

# The Sculptors Society Bulletin

www.sculptorsociety.com

July - August 2008 Issn 0728 1293

## Sydney's Biennale: Revolutions – forms that Turn \_ Report by A Morrell

Sydney 16th Biennale, Australia's premier visual arts event is on now. The first Biennale was in 1973, the same year that the Opera House opened. The Biennale's stated goals are: to engage, challenge and inspire.

Represented are many of the most ground breaking, avant-garde artists who have been pivotal in the evolution of change and they have altered our perception of what art is. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Biennale art director, says "Movement is a strong feature - works turn, spin, go in reverse, mirror, make noise and even blow up – a celebration of the defiant... what I am doing in this Biennale is to break the rule that a Biennale is a festival of new contemporary art, and I am going to include a lot of old art. In some ways all of my exhibitions are decoys. They are designed to create a certain kind of space, gap or platform which facilitates conversations between artists and artworks".

Marcel Duchamp's reconstructed 'Bicycle Wheel', a tiny photograph by Man Ray and an even smaller drawing by Malevich are included. These very good artists broke the rules and conventions of their time.



Leon Ferrari : Western Christian Civilization. 1965, plastic, oil and plaster, 200 x 120 x 60 cm Collection Alicia and León Ferrari, Buenos Aires. Photograph: Ramiro Larrain

A strong feature about this present Biennale is not so much what challenges us but it is more about informing us on how much has changed. The theme of the Biennale creates a formula that gives direction, is easy to

follow and serves as a reminder of how far art has come. It gives us the opportunity to observe the changes that have taken place. Christov-Bakargiev rejects the cult of newness that defines consumer culture. She considers the "art world's current obsession with newness is damaging, it pushes people right back into a shopping mall mentality". She seems to want to put the breaks on change and take us on a retrospective journey.

More than 180 artists from 42 countries are represented in this large exhibition spread across Sydney in seven venues, the highlight of these being Cockatoo Island, once a convict prison, then a shipyard and now reborn as an art venue.

Pictured here on the left is the work shown at the MCA by León Ferrari. He deals with the subject of power and of the United States' Influence in 'Western – Christian Civilization' with Christ appearing crucified on an American fighter plane. It is symbolic of humanity's suffering. Born in 1920 in Buenos Aires, Ferrari lives and works in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*(cont'd on page 6.)*

## Darling Park Exhibition

**4 August - 6 September, 2008**

**To be judged by Monica McMahon**

**Art Curator, University of Western Sydney**

**To be opened by Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir, AC CVO**

**Governor of NSW, and Chancellor of Sydney University**

**on 5 August, 6 - 8pm**

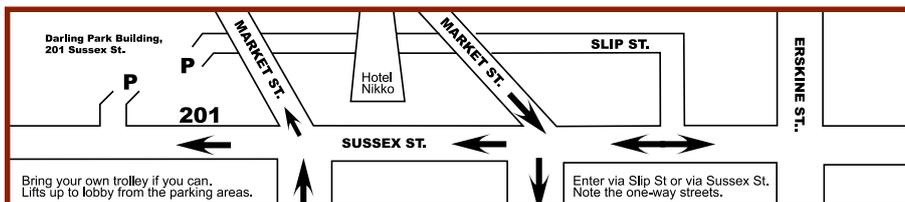
**fabulous prizes from our many sponsors - See over for details!**

**Darling Park Exhibition. 201 Sussex St. Sydney. 4 Aug - 6 Sept.**  
**Open 8am - 6pm every day with a sculptor on duty 10.30am - 3.00pm.**  
**Enquiries: Jenny Green - 0414 994 971. or Babette Gomme - 9486 3438**



Exhibiting members are reminded about our obligation to do a **rostered duty** (2 on duty at a time) of at least one session during the exhibition. Apart from being fun, and an opportunity to peruse the works (over 200!) at our leisure, it is important to facilitate sales. Please see Babette on set-up day to nominate a date.

