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Large Scale: Fabricating Sculpture in the 60s and 70s Jonathan D. Lippincott's new monograph

By: Christina Lanzl - 12/21/2011



The collaborative nature of large-scale sculpture becomes most evident in the facilities specializing in the fabrication of such works. The Lippincott workshop, co-founded by Donald Lippincott and Roxanne Everett in 1966, was the first to serve artists exclusively. Up to that point, industrial manufacturers were the sole source for the production of large-scale sculpture. Author Jonathan Lippincott, the owner's son, grew up surrounded by the joy and challenges of the creative process experienced with such notables as Ellsworth Kelly, Roy Lichtenstein and Barnett Newman. They and many other artists, whose training was in painting or another non-sculptural medium, had entered the medium of sculpture on a smaller, 'model-size' scale.

Lippincott Inc. was usually approached with a concept that depended on both the machinery and the know-how of the workshop team to realize a project. To date, close to 100 artists have worked with the Connecticut firm, which continues to

fabricate large-scale sculpture, as well as working with museums and private collectors on the restoration of monumental art.

Large Scale presents a rare opportunity to witness the creative process up-close, thanks to Roxanne Everett's own passion and foresight to adopt the medium of photography. She painstakingly documented all the work that came through the studio from the very beginnings until 1980, when she left the company. Culled from vast archival records, her photographs—many initially developed in her own darkroom—form the core of the monograph's 380 black-and-white illustrations and color plates.

The inception of percent-for-art programs across the United States beginning in the late 1950s marked the birth of a new discipline, heralding the emerging field of public art. It is still rather uncommon to credit a fabricator, while team members, builders or contractors are generally acknowledged in architecture. As the field advances, the artist / fabricator relationship and the latter's role in the creative process needs further study. This book is a welcome contribution to a necessary dialogue yet to take place.

Large Scale is a lovingly designed homage to mastering the communicative and technical processes of fabricating large-scale sculpture, complemented by a useful introductory survey, interviews, and good indexes. Readers will visit behind the scenes to observe (almost) everything they ever wanted to know about interaction between renowned and some lesser-known artists with the workshop owners and crews from the very inception of projects to their final installations.

Today, at least some of the large-scale sculpture installed in the 1960s and 1970s is decried as plop-art, because little regard was paid to the evolving standards of placemaking and community engagement. As such, *Large Scale* also serves as insightful record of a bygone era.

Jonathan D. Lippincott

Large Scale: Fabricating Sculpture in the 1960s and 1970s

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