New campus sculpture aimed at capturing students’ energy

By Theresa Shovlin
Lantern Staff writer 7-13-82

With its bright whiteness and huge jagged shape, “Breaker” looks like something Don Quixote would have conquered.

The 70-foot-long by 20-foot-high spiral helix sculpture on 15th Avenue between Weigel Hall and Mershon Auditorium was dedicated Friday as the newest fixture on the OSU campus.

The dedication signified the end of a two-year project by David Black, professor of art.

Money for the $35,000 commission was provided by OSU’s Development Fund as the first gesture of bringing the arts to the community, but Black estimates the commercial value of the sculpture at $80,000.

“It’s a biggie,” he said. “I wanted something that would tend to identify the arts — something monumental. I wanted a notable form that would interest people right away.

“I was thinking what would students like. That’s who it’s for. I think they’ll find it lively and high spirited,” he said.

FOCUS

Black came by his idea months ago on his way to eat lunch on High Street, when he saw three young women cartwheeling down 17th Avenue. He said this was his “psychic ingredient.”

“It was for the students, so it should have some of the energy of the student body,” he said.

Speakers at the dedication included Terry Roark, associate provost, Andrew J. Broekema, dean of the College of the Arts, Jonathan Green, director of University Gallery, U.S Rep. Robert Shamansky, a member of the Congressional Caucus on the Arts, New York art critic Donald Kuspit, contributing editor of Art in America magazine, and Black.

In his opening greeting, Green praised the sculpture as the first piece of artwork to be placed at an entrance to OSU. He said the sculpture was a commitment to the “importance and visibility” of art at OSU.

“It is a gesture of our renewed excitement in the arts,” he said.

Roark said artwork must be as available to a community as books in a library, and is meant “to better life through creative effort.”

Shamansky spoke on the importance of community support of the arts rather than corporate support of the arts. “I think we can happily accept the fact that the public has a role to play as an art patron,” he said.

Kuspit, a visiting lecturer at OSU in 1978, returned to share his views on the latest campus attraction. “It’s beautifully sited, and it’s an intellectual and rational piece to remind us of what we’re here for — a life of reason,” he said.

The sculpture is in the tradition of constructivism, a turn of the century Russian form of artistic expression, which “rearticulates the openness of space” Kuspit said. “It is competitive with architecture and it tries to give the openness that architecture cannot give,” he said.

Because the sculpture is not in a museum, it is experienced “on the run and involuntarily by a spectator who sees it as he goes about his business,” Kuspit said.

“It echoes the spectator’s feeling of being on the move, of being in transition. It is a mimic of real life,” he said.

The sculpture is made of blinding-white epoxy over aluminum, and was erected over an eight-week period stalled periodically by rain.

“It’s a rather complex visual form, but the spiral itself is a simple chain — connections of identical sections,” Black said.

“It invites participation. It will allude to various images,” he said.

The Ohio State Lantern
Breaking away

Marshon Auditorium near David Black's modern sculpture "Breakers."
The David Black sculpture “Breaker”, adjacent to Mershon Auditorium on the Ohio State University campus, will be moved June 5. The huge metal sculpture, which has been anchored to a 16-ton concrete base since June 1982, will be moved to make way for the university’s new Center for the Visual Arts. Construction will start on the new building in September.

The sculpture will be relocated on a grassy open space across 15th Avenue between Sullivan and Page halls. That section of 15th Avenue will be closed during the move.

A short ceremony will begin at 2 p.m. June 5 in front of the sculpture, as the university marks the first step in construction of the proposed center. Sculptor Black will discuss the artwork and Ohio State President Edward H. Jennings will describe the new center. As the talks end, a welder will finish cutting apart a section of the sculpture and a crane will lift it into the air, beginning the move across the street.

Black, a professor emeritus of art, has created numerous public sculptures, including one called “Airfold” for Port Columbus International Airport and many which are displayed in Europe. His newest sculpture, “Windpoint,” was recently chosen for permanent installation in Japan’s new Utsukushige-Hara Museum in Tokyo. It was one of 25 chosen from more than 500 entries in the International Sculpture Project.

Moving the Ohio State piece will be no small job. The piece is 21 feet high and 65 feet long and was originally brought to campus on two 40-foot truck beds. Because it is made of aluminum, it is not heavy -- less than two tons, Black says. However, he describes it as "relatively fragile."

The 16-ton concrete base will not be moved but will be replaced with a new base in the new location.

NOTE: We expect that this will be an interesting and highly visual event. For additional information, please call David Tull in Communications Services at (614) 422-2711 or Lisa Holstein in the Office of the President at (614) 422-2424.

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES
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Abstract sculpture relocated

By Rebecca Pond
Lantern staff writer 6-6-85

The abstract sculpture "Breaker," often associated with water, became airborne Wednesday.
Currently located adjacent to Mershon Auditorium, the massive white-painted aluminum sculpture is being moved piece-by-piece to make way for the construction of the Center for the Visual Arts.

David Black, professor emeritus of art, is the sculptor of "Breaker." "When I heard they were moving the sculpture to the new site for the visual arts center, I realized the engagement was over and the wedding is here," Black said.

"Breaker" is being relocated across 15th Avenue to a new site between Sullivant and Page Halls. The sculpture should be completely moved by the end of the week, said Jonathon Green, director of University Gallery of Fine Art.

"President Jennings promised me that in order to make the space more meaningful, he would move Page Hall," Black joked.

Black spoke at a short ceremony preceding the move of one appendage of "Breaker." The piece was lifted by crane and then loaded onto a truck bed and taken to the new location.

"This (the move) truly does represent the first step of construction of the Center for the Visual Arts," President Edward H. Jennings said at the ceremony. "As we stand here today, we can look forward to the time in just a few short years when the center is completed."

Groundbreaking for the Center for the Visual Arts will occur early fall quarter, said Scott Mueller, director of university relations. "I believe that it is going to be sometime after the students arrive in September and before the month ends," he said.

"Breaker" is associated with buoyant objects like sails and kites, Black said. "Frankly, I wanted it to have a sense of spirit — to evoke excitement in students," he added.
Breaker Makes Way for the New Visual Arts Center

President Jennings speaks before an audience gathered to watch the Breaker move. Pictured in the background are the sculpture and its creator, David Black.

Toasting the occasion with ice cream cones and speeches, the white aluminum sculpture Breaker was launched from its three-year home for a short trip across the street, to make way for the new Center for the Visual Arts.

Dean Andrew J. Broekema presided over a brief ceremony before the move June 5, at the sculpture's site behind Mershon Auditorium. President Edward H. Jennings and David Black, professor emeritus of art and sculptor of Breaker, also participated.

A section of the twenty-one-by-sixty-five-foot structure was detached and hoisted by crane onto a flatbed truck for transport across Fifteenth Avenue to its new home next to Page Hall. The rest of the sculpture was moved by the end of the week.

Breaker was first installed in June 1983, anchored to the ground with sixteen tons of concrete. Black said he wanted the airy sculpture to “evolve a good spirit with the students” and named it in memory of the waves breaking on the beaches of his Massachusetts birthplace.

Black is an internationally known sculptor who has pieces on permanent display in the United States and Europe. His sculpture Windpoint recently was selected for permanent installation in Japan’s new Utsukushi-Ga-Hara Museum.
Art 101

Three-year-old Zachary Holloway takes a break on “Breakers,” a sculpture by David Black at the Wexner Center. Zachary was taking a walk on campus with his parents when he decided to critique the artwork.