

SCOTT BURTON WAS ONE OF THOSE RARE ARTISTS WHO CARVE THEIR OWN DISTINCTIVE NICHE. HIS SCULPTURAL FURNITURE STRADDLES CATEGORIES and blurs boundaries in ways that enrich the viewing experience. Reviewing Burton's work, the late art historian Robert Rosenblum acknowledged a "bewilderment in confronting something that belongs comfortably to no familiar category."¹ Burton entered the art world as a critic and historian, became a performance artist, and ultimately emerged as a sculptor and public artist. That unconventional trajectory gave him a broad historical and conceptual perspective as he developed his novel artistic practice.

As a sculptor, Burton focused on furniture design and arranged his objects – often a cluster of chairs and tables – like tableaux or stage sets awaiting actors. Viewers observe and make use of the seating and tables to "complete" the work, whether it is displayed in a gallery or outdoors as public art. Inspired by modern design theories, Burton invited engagement with his sculptures as a means of heightening individuals' awareness of the built environment and, as a result, their aesthetic sensibility.

Located in the Martin H. Bush Outdoor Sculpture Collection at Wichita State University, *Münster Benches, a Pair* is one of two editioned Burton sculptures originally commissioned by the city of Münster, in the former West Germany. In 1977, 1987, 1997, and most recently 2007, this Westphalia municipality engaged prominent international artists to create public art. While researching his project, Burton

looked to the neighboring town of Hagen and its Villa Hohenhof, a 1908 house (now museum) designed by Henry van de Velde, the highly influential Belgian architect, interior designer, theorist, and teacher who was an early proponent of the fully designed environment, or *Gesamtkunstwerk*. In 1906 he established and became the first director of the School of Arts and Crafts in Weimar, Germany, which was succeeded after World War I by the legendary Bauhaus. Van de Velde developed the building, interiors, furnishings, and garden of the Villa Hohenhof, creating a vibrant embodiment of the encompassing-design ethos.

Knowledgeable about design history and sympathetic to the efforts of van de Velde and the Bauhaus modernists to awaken the public to a richer array of aesthetic pleasures, Burton based his commissioned benches on those in the Villa Hohenhof garden. Yet, as in all his other works inspired by design precedents, he altered the original, subtracting the undulating lines and flourish of art nouveau that van de Velde had employed. The result is a spare, reductive example of late-twentieth-century public art – one that invites those in the campus community to sit, pause from the academic bustle, and find a moment's aesthetic pleasure.

40 *Münster Benches, a Pair*

Designed 1987; fabricated 1999

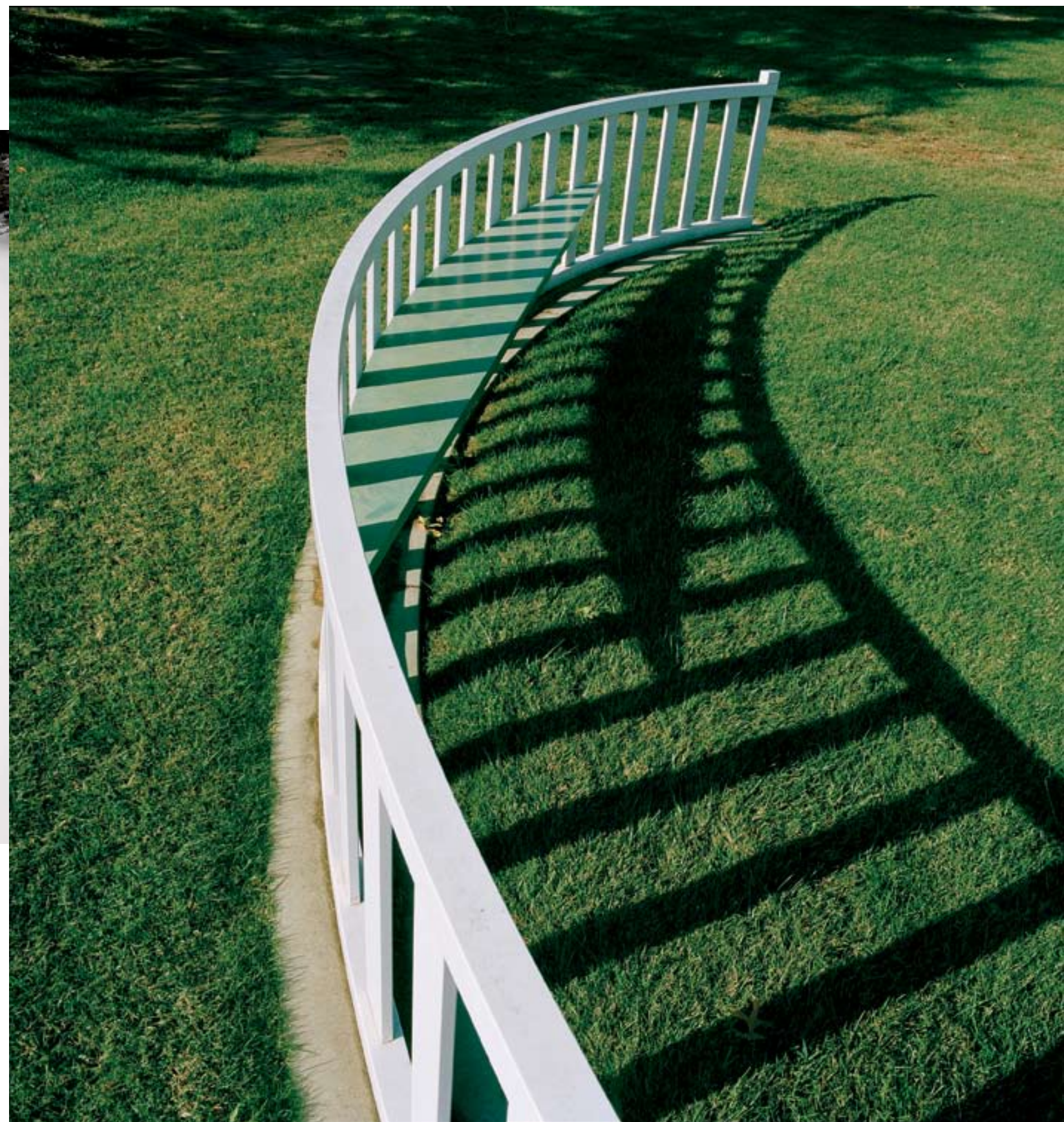
Painted aluminum, 40 x 190 x 58 in. each

