to connect with others."

Often when my phone would ring it was Seward on the line with an idea. He had just dictated a memo about his idea that he was going to send to the team. He was so excited about it that he had to call someone to talk about it, someone who could help. I certainly wasn't the only one to get the call, but you felt as if you were. He was personally connecting you to his vision for whatever it was that got his blood pumping – great fight, or irresistible challenge. It could have been a vision for repurposing a building into a gallery, a magical café, theaters – a gathering place. It needed food, drinks, music, sunlight, and it needed to provide shelter from the weather and light in the darkness. It needed to be evocative and worthy of a first date. Other calls described fire floating on the water outside of Rat's Restaurant, underground galleries, enchanted forests, galleries that open up into nature, buildings connected by pathways that might provide shelter from the rain and capable of being flooded for ice skating in the winter. Some of these materialized. His ideas were as endless as his energy and his love of connecting people.

It was on one of those calls when he said, "I think I know just what Rat's Restaurant needs: Sing Alongs!" You could have heard crickets in my reaction. He got busy picking the songs and selecting a pianist. We printed books of his favorite lyrics. It took a few weeks to find the perfect location and for the idea to catch on, but soon enough it became a highlight of the week in Rat's Pavilion. Singing and dancing with his tap shoes, he could lead a standing room only crowd in "I Love Paris". He made friends, told stories, embellishing some of them to the crowd's delight, danced with Mrs. Johnson, and sang Christmas songs surrounded by family.

Seward would appear at my office door, having come down from his studio with clay under his fingernails, and say that being an artist gave you such a sense of freedom and joy that it sometimes didn't seem right to call it work.



10/4/201



Top Photo: With Michael Unger and Brian Carey at construction site of the Seward Johnson Center for the Arts building; Bottom: Site planning for new installation with Claire Brown, Charles Haude, Michael Unger, and Autin Wright

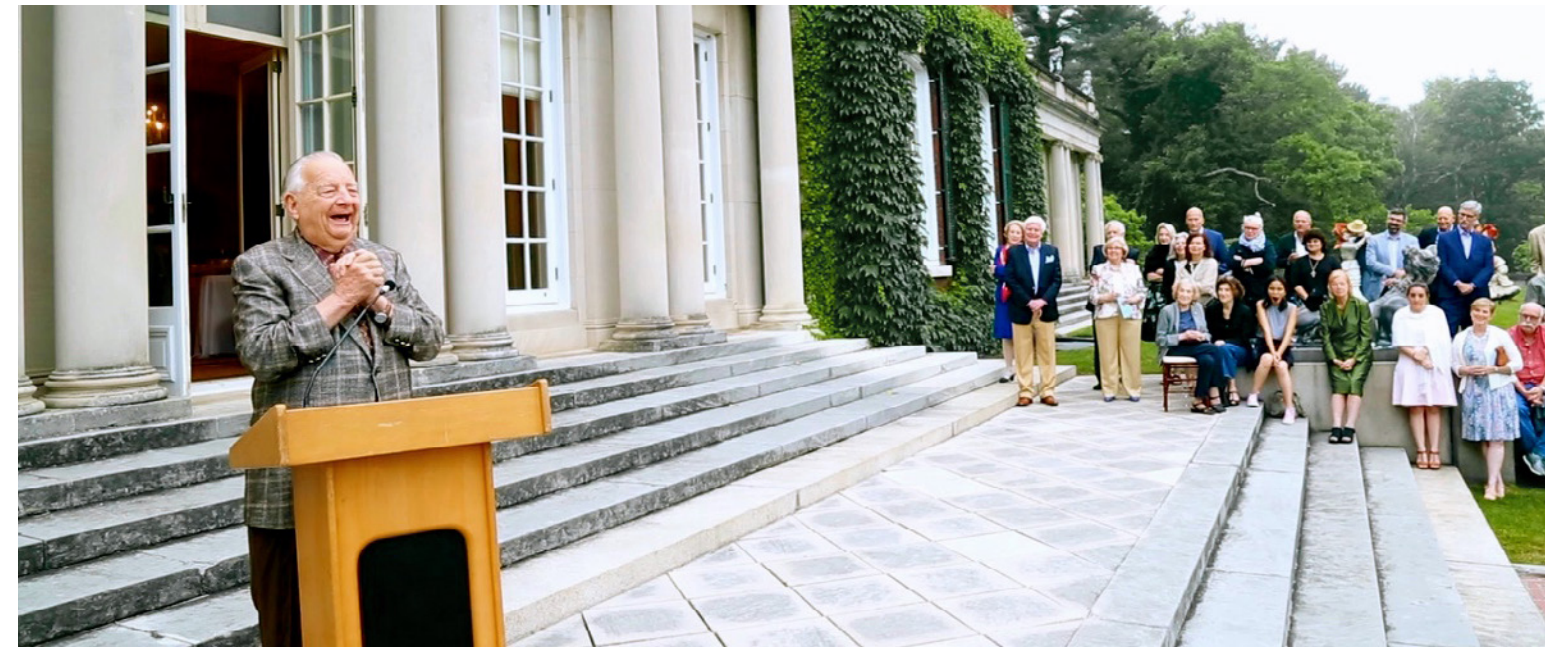
Seward had a deep sense of what it meant to connect with others. He said, "We must create an atmosphere that elevates the spirit and sense of adventure, transporting them to a place where they are free to experience art through all the senses." And he did. There was an unmatched authenticity in both his creative expressions, and his pursuit of a good time. I was among his greatest admirers and advocates in his quest to make our little world a better place, inviting others to what he sees, being open to surprises, and to stop taking ourselves so seriously. I am thankful for the opportunity to have played whatever modest role I could in this adventure.

