



Hans Van de Bovenkamp



Living
in the present moment
Hans Van de Bovenkamp

photo: Denise C. Moore

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"Manhattan Portal" 2011 bronze 12'H x 45'W x 8'D

Essay by
Steve Larsen

Recreating Sacred Space

Since time immortal, says religious historian Mircea Eliade, human beings have created “sacred spaces.” The urge, he says, springs from the primordial depths of the psyche. People need places that are apart from the daily bustle of the marketplace. It is really the mood that creates the space. What is “sacred” is the attitude in which the mind is encouraged to contemplate each object and event against the backdrop to the endlessly fascinating mystery that is the actual matrix of our being. It is impossible to emerge unchanged from such an encounter.

People throughout the ages have set the space aside by a variety of devices: from drawing a circle in the sand or etching it on a cathedral floor; to hanging cords and paper streamers and raising a Torii gate through which you must pass to enter, as they do in Japan; to designating a “Holy of holies” deep within a temple in ancient Jerusalem, into which only certain high priests may go.

With these “bounding” rituals, a different frame of reference, or, if you will, “frame of reverence,” is established, in which the normal doings of the world are set aside. “The world is hung with banners,” says mythologist Joseph Campbell, “...heavy thinkers are to remain without. For the whole purpose of entering a sanctuary or participating a festival, is that one should be overtaken by the state known in India as “the other mind” (*anya manas*) where one is...spellbound, set apart from one’s logic of self-possession.”

As a mythologist, I recognized from the beginning of our relationship this same primordial impulse in the work of my friend and neighbor, Hans Van de Bovenkamp: the human urge to make sacred space. What first caught my attention was just the elegant way that Hans set up spaces, – functional workshops and studios in dusty old barns and chicken coops that had been abandoned. In those days Hans did much of the work himself. We would come to visit and find him crouched over a steel sculpture, or a cement mixer, up on a ladder, or driving a rickety old crane around his sculpture gardens like a mad inventor among his giant steel question marks.



"Stargazer" 1989 Stainless Steel 144" H x 96" W x 65" D

Around Hans, my wife, Robin (also an artist) and I have observed environments transform: ramshackle, weedy places achieve a new dignity, lawns are mowed, and ponds created. Set among the studios and houses, his whimsical sculptures resemble frozen archetypes, or space-age steel Moai, like those of Easter Island.

Sometimes I would experience “creativity vertigo” around my friend’s relentless self-actualization. His soul seemed always to be spilling over with images and ideas. I would bring him a copy of my latest book I had written, and he would show me enormous steel creations that required derricks to erect in public plazas all over Europe and America. In the midst of all this work, he has created an elegant new apartment in a hayloft, visited Barbados and Bali, hung out with Mick Jagger and Ram Dass, and accompanied Joan Halifax to North Vietnam. My own arena had been depth psychology and psychotherapy, using words and images. Hans’ work involves transformations of matter. Each time we came to visit his place, we would be treated to an elegant new environment,—renewed every couple of years – in which to lounge, and taste all the wonderful things of life – good food and drink and lots of mind play – as we enticed each other into new creative visions or paroxysms of laughter.

In making sacred space, one must leave room for emptiness, for that is where the spirit enters, like the breath in the vowel between the consonants of Hebrew sacred scripture. As Campell says sacred space is to set aside “the normal attitude toward the cares of the world.” Wisely, Hans leaves places among his sculptures in which one can contemplate, play, dream., and also – perhaps subversively— inserts them into the marketplace itself. You take in a little *sunyata*, emptiness, with each glance at a gleaming sky-reflecting steel enigma. His sculpture-ciphers sometimes resemble the curious question marks on Buddhist *stupas*, like the giant one at Bodhinath, Nepal. Hans achieves sacred space effortlessly, by leaving it alone and surrounding it with a beautiful unspoken invitation.

The principle is exemplified in his design of an extraordinary meditation temple now completed at the Omega Institute. It is a compelling exercise in contemplative architecture and interior design. The mind is quieted, the senses



"Cloudkicker" 2005 Stainless Steel 128" H x 79"H x 97"D

soothed; we hear a bellring in an empty sky.

Once Hans came to me to share a new idea. He wanted to create giant tables in the middle of nowhere, the top perhaps to be achieved by a strange surreal ladder, as if in a giant's kitchen, with celestial cloud shapes all around. This vision coincided, by one of these Jungian synchronicities, with my own peculiar study of the use of mesas, symbolic tables by South American shamanism. In this unique tradition, the magician sets up a small table like a sanctuary, with all of his "power objects", talismans of personal power, on it. The table is a symbolic replica of the cosmos, of the whole world. (There is actually a version of this concept in North America, in the symbolic sand paintings of the Navajo, and in the high Himalayas, near Tibet, where at 15,000 feet Robin and I had seen Buddhist priests painting a mandala in sand. Here, in sacred space, you realize that you stand in vastness, symbolically connected to everything.

