

RONALD BLADEN: HEROIC SHAPES
October 25 – December 21, 2018



Left to right: *Flying Fortress*, *Host of the Ellipse*, *Wedge*, and *Cosmic Seed*

Every single one of Ronnie's pieces is embedded with mythic and epic qualities. That's what he was always about. Those gigantic sculptures are either self-images or images of great epic heroes, gods, and goddesses. Nothing short of that. –Al Held

Each of the four Ronald Bladen works shown in this exhibition was created as major public commission projects.

Wedge was created in 1971 for Sonsbeek 71 exhibition, in the Netherlands. Bladen was chosen as a participant along with artists Carl Andre, Christo, Donald Judd, Michael Heizer, Sol Lewitt, and Robert Smithson amongst others. Each artist was asked to choose a location and to design a work for that site.

Cosmic Seed was the winning proposal for a public sculpture to be placed near the new Agricultural Building, directly across from the state capitol building, in Des Moines, Iowa. The Iowa Council and the NEA funded the project. In his presentation, Bladen said, "I have attempted to produce something that would evoke the dignity of agriculture and that would possess uplifting and positive values."

Host of the Ellipse was commissioned by the Federal Government's GSA program. Bladen called this a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity. It was placed in a public park in front of Baltimore's new Social Security Administration Building, a structure used daily by five thousand employees and visitors.

After a competition that included entries by Richard Serra and Claes Oldenburg, Bladen was selected to create *Flying Fortress* to stand in front of the engineering

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school at the University of Düsseldorf. The project was canceled after the director's sudden death.

Ronald Bladen is cited as an influence of the younger generation of minimalist artists such as Carl Andre, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, and Lawrence Weiner, who repeatedly referred to him as the 'father figure' of Minimal Art. Bladen's work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions including the Sculpture Center and MoMA PS1 and included group shows at The Museum of Modern Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Whitney Museum of American Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, documenta 4, The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, "Primary Structures" at the Jewish Museum in New York, and "Scale as Content" at the Corcoran Gallery.

A forthcoming monograph on the artist with an introduction by Mark di Suvero and text by Robert S. Mattison is near completion. For additional information and press inquiries, please contact Gabby Johnson at 212-695-0164 or gabby@lorettahoward.com