Paula Stoeke | Curator, The Seward Johnson Atelier

Seward Johnson was larger than life. His vitality filled any room that he was in. Often, at an opening event, I'd look over and see a crowd surrounding Seward. He would be telling a great story, an irreverent one, and undoubtedly making every person within earshot laugh. His natural charm, cunning humor and ever-present sense of fun won everyone over time and again. I always appreciated his raw exuberance! If he delighted in something – an idea, an insult, a clever joke – he'd vigorously rub his palms together. It was as if the energy had to go somewhere. And it is this very same life force that you see in so much of the inventive design of the park, in his bronzes, at Rat's Restaurant and throughout the Atelier. Never doing anything half-way, Seward Johnson's expansive creativity always went the extra step – often in surprising directions – and always beyond what you expected. His imagination, and his sheer thrill at making something that would be new, different, bigger and better, kept him pushing the edges in every project. Always with the end user in mind.

"Never doing anything half-way, Seward Johnson's expansive creativity always went the extra step –"

How might he connect with people and give them the same joy and rush that he had. Bring them into the sense of discovery and make them complicit in the experience of the art and the artist. There was nothing more fun for me than calling Seward with some good news. And there was not much that was more romantic than watching Cecelia and Seward dancing together. Seward was beloved. His legacy as an artist, a leader, a friend to all, and as a rare and spectacular individual, will remain vivid and alive in our hearts.



Opening ceremony at Old Westbury Gardens, 2017



Discussing a new piece with Claire Brown, Atelier Director



Top Photo: Being interviewed at his opening at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2003
Bottom: With Paula Stoeke



Jon Lash | President and CEO, Digital Atelier

When I think back to my early times with Seward Johnson, laughing and chatting, probably over a glass of wine at lunch, I would remember how he would close his eyes, then begin to speak about what changes he could affect. At first occurrence, it was fun to go along with some of his discourse. All artists like to dream. But, in time, more and more of these conceptual visions began to come to life. The creation of his own Atelier spoke to the needed relationship of the Artist and Craftsperson. In his own work Seward would address the unfolding of his imagination; that it was most important to influence others and communicate the narrative of his sculptures. In these times the critics were secondary symptoms, often meaningless to him. And yet the vision began to metamorphose as his boundaries expanded and he began to consider other artists' creations. Seward saw the importance of opening the atelier to other sculptors. The techniques being taught were traditional, but rapidly changing as new materials were developed, and techniques modernized. Students became craftsmen became sculptors. It was during this period Seward created a fund that was employed to allow

"All artists like to dream. But, in time, more and more of these conceptual visions began to come to life."

sculptors to gain entry into making works of art that would not normally be affordable to themselves. These visions were all growing rapidly. Seward also saw the need to display this work amongst a community. That idea led to the development of Grounds For Sculpture. I, myself, as a sculptor, was influenced by all this rapid change. The Atelier began doing many experimental techniques in bronze casting, mold making, fabrication and patination. In the end, all these manifestations influenced my thoughts and direction. When I first proposed to Seward a means to transition sculpture making from analog to digital, he saw right away this was to be the future and made sure that it would happen at his Atelier. The rest is history. Seward Johnson was a visionary, and my friend.



