



The outdoor sculpture *Shockers* is scheduled for installation on the Wichita State University campus in the spring of 2019. The giant Cor-Ten steel figures, created by world-renowned sculptor Tom Otterness, will join one of the top 10 best campus outdoor sculpture collections in the United States.

Otterness was born in Wichita in 1952. After his high school graduation, he headed to New York City. In 1970, at age 18, he joined the Art Students League in New York and, by 1973, was participating in the independent study program at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. In 1977 he became a member of Collaborative Projects Inc. in New York. He still lives in New York and works out of his own studio in Brooklyn. He is widely known and respected for his public sculptures, many of which are permanently displayed in outdoor venues in major cities in the United States, Canada and Europe. Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Adam Weinberg, said of Otterness: "The work that Tom has done today is probably some of the most community-friendly, family-friendly work being produced by a major artist in America."

In 2017, Otterness was contacted by the Ulrich Museum regarding a commission for the university. The Ulrich announced the commission in fall 2017. *Shockers* is funded entirely by a private donation in honor of Joan S. Beren. Joan was an admirer of Tom's work, a proud shocker and a supporter of the Ulrich Museum of Art. *Shockers*, will join Wichita State University's widely known and highly ranked Martin H. Bush Outdoor Sculpture Collection.

"Whimsical" is one of the words most often associated with Otterness sculptures. Whether large- or small-scale, his work often features cartoon or fairytale characters and subtle social commentary. He works the bronze into smooth, rounded shapes. *Shockers*, for instance, will feature figures embracing, signifying unity and a collegial bond. *Shockers* is inspired by Otterness' *Makin' Hay* (2002) sculptural group. *Makin' Hay* was on temporary exhibition at WSU from 2015–2017, and quickly earned its place as one of the most beloved sculptures on campus. With the departure of 'Makin' Hay,' the donor was looking for something that would personify the Shocker spirit and the notion of agrarian roots and summers spent working in the fields before returning to college.

*Shockers* is fabricated from Cor-Ten steel and locally sourced hay. The structure of the figures is created by the steel, and the form of the figures is filled out using hay. Due to the nature of hay as a material and exposure to the elements, the hay will need to be replaced on a yearly basis. The sculpture will consist of two figures, each approximately 19 feet high. The installation of *Shockers* is scheduled for Spring 2019 and will be installed in a large grassy area near Duerksen Fine Arts Center.

His work is included in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Museum of America Art, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It graces the New York Botanical Gardens, the Nelson Rockefeller State Park, Times Square and parks and public places in other major cities. His work can be found on many university campuses such as, the University of Illinois, Texas Tech University, University of Florida and the University of Oklahoma.

Locally, you can see *Millipede*, located in front of the Ulrich Museum; and *Dreamers Awake*, a darker large-scale work by Otterness, on the grounds of the Wichita Art Museum. You may also visit the artist in his New York studio at <http://www.tomostudio.com/>. For a tour of one of his more well-known installations, "Life Underground" in the New York subway stations, visit [http://www.nycsubway.org/perl/artwork\\_show?21](http://www.nycsubway.org/perl/artwork_show?21).