**Set-up day is on 3 August** from 8.30am - noon. Please remember not to park in the bus turning bay, yes, even on a Sunday! - and to move off as soon as your sculpture is installed, so as to make room for others. The map will help you locate the delivery points, and there is a goods lift to the gallery level (Level 3). **Please bring a trolley** if you have one! - and if you can lend it to others on the day, it would be very helpful! **Dismantling takes place on 7 Sept.**



It is important to have your **plinths freshly painted** in black or white, and to have each **plinth appropriately sized**. Remember that a good work will suffer from poor presentation, and it lowers the tone of the whole exhibition for everyone, not only you, if you present your work on a shabby plinth. Also, most importantly, **small works MUST be secured against theft**. Ring Babette on 9486 3438 to find out how to do this, if you're not sure.

Please also remember to **bring a plate of party food to our opening!** Soft drinks and wine are provided free by the Society. Please also help in manning the bar and the food tables. **Speeches on opening day start at 6.30pm.**

**The Franco Belgiorno-Nettis Transfield Holdings Prize - \$2,000**

**Crawfords Casting prize - \$1,000**

**Australian Bronze - \$1,000 worth of bronze casting**

**Tom Bass Studio Sculpture School - Viewers' Choice Award of 1 term of Life Study to the sculptor - \$680, & 1 day introductory class or \$100 of merchandise for the winning voter**

**Lathams Australia - \$500 worth of stone carving tools**

**The Sculptors Society - \$500 for an abstract sculpture**

**The Sculptors Society - \$500 for a figurative sculpture**

**Barnes Products - \$350 voucher for moulding casting & sculpting supplies**

**Roger Fenton - donation of a plinth - worth \$200**

**New Members**

We have 2 new student members joining The Sculptors Society: David Hamlyn Waters and Robyn Rumpf. Welcome to you both!

**URGENT - STOLEN GOODS NOTIFICATION**

Some 500 items were stolen from Lathams, nearly all of these chisels and with their name "LATHAM" or "LATHAM - SYDNEY" imprinted on the shanks.

Please be on the look out for anyone offering these goods at low prices. Notify the police, or ring Lathams (see advert on page 4). Don't allow the thieves to get away with it.

## Report on last forum on 3 July. 2008.



Corner of Ron Mueck's studio in London.

A fascinating 40 minute telephone conversation took place between Gary Grant (at our meeting) and **Ron Mueck** (in London), with 40 of our members listening in! They mainly talked technique. It was a huge success.

Ron was first put at ease by chatting about his studio, describing what he saw around him. He followed this up with a number of photographs. It is quite comforting to see that even "the great sculptors" are messy! The windows are covered to stop people peering in, and Ron works using fluorescent lights.

Ron Mueck has always known that he wanted to sculpt, creating his first work, a plasticine snail, for which he received high praise from his teacher, at the age of 5. As a youth he enjoyed making things. His mother had a small cottage industry making dolls. Dad did woodcarving, making marionettes. 'Sesame Street' puppets also inspired him. At 17 the movie 'Starwars' further inspired him - they were more adult-like puppets and creatures - more sophisticated.

Early materials that Ron used were DAS modelling material, and then terracotta clay for figures, like cats and mice were created to earn pocket money. He learned mould making at a ceramics factory where he saw plaster moulds for the first time, with key locks, which enabled mass production using latex casting in plaster moulds.

Silicone has become his preferred medium, rather than resin. He found coloured silicone in hardware shops and saw its immediate application as it felt like skin and could be blended with clear silicon to get a translucent look like flesh.

Ron prefers to use synthetic hair on his figures, as it is easier to style than human hair. It stays in the set. But each sculpture's problem-solving is individual, and "Large Woman In Bed" uses horse hair to achieve the desired large scale effect.

The sculpture of the large "Boy" was based on the smaller 'Boy' which became the maquette for the larger version. "Boy" was sliced up and the work was done off slices. "Big Boy" was created with weld ups for structural strength, like the hull of a ship.

Ron mostly works alone. Sometimes a friend will help out in say mixing the acrylics, but he likes to maintain artistic control, and doesn't farm work out.

Asked whether he would ever consider using traditional materials like bronze, Ron said he felt it wouldn't feel life-like.

Asked about how he learned about anatomy, he said it is simply a matter of close scrutiny. He studied his own skin and body. Ron doesn't often use live models, as he feels uncomfortable with someone else being present when he works. We were privy to some fascinating insights. Thank you Ron!

Next, **Allan Ryan, Head Teacher in Vehicles Trades & Sign Craft at Mount Druitt TAFE**, gave a wonderful talk and showed a short film on the Dillon DHC 2000 welding torch which has been developed over a period of 11 years.

