

MIT List Center

Beverly Pepper

Artist Beverly Pepper made this sculpture, Trinity, in 1971.

It belonged to a series that were ground hugging. It's three triangles interlocked, and not in step with each other, but one leaning on the other, and looking as if they're pierced through. I liked the idea of the hard-edged ripples. I like things at a counterpoint.

Born in 1924, Pepper spent her early career as a painter. By the late 1960s, she had turned to large scale metal sculpture, often working in steel factories where she could experiment with different techniques and materials.

Nobody ever saw the likes of me working in the steel plant. The guys loved me. I was young. I had bright red hair. I was not bad. And, so, they'd show me things. And one of them came in and said, kid-- I always was kid-- kid, we got some ruled steel you might be interested in.

They were referring to a fabricated sheet metal called Corten.

It was really developed for the tensile strength. So they gave me a couple of sheets of Corten. And I cut it up and made it into some sculptures. And it looked terrific.

Trinity was among those sculptures. Pepper says she made multiple versions before being finally satisfied with this one, and that these alternate versions varied by only millimeters.

I'm not finished because I see something. I'm finished because I feel something.

Trinity's deep red rust color evolved over time, as the Corten was left exposed to weather and pollution.

What I liked about Corten, also, is the fact that it has a life of its own in the sense of its color, that it's something that said, you don't really control me. I like the fact that there is a kind of living aspect of the work.