Hans did indeed create his tables and I laugh with joy every time I see them. In terms of his whole artistic corpus they may now be recognized as an elegant stage in his own creative development.

About ten years ago, Hans was staying in Bali, one of his favorite destinations around the world. Sitting in the elegant teakwood temples, of the island paradise, he thought, what if I brought some temples to Tillson? After consulting with his Balinese friend, Amir Rabik, craftsmen were commissioned to build three traditional teakwood temples, which were shipped to the United States. To receive them Hans created a quarter acre pond and beautifully manicured landscape. The temple-dwelling have since become a local legend and constitute tours de force of traditional and innovative methods. The buildings nestling around the little lake, silent witnesses to Hans' amazing vision.

I picture Hans rising at dawn like Hephaestus, the Greek divine craftsman. In the early morning sunlight, he begins to wrest shapes, great or small, out of steel or bronze. The productive work clamours through the day, following the sun in its course over the sky. By dusk the hammers, forges and welders are silent. The master sits in his quiet, graceful temple and visits with a client or friends. This man has not only learned how to live well, but how to share well.

As a young psychologist, I diagnosed Hans with "positive paranoia," the outrageous belief that the universe is conspiring in your favor. Our old friend



"Black Portal " Painted Stainless Steel 2009 125" H x 140"H x 78"D

the mythologist, Joe Campbell said, "Follow your bliss!" and doors will open for you, that you didn't even know were there." It was Campell at his most artless, simply describing how his own life had worked. Hans Van de Bovenkamp's life has proven the same principle. By the core of his own being. The truth of his accomplishment is validated by the universe's blessing. Hans pitched his tabletop up toward the clouds, and found a beautiful feast perpetually spread upon it.

Steven Larsen, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus SUNY, the author of *The Mythic Imagination*, and with his wife Robin, *A Fire in the Mind, the Life of Joseph Campbell*, and *The Fashioning of Angels; Partnership as Spiritual Practice*. The Larsens co-direct The Center for Symbolic Studies near New Paltz, NY.



"Olympia" 2007
Painted stainless steel
144" H x 60"W x 48"D



"RedTrunk" 2009 Painted stainless steel 150" H x 112"W x 104"D



"Siv's Tiara" 2007 Stainless Steel 108" H x 72"W x 72"D



"Menhir Meneer" 2009 Stainless Steel | 148" H x 94"W x 86"D





"Stella in the Wind" 1997 Stainless Steel 120" H x 96"W x 28" D



"Gaea" 2012 Bronze 95" H x 60"W x 45" D

Right "Ode to Miles" 2006 Stainless Steel 180" H x 96"W x 84" D





Brown Menhir 2012 Corten Steel 128" H x 79"W x 97"D





"Lost at Sea" 2010 Stainless Steel H 72" x W 72" x D 48"







"Itzamma Stella" 1992 Polished Stainless Steel 44" H x 14"W x 9"D





"Menhir-Tower" 2010 Stainless Steel 244" H x 48" W x 48" D



"Up & Over" Multi-patinated bronze 2013 38" H x 48" W x 10" D







"Peleus" Stainless Steel 2012 104" H x 55"W x 46" D

Left: "Spire" Stainless Steel 2008 192" H x 72"W x 60" D





"The Beloved" Stainless Steel 2011 84" H x 120"W x 72" D

Left "Green Thunder" Bronze 2008 72" H x 60"W x 12" D



"Sagg Portal with Bench" Stainless Steel 2005
112" H x 133" W x 55" D



"Upside Down Portal" Stainless Steel 2017
84" H x 84" W x 21" D



"Sagg Portal #9" Stainless Steel 2011 138" H x 216"W x 48" D





"Spirit Portal" Bronze 2009 11'H x 16'W x 6'D



"Titan Blossom" 2016 Stainless Steel 120" H x 72"W x 72" D



"Titan Anemone" 2016 Stainless Steel 108" H x 77" W x 70"



