Return to Paradise

Celebrating Walter Byck and Marijke Byck-Hoenselaars' thirty year legacy of visionary leadership and community engagement through art and sculpture.

RIIS BURWELL



Bird 144" x 60" x 60" Bronze and stainless steel 2005

It's hard to believe it's been this long but, I was introduced to Walter way back in the late 90's. Our mutual friend Bruce Johnson and he were putting together another show of large sculpture at the winery and Bruce suggested that Walter come look at what I was currently building. Walter arrived with his wonderful wife Marike and we talked for a long time about their mutual love for sculpture and their vision for the sculpture grove.

I was working on a bronze enlargement of a piece from a series called "Cloud Forms". Walter was intrigued by the concept and almost immediately began reciting a poem by "Shelly" called "The Cloud". With that said, he showed me he knew exactly where I was coming from with this series. Thus began a long friendship! Walter loved "makers" and "doers" and I always felt that as accomplished as he was, there was a bit of a frustrated artist deep in him.

Anyway, life and time went by and there have been many great shows at the Grove. Paradise Ridge at his direction became a destination for a lot of great sculpture. I was happy to be a part of many of those shows. Walter was always working on new concepts and ideas for sculpture at the winery. Last year he called me up to come see some of his latest plans which were just as grand as always. He never stopped! In many ways I feel he lives on in all he did for art in Sonoma county and at Paradise Ridge. I miss him greatly!

BIO

Riis Burwell was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1954. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts at Goddard College. Since 1983, Riis has been engaged in designing and hand-fabricating exquisite tabletop, wall, large free-standing and public art abstract metal sculpture in his Northern California studio. Riis' sculptures are hand-fabricated in his 4,000 square foot studio and are primarily purchased on commission or through galleries and art consultants. Clients include individual, institutional and corporate art collectors. His preference is to work in bronze, steel and stainless steel because of their natural beauty and their suitability for indoor and exterior sculpture. I prefer to work on gallery sized pieces first then enlarge them to monumental when appropriate.

My work is an exploration–emotional, spiritual and physical–of what is unseen in nature. I seek to create a tangible expression of the intangible. From the beginning, my art has been inspired by a deep interest and curiosity about the many facets of nature. Even as a child, nature and plants, in particular captivated me. Patterns, relationships, harmonies and dissonances are the forces that continue to fascinate me. I came to realize that art, and specifically, three-dimensional art could be a means to explore and illustrate these natural occurrences and initially drove me to try to embody them in my sculpture. My original venture into this realm encompassed examining crystalline structures and invisible forces supporting the birth, growth and decay cycle of all living things. My goal is to assist people in gaining a deeper understanding of the depth of beauty to be found in all aspects of nature and the environment. "Creating sculpture provides me with a deeper connection to the grace and beauty in nature."

"Try and penetrate with our limited means the secrets of nature and you will find that, behind all the discernible laws and connections, there remains something subtle, intangible and inexplicable." Einstein

Artworks are for sale. For inquiries, contact Jeff Nathanson jhnathanson@comcast.net or 609-510-4236. Price for Bird: \$50.000

riisburwell.com