

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Chad Calder, 'Sculpture created for 1984 world's fair to be repaired for display in Kenner'*The New Orleans Advocate, May 27, 2014*



A sculpture created for the 1984 New Orleans World's Fair will be shipped to its creator in New York for repairs in advance of its eventual return to Kenner.

"The Wave," a two-ton bronze sculpture by artist Lynda Benglis, features hidden tubes that pump water over it when it is on display.

Shortly after the 1984 fair ended, the sculpture was purchased by local businessman Carl Eberts and was shown briefly overseas.

It ended up in the storage yard at a former sewage treatment plant off Williams Boulevard, where it now sits alongside spheres of metal wire assembled to make a snowman during Kenner's holiday celebration.

Eberts told nola.com last year that failed efforts with his brother-in-law, former Kenner Mayor and Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard, to display the piece led to its ultimately ending up in the Kenner storage yard, though it's not clear exactly when that happened.

For many years, the sculpture's ownership was unknown or in dispute.

Assistant City Attorney Deborah Miller Yenni now says the city has records showing the sculpture was donated to the Kenner Development Corp. in the late 1990s and was later given to the city. That cleared the way for the city to allow Benglis, who was born in Lake Charles, to take possession of the sculpture for the next two years and restore it at her own expense.

The 72-year-old artist hired attorney Christopher Alfieri to approach the city in December after she decided to see what it would take to get the sculpture back on public view.

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Alfieri said “The Wave” was the first piece in what would become a significant artistic phase for Benglis.

“She wanted to revisit a piece of work that she considers an artistic achievement,” he said.

The sculpture’s value at this point is unknown; Alfieri said the value is probably greatly diminished because of the state it’s in.

The work spent a considerable amount of time outside and was not always covered, causing its surface to age inconsistently. It has some cracks and dents, and decisions will need to be made about how to restore the sculpture’s patina and repair the internal tubes that pump the water.

In addition, a 3-square-foot piece that covers the plumbing at the base will need to be remade entirely.

Luckily, the original artist can restore it using the original foundry, Alfieri said.

“This isn’t something a restorer could do because it is re-creating a piece of the sculpture, which is something only the artist can do,” he said.

Alfieri said the two-year time frame was chosen to give both parties ample time to prepare for the sculpture’s return to Kenner.

The restoration likely won’t take longer than six months, and the cooperative endeavor agreement between Benglis and the city allows the piece to be shown publicly in the meantime.

Miller Yenni said the city isn’t prepared to display “The Wave” at this point — one estimate of the cost to mount the sculpture was about \$250,000 — but it now has two years to raise the money to do so.

While Benglis plans to make a mold of the work, Alfieri said she has no plans to replicate it and wants the piece to remain one of a kind.

<http://www.theneworleansadvocate.com/news/9258248-171/sculpture-created-for-1984-worlds>