This odd pistol grip welding torch had changed the conventional welding process. This torch is unique by producing an oxy acetylene weld that in appearance could have been TIG



Demonstrating the Dillon DHC 2000 welder.

welded. Moreover, it is easy to use! The great advantage of the DHC 2000 is that it minimises distortion by working with very low gas pressures, 4 PSI or 28 KPA. This compares with a conventional welding torch which works with 15 PSI or around 70KPA. It also has a unique mixing chamber and a low velocity tip which allow a narrow concentrated heat pattern to be achieved. A neutral flame (that is a flame that has equal parts of oxygen and acetylene) is used for 99 per cent of welding operations.

Economically the DHC 2000 only consumes about one quarter of the gas used by conventional welding process, so that small bottles can be used. The DHC 2000 can weld all types of metals including welding mild steel to stainless steel, cast alloys without any preparation, aluminium, copper and brass with ease. The basic cost of this welder is about \$650 and the deluxe model around \$1,000. Note the information at the end of this article.

And lastly, but not least, **Byron Comminos**, a qualified Occupational Health and Safety trainer and one of our members, gave a very interesting presentation packed with useful advice to help us all sculpt safely and with longevity. Of particular interest was the excellent display of Personal Protective Equipment he brought from the company, MSA.

Byron suggested some simple things: position heavy material so that it can be more easily moved; think before you make a physical movement; take breaks; avoid sudden/shock-like movements; use vibration energy absorbent gloves when chiseling, and be aware of the danger of poisonous chemicals.

*Cont'd on page 5*

## WILLOUGHBY SCULPTURE PRIZE 09

Exhibition: 21 – 29 March 2009

ENTRIES CLOSE FRIDAY 31 OCTOBER 2008



Artists are invited to submit work which relates to one or more aspects of the 2009 theme to **rethink, reduce, reuse, recycle.**

Willoughby City Council has coordinated the Willoughby Art Prize for over 20 years and with the demolition of its venue, the Civic Centre and the construction of Civic Place, there is an exciting opportunity to take a new direction – the Willoughby

Sculpture Prize.

The Prize will be held inside the heritage listed Incinerator building, 2 Small Street and its nearby parklands in Willoughby. The Incinerator was designed by Walter Burley Griffin and Eric Nicholls in 1934 and is currently being refurbished as a café, meeting rooms, gallery space and artist studios. Suitable works will be displayed throughout the building prior to occupation. The parkland and selected pathways surrounding the building will also display suitable and site specific works. There is a major prize of \$10,000 and awards total \$20,000.

For details: [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au) or contact Alison Clark on 02 9777 7972 [alison.clark@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:alison.clark@willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

## Mortimore Prize

Named after Peter A. P. Mortimore, the \$25,000 prize money includes \$1,500 for the best sculpture, to be judged by Alan Somerville as well as Paul Delprat and Ross Harvey. Entries are due on 9th October 2008.

Sculptures should be figurative, no bigger than 50cm x50cm, weighing no more than 25kgs. and in any medium.

The Exhibition will be held at St Brigids Church, Brisbane St, Dubbo from 25th October and at the Scots College, Bellevue Hill, Sydney from the 27th November.

For details, contact MikeCoward [mike@australianartsales.com.au](mailto:mike@australianartsales.com.au)



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## Nola Diamantopoulos: Drawing In Breath

Arterial Gallery  
747 Darling Street, Rozelle NSW 2039  
7th - 31st August 2008  
Opening: 6 - 9, 7th August  
RSVP: [exhibition@arterial.com.au](mailto:exhibition@arterial.com.au)  
[www.arterial.com.au](http://www.arterial.com.au)

A series of 6 sculptures and drawings exploring the concept of descending breath.

Nola says of the work shown here: *Breath descending relates to many things as the whole planet is breathing. With the Breath of Sisyphus this was a two part work because it is a representation of the wind of Sisyphus which is the earth breathing and the two elements in this work are the sails that capture this wind.*

*Sisyphus is the son of Aeolus, Greek God of the winds. The four winds, contained in a sack that he carried, is an apt description of the breath of the Universe. If you play with the sound of Sisyphus you can hear the inhale sound, 'ssssss' and the exhale 'phhhhus', make the one Breath, penetrating the lungs,*



Nola Diamantopoulos : Breath of Sisyphus, bronze (shown here in clay) 15 cms. A two piece sculpture symbolising the wind - breath of the Universe.