Installation of *Dejeuner déjà vu*, Seward's first pieces in the Park, 1994



With Jon Lash

Top Photo: David W. Steele; Bottom Left: Seward Johnson, *Dejeuner déjà vu*, 1994, cast bronze, 62 in x 132 in x 360 in, 1/8, Gift of The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc., ©1994 The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc.

Left Photo: Seward Johnson, Study for Leadership Walk ©2019 The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc. Photo: David W. Steele



Leading a Salon Tour at the Seward Johnson Center for the Arts



Opening of *Were You Invited?* at GFS with the Atelier's late Supervisor of Modeling and Mold, Andrew Pitynski, 2001

Lynn DeClemente Losavio | Collection Manager, The Seward Johnson Atelier

This has not been an easy piece to write. I don't know if it is that I am faced with the reality that Seward is not sheltering in place like the rest of us, or perhaps that I am confronted with trying to capture all that Seward is, coupled with the loss, love, humor and gratitude that we are all feeling in just 500 words. Sometimes, you must do things that are bigger than you, even if you don't know where to begin or are afraid that you might fail - Seward taught me that. So, I will try, and I will focus on the small - the everyday moments that felt big.

Before becoming the Collection Manager for The Seward Johnson Atelier, I worked at Grounds For Sculpture for eight years prior. As a member of the senior staff at TSJA, I provide managerial oversight for the collection, collaborate with colleagues on programs in advancement of our artistic mission, and serve as the exhibition and collection staff liaison between TSJA and GFS. This collaboration plays a key role in the growth of the relationship between the organizations supporting Seward's legacy. However, over the past almost two decades, most of you may know me as the person who is present when Seward is holding court, usually holding his hat or jacket, placing a glass of water next to him, or gently interrupting him so his story is just the right amount of naughty. There is a complexity to Seward and working for him can be, too.

Whether at one of those events or being at his home for a meeting, I can still remember him walking into the room, the large exaggerated jolly laugh, the pause and smile he would give you like he couldn't be happier to see you. If he wasn't in New Jersey, you could expect a phone call during his morning rounds (11:30am-1pm), even though the Atelier has religiously broken for lunch at 12:30pm. If he did not call you then, you would more than likely get a call at 4:45pm. If he ever called on a weekend or after hours by chance, he would always begin by apologizing for interrupting family time, continuing to tell you what information he was looking for, or sometimes just to talk. Even before the current pandemic, I was able to work from home because Seward understood what a big factor family is. He always told me that the



With Lynn DeClemente Losavio during a signing of his book *Midnight Snack Art* during an exhibition of his painted trays at Old Spouter Gallery, Nantucket, 2018

most important job in the world was being a mother. I felt close to him while listening to his life stories and sorting through family photos for the exhibition in the Cecelia Joyce and Seward Johnson Gallery. I am grateful that I was trusted with such personal information and to work with the Johnson family as a whole, as family was so much of who he is.

He was always generous and thoughtful. Dining with Seward as his guest meant to have the seat with the best view, or the recommendation of where to sit, so as to have the best conversations. He was masterful at ordering a bottle of wine, asking everyone at the table what they were having for dinner so he could pair the wine selection appropriately. In January, I was able to spend time with Seward in Key West. We spoke about his artwork, ideas that he was working through, the business of the Atelier, family, but we also spent much of our time not talking - just being together in the same space and taking in the beauty of the sun reflecting off the ocean.