Museum Purchase, 2000.0001.a–b

Patricia McDonnell

1. Robert Rosenblum, "Scott Burton: The Last Tableau," *On Modern American Art: Selected Essays by Robert Rosenblum* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 305.





Art OF OUR TIME

SELECTIONS FROM THE | ULRICH MUSEUM OF ART
WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

Patricia McDonnell AND *Emily Stamey*

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

Toby Kamps, Laura Moriarty,

Antonya Nelson, Timothy R. Rodgers,

AND *Robert Silberman*

PHOTO-ESSAY BY *Larry Schwarm*

Ulrich Museum of Art | Wichita State University
in association with the University of Washington Press

This book is published in conjunction with the exhibition
Art of Our Time: Selections from the Ulrich Museum of Art,
Wichita State University

April 24–August 8, 2010.

© 2010 Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced
or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical,
including photocopying, recording, or by an information
storage-and-retrieval system, without prior written permission of
the Ulrich Museum of Art.

Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art
Wichita State University
1845 Fairmount Street
Wichita, KS 67260-0046
www.ulrich.wichita.edu

University of Washington Press
P. O. Box 50096
Seattle, WA 98145-5096
www.washington.edu/uwpress

Book design: Patrick Dooley, Lawrence, Kansas

Assistant manuscript editor: Susan C. Jones, Minneapolis

Photographers: Larry Schwarm and Jim Meyer for the Ulrich
Museum of Art, except work by Zhang Huan (courtesy of the
artist)

Printing and binding: Greystone Graphics, Kansas City, Kansas

This book was typeset in Adobe Garamond Pro, designed by
Robert Slimbach (based on the roman typefaces of Claude
Garamond and italic typefaces of Robert Granjon), and Gill Sans,
designed by Eric Gill.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art.

Art of our time: selections from the Ulrich Museum of Art,
Wichita State University / Patricia McDonnell and Emily Stamey;
with Toby Kamps . . . [et al.]; photographic essay by Larry
Schwarm. – 1st ed.

p. cm.

Published on the occasion of an exhibition held at the Ulrich
Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Apr. 24–Aug. 8, 2010.

ISBN 978-0-295-99024-8 (cloth) – ISBN 978-0-295-99025-5 (paper)

1. Art, Modern – 20th century – Exhibitions. 2. Art, Modern – 21st
century – Exhibitions. 3. Art – Kansas – Wichita – Exhibitions.

4. Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art – Exhibitions. I. McDonnell,
Patricia, 1956 – II. Stamey, Emily. III. Kamps, Toby. IV. Schwarm,
Larry, 1944– V. Title. VI. Title: Selections from the Ulrich
Museum of Art, Wichita State University.

N6490.E36 2010

709.04'007478186 – dc22

2009051477

Front cover: Joan Miró, *Personnages Oiseaux* (Bird People), 1977–78
(cat. no. 16)

Back cover: Tom Otterness, *Millipede*, 2008 (cat. no. 45)



This exhibition and book have been made possible through the
generous support of Emprise Bank and the National Endowment
for the Arts. Additional sponsors include the Joan S. Beren
Foundation, Edward and Helen Healy, Harry Pollak, and
Richard S. Smith and Sondra M. Langel. Support has also been
provided by Jon and Kelly Callen, Mike and Dee Michaelis, Jayne
S. Milburn, Christine F. Paulsen-Polk, and the Wichita State
University Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic
Affairs and Research.