*expanding them, and then expelled, like the wind through sails, carrying us to our destination. The sculpture is a boat and sails.*

## Last Forum - from page 3

If you are not sure about the hazardous effects of a material you can Google "MSDS"; check "Acute" and "Chronic" health effects and beware of understatements and generalisations - assume the serious effects and always have emergency equipment at hand. For more tips or advice, email Byron at: [bc@changenetwork.com.au](mailto:bc@changenetwork.com.au)

Useful websites are:

- [www.visualarts.net.au](http://www.visualarts.net.au)
- [www.info.library.unsw.edu/cofa/guides/sculpture](http://www.info.library.unsw.edu/cofa/guides/sculpture)
- [www.ci.tucson.az.us/arthazards/sculpt.html](http://www.ci.tucson.az.us/arthazards/sculpt.html)

You can purchase the Dillon DHC 2000 torch through American welding distributors P/L. PO Box 136, Olinda Victoria 3788. Mob 0419373589

Can't weld! Want to learn? Enrol now in welding for beginners, Mount Druitt TAFE. Contact Allan Ryan Head teacher vehicles trades on 02 92086289 or 0402185505. Welding courses can be individually designed to meet all welding requirements (cost about \$380 pp) Min. class size of 12. Nights or Saturdays too.

## Changchun International Sculpture Conference

Roger McFarlane, a long standing member of The Sculptors Society has been invited as a guest speaker at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Sculpture Conference, an adjunct to the 9<sup>th</sup> Changchun International Sculpture Symposium.

Changchun is located in the north east of China north of the republic of North Korea. Changchun has an annual sculpture symposium, and invites sculptors from different countries each year. The 2008 symposium has sculptors from China as well as sculptors from the USA, Canada, France, Belarus, New Zealand, Serbia, Czech, Burkina Faso, Vatican, Georgia, Mauritania, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Antigua, Barbados and Roger from Australia! The conference begins at the end of the sculpture symposium, and it will have 500 official representatives with 120 overseas representatives.

The theme of the conference is City Sculpture and City Construction along with City Culture. Sub-thermometric forums will be held on hot issues in the sculpture field. Also on show are a few exhibitions such as the China Sculpture Annual Exhibition, the France Model Art Exhibition and a Korean sculpture exhibition.

Roger says that he is honoured to be asked, but a little nervous. He is speaking on the theme of City Sculpture and City Culture. Along with the speech he will have a PowerPoint presentation featuring Australian public art. He is excited about meeting many sculptors from China and from around the world. Roger has been invited to China twice previously to make public art in marble. He has been impressed by the warmth of his welcome by the sculptors and people of China.

## Contempora Sculpture Award 2009

Held 5 March – 19 April 2009 along the waterfront boardwalk of Melbourne's Docklands, this a major event on the Melbourne calendar with an estimated 800,000+ visitors over 6 weeks.

Entries for the exhibition close on 31 July 2008. Awards total \$17,000. There are no size or materials restrictions. For further information go to <http://www.contempora2.com.au/about2009.php>

## REMINDERS!

### Sculpture in the vineyards

7 Oct 2008 - 18 Jan 2009

[www.wollombivalley.com/sculptureinthevineyards](http://www.wollombivalley.com/sculptureinthevineyards)

**ENTRIES CLOSE ON JULY 31**  
Tara Morelos - curator. 0403 469 753, or [2008sinv@gmail.com](mailto:2008sinv@gmail.com)

### **Barnes Workshop**

16 August, 1pm - 4pm

6 Homedale Rd, Bankstown

Free – but bookings are essential  
To put your name down, please call Eva Chant on 0418 250 456 or email [sculpt1@bigpond.net.au](mailto:sculpt1@bigpond.net.au)

### **Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize**

24 Oct - 2 Nov 2008

Entries close Friday 8 August  
Council's Redleaf building

Information from Jo Jansyn on 9391 7135 or visit the website <http://sculptureprize.woollahra.nsw.gov.au>

## Sydney's Biennale: Revolutions – forms that Turn *(from page 1)*



Maurizio Cattelan: Novecento 1997, taxidermy horse, metal frame, leather slings, rope. Collection Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin; Gift Amici Sostenitori del Castello di Rivoli. Shown at the MCA. Photograph: Ben Symons.

