ART IN MOTION

25 YEARS OF SCULPTURE *by George Sherwood*

MAY 3 TO OCTOBER 12

Explore an extraordinary collection of kinetic sculptures, masterfully crafted by artist and engineer George Sherwood. *Art in Motion* spans an impressive 25 years of Sherwood's artistic journey, showcasing 17 intricate stainless-steel sculptures that move in the wind and reflect the sunlight. Drawing inspiration from patterns and perspectives in nature such as birds in flight, ripples and reflections on the surface of water, and floral forms, each sculpture captures the dynamic forces of nature and reflects the beauty of our living world. *Art in Motion* invites viewers to find moments of tranquility and joy while considering the subtle, ongoing changes taking place in the natural world around us.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

American sculptor George Sherwood examines the aesthetic interplay of space, time, and moving objects. His stainless-steel sculptures, known for their reflective surfaces, respond dynamically to environmental factors like wind, light, and the changing seasons. Recently, he has explored indoor wall installations that subtly shift with the faintest air currents, producing shimmering effects on their surroundings.

Born and raised in Fairfield, Connecticut, and currently based in Ipswich, Massachusetts, Sherwood holds degrees in both art and engineering. His fascination with movement began in the 1970s through physical theater, which led him to create performances featuring animated props and sculptures. After earning his engineering degree, he worked with LEGO Futura, where he contributed to developments that inspired his sculptural journey.

Sherwood's works are featured in many notable collections, including those at the Currier Museum of Art and the Atlanta Botanical Garden. He has also completed public projects in various cities, including Salt Lake City, UT, and Hanover, NH as well as solo shows at the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston, MA and the Katonah Museum in Katonah, NY. In 2007, he received the Lillian Heller Award for Contemporary Art at Chesterwood in Massachusetts.

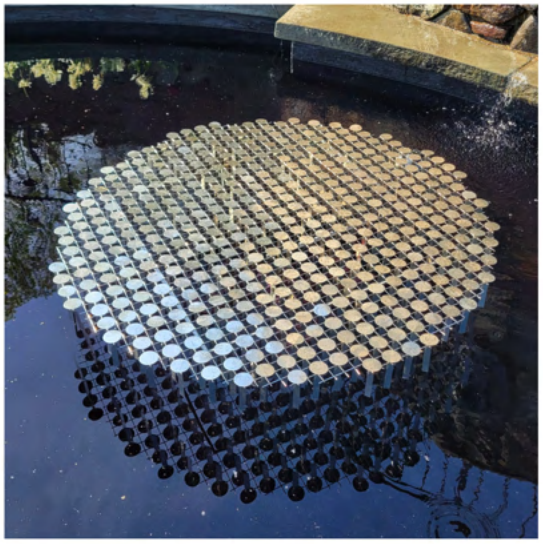
ABOUT THE ARTWORK

Each sculpture featured in *Art in Motion* is unique and interacts with its surroundings in its own special way. The pieces vary in shape, size, and movement, ranging from smaller, more intimate sculptures to large-scale works reaching up to 21 feet. Each piece is a kinetic sculpture made of stainless steel and may incorporate other reflective materials like dichroic film. A **kinetic sculpture** is a sculpture where movement is a key part of the design. Kinetic sculptures move by motor or by natural forces like wind or water.

A collection of Sherwood's work, *Wind, Waves and Light,* was featured at New England Botanic Garden in 2019. A few favorites from this collection return as part of *Art in Motion* along with pieces not previously displayed at the Garden and one new, never-before-seen sculpture.

WIND SPHERE, 2005

Standing over 14 feet, *Wind Sphere* is the first sculpture to greet visitors upon entering the Garden. Created as an innovative experiment, this sculpture is designed to explore the dynamic movement of an open sphere powered by the wind. Its structure features opposing curves on either side, expertly engineered to catch the passing breeze to glide gracefully in multiple directions.



LILY POND, 2020

Lily Pond hovers just above the surface of the water in the Secret Garden fountain. This sculpture is the only piece in the *Art in Motion* exhibition designed to be viewed from above. Each sculptural element moves independently, responding to the breeze while reflecting the ever-changing colors of the sky and surrounding landscape. Depending on the light and weather, the stainless steel may shimmer in shades of white, blue, or green, transforming the piece into a mirror of its environment.

AVIAN GEOMETRY, 2018

Avian Geometry is inspired by the graceful movement of birds in flight. Its circular forms mimic the gentle arcs of wings in the sky, capturing the fluid grace of nature in motion. While studying avian flight patterns, Sherwood was inspired to evolve