VIRAL ART

Seward Johnson enjoyed tracing the repeated motifs seen throughout the history of art. In this scene we take trip through time from Monet to Manet, Manet to Churchill, and then Churchill to Seward Johnson, building exponentially across the eras. The sculptor noted, "Churchill was alive while Manet was, and I was not" thus Churchill provides a literal time conduit between Johnson and Manet. Years before COVID-19, and referencing the title and the possibility of contagion, Johnson said that he "added Churchill in this way to make sure that the "virus" could continue its spread!" Seward developed this sculpture, consisting of five distinct parts, over a period of years beginning in 2013 and completing in 2019.

Monet (and his wife) are afloat in the harbor at Argenteuil on his boat studio where he captures the view on canvas. Manet paints Monet, Churchill paints Manet, and Seward Johnson portrays Churchill. In the final note of this triumphant installation, the ever-playful Seward Johnson generously includes us, the viewer. We are given our own easel, canvas and the encouragement to participate. It's now our turn to paint Seward Johnson - if only for a keep-sake photograph.

If the virus is art, is creativity, surely Seward Johnson embodied the concept of inviting everyone to be a part of it, to join in, to catch this virus and to feel into, as he often said, "the visceral moment".

WATCH THE VIDEO:

youtu.be/OJfvblCOeT8



Detail view of *Viral Art*, now on view at Grounds For Sculpture

COLLECTION NEWS

BEVERLY PEPPER

Faith McClellan | Director of Collections & Exhibitions

*I never do anything consciously. I follow myself into the next thing. And it's very rewarding to wake up and find out that I've been brave. I didn't know I was brave. But then you find out you're brave. And I think you can't be an artist without courage*¹.

Among the many great works in the GFS Collection that demonstrate the range of American 20th century sculpture are three works by Beverly Pepper: *Untitled* (ca. 1968, stainless steel), *Split Ritual II* (1992, cast ductile iron), and *Paolo e Francesca* (1999, stone). These works in turn display the depth and range of Pepper's artistic practice. Thanks to a grant from American Express, over the summer we were able to expand our conservation efforts while continuing to honor Pepper's legacy. During a previous American Express funded project in 2014, GFS Curatorial staff completed an analysis of underground foundations and paint systems that informed our future conservation goals. In the 2020 project, we focused specifically on two works identified as needing intervention during the previous survey, the *Untitled* work in the Water Garden and *Split Ritual II* in the Rat's Woodlands area.

The most successful conservation projects start with a fundamental understanding of not just the materials used and how to treat them but are also built on a deeper understanding of the artist's intent and practice. Over the course of her long career, Beverly Pepper (1922-2020) created an expansive body of work of varying scales, working primarily in cast iron, bronze, steel, stone, and reflective stainless steel. In 1999, GFS exhibited a large collection of her works in a one-person exhibition that spanned the Museum, Domestic Arts building, and outdoors. Though she was a pioneering artist by any measure, Pepper was one of the early female artists who

welded with steel, and one of the first artists ever to use Cor-Ten steel, learning to weld in the 1960s at a time when few women were provided an opportunity to break into that male-dominated world. "There was nothing I ever thought would limit me because my mother and grandmother were very strong women"², she said.

Discouraged at an early age from studying art, Pepper made a compromise with her family to study "advertising art" at Pratt Institute, where she had taken a few drawing classes while still in high school. She channeled her creativity into graphic and industrial design, however there too she faced obstacles, prevented from continuing in any classes that required using tools and machines that were considered "unfeminine". Upon graduation, already married to a fellow student she met at Pratt, Pepper launched into a financially successful but creatively stifling career in design and art direction. In her mid-20s, experiencing the freedom of being an adult with a steady income for the first time, she looked for more – discovering museums, finding inspiration there and in friendships with fellows NY artists she met while continuing her education at The Art Students League, where she took painting classes at night. In 1949 Pepper decided to leave the US and her husband behind and moved on her own to post-war France to study at The Grande Chaumière (two decades earlier and she would have met Alexander Calder and Isamu Noguchi there). A period of traveling, painting, and meeting other artists followed. Upon settling in southern France with her second husband Bill Pepper, she continued painting and created a substantial body of two-dimensional work (which would be shown later in her first exhibition