Maurizio Cattelan's 'Novecento' 1997, Italian taxidermist horse hangs, with strangely elongated legs, by its harness from the ceiling in the MCA. It is one of the Biennale's most striking and disturbing images. A saddled horse is a means of mobility; here it is rendered immobile. It is a eulogy for the end of the great revolutionary impulses that characterized the 20th century. Cattelan was born in 1960 in Padua, Italy, and he lives and works in New York City, USA.

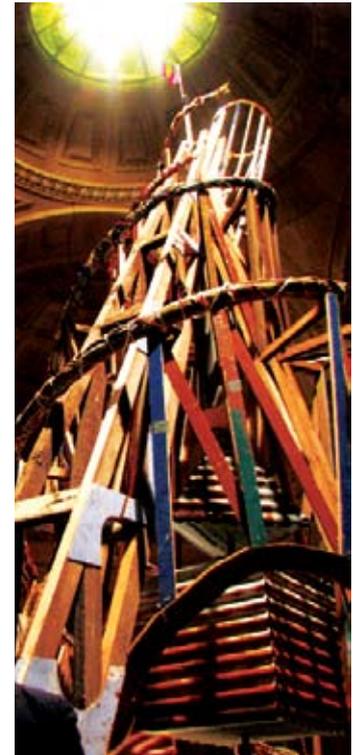
Sharmila Samant, was born in 1967 in Mumbai, India, and lives and works there still. Also



Sharmila Samant: Against the Grain 2008 BT cotton, camphor, 1000 paddy craft objects (snakes), metal stands. This project was made possible with the generous support of the Keir Foundation and additional support from Bose Pacia Gallery, New York. Shown at the MCA. Photograph: Ben Symons.

shown at the MCA, this work, 'Against the grain' 2008, has created a tribute to the agrarian crisis in India and to its victims. As a result of planting genetically modified crops the cobras have lost their habitat, further damaging the natural order. The artwork will be auctioned off and the proceeds will go to indigenous people after the Biennale is over.

Michael Rakowitz created this sculpture in the entrance to the AGNSW as a full-scale contemporary version of avant-garde Russian artist Vladimir Tatlin's model known as Tatlin's Tower, and which became a symbol of revolutionary and visionary thought. He responds to contemporary indigenous life in Australia creating associations with the history of visionary architecture and its failure. 'White man got no dreaming' symbolizes a rebirth of collective hope. Tatlin's Tower was created



Michael Rakowitz: White Man got no dreaming 2008. Recycled materials from old houses owned by the Aboriginal Housing Company in Redfern, Sydney, video, radio transmitter. Courtesy of the artist and Lombard-Freid Projects, N.Y. Shown at the Art Gallery of NSW.

as a 'Monument to the Third International' 1919 - but it was never built. Tatlin's reference was to historical social revolutions and circular forms, sections were intended to spiral and rotate. It had been planned for the tower to have been built in Petrograd after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Rakowitz's Tatlin's Tower fulfills one of Tatlin's intentions for the original monument, by using it as a broadcast tower for Koori Radio. There is an Aboriginal flag on top. The tower, made of recycled materials expresses the desire and ability to dream, and dreaming is a revolutionary space.

## Next Forum - 2 October. NSIC. Cammeray Biennale - Venice 2007 & Sydney 2008

Wendy Fraser will talk to us and show images of our Sydney Biennale, comparing it with the Venice event. She has teaching experience in Victoria, TPNG, the ACT and NSW. Wendy is a retired secondary art teacher, with a background in Victoria at RMIT, and in NSW at the Universities of NSW and Wollongong. Now retired, she does guiding at the MCA. Wendy also conducts an art appreciation group called Deconstructing Contemporary Art, with the U3A. What more fabulous discerning eye could we have in leading us in this critique?! More in the next Bulletin!

## Congratulations!!

Col Henry won the People's Choice Award for his lifesize colcast cricket team, "Is it our turn yet?" at the Uni of West. Syd. exhib'n (featured last Bulletin), and David Solomon won the 3-D section of the Ewart Art Prize at WAC for his ceramic and plastic dice sculpture, "Playing the Game - Snakes and Ladders City", parodying the casino culture. Marvellous, both of you!



