



## "Tower Construction"

A Performance by...

Linda Wysong  
Ted Huckins

Portland Art Museum 1221 S.W. Park

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Photography and design by Ted Huckins

### **Art and Labor**

*The frames are stood up, the cross braces secured and then the planks are laid; a scaffold is being built. As the metal and wood structure rises from the ground, the builders move up as well. The interconnection between fixed rectilinear forms and the movement of the workers is a key to Art at Work's "Tower Construction."*

**Process**, an intrinsic aspect of twentieth century art, is the essence of construction. When you walk on to a building site, the rumbling noise overwhelms at first. But soon the attentive observer senses an intricate and carefully orchestrated pattern comparable to the choreography of a dance. Coordination, timing, training and individual excellence are evident. The construction site often forces the worker to perform in awkward positions, calling for even greater skill and adaptability. There is art and vitality in awkwardness as well as the physical movements that demonstrate precision and grace.

Still, there is little danger that a construction job will be confused with a dance performance. The dancer leaves an empty stage while the process of building yields tangible results. Even temporary forms such as scaffolding are seen in terms of the final finished structure. In fact, the temporary forms on the job site can be read as a metaphor for the process of work. Like the work itself, the temporary forms are necessary for construction, yet neither of them are seen when the project is completed.

This performance by Art at Work is the construction of a scaffold tower whose aesthetic qualities are of interest both when the figures are within the structure and when they step down. The tower is composed of a repeating three-dimensional grid which can be appreciated for its rectilinear shapes, spacial clarity and strong rhythms. The delicacy created by the cross bracing is an excellent contrast with the large scale and rough materials.

This temporary structure embodies much of the formal qualities found in our urban world. Like modern cities, the human figures move freely throughout the geometric structure, creating a living, kinetic sculpture.

Art at Work draws from labor culture to express the vitality and importance of work and to focus on the aesthetic potential of the job site.

Linda Wysong and Ted Huckins