



Jonathan Borofsky (American, b. 1942)

Walking Man (On the Edge), 1995

Fiberglass and steel

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995.14

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation

After completing his MFA at Yale, the Boston-born Jonathan Borofsky moved to New York City, where he pursued an intensely private form of conceptual art that consisted of counting and recording numbers sequentially onto 8 ½ x 11" sheets of paper. Desiring to connect with a wider public, he began in the 1970s to make drawings, paintings, prints, sculptures and installations featuring recognizable figures. Recurrent images such as the Hammering Man, Running Man, and Man with a Briefcase function, for Borofsky, both as self-portraits and symbols of common aspects of the human condition. Appropriately placed atop the JCCC Commons building, *Walking Man (On the Edge)* exemplifies Borofsky's use of generic figures to communicate shared human experience. The college campus attracts many different people, but most are students, striving for knowledge. Borofsky had this in mind when he set the man on the roof's edge, remarking, "The edge . . . seems to refer to pushing the limits of knowledge. [It] implies that we are reaching for something or looking for answers." Striding forward with energetic purpose, oblivious to his precarious position, Borofsky's Everyman simultaneously embodies and brings together the diverse student population, in a surprising, delightful, and inspiring fashion.

Jonathan Borofsky received his BFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 1964 and his MFA from Yale University in 1966.



Magdalena Abakanowicz (Polish, b. 1930 – d. 2017)

Two Figures on a Beam, 1997

Bronze

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.01

Gift of the Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Jules and Doris Stein Foundation in honor of Floriene and George Lieberman's 50th Anniversary

Beginning in the 1970s, Magdalena Abakanowicz created figurative works by molding burlap over plaster casts of nude bodies and stiffening the fabric with glue and resin. Abakanowicz often presented these headless, half-hollow figures in regimented groups, as if to evoke dehumanized victims of imposed conformity such as she herself had known in Poland under both Nazism and communism. Yet, the artist rejected narrow political readings of her sculptures, understanding them as universal emblems of the human condition. *Two Figures on a Beam* is a unique bronze based on a 1992 work of the same title composed of two burlap and resin figures balancing on a wooden beam supported by two logs. The two stolid, headless figures, with their rigid, frontal poses recall soldiers at attention or prisoners before a firing squad, while their elevation on a beam suggests slaves on the auction block or war captives on display. But they may also be interpreted in positive terms, as athletic performers balancing on an unstable beam in a demonstration of personal skill and discipline, rather than in submission to externally imposed authority. Such ambiguity is characteristic of Abakanowicz's enigmatic art, which always involves, in her words, "mystery, the inexplicable."

Magdalena Abakanowicz studied at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, graduating in 1954.

Antony Gormley (British, b. 1950)

Still Standing, 2000

Cast iron

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000.78

Posed with legs together and arms pressed to his sides, British artist Antony Gormley's cast iron sculpture of a simplified male figure is stripped of all references to a specific time or place. He projects a quiet centeredness, as if released from the travails of life or caught in a meditative state. The title, *Still Standing*, suggests that this figure has undergone some kind of test of endurance and emerged with his humanity intact. A recipient of Britain's prestigious Turner Prize in 1994, Gormley is renowned for his sculptures of the human body, a theme he has been exploring since the early 1980s, most notably in *Angel of the North*, a public sculpture in the north of England. "For me, the body is the central theme in art, but of course, also in life," the artist has said. "Without the body, there is nowhere for our consciousness to exist." Antecedents of this erect, self-contained figure date back centuries, to Egyptian mummies and ancient Greek *kouros* figures of standing young men. However, Gormley's metal figure, with its velvety, rust-red patina streaked with rivulets that animate its gently undulating form, has the breath of life.

After attending Trinity College in Cambridge, from 1968 to 1971, Antony Gormley studied at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, Goldsmiths College in London, and the Slade School of Art, University College London. The JCCC Gallery of Art had a solo exhibition of Gormley's work in 1996.





Judith Shea (American, b. 1948)

Between Thought and Feeling, 1988

Bronze and cast stone

Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995.15

Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer

Merging her training in clothing design and studio art, Judith Shea in the 1980s developed her signature image of the hollow dress, cast in bronze in the shape of a female body, “establishing,” in her words, “the presence of the figure in the actual absence of it.” In *Between Thought and Feeling*, the bronze dress sits on a cast stone cube, and holds in its lap a large bronze head. The head, freely modeled after Hellenistic portraits of Alexander the Great, bears a poignant expression meant to draw forth an emotional response. The perfect geometry of the cube, by contrast, appeals to the intellect. Situated between the two is the hollow dress, which Shea sees as a surrogate for herself. Mediating between the stylistic extremes embodied in the cube and the head, the dress occupies a middle position between classical figuration and minimalist abstraction. Shea’s sculpture posits a postmodern view of art history as a reservoir of images from which the artist may freely choose, rejecting outdated notions of the superiority of either pure abstraction or perfect naturalism. Abstraction and representation are both meaningful, thought and feeling are both important, and Shea sees no need to choose between them.

Judith Shea earned a degree in fashion design from Parsons School of Design, New York, in 1969, and received her BFA from Parsons The New School for Design in 1975.