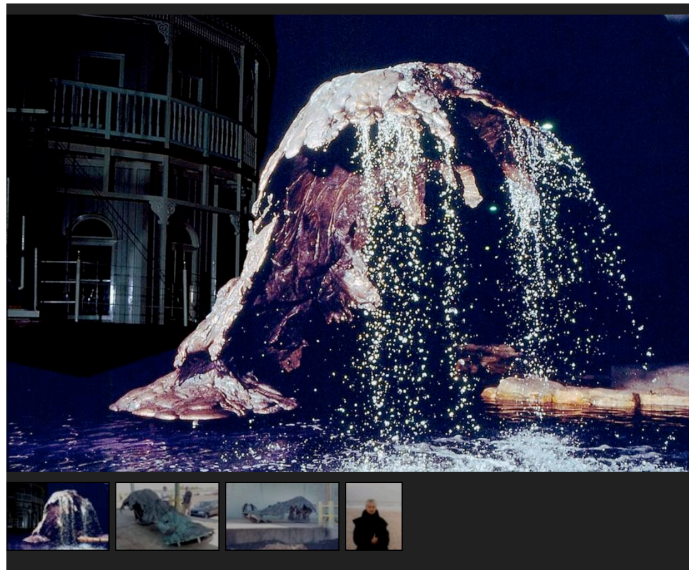
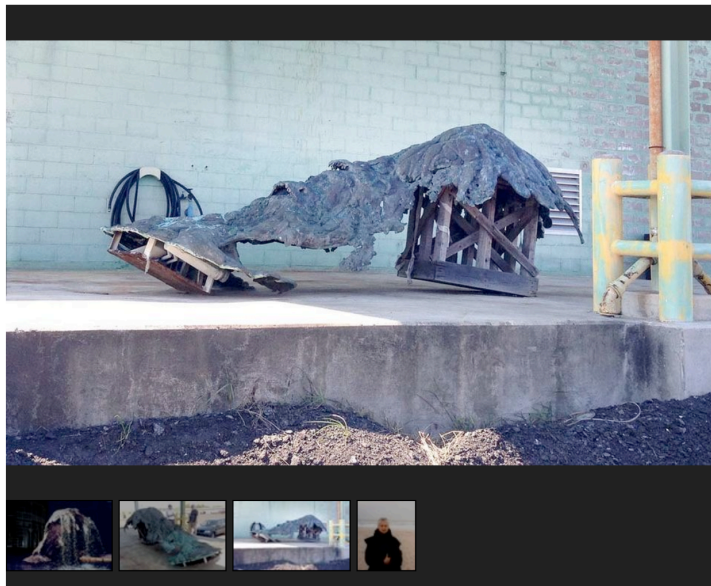


## THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Adriane Quinlan, "Long-lost Lynda Benglis sculpture 'The Wave' headed to City Park,"  
*Nola*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015



Lynda Benglis sculpture, "The Wave (The Wave of the World)" in 1984 at the World's Fair before Kenner got it.  
(Photo Courtesy Cheim & Read, New York)



A sculpture by the artist Lynda Benglis, "The Wave (The Wave of the World)" has sat here in a former sewerage treatment facility in Kenner for three decades, without the stand to hold it upright or the pool of water that would show how it looked as a functional fountain. (Photo by Adriane Quinlan, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)

## THOMAS DANE GALLERY

After almost three decades in storage at Kenner's former sewage treatment plant, an avant-garde sculpture by the world-renowned artist Lynda Benglis is going back on display. The 19-foot-tall bronze fountain, named "The Wave (The Wave of the World)," will be installed at **City Park** in New Orleans as early as June, a **Kenner** official said Friday (May 1).

"The Wave" debuted at the 1984 world's fair in New Orleans. But after its extended showing there, it was left to deteriorate at the Kenner plant, open to the elements, its only admirers the municipal employees who passed by it to pick up equipment.

*Read more about the sculpture's **history and value, and how it ended up in Kenner.***

Now, however, Kenner has forged an agreement to loan it for four years to the Helis Foundation, a New Orleans philanthropic group that focuses on the arts. The foundation has agreed to pay all costs of storage, transportation and display in City Park, said Debra Miller Yenni, an assistant city attorney in Kenner.

The foundation signed an agreement with City Park for a display site just east of the New Orleans Museum of Art. "That's a win-win. We don't have that kind of money," Yenni said. "It's considered, you know, a real coup for Kenner and New Orleans too, for the art community. It will definitely be a big deal ... because it's finally going to be able to be seen."

A representative of the Helis Foundation did not immediately return a call for comment Friday.

The cast-bronze piece, curved like the spine of a tail-flipping whale, was designed for flowing and dripping water. Forged by Benglis early in her career, "The Wave" was displayed at the Louisiana World Exposition, which had a theme of "The World of Rivers: Fresh Water as a Source of Life."

Afterward, however, through a series of bungled hand-offs, the piece that would come to mean so much to Benglis' career ended up on the loading dock at Kenner's sewage plant. When NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune **publicized its whereabouts in 2013**, Kenner officials determined that the city owned the piece and worked with Benglis to restore it, Yenni said. Benglis transported the sculpture to a forge in New York, where she restored a missing piece and created a cast of the entire work, Yenni said.

Kenner's research on its ownership showed that "The Wave" had initially been purchased by a private collector, Carl Eberts, for \$100,000, with a \$15,000 grant that required him to display it for public view, Yenni said. When Eberts donated the work to a Kenner non-profit, which later folded and gave "The Wave" to the city, the stipulation that the piece must be publicly displayed carried through, Yenni said. She said Kenner officials sought to display it near Lake Pontchartrain, but they found that installation alone would cost \$250,000.

That is when the Helis Foundation and a Benglis representative offered to pay to install it at New Orleans City Park for at least four years, Yenni said. The delay might allow Kenner time to come up with the \$250,000, Yenni said.

So how did Kenner have such a change of heart? How did the piece that was once treated as scrap metal end up becoming a \$250,000 priority?

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"No one really had any clue how much the thing was worth," Yenni said. "Once we found out, we were like, 'OK, well maybe we really need to make sure we have ownership and everything is in line!'"

While there is no exact figure for the value of "The Wave," Benglis' work has been auctioned for as much as \$173,000, according to **Artspace.com**. As Yenni researched the sculpture's provenance, she found Benglis pieces estimated to be even more valuable.

"Some of her work, the stuff hanging on the wall, was almost \$1 million," Yenni said. So she asked officials, "Do you have any idea how much this is worth?"

In an **interview with The Art Newspaper in December 2014**, Lynda Benglis said she was cheered by the news that the piece was scheduled for public display. "It's a wonderful thing to have happened," Benglis told the paper. "It was a pain in my heart for almost 30 years, to have it leave and not be shown again. I never stopped looking for the work, and am so happy to have found it."

[http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/05/long\\_lost\\_lynda\\_benglis\\_sculpt.html](http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/05/long_lost_lynda_benglis_sculpt.html)

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