## SCULPTURE STUDIO SCHOOL

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### James Powditch Studio Tour

Sat 9 August 2pm – 3.30pm

Powditch is one of the few Australian artists to exhibit simultaneously in the Archibald, Wynne & Sulman Exhibitions. Powditch will talk about his works and life as an artist.

### Bass in the City Sculpture Walk

Sat 27 September 2pm – 3.30pm

Tour Bass' four permanent sculptures in Sydney's CBD. Hear about the symbolism and artistic processes.

### TBSSS tours SXS Bondi 2008

Fri 17 October 7am – 9am

Avoid the crowds and join this exciting and energetic walking tour with exhibiting artists Orest Keywan and Bjorn Godwin.

### Art & the Landscape Workshop with SXS08 Artist Sebastian McIntyre

Sun 19 – Mon 20 October 9am – 5pm

Understanding the process of designing and fabricating sculpture for clients' gardens.

#### BOOKING INFORMATION:

[www.tombasssculptureschool.org.au](http://www.tombasssculptureschool.org.au)

1A Clara Street Erskineville NSW 2043 Ph 02 9565 4851 Email [tbsss@tpg.com.au](mailto:tbsss@tpg.com.au)

*Event meeting points confirmed upon receipt of payment*

## Sculpture Heaven - by Jenny Green



Louise Nevelson: 'City on the High Mountains' Weathering Steel, painted black. 20'6" x 23' x 13'6"



Isamu Noguchi: 'Momo Taro'. Granite 9' x 34'7" x 21'7"

Thirteen sculptures by David Smith form the core of the collection.....there is a Calder Hillside devoted to works by Alexander Calder... the collection boasts sculpture by Henry Moore, Louise Nevelson, Mark Di Suvero, Isamu Noguchi, Richard Serra, Andy Goldsworthy and Roy Lichtenstein....all set in 500 acres of rolling hills and fields. Is this sculpture heaven you ask?

No, but it's close – it is the Storm King Art Center, located 50 miles north of Manhattan in Mountainville, New York State. The park was founded in 1960 and began building

a collection of large scale sculpture to interact with the landscape. This is a 'must see' if you are travelling to New York. Unencumbered by walls, you can wander through the countryside to see this extraordinary collection of monumental works. For the less sure-footed, there is also a half-hour tram ride which tracks you through highlights of the collection.

Some examples follow. Louise Nevelson's 'City on the High Mountains', 1983, with rectilinear and curvilinear forms representing many 'neighbourhoods', is black painted steel and stands about 7 metres high. Davis Stoltz's 'Day Game', 1972, is shown in the foreground of Alexander Liberman's 10 metre high orange painted steel 'Illiad', 1974-76. Isamu Noguchi's 'Momo Taro', 1997-78, inspired by a Japanese tale about a peach, is beautifully carved from granite replete with the texture of the peach inside.

*(cont'd on page 8)*

## Sculpture Heaven - (cont'd from page 7)



David Stoltz: 'Day Game' Steel, and behind that, Alexander Liberman: 'Illiad', Steel painted orange 36' x 54" x 19"

Just 15 minutes drive from Storm King is DIA Beacon, another sculpture gem. Opened in 2003, the museum occupies a nearly 300,000-square-foot historic printing factory and houses major works from the 1960's to the present – sculpture, paintings and installations.

Works in the museum include three of Richard Serra's monumental 'Torqued Ellipses', 'monuments' for V. Tatlin, a series of fluorescent light works by Dan Flavin, and one of Louise Bourgeois' giant spiders. Photographed here is John Chamberlain's 'The Privet', 1997, made from recycled and painted automotive panels.

Storm King is 1 to 1½ hours from Manhattan by car or bus. Dia Beacon is very close to the Beacon train station. For further information have a look at [www.stormking.org](http://www.stormking.org) and [www.diabeacon.org](http://www.diabeacon.org).



John Chamberlain: 'The Privet', Steel.

The Sculptors Society Bulletins provide information, and topical news and views considered to be of interest to our readers. Nothing written here is intended as a substitute for professional advice, and no liability arising from our publications is accepted. Articles and reviews submitted may be edited at the discretion of the editor, and no correspondence in this regard will be entered into.

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