¹ Oral history interview with Beverly Pepper, 2009 Jul. 1-2. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
² Quoted in *The Sunday Telegraph*, "The Brilliant Artist You've Never Heard Of: interview with sculptor Beverly Pepper", Kate Salter. 2013



Top Left Photo: Before, uncovering old hardware that had deteriorated over time on *Split Ritual II*; Top Right: Before, interior view of peeling/lifting paint on *Untitled*; Bottom: After, setting the base on the new foundation on *Split Ritual II*



[*Untitled*]

in Rome at Galleria dello Zodiaco in 1952). The couple would later resettle in Italy where Pepper would continue to reside until her recent death earlier this year, dividing her time between homes and studios in New York and Todi, Italy.

In 1960, a trip to Southeast Asia opened her mind up to new ideas about space and dimension. Pepper recalled being "haunted" later by her memories of the trees and statuary that she saw there. Upon returning to her home outside Rome, she described the discovery of some fallen trees which became raw material to her developing sculptor's eye:

"There were about 30-some-odd trees that had been cut down on the property... And I guess this would be a microcosm of my life. I never sculpted a piece of wood in my life. So I went out and bought not sculpting tools; I bought jigsaws and this and that. And started cutting up the trees. And the result of those cut-up trees was that I had my first [sculpture] show."³

On the strength of these works displayed in her first sculpture exhibition, Pepper was recruited to take part in the *Sculture nella città* exhibition in Spoleto, Italy in 1962, invited with the understanding that she knew how to weld (she said she did, and quickly learned thereafter). The concept for the exhibition was to pair sculptors with factories in different Italian towns, allowing the artists to make use of those facilities to create new work for the exhibition in Spoleto. During this period, Pepper befriended co-participants David Smith, Alexander Calder, and Lynn Chadwick, sometimes helping them with Italian translation. Pepper described that time as life changing, while eating onion sandwiches and drinking wine with the locals, she felt like she was moving into the "real world" while she earned a figurative PhD in metal welding.⁴ Following this project, Pepper received her first sculpture commission in the US, recommended for the project by David Smith who explained that he couldn't make what was needed on that scale (Pepper's work in Italy was towering at heights of close to 20 feet) but that Beverly Pepper "could do anything."⁵

Pepper described her body of work as one series or idea leading to another. She frequently collaborated with industrial manufacturers, including US Steel and John Deere (with whom she made a series of ductile iron works). It was

with US Steel that Pepper pioneered the use of a new material for sculpture at that time, Cor-Ten. Today Cor-Ten is widely used in art making due to its resistance to weathering, but Pepper is considered the first artist to adopt its use for sculpture. It was there too that she began working with stainless steel. Her early stainless works often focused on the use of highly reflective surfaces, of which *Untitled* (ca. 1968, stainless steel) on view in Grounds For Sculpture's Water Garden is a prime example on a small scale.

Among one of the earliest created works in the collection, *Untitled* was last repainted in 1997 per the artist's original specifications. That project provided good documentation that informed the current restoration. Composed of hollow blocks, the exterior of the work is polished to a mirror-like sheen, in contrast to the interior painted in a rich dark blue. The reflective quality of the exterior tied to the saturated blue interior is designed to blend the sculpture into its surrounding environment while also reflecting the landscape around it. These early works with their mirrored finishes that engage in a dialog with the landscape lead Pepper to consider more direct connection with the environment and her later series of earthworks. Among her many earthwork sculptures is *Amphisculpture* (1974-75) sited at AT&T in Bedminster, NJ. More than 20 years after its last restoration, and two decades of continuous outdoor exposure, the interior surface of *Untitled* was stripped and repainted once more. Additionally, the outer reflective surface was cleaned, buffed, and polished, removing years of mineral deposits.

In contrast to the small, reflective *Untitled* work in the Water Garden, *Split Ritual II* (1992, cast ductile iron) stands 10 feet tall upon a large berm in the center of the grounds. Where *Untitled* blends into and reflects its environment, *Split Ritual II* dominates the landscape with a still, solid presence. Removed for cleaning and examination and replacement of old hardware, the work has now been reinstalled on a new foundation that will offer better long-term stabilization. For Pepper, iron was one of her favorite materials in which to work. She valued the fluidity of the metal during casting as well as the patina as the material ages. The tall, totemic shapes in *Split Ritual II* were cleaned but continue to exhibit the weathered appearance that Pepper would appreciate. She described these works as "metamorphosed tools", adding that, "the soul of the tool remains inside the sculpture, marking the past on the present."

