

Beverly Pepper

MEDIUM Sculpture

NATIONALITY American

LIFE DATES Brooklyn, New York 1922 -

Sculptor Beverly Pepper was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1924. She first worked as a commercial art director before beginning her studies at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. After a brief period at the Art Students' League in New York, where she attended courses with Georgy Kepes, Pepper left the United States in 1949 to study painting in Paris at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière under Fernand Léger.

Although she returned one year later, Pepper continued over time to travel extensively throughout Europe and Asia. One of her most influential trips was a 1960 visit to the Angkor Wat Temples in Cambodia, about which she said, "I walked into Angkor Wat a painter and I left a sculptor." From this point on, she began to experiment with geometric form and its surrounding space as well as natural and industrial materials, such as wood, metal and Cor-Ten steel.

In 1962 she exposed her first welded works, which appeared alongside those of David Smith and Alexander Calder at the Spoleto Festival in Italy. The sleek, abstracted forms and shapes of her sculptures from this period incongruously complement the raw, unfinished quality of the material. Characterized by their monumentality, the superhuman scale and the strong verticality of these works relied on the interplay between solidity and emptiness, space and void.

Considered one of the major contributors to contemporary sculpture, Pepper has exhibited her work in several hundred shows at numerous venues. Her sculptures, through purchase or commission, have entered the collections museums and institutions including MIT; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.; the University of Michigan; Rutgers University; Vassar College; Dartmouth College; University of Iowa; Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama; Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.; Albertina Museum, Vienna; Art Gallery of Ontario; Courtland Art Institute, London; Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Florence, Italy; and Barcelona Museum of Modern Art, Spain.

Beverly Pepper shares her time between her studios in New York and Italy, where she has lived for over fifty years.

