



September 16, 2010

Flower Power sculpture by renowned artist Mark di Suvero returns to Toronto

The large scale steel sculpture Flower Power, created by internationally known artist Mark di Suvero in 1967, has returned to Toronto after being restored by the artist. The sculpture was installed over two days at 175 Dan Leckie Way (Concord City Place), on a parcel of land donated to the City by Concord Adex.

Part of the City of Toronto's Public Art collection, Flower Power, along with a similar sculpture, No Shoes, was commissioned for the International Sculpture Symposium in Toronto in 1967. These works were the first large scale works completed by the artist and had been installed in High Park for more than 40 years. In 2008, the works were removed by City of Toronto Cultural Services and sent to the United States to be restored by the artist. The Flower Power sculptural work is estimated to be worth more than \$2 million.

Mark di Suvero is an American sculptor whose work has appeared in museums, exhibitions and outdoor public settings around the world. His mostly large-scale sculptures, fashioned from industrial materials and found objects, blend the dynamic movement of kinetic art with Abstract Expressionism. His commitment to helping other artists includes his co-founding of the cooperative Park Place Gallery in New York, and the Athena Foundation, an organization to help individual artists realize their visions. He also founded the outdoor museum and artist residency program Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City. He has received the Lifetime Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award from the International Sculpture Center and, in 2005, the Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities for his commitment to aspiring artists.

In 1967, di Suvero was a rising star in the international art scene. He was part of a group of artists invited to participate in the Toronto International Sculpture Symposium - an event held to celebrate Canada's centennial. He created two sculptures in High Park: No Shoes, situated by the woods at the bottom of a hill; and the towering Flower Power, which rested at the top of the same hill. Their titles reflected the ideals of the time: "It was a moment when in 1967, I was then, as I am now, very dedicated to an idea that the world can exist in peace," said the artist.

Flower Power and No Shoes represent the first time that di Suvero worked on a massive scale and with steel I-beams, which have remained central to his work ever since. The art works didn't fare well over time - they were allowed to rust and were eventually cut apart. No Shoes lost its free-swinging logs: the top section of Flower Power was cut down due to safety concerns. Both of their original colours, bright orange and bright red, faded.

Di Suvero is happy to restore both works and return them to the City of Toronto. The No Shoes sculptural work will be installed at a later date at a prominent downtown location.

The City has also commissioned a documentary on these works and the restoration process produced by Sarah Keenlyside of Inkblot Media. Keenlyside recently interviewed di Suvero about the Flower Power sculptural work and has written about the work's past and present history in Toronto. This article can be accessed by visiting: <http://www.livewithculture.ca/art/flower-power-blooms-again/>

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