^{3,4,5} Oral history interview with Beverly Pepper, 2009 Jul. 1-2. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



[Beverly Pepper in Spoleto, c. 1962]



[*Split Ritual II*]

Left Photo: Beverly Pepper working in Spoleto, Italy (1962). Photo © Beverly Pepper, Courtesy of Marlborough Contemporary, New York and London. Beverly Pepper, *Split Ritual II*, 1992, 2/3, cast ductile iron, 120 x 96 x 96 inches, Grounds For Sculpture, Gift of The Seward Johnson Atelier

Beverly Pepper, *Untitled*, ca. 1968, stainless steel, enamel paint, 17.5 x 30.5 x 8 inches, Grounds For Sculpture, Gift of The Seward Johnson Atelier



COLLECTION CROSSWORD

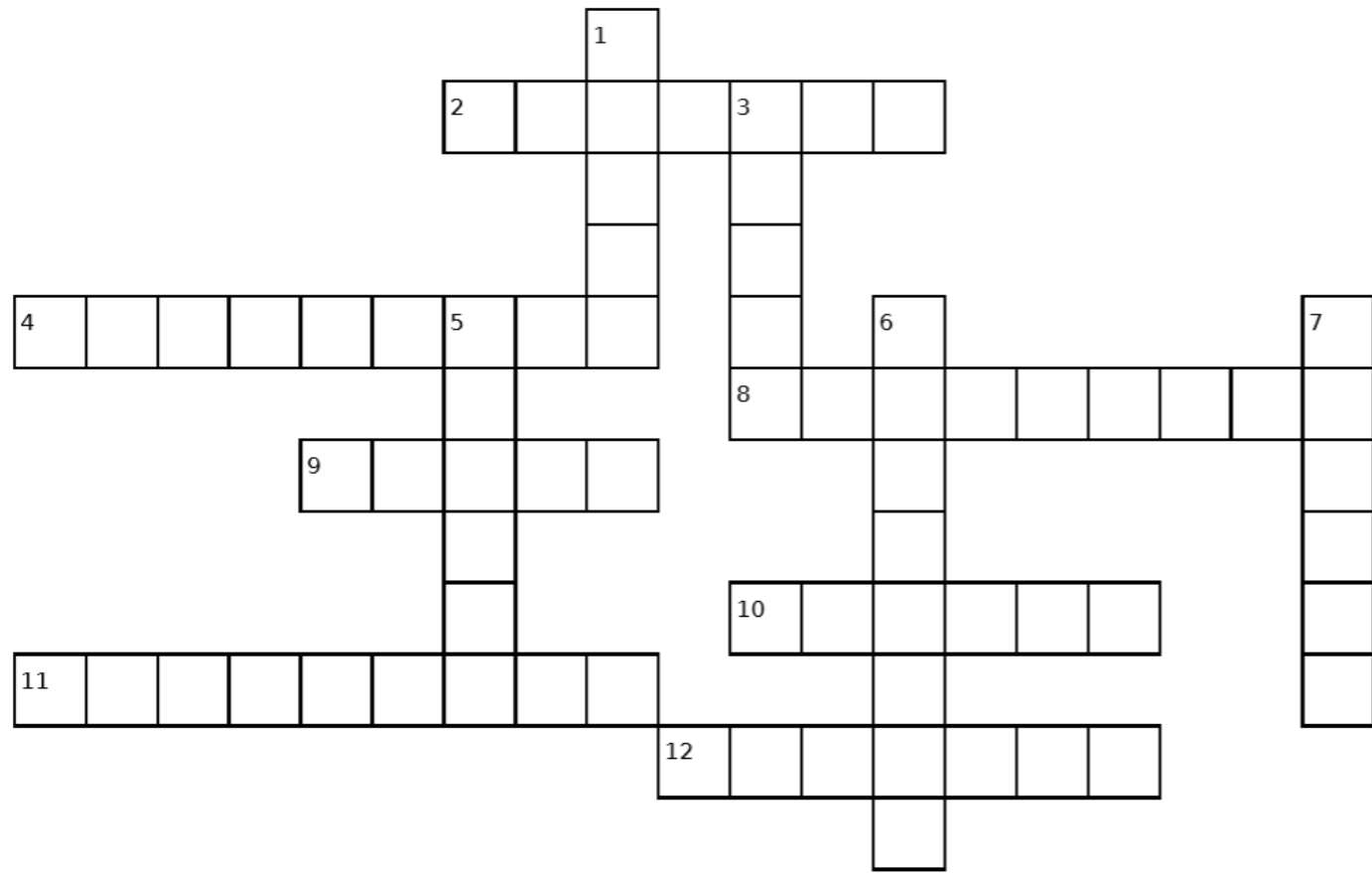
To complete the puzzle, explore the collection in-person, at groundsfor Sculpture.org or through gfsmap.org

