

Landmarks Guide For Adolescents



Willard Boepple
American, born 1945

Eleanor at 7:15
1977
Cor-ten steel

Subject: Movement and the title of an artwork

Activity: Create a cardboard slot sculpture that evokes a feeling or gesture

Materials: Cardboard, scissors

Vocabulary: Cor-ten steel, dynamic, formalism, perpendicular, plane, negative space

i Introduction

Willard Boepple worked closely with British artist Anthony Caro (1924–2013) as a technical assistant for sculpture. Caro was a master of improvisational composition using sheet metal, and Boepple adapted that technique to create his own style.

Eleanor at 7:15 is made of many sheets of hard and heavy steel. Steel was also desirable because it posed a physical challenge to sculptors: to take on a sheet of industrially made metal, to cut it, to weld it, to bend it, and construct it would require great physical strength. It also requires a certain amount of technological skill with a welder and other industrial tools. Boepple specifically uses Cor-ten steel, a strong yet malleable material that can be cut, bent, and formed to create things with an extraordinary amount of energy and movement. This sculpture looks lively and active, like it may have just stopped moving, and could get up again at any moment.

While *Eleanor at 7:15* resists a figurative interpretation, the title alludes to an intimate moment in the life of the artist. Boepple's titles are not meant to be descriptions or explanations. They are inspired by places or poetry that evoke a feeling or gesture. With *Eleanor at 7:15*, Boepple envisioned a lively and energetic morning person. Aesthetically, the piece adheres to the formalist ideas that drove abstract sculpture at that time, when the context behind a work of art was secondary to purely visual aspects like form and style. Boepple breaks from this tradition by suggesting a narrative within the title.

? Questions

How is movement is used in this sculpture?

How does the material of the sculpture relate to how it looks? Does it contrast or compliment it?

This sculpture is called *Eleanor at 7:15*. Judging by the sculpture, what do you think Eleanor is like?

Willard Boepple, continued



Activity

- Using cardboard, assemble a cardboard slot sculpture.
- To attach two pieces of cardboard, cut two slots of the same size in each piece and slide them together perpendicularly. These will be the planes for your sculpture. You will also have to make sure your sculpture stays balanced.
- Unlike Cor-ten steel, cardboard is very lightweight and not malleable. How might these properties change the movement and overall visual appeal of your sculpture?
- Finally, give your sculpture a title that suggests a feeling, gesture, or movement.



Look Again

Look at the sculpture from all angles. Walk around it, look from eye level, and from different heights and angles. Do you notice things you can only see from a certain view? How does the artist use negative space?



BTW

This is one of Boepple's earlier artworks, when steel was the main material with which he worked. In the 1990s, as part of a popular reaction against steel sculptures, Boepple turned to working with wood.



Vocabulary

Cor-ten steel – A high strength group of steel alloys which were developed to eliminate the need for painting. It forms a stable, rust-like appearance after several years' exposure to weather.

Dynamic – Characterized by action or motion, the opposite of static.

Formalism – The position that the most important aspect of a work of art is its form, the way it is made, and its purely visual aspects, rather than its narrative content or its relationship to the visible world.

Negative Space – The empty space around and between an artwork.

Perpendicular – Two geometric objects are perpendicular if they intersect at a right angle. A line is said to be perpendicular to another line if the two lines intersect at a right angle of 90 degrees.

Plane – Any distinct flat surface within a painting or sculpture that exists in space.

Willard Boepple, continued



Artists with Related Works

Anthony Caro, *Veduggio Glimpse*, 1972–73

Antoine Pevsner, *Column of Peace*, 1954

Tony Smith, *Amaryllis*, 1965

Mark di Suvero, *Clock Knot*, 2007