About the Contributors

Toby Kamps is senior curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. He has organized exhibitions on the work of Vanessa Beecroft, Ellsworth Kelly, and Claes Oldenburg as well as such themed exhibitions as *Small World: Dioramas in Contemporary Art* (2000), *Lateral Thinking: The Art of the 1990s* (2002), and *The Old, Weird America* (2008).

Patricia McDonnell is director of the Ulrich Museum of Art. Her scholarly focus is upon European and American modernism, and she is a leading specialist on the painter Marsden Hartley. Her publications include *Marsden Hartley: American Modern* (1997), *On the Edge of Your Seat: Popular Theater and Film in Early Twentieth-Century American Art* (2002), and *Painting Berlin Stories* (2003).

Laura Moriarty is the author of three novels and the recipient of several literary awards. Before becoming a full-time writer, she was a social worker. Moriarty lives in Lawrence, Kansas, where she teaches creative writing at the University of Kansas.

Antonya Nelson has written three novels and published six short-story collections. She contributes often to the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times Book Review*. Nelson holds the Cullen Chair in Creative Writing at the University of Houston. Her award-winning novel, *Living to Tell* (2000), takes place in her hometown of Wichita, and her forthcoming novel, *Bound*, is set there as well.

Timothy R. Rodgers is director of the Scottsdale (Arizona) Museum of Contemporary Art. Formerly chief curator at the New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, he is involved in a range of writing and curatorial projects. His scholarly concentration is on American early modernism.

Robert Silberman is an associate professor of art history at the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus. His chief scholarly interests have been photography, film, and contemporary art. Silberman collaborated with former *New York Times* photography critic Vicki Goldberg on the companion volume for the 1999 PBS series *American Photography: A Century of Images*.

Larry Schwarm is a professor of art at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, and a nationally regarded photographer whose work has been shown at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. His 2003 book, *On Fire: Larry Schwarm*, won the Honickman Book Award and Prize.

Emily Stamey, the Ulrich Museum's curator of modern and contemporary art, is the author of *Jolan Gross-Bettelheim: The American Prints* (2001) and *The Prints of Roger Shimomura: A Catalogue Raisonné, 1968–2005* (2006). Her scholarship centers on ethnic identities and social themes in American art.

Reproduction Credits

Berenice Abbott: © Berenice Abbott/Commerce Graphics, NYC;
 Benny Andrews: Art © Estate of Benny Andrews / Licensed by
 VAGA, New York, NY; Arman: © 2010 Artists Rights Society
 (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris; Milton Avery: © 2010 Milton
 Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Margaret
 Bourke-White: Art © Estate of Margaret Bourke-White / Licensed
 by VAGA, New York, NY; Alexander Calder: © Calder
 Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York;
 Imogen Cunningham: © 1910 / 2009 Imogen Cunningham Trust;
 Helen Frankenthaler: © 2010 Helen Frankenthaler / Abrams
 Original Editions, New York; George Grosz: Art © Estate of
 George Grosz / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY; Robert
 Indiana: © The Morgan Art Foundation / Artists Rights Society
 (ARS), New York; Luis Alfonso Jimenez: © Estate of Luis A.
 Jimenez, Jr. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Jacob
 Lawrence: © The Jacob and Gwendolyn Lawrence Foundation,
 Seattle / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Sol LeWitt:
 © The LeWitt Estate / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York;

Robert Longo: Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures; Ludwig
 Meidner: Ludwig Meidner-Archiv, Jüdisches Museum der Stadt
 Frankfurt am Main; Joan Miró: © 2010 Successió Miró / Artists
 Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris; Henry Moore:
 © The Henry Moore Foundation, 2010; George L. K. Morris:
 © Frelinghuysen Morris Foundation; Joan Mitchell: © Estate of
 Joan Mitchell; Robert Motherwell: Art © Dedalus Foundation,
 Inc. / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY; Louise Nevelson: ©
 Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New
 York; Emil Nolde: © Nolde Stiftung Seebüll; Tom Otterness: ©
 Tom Otterness / tomoetterness.net; George Rickey: © Estate of
 George Rickey / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY; Richard
 Serra: © Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York;
 Andy Warhol: © 2010 The Andy Warhol Foundation / ARS, New
 York / Trademarks, Campbell Soup Company. All rights reserved;
 Edward Weston: Collection Center for Creative Photography ©
 1981 Arizona Board of Regents; Frank Lloyd Wright: © Frank
 Lloyd Wright Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York