"Divine Cedilla" Bronze 2013
66"H x 13"W x 13"D



"Cedilla Rising" Bronze 2013
116" H x 16.5" W x 16.5" D



"Bryce Hoodoo" Bronze 2013
96" H x 20"W x 18" D





"Kali WOW" Painted Stainless Steel 2013 33"H x 57"W x 20" D

"Square" 2012 Bronze 22" H x 19"W x 12" D



"Carnac" 2010 Bronze 29" H x 34"W x 10" D





"Lady Grace Variation#2" 2017 Stainless Steel 79.5" H x 38" W x 38" D

"Who Are You To Tell"
2011 Bronze
43" H x 18"W x 15" D





"Oracle#7" 2012 Bronze 26" H x 20"W x 7" D



"Hope III" 2011 Bronze 17" H x 27"W x 12" D



"Spring Tambour" 2012 Bronze 25" H x 27"W x 14" D



top
"Pear Portal"
2011 Bronze
48" H x 24" W x 12" D

left
"Rocker"
1997 Bronze
46" H x 26" W x 12" D



top
"Vortex"
2011 Bronze
21.5" H x 23" W x 22" D

bottom
"Winged Thought"
2012 Painted Bronze
14" H x 18" W x 10" D





below
"Apache"
2012 Painted Bronze
14" H x 18" W x 10" D



left
"Pink Amour"
2007 Bronze
57" H x 17" W x 17" D



top
"Rooster #2"
2011 Bronze
16" H x 14" W x 12" D



right
"Lady Godiva Variation 3"
2011 Bronze
32" H x 18" W x 19" D



"Siv's Lectum#4"
2010 Bronze
39" H x 24"W x 20" D



"Mensch" 2013 Stainless Steel 40.5" H x 46"W x 32.5" D



"Morning Salute" 2013 Stainless Steel 30.5" H x 35"W x 17" D



"Wish You Were Here" 2012 Stainless Steel 72" H x 30"W x 36" D



"The Emperor's Wish" 2012 Stainless Steel 64" H x 54"W x 19" D





"Future Archeological Excavation" Bronze 2009/2010 14" H x 48" W x 24" D





"Sunken Theatre in the Round" bronze 2009/2010 8" H x 48" W x 24" D





"Palenque" bronze 2000 46" H x 19"W x 24" D





Crescendo 1984 24' x 16' x 6' Tarrytown, NY





"Clouds" 2000 25' x 30' Collection of the City of Toledo Toledo,OH





"Stella in the Wind" 2007 12' x 15' x 15' Collection of Diane and Tom Tuft Bridgehampton, NY





"Confluence" 1976 30' x 22' Sidney, NE



"Fiddlehead Fountain" 2006 Stainless Steel 12' x 12' diameter Collection of Karen and Harvey Silverman Wainscott, NY



"Green Thunder" 2008 Stainless Steel 14' x 8' x 3' Collection of Louis and Susan Meisel Watermill, NY



"Shanghai Portal" 2010 12' H x 22' W x 6' D Jing'an Sculpture Park Collection of the City of Shanghai, China



"Long Island Sound Portal" 2012 Painted Stainless Steel 12'H x 45'W x 8'D
Greenwich CT

BRIEF BIO

Hans Van de Bovenkamp is an architectural designer and a sculptor. He has earned an international reputation over the past 50 years for designing, fabricating, installing and maintaining unique sculptures and fountains in collaboration with architects and designers. His works can be seen in public, civic, corporate and private collections. He has executed over 100 commissions.

ARTIST STATEMENT

"For me, making sculpture is both a spiritual and an artistic act. The studio is my playground, my laboratory, my sanctuary, where I practice and experiment with sculptural ideas. When I am working I am truly living in the present moment: focused and aware of choices as I make them, functioning in an elevated state between the conscious and the subconscious. Over time, I have been fortunate to gather together enough skill and vision to realize my ideas as they have come into my heart. Art for me is a way of life, not just a passion."

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2017 Samuel Lynne Gallery, Dallas, Texas
2016 Alfstad & Contemporary, Sarasota, FL
2016 Louis Meisel Gallery, New York, New York
2014 Wesleyan University Illinois Campus
2013 Adelphi University, Garden City, NY
2013 Samuel Lynne Gallery, Dallas, Texas
2011 Louis Meisel Gallery, New York, New York
2011 Bernarducci Meisel Gallery, New York, New York
2008 Goldman Warehouse, Wynwood District, Florida
2007 Sculpturesite Gallery, San Francisco, California
2007 Basel Miami Art Fair,
Goldman Warehouse, Miami, Florida
2007 Basel Miami Art Fair, Gary Nader Fine Art, Miami, FL
2006 Danubiana Meulensteen Museum,
Bratislava, Slovakia
2005-06 Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey
2003 Louis Meisel Gallery, New York, New York
2003 Bernarducci Meisel Gallery, New York, New York
2003 Sagaponack Sculpture Fields, New York, New York
1996 Michener Museum, Doyles Town, Pennsylvania
1996 Camino Real Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida
1994 Quietude Gallery, East Brunswick, New Jersey
1993 Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York
1992 Shidoni Contemporary Gallery, Tesuque, NM
1981 Tiffany's, New York, New York
1981 University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri
1979 Sculpture Center, New York, New York
1976 Brooklyn Borough Hall, New York, New York
1976 Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, New York
1970 Jacksonville Children's Museum, Jacksonville, Florida
1968 10 Downtown, New York, New York
1965 Glassboro State College, Glassboro, New Jersey
1963 New York University, New York, New York
1961 University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Selected Group Exhibitions