DOWN:

- 1. Muxiang's main material
- 3. *Nelumbo nucifera*
- 5. *Split Ritual II* sculptor
- 6. Ruppert's symbol of the harvest
- 7. *Color of Murray's Hillary*

ACROSS:

- 2. *Dorion* sculptor
- 4. Orchard tree
- 8. Grounds For
- 9. Red _____ Allée
- 10. *Birth of the Messenger* sculptor
- 11. Caro's welded steel assemblage, or a mixture of dried petals & spices
- 12. GFS Founder



ANSWERS: 1. Cable, 2. Beasley, 3. Lotus, 4. Crabapple, 5. Pepper, 6. Pumpkin, 7. Yellow, 8. Sculpture, 9. Maple, 10. Viktor, 11. Potpourri, 12. Johnson



EDUCATION NEWS

Julio Enrique Badel | Manager of Experiential Programs

As we continue to limit the spread of COVID-19 and prioritize the health and wellbeing of our community, our in-person tours and programming remain suspended. To fill the need for socially distant and self-guided experiences, the Education department has created new online resources for visitors of all ages to engage with the art works and nature at GFS. These resources are in the form of one-page guides for self-exploration and offer topics such as *Look & Listen*, *Ask & Share* and a new *Sculpture Hunt*. More specific themes related to the elements of art will include *Scale*, *Color and Materials*. These guides for families include prompts for closer looking, such as picking a mood through song and thinking about the relationship between the sculpture and its unique setting.

All digital content is free to the public and can be found on our website under Education, Kid + Families, as well as on our digital map at gfsmap.org under the information tab. They can be viewed on your phone, printed at home or applied to experiences outside of GFS.

These resources will continue to expand over the course of the fall and winter in order offer new ways of creating conversations and experiences for our guests. Please continue to visit our website and digital map for new updates.

Enjoy the member preview on the next two pages!



Glenn Zweygardt, *Allentown Council*, 1993-1994, Pennsylvania Fox Hill granite, steel, bronze, 150 x 96 x 96 inches, Grounds For Sculpture, Gift of the Seward Johnson Atelier, In Exchange with Philip and Muriel Berman. Photo: David Michael Howarth Photography



EXPLORERS GUIDE

OBSERVATION

Look & Listen / Questions to think about

Explorers observe their surroundings when on a **new adventure**.

When exploring Grounds For Sculpture take notice of what is around you!

SHARE your observations with others – did they notice the same things as you?



QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT DURING YOUR VISIT

1. Do you hear or see any animals (birds, bugs, peacocks)?
2. What about the weather? Is the sun shining bright or behind a cloud?
3. How do you think your surroundings would look like at night? In the winter? In the middle of a rainstorm? What about the sculptures? Do you think they would look different?
4. Walk around the sculpture— does it look different on the side?

5. Imagine you are one of the peacocks at GFS - crouch or lay down - does the sculpture look different looking up from the ground?
6. Do you see any shadows? What about the plants around the sculpture, do they create any shadows?



EXPLORERS GUIDE

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Ask & Share / Every artwork tells a story

If you chose a **song** to go with a **sculpture**, what kind of song would you choose?

