Luther College’s Outdoor Sculptures

Ernest Friedrich Rietschel (1804-1861)

*Martin Luther*

Bronze

LFAC #976

The sculpture was erected in 1911 as part of Luther College’s 50th anniversary celebrations. It is a replica of the Ernst Rietschel sculpture in Worms, Germany but is a third generation sculpture. This means that the original sculpture, by Rietschel, provided the molds for the Luther sculpture located at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO. Luther College’s sculpture was made from molds of the sculpture at Concordia Seminary.

Gerhard Marcks (1889-1981)

*Oedipus and Antigone*

Bronze

LFAC #2000:01:01

Wilfred and Ruth Jensen Bunge donated this sculpture to Luther College. Six castings have been made of this sculpture, but only two are located in the United States. The work was purchased from the Lempertz-Contepora art gallery in Cologne, Germany.

The statue was inspired by Oedipus at Colonus, one of three plays about Oedipus written in the fifth century BCE by Greek dramatist Sophocles. Through a tragic series of incidents beyond his control, Oedipus unwittingly killed his father and married his mother, thereby fulfilling a prophecy told to his parents when he was born. Once he learned what he had done, Oedipus blinded himself in grief and wandered Greece as a beggar, accompanied by his daughter Antigone. An outcast to most, Oedipus was allowed into Attica by the King of Athens, where his life ended when he entered an olive grove and was never seen again - apparently taken up by the gods. The sculpture depicts Oedipus as he is about to enter the olive grove and gain release from his life of suffering and agony. Knowing that the end is near, he separates from his loving daughter, Antigone, who can no longer help him. Oedipus must face death alone.
Tarkjel Landsverk (1859-1981)
*Pioneer Memorial*
Cement, Stone
LFAC #975

The Laur Larsen memorial was commissioned for Laur Larsen’s 100th birthday in 1933. In 1936, the college celebrated its 75th anniversary by expanding the memorial into what is now known as the *Pioneer Memorial*. In 2003, professor Sigurd Reque researched and wrote the texts of the nine bronze plaques on the wall. Since its dedication, the *Pioneer Memorial* has been used in many ways. Open-air worship services as well as commemorative events have been celebrated there. It has served as a logo for the college.

Edward McCullough
*Elegy #10*
Steel
LFAC #969

This sculpture was built while Edward McCullough was an artist-in-residence fellow at Kankakee Community College in Kankakee, Illinois. It is part of the Elegy Series which consists of ten abstract sculptures. The ten sculptures took seven years to complete. For the series, McCullough was inspired by the Rainer Maria Rilke’s poem cycle "The Duono Elegies" written between 1912 and 1922. McCullough has written that the poem cycle inspired him to think about "nature in the widest sense of the word, and our transitory place among all else that's transitory within this common source."

The work was purchased from the artist by Luther College in 1993 with funds donated by Ruth and Wilfred Bunge. At that time, McCullough wrote that the sculpture would look especially inviting in winter as the "snow drifts move up and into the forms of the piece becoming a part of the greater three-dimensional whole."
Paul Granlund
3-D Life Tree
Bronze
LFAC #2007:04:01

This sculpture was given to Luther College by Ruth and Wilfred Bunge in August 2007 in honor of their parents, Hilda Fruechte Bunge and Franklin Bunge; Martha Andersen Jensen and Axel Jensen. It was formally dedicated on October 5, 2007, in an outdoor chapel service in front of the sculpture at which Will Bunge spoke. In his message, Bunge spoke about the meaning of the sculpture as a “family tree, without the specificity of the usual family tree. The model is an ideal model, to be sure.” At the conclusion of his address, Bunge stated, “Come and see. Look often as you walk by. Images that don’t deserve our attention litter our lives. We need some that enrich our gaze, and thus our lives.”

Jeffrey Boshart
I Am
Wood
LFAC #2008:05:01

This sculpture was created during an artist-in-residence experience led by the artist at Luther College, September 17-21, 2007. During that time students collaborated with the artist to create the sculpture. Faculty and staff were also invited to participate in its creation. Jeffrey Boshart said in his Artist’s Statement that he hoped the sculpture helped return “the spirit of the mighty oak trees” to the campus.
Meridian II was premiered at the Pier Walk exhibition held at Chicago’s Navy Pier in 1997, then exhibited at the South Bend Regional Airport where it was leased for two years. In 2008 it came to Luther College from Indiana State University at Terre Haute, IN, where it had been exhibited on loan since 2003. The sculpture was donated to Luther College by the artist, Edward McCullough. During the dedication speech by the artist, he said, “The Meridian sculptures are grounded at a place and they’re also airborne -- the forms that define open spaces also release themselves and their spaces upward and then... bring it all back again, you with it. Everything therein is connected to everything else; inseparability, meridian.” Other works from the Meridian Series can be found at the McLean County Arts Center and the Central Illinois Regional Airport, Bloomington, IL; the Admiral Michael Boorda Memorial in Momence, IL; the Unified Public Schools, Watertown, WI; Dominican University, River Forest, IL; Kankakee Community College, Kankakee, IL; Eastern Illinois University, Charleston IL; and the Chicago Police Headquarters Building.