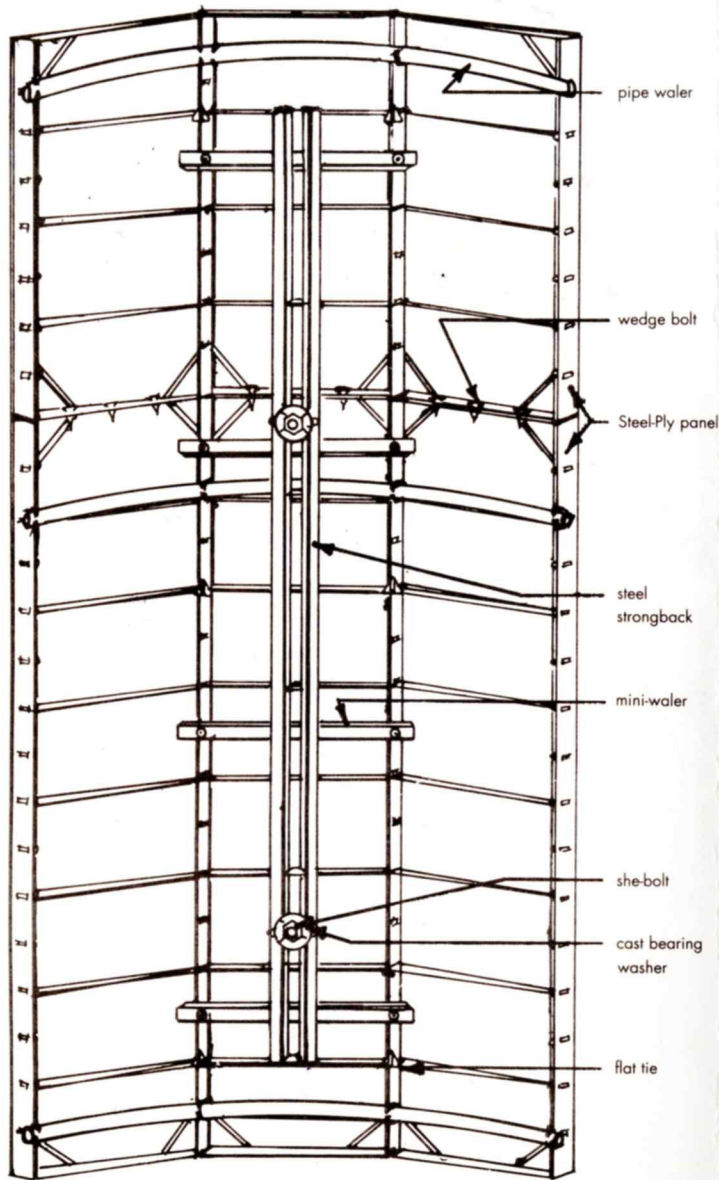


Moving Circles Performance Sculpture



Formwork for Concrete

"Moving Circles" celebrates workers and contemporary building practices. Thus, it is appropriate that it is presented in the National Building Museum, whose mandate is to showcase the achievements of Americans in building and to encourage a commitment to excellence in the building arts.

Linda Wysong is a union journeyman carpenter and an artist. She lives in Portland, Oregon, and has created numerous sculptural installations since 1983 which form a series she calls Art at Work projects. "Moving Circles" is her most recent presentation.

Linda Wysong designed "Moving Circles" specifically for the Great Hall to complement this remarkable interior space. Over fifty tons of modular steel, wood forms, and hardware are assembled into a monumental sculpture that fills one third of the Great Hall. The sculpture is composed of three large concentric tank-like structural forms, placed in stepped elevations.

"Moving Circles" broadens our appreciation of the collaborative work that builders perform today. By bringing a construction work within museum walls, the performance becomes more than a demonstration of building techniques. The museum setting highlights the workers' complex art and their key contributions to our environment. Union carpenters, iron-workers, laborers, and operating engineers here present their skills and product up close.

Our urban landscape is constructed from building materials that are often hidden or removed upon completion. Reinforcing bars strengthen poured concrete from within, and concrete forms are removed after the concrete is poured. In "Moving Circles" we are encouraged to look at these working materials and experience them as workers do on a job site.

"Moving Circles" asks us to recognize the crucial position of building arts in our society. A changing exhibition, it offers us the chance to confront elements of our built environment through a celebration of materials and the people who build with these materials.

Artist's Statement

Flat panels of steel and wood are unloaded from the truck and stacked on the ground. The pins are locked into place, the walls begin to rise, and the space is gradually shaped. "Moving Circles," an Art at Work performance, is underway.

Process, an intrinsic aspect of twentieth-century art, is the essence of construction. When you walk onto 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 can also force the worker to perform in awkward positions. Getting the job done can mean working in a low tight spot or balancing on a high beam. There is art and vitality in awkwardness as well as in more traditional movements of grace and precision.

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. In construction the temporary is always seen in terms of the final product. The temporary forms on the job 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.

The temporary nature of "Moving Circles" is also reflective of the evolving and cyclical state of our urban environment. The constant process of building and tearing down in our cities is evident all around us and can be seen as a source of both vital energy and disorientation.

"Moving Circles" is a living kinetic sculpture that changes throughout its existence. The movements of the craftspeople, the visitors who walk through the space, the passage of time, and the physical changes in the structure are all part of the piece.

Art at Work draws from the labor culture to express the vitality and importance of work and to consider the world in which we all live.

Linda Wysong
Artist and Journeyman Carpenter