A happy one, a scary one, a sad one, a creepy one, a celebratory one?



What about others you are with? Did they pick the same mood?

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT DURING YOUR VISIT

As you explore GFS you may see sculptures of people. **Ask & share:** What do you wonder about their story? If you see a sculpture with two or more people, what do you think their relationship is?

REMEMBER: Explorers use all their senses when entering a new adventure but are careful with two: taste and touch. Instead of touching or tasting (ewww) a sculpture or plant, use your observation skills to discover more.



SUPPORT



THANK YOU SOURLAND MOUNTAIN SPIRITS

In early April, with high demand for hand sanitizer, local distillery Sourland Mountain Spirits quickly pivoted their production. We were delighted to receive a generous donation from owners Ray and Erica Disch of personal-sized bottles for our staff and volunteers returning to the park. A long-time supporter of GFS, it was a sign of the times when instead of donating their hand crafted beverages for an in-person event, they were able to help us with this useful donation instead. Paired with handcrafted masks and other GFS supplies, these kits welcomed our team back and are helping to keep them safe. To learn more, visit: sourlandspirits.com

Thank you to ALL of our sponsors who have generously supported GFS this year!

groundsforsculpture.org/our-supporters

GFS GRANT

We're incredibly grateful to have received a grant in support of our Community Art Programs from Investors Foundation. Our Hamilton Investors Bank Branch Manager Jason LaViscount came out to the park to present the check to GFS Executive Director Gary Schneider.



NEW & IMPROVED MAIN LOOP

GFS has upgraded its accessibility and resurfaced main paths to be more stroller and wheelchair friendly. Path improvements were funded by New Jersey Cultural Trust, Karma Foundation, and the newly established The Seward and Cecelia Johnson Endowment.



Photo: David Michael Howarth Photography



RAT'S RESTAURANT

GFS Members enjoy 10% off dining at Rat's Restaurant (parties up to 8 people). Reserve your table online and remember to show your membership card to your server.

ratsrestaurant.com

VAN GOGH CAFÉ

The Van Gogh Café is open on the Welcome Center patio. Open Thursday-Monday, 11am-4pm. Visit the French-inspired café for fresh-made salads, sandwiches, pastries, coffee, and drinks. Be sure to show your membership card to receive your 10% discount.

IRON AND IVY

Currently open for takeout and outside dining, the refurbished Iron and Ivy restaurant at Marriott Princeton Forrestal offers GFS members a 20% discount on food. Members can also receive 15% off treatments Tuesday through Thursday. Please be sure to show your membership card to receive these benefits and call ahead to reserve and confirm current operating schedules.

bit.ly/2Tc5w4L



Grounds For Sculpture is a registered nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Your Membership provides critical support for educational programs and exhibitions that enrich, surprise, and inspire so many. And after an unprecedented, challenging year, we need your support more than ever to help sustain GFS as a place for wonderful, nurturing, inspiring experiences – we cannot do it without you!

To make a tax-deductible donation beyond membership: Donate by mail (Grounds For Sculpture, 80 Sculptors Way, Hamilton, NJ 08619), by phone (609.249.0234) or at: groundsforsculpture.org/donate

Your gift will make it possible for GFS to remain an important place to enjoy the arts in an environment accessible to all. Thank you for your generosity!

Will your Employer match your gift?


Many companies participate in matching gift programs for charitable gifts made by their employees. Check with your Human Resources Department to see if your generosity will be made even greater through a match by your employer. You may also check if your employer will match your donation on our website at: groundsforsculpture.org/matching-gifts

eMEMBERSHIP TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

Allow Notifications from the eMembership app for exclusive member news, deals and special happenings. Discover ways to make the most of your GFS membership by exploring the FAQ's in the eMembership app.

(See screen examples on right)

SHARE YOUR DIGITAL GUEST PASSES WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

When in your eMembership app account, view your guest passes under "Membership Benefits" then tap "Guest Pass". Tap the  button in the upper right-hand corner.

Next, select the guest passes you'd like to share, then choose to text or email the Guest Pass(es) to your guest.

Guest Passes are one-time use, and are marked as USED when redeemed at Grounds For Sculpture.

