NEW WORKS OF ART INSTALLED AT THREE UHS CAMPAUSES

Houston, December 8, 2011 – Back in 1966, our wise university leaders made a decision that continues to enhance and add prestige to our campus. President Philip Hoffman and the Board of Regents realized the university was about to grow dramatically and knew art could add to the beauty of the campus landscape. They voted to establish a progressive policy that would dedicate one percent of construction costs for all future buildings projects to works of art. Because of this decision many years ago, the University of Houston currently has one of the largest notable art collections in the country.

This fall semester, the University of Houston System has made three more additions to its collection. Regent’s System-wide Art Acquisition Committee comes together each month to make decisions about artists and locations for public art within the system. The committee is made up of UH regents, representatives from each campus, local museum curators and directors, and community representatives. Once a location is determined, the committee will narrow down a list of artists and hear from a few top candidates whose work best fits the space available. Occasionally, a piece of art that has already exists will be added to our system’s public art collection, however, it is more often created specifically for that space.

The newest addition to the UH main campus has been two years in the making. Lawrence Argent, an artist originally from Australia that now lives and works in Denver, created three enormous sculptures of gourds that he designed through 3D modeling software. He presented a proposal for his idea for the courtyard at Calhoun Lofts two years ago.

“At this point, Lawrence had only done projects in

Lawrence Argent’s sculpture, not yet named, was installed in the courtyard of Calhoun Lofts on the UH main campus.
Colorado but he was so thoughtful in his proposal and presentation that he won us over,” said Michael Guidry, curator of University Art Collections.

The three gourds, two made of granite and the third made of bronze, have a unique texture, color and shape. They were carved by hand and shipped to the campus from China. Argent’s sculpture will be complete once the base of the artwork is installed. After it is finished, a light will illuminate each of the three gourds from its base.

Argent explained his decision on the gourds in his proposal stating, “The University is a place for the exchange of dialogue. A learning environment: it provides a site for people from all over the world to intellectually, mentally and physically come together. It is with these aspects in mind, that I found myself attracted to the gourd as a form and its’ attached history.”

Outside of Brazos Hall at the UH Sugarland campus is a 15-foot tall kinetic sculpture created by Lin Emery called *Pastoral*. Emery grew up in New York and traveled the world, eventually settling in New Orleans. The sculpture, which moves with the wind, was installed in October by Emery and her assistants. Emery, in her 80’s, created the aluminum and stainless steel sculpture entirely in her studio.

“In a time when many artists have their larger work fabricated by others, it’s surprising she is so hands on and creates the work in her studio,” Guidry said. “This elegant sculpture is hypnotic in the way it rotates around itself, akin to cloud watching. The leaf-like forms seem to disappear in the sky and return to their inherent form or reflect the surrounding brick, concrete and trees all the while reflecting the sun’s light against the ground and building like a mirror ball. It’s like an organic machine.”

The last of the new additions to the University’s public art collection was installed at the UH Downtown campus in the fourth floor of the library. Local artist Bert Samples created a glass work of art that was inspired by earth, air, fire and water. Samples created his vision first in a sketch of each of the elements and then layered his creations to form the complete composition. The composition was then etched onto10 sheets of glass with dichromatic film edging to create the colorful work of art. The piece is titled, “Manu Languidly Stirs Songs in the Grip of Shadow and Light.” Samples said “Manu” is an oceanic term that refers to the creation of life.

“The oceanic stories of Manu refer to the life force in every element in all things. I see it as the divine spirit of life. It seems enigmatic, but the name brings me close to the indecipherable meaning about the knowledge of our existence,” Samples explained.

A dedication for Samples’ work of art took place on November 9. For more information or to view the University’s current public art collection, visit [www.uh.edu/uh-collection](http://www.uh.edu/uh-collection).
About the University of Houston

The University of Houston is a comprehensive national research institution serving the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. UH serves more than 38,500 students in the nation's fourth-largest city, located in the most ethnically and culturally diverse region of the country.