

Return to Paradise

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

BRUCE JOHNSON



Three Moons
108" x 108" x 96"
Redwood, copper, and steel
2008



Void - Vortex of Empty Space
96" x 96" x 84"
Redwood, copper, steel base
2014

BIO

Bruce was born in Portland, Oregon. He studied art at UC Davis in the sixties, with such faculty as Arneson, De Forest, Thiebaud and Neri. A few years after college he took a job on the Sonoma coast to work on the historic restoration of the 19th-century Russian chapel at Fort Ross ('Metini' to the Kashaya Pomo). On a nearby ridge he established a studio and started a family, and worked relentlessly making large-scale abstract sculpture for many decades.

Bruce's work can be found in public spaces and private collections, parks, museums, galleries and campuses all over Sonoma County, the US and internationally. He was deeply inspired by Japanese art and architecture and traveled to Japan multiple times. His long career in art is featured in the exhibition "Bruce Johnson: Sculptor" at the Museum of Sonoma County, on view from June 28 to November 30, 2025.

Artworks are for sale. For inquiries, contact Jeff Nathanson jhnathanson@comcast.net or 609-510-4236.

Price for Three Moons: \$66,000. Void - Vortex of Empty Space is NFS

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Bruce Johnson worked as a sculptor in Sonoma County for fifty years. Walter and Marijke loved to visit sculpture gardens together. When the Bycks decided to begin exhibiting sculpture at Paradise Ridge, Walter heard he needed to talk to Bruce. So he did, and they became fast friends. Bruce and Walter dreamed together of a sculpture garden that would honor that beautiful oak-studded ridgetop. They named it Paradise Wood; then to honor Marijke after her passing, it was re-named Marijke's Grove. They developed the site and established a program that would value and elevate new and established artists alike. Dozens of artists have graced the grove with inspired sculpture over the years.

Bruce's own work was shown at Paradise Ridge for decades, including two important mid-career solo exhibitions. An iconic, huge gate piece of Bruce's called 'Asia' was shown in an exhibition Walter curated called 'Prelude' in 2008. Walter later generously donated 'Asia' to the Green Music Center at Sonoma State University.

Bruce died in an accident in the spring of 2023. "He was a wonderful man and a talented artist," said Walter of his friend. After Bruce's death Walter arranged the purchase of "Void" — a sculpture that might reference the hole that is left when a loved one is gone. Only a few short months later, Walter too was gone.

Bruce made "Three Moons" with a series of several works referencing energy, matter and the cosmos — pieces with titles like "Ion," "Dark Matter," "Photon." Bruce and Walter both shared a sense of reverence for the vastness of the universe, and deep gratitude to have found home on this speck of a planet. They each left not so much a void as an important legacy of love and sculpture in Sonoma County.