

ACKLANDARTMUSEUM

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

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Sculptor Patrick Dougherty Creates Inspired, Site-Specific Work for Ackland Art Museum

Visitors invited to “Step Right Up” to outdoor installation

Chapel Hill, N.C.— The Ackland Art Museum at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has commissioned its first major site-specific, outdoor art installation in nearly 20 years: a “stickwork” sculpture by Chapel Hill-based artist Patrick Dougherty entitled *Step Right Up*.

The large-scale work was constructed on-site over a three-week period, and is made entirely of tree saplings. It is on view 24/7 in front of the Ackland Art Museum at 101 South Columbia Street in downtown Chapel Hill.

Step Right Up was formally dedicated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, October 31, 2017, that featured remarks by UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Carol L. Folt, Ackland Director Katie Ziglar, and the artist, and included Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger.

“Patrick’s five individually-shaped sculptures act as carnival barkers of sorts, summoning the public to ‘step right up’ and enter the Ackland to experience the wonders inside,” said Ziglar. “The art on view in the Museum includes a 2,000-year-old Iranian earthenware, animal-shaped pouring vessel that the artist acknowledges was a key inspiration for these works.”

Dougherty’s *Step Right Up* follows the Ackland’s exhibition of *Los*

Trompos—large-scale, Mexican spinning tops—and similarly activates the outdoor public space in front of the Museum. “Patrick’s stickworks invite us to walk inside them, explore their interiors, and discover new views looking out on the surrounding environment of UNC and Chapel Hill,” said Ziglar.



The maple and gum tree saplings used to make the piece were responsibly harvested from Duke Forest and Triangle Land Conservancy, organizations with which Patrick Dougherty has long relationships. At the ribbon-cutting, Ziglar thanked “the 188 volunteers—including UNC students, faculty, staff, and alumni; Triangle community members; and Ackland Art Museum Members and friends—whose hard work and commitment made *Step Right Up* come to life.”

Owing to the organic material used and the outdoor setting, *Step Right Up* is a temporary installation, expected to be on view through August 31, 2018.

Related media:

[Read a Q&A with Patrick Dougherty in the Daily Tar Heel](#)

[Watch a 360 Video of the Piece's Construction](#)

[Listen to a "Well Said" Podcast with Patrick Dougherty](#)

About Patrick Dougherty

Born in Oklahoma in 1945, Patrick Dougherty was raised in North Carolina. He earned a B.A. in English from UNC-Chapel Hill in 1967 and later returned to study art history and sculpture. His first work, *Maple Body Wrap*, was included in the North Carolina Biennial Artists’ Exhibition of 1982. The following year, he had his first one-person show at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Over time, Dougherty developed the monumental-scale environmental works for which he is now famous. In the last thirty years, he has built over 280 of these works—around the United States and all over the world—and has received international acclaim. Some of his most recent commissions have been at the Gibbes Museum, Charleston, South Carolina; the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Durham, North Carolina; the Bay Area Discovery Museum, Sausalito, California; the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts; and the Palo Alto Art Museum, Palo Alto, California.

He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2011 Factor Prize for Southern Art, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, a Japan-US Creative Arts Fellowship, and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship.

About the Ackland

Featuring a year-round calendar of special exhibitions and dynamic public programs, the Ackland Art Museum—located on the historic campus of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—encourages visitors to engage with the artistic past as well as with living artists from around the world. The Ackland’s holdings consist of more than 18,000 works of art, featuring significant collections of European masterworks, twentieth-century and contemporary art, African art, and North Carolina pottery. In addition, the Ackland has North Carolina’s premier collections of Asian art and works on paper (drawings, prints, and photographs). Its global collection of artworks from antiquity to the present makes the Ackland uniquely able to advance the teaching and research missions of the University.

The Ackland Art Museum is located at 101 South Columbia Street, just south of Franklin Street, on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus.

Admission to the Ackland Art Museum is free. More information is available at ackland.org.

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