2016 Southampton Arts Center, Southampton, NY
2016 Philippe Staib Gallery, Shanghai, China
2016 Samuel Lynne Gallery, Dallas, Texas
2015 Illinois Wesleyan University Campus
2015 Two Sculptors on The Stroll - Rockford, IL
2015 Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
2014 Philippe Staib Gallery, Taipei City, Taiwan
2014 Art Sarasota, Seafare, Sarasota, Florida
2013 Season of Sculpture, Sarasota Marine Park, Florida
2012 Mark Borghi Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York
2011 Art Fair, Shanghai, China
2011 Gary Nader, Miami, Florida
2009 Spanierman Gallery, East Hampton, NY
2008/9 ArtHampton, Bridgehampton, NY
2007 40 Years of Central Park, Lincoln Center, NY, NY
2007 Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY
2005 Sculpturesite Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2003 Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, New York
2000-04 City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida
2000-04 Arlene Bujese Gallery, East Hampton, New York
1996-16 Elena Zang, Woodstock, New York
1994-16 Cavalier Gallery, Greenwich, Connecticut
1999-09 Shidoni Contemporary Gallery, Tesuque, NM
1999 Long Beach Museum, Long Beach, New Jersey
1996 Stamford Museum, Stamford, Connecticut
1988-91 Shidoni Contemporary Gallery, Tesuque, NM
1988 Chicago Art Fair, Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois
1987 Hudson River Museum, Sculptors Guild, Yonkers, NY
1984 Molly Barnes Gallery, Los Angeles, California
1982 Oakland Museum, Oakland, California
1969-99 Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, New York
1978 PSI Contemporary Art Museum, LIC, NY
1978 Nassau County Art Museum, Roslyn Harbor, NY
1978 The United States Mission, New York, New York
1977 National Academy of Design, New York, New York
1976 American Institute of Arts & Letters, NY, NY
1973-76 Storm King Art Center, Cornwall, New York
1970 University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut
1969 New York Sculptors Guild, Bryant Park, NY, NY
1968 Loeb Student Center, New York University, NY, NY
1968 Stamford Museum, Stamford, Connecticut
1964 Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas

Awards

- 2003 - Best Sculpture Award, Guild Hall, East Hampton, NY
- 1996-04 - Listing, Who Is Who in American Art
- 1996 - Sanctuary Design Competition, Omega Holistic Health Institute, Rhinebeck, New York
- 1976 - Exhibition, American Institute Arts & Letters, NY, NY
- 1976 - Nebraska Bicentennial Sculpture Competition, Sydney, Nebraska
- 1964 - Emily Lowe Sculpture Award, New York, New York

Selected Corporate Collections

- 2011 Louis Meisel, Watermill, New York
- 2009 Manhattan House, New York, New York
- 2005 Stamford, Connecticut (9 Fiddleheads)
- 2001 Corporate Business Park, Columbia, Maryland
- 1995 Litwin Building, Wall Street, New York, New York
- 1995 Goldman Properties, 110 Greene Street, NY, NY
- 1993 Mayer Collection, Denver, Colorado
- 1992 Hyatt Regency, Paris, France
- 1990 Marina Village, Alameda, California
- 1988 Amlie Realty Corporation, Chicago, Illinois
- 1986 Haverstraw Marina, Haverstraw, New York
- 1984 Christiania, Tarrytown, New York
- 1980 Litwin Building, 72nd & 2nd Ave., NY, NY
- 1977 Cargill, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 1967 Gaslight Tower, Atlanta, Georgia
- 1966 Georgetown Plaza Building, New York, New York
- 1966 Levitt Headquarters, Lake Success, New York

Selected Major Commissions

- 1966 "Mushroom Water Garden" Copper 12' x 60'
Levitt Headquarters Lake Success, NY
- 1984 "Crescendo" 24' x 16' x 6' Tarrytown, NY
- 1986 "Mariner's Gateway" 35' x 34' x 12' Haverstraw, NY
- 1988 "Spring Mist" stainless steel 30' Itasca, IL
- 1991 "Menos" stainless steel 25' x 10' 6'
Texas A&M university
- 2001 "Trinity" 26' x 24' stainless steel
Corporate Office Properties Columbia, MD
- 2005 "Flight" bronze 27' x 25' diameter
R.J. Kirk Roanoke, VA
- 2007 "Stella in the Wind" 2007 12' x 15' x 15'
Bridgehampton, NY
- 2008 "Green Thunder" 14' x 8' x 3' Meisel Watermill, NY
- 2012 "Long Island Sound Portal" painted bronze
12' x 4' x 8' Greenwich CT
- 2015 "Lady Grace" Stainless Steel
10.5' x 4' x 4' The Grace Building New York, NY

Museum Collections

- Miniature Museum Amsterdam, Holland
- Guild Hall East Hampton, NY
- Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton, New Jersey
- Danubiana Meulensteen Museum, Bratislava, Slovakia
- Miami University Art Museum, Oxford, Ohio
- Boca Raton Museum of Art, Boca Raton, Florida
- Estate of Nelson Rockefeller, Kykuit, New York
- Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, Florida
- Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio

Municipal Collections

- 2011 Jing'an Park, Shanghai, China
- 2001 City of Toledo, Ohio
- 1999 Mt. Sinai Hospital, Miami, Florida
- 1992 Myriad Gardens, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- 1988 City of Ormond Beach, Florida
- 1988 City Hall, Voorhees, New Jersey
- 1983 State Capitol Plaza, Lansing, Michigan
- 1976 I-80 Nebraska Bicentennial, Sidney, Nebraska
- 1972 Jewish Institute for Geriatrics Care,
Lake Success, New York

University Collections

- Pratt Institute Brooklyn, New York
- City University of New York,
- Staten Island Community College, New York, New York
- Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, New York
- Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
- Towson University Art Center, Towson, Maryland
- University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri
- Wheeling Jesuit University, Wheeling, West Virginia

Gallery Representation

Alfstad & Contemporary

1419 5th Street
Sarasota, FL 34236
941.366.6400
www.www.alfstadand.com

Baker Sponder Gallery

608 Banyan Trail
Boca Raton, FL 33431
561.241.3050
www.bakerspondergallery.com

Bernarducci.Meisel Gallery

37 West 57th Street
New York, New York
212.593.3757
www.bernarducci.meisel.gallery.com

Ron Cavalier Gallery

GREENWICH
405 Greenwich Avenue
Greenwich, Connecticut 06830
203.869.3664

NANTUCKET

34 Main Street
Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554
508.325.4405
www.cavaliergalleries.com

Louis K. Meisel Gallery

141 Prince Street
New York, New York 10012
212.677.1340
www.meisellgallery.com

Gary Nader Fine Art

62 NE 27th Street
Miami, FL 33137
305.576.0256
www.garynader.com

Philippe Staib Gallery

m50, 4-102 Moganshon Rd.
Shanghai, China
86 21 6298 0729
www.philippestaibgallery.com

Quogue Gallery

44 Quogue Street
Quogue, NY 11959
631.653.6236
QuogueGallery.com

Samuel Lynne Galleries

1105 Dragon Street
Dallas, TX 75207
214.965.9027
www.samuellylne.com

Sculpturesite, Inc.

23588 Arnold Drive
Sonoma, CA 95476
707.933.1300
www.sculpturesite.com

Vincent Vallarino Fine Art

222 East 49th Street
New York, NY 10022
212.628.0722
www.vallarinofineart.com

Elena Zang Gallery

3671 Route 212
Woodstock, NY 12407
845.679.5432
www.elezang.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Geralyne Lewandowski, Designer, was awarded a national merit scholarship to Pratt Institute where she received a BFA (with honors) in Communication Arts. Her accomplishments include a CLIO nomination, several successful advertising campaigns, numerous catalogue and book designs and websites. Transplanted from Manhattan, she currently lives and works in East Hampton, NY. She has worked with Hans since 2001.

Dan Budnik, Photographer, was born in 1933. Photographer of artists of the New York Abstract Expressionist Movement from 1959 till present. He has documented extensively the work of Willem De Kooning, Georgia O'Keefe, David Smith, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenburg. He has also photographed civil rights marches, notably the March on Washington and the Selma to Washington March. He has been working with Native Americans on human rights and environmental issues. He lives in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Kevin Miller is a master craftsman in patina and fabrication. He has worked with Hans since 1994.

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