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Keeping Our Artwork Safe, Too

Laumeier Sculpture Park Announces Conservation Projects on Three Major Works

(ST. LOUIS, MO)—Laumeier Sculpture Park proudly announces conservation projects on three of its outdoor artworks: *The Way* by Alexander Liberman, *Pool Complex: Orchard Valley* by Mary Miss and *Intricate Wall* by Sol LeWitt. Care and conservation are ongoing needs for any art collection, but arguably the most pressing for those that are located in outdoor settings like Laumeier, where works are exposed daily to extremes of temperature and precipitation.

At 50 feet high and 100 feet long, Alexander Liberman's *The Way*, 1972-80 was the first massive sculpture purchased for Laumeier's collection. Over the years, it has become Laumeier's signature work and a favorite of park visitors. *The Way* is made of 18 salvaged steel oil tanks and will undergo a major restoration over the next year in a multi-phased project.

Phase one of this conservation project started in October 2020 and includes a structural, material and concrete base assessment. A Faro Laser Scanner was used to create a 3D scan of the sculpture that will be used to evaluate the structure and metal materials of the oil tanks. Phase two of *The Way* conservation will include sandblasting and metal repair. Phase three involves painting and ongoing care.

The Way conservation project is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, Art Works grant. Laumeier will launch a funding campaign in 2021 to complete the work.

Dana Turkovic, Curator at Laumeier Sculpture Park, says, "Having recently celebrated its 40-year anniversary as the most iconic sculpture at Laumeier, we look forward to working with our external partners to regain the condition in which *The Way* was seen by the public on the day of its dedication, June 7, 1980."

In October, Laumeier also began conversation work on *Pool Complex: Orchard Valley*, 1983-85 by artist Mary Miss. Once the site of the Hedenkamp family's Orchard Valley Estate, Miss converted the abandoned 1929 pool into a newly built and landscaped environment. Surrounding the pool basin are treated pine pavilions, platforms and staircases meant to highlight the existing ruins within Laumeier's acreage. This ongoing project will help



ensure that visitors will be able to enjoy the unique, expansive and multi-level space, deep within the Nature Trail, for years to come.

The conservation of *Pool Complex: Orchard Valley* by Mary Miss is funded by the Sarah A. Kaufmann Charitable Fund of YouthBridge Community Foundation.

“As one of the first and largest dedicated sculpture parks in the country, Laumeier has set many of the standards for combining curated public art with the interpretation and stewardship of a traditional indoor museum,” says Turkovic. “Maintaining the integrity of the artist’s intentions and responding to the materials and our environment are very important when completing conservation work.”

Sol LeWitt’s site-specific *Intricate Wall*, 2001-04 uses his iconic repetitive modular pattern and was originally created as part of a solo exhibition at Laumeier in 2004. Temporarily decommissioned in 2018, the piece required a complete rebuild after water damage compromised the structural integrity of the sculpture. Recognizing the importance of LeWitt as a pioneer of minimal and conceptual art, *Intricate Wall* was rebuilt with the help of the St. Louis County Parks carpenters. Each layer of concrete block was installed per the artist’s instructions and in reference to the first installation. Completed in October 2020, the newly rebuilt work can be viewed on the southeastern edge of the Ferring Family Foundation Museum Lawn.

Laumeier was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Artworks grant in 2020 to reconstruct *Intricate Wall* on its original site.

“We are excited to reintroduce this artwork by a historically significant artist to our visitors,” says Turkovic. “Bringing this work back on view is also a great illustration of our partnership with St. Louis County and our commitment to the outdoor artworks at the Park.”

About Laumeier Sculpture Park

Founded in 1976, Laumeier Sculpture Park is one of the first and largest sculpture parks in the country. Laumeier presents more than 70 works of large-scale outdoor sculpture throughout its 105-acre campus. Laumeier serves 300,000 visitors of all ages each year, with a world-class art collection, indoor and outdoor temporary exhibitions, education programs, and public events. Laumeier is an internationally recognized museum, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization operates in partnership with St. Louis County Parks.

Laumeier Sculpture Park’s ongoing operations and programs are generously supported by St. Louis County Parks; Regional Arts Commission; Missouri Arts Council; Arts and Education Council; among other corporations, foundations, individual donors and members.

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Additional funding related to COVID-19 relief has been provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Windgate Foundation.

Conservation of artwork is funded in part by the Mark Twain Laumeier Endowment Fund.

For more about Laumeier Sculpture Park, please visit www.laumeier.org

Images

High-resolution images available upon request.



ALEXANDER LIBERMAN

The Way, 1972–80

Eighteen salvaged steel oil tanks
780 x 1224 x 1200 inches

Laumeier Sculpture Park
Collection, gift of Alvin J.
Siteman and with funds from
the National Endowment for the
Arts



MARY MISS

Pool Complex: Orchard Valley,
1983–85

Wolmanized® pine, stone,
galvanized steel, concrete, One
acre

Laumeier Sculpture Park
Collection, commissioned with
funds from the National
Endowment for the Arts and
additional support from
anonymous donors



SOL LEWITT

Intricate Wall, 2001-04

Concrete block
96 x 136 x 72 inches

Loan courtesy of the LeWitt
Estate

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