

FOSTER WILLEY - BIOGRAPHY

Foster Willey is a sculptor and public artist who maintains his studio in Detroit, MI. He is a new comer to the Detroit Art scene having just moved to the Motor City with his wife, Valerie, an affiliate of the College for Creative Studies. Foster has participated in numerous design settings including large-scale projects for major municipalities. His professional affiliations include architects, engineers, landscape architects, lighting designers, fabricators, historians, graphic designers, and conservators.

Originally from St. Joseph, Michigan, Foster received a B.F.A. from Grand Valley State University in painting and sculpture. He expanded his education with courses at Michigan State University and Andrews University where his mentor was British Sculptor, Allan Collins. Foster also attended the Naguib School of Sculpture in Chicago where he worked with Egyptian sculptor, Mustafa Naguib.

Upon relocating to Minneapolis in 1988, Foster was commissioned by the City of Minneapolis to create *The Leaders Wall*, a series of fifty life-size bronze portraits of community activists that are integrated into the 4th Ave Bridge along the Green Line commuter bike path. Other major projects followed including *Centrifuge*, a monumental abstract bronze sculpture for Nicollet Commons Park in Burnsville, MN.

Today, Foster Willey's commissions can be found throughout the State of Minnesota, including St. Louis Park; *The Bee Way*, Plymouth; *Winged Iris*, Rosemount; *Triskele*, Owatonna; *Regeneration*, Minneapolis; *Minnesota Menagerie* and the *Central Avenue Stelae*. Recent Public Art projects include two light rail stations for the new Green Line in St. Paul; *Hamline Prairie Station* and *Faces of Rondo* at Victoria Station. In 2016 Foster completed *Ascent Fountain*, also located in Nicollet Commons Park.

Related professional accomplishments include collaborations with landscape architects at Kimley Horn Inc. for Nicollet Commons Park, SRF Consulting and the 13th St Enhancements, Toole Design and the Street Design Manual for the City of St. Paul. Foster has received two CUE awards from the Minneapolis Committee on Urban Planning, an Award of Excellence from the MN Concrete & Masonry Contractors Assn. for stone carving. Burnsville's Nicollet Commons Park received a Great Places Award from the MN Urban Land Institute & the Sensible Land Use Coalition, which features the sculpture, "*Centrifuge*". More recently, Codaworx Magazine, a global design platform showcasing commissioned public art has recognized his projects *The Bee Way* and *Centrifuge* for the 'The Art of Place' and 'Motion and Mobility'. Hamline Prairie Station has also been recognized in their 'Art of Transit'.

"As a sculptor I am very interested in the built environment. Public Art and large-scale sculpture are exciting fields because of their range of expression and impact on our surroundings and the experience of daily life. My work as a public artist is adapted to the specifics of the opportunity. As a sculptor I am able to bring a range of design and fabrication skills to any public art project. My sculptural designs supplement a collaborative process that includes a community's voice."

FOSTER WILLEY - ARTIST STATEMENT

“As a sculptor I am very interested in the built environment. Public Art and large-scale sculpture are exciting fields because of their range of expression and impact on our surroundings and the experience of daily life. My work as a public artist is adapted to the specifics of the opportunity. As a sculptor I am able to bring a range of design and fabrication skills to any public art project. My sculptural designs supplement a collaborative process that includes a community’s voice.”

My approach for all public art opportunities begins with an assessment of the project requirements and consideration for the setting of the artwork. This includes the function of the site as a social space, and the regional history that defines the community. The emphasis of these efforts has been on place making, engaging the community, and providing artistic elements that offer an uplifting and meaningful experience.

“My work is both abstract and representational. My interest in the figurative tradition and architectural ornament are central to my creative efforts. Of equal importance is the influence of the early modernist from which my explorations into abstraction have evolved.”

“Animating form thru the plasticity of materials and utilizing negative space to create forms that express both mass and transparency have been the focus of many of my sculptural investigations. These formal concerns inform the symbolic content of my work, which often involves the search for something archetypal, innate, and universal. It is my feeling that these qualities are relevant in the depiction of human striving and our shared lived experience.”

Detroit

It is exciting and inspiring time to be in the City of Detroit.

It is my desire to bring my creative aspirations to the innovation and caring that define Detroit’s resurgence, a new chapter in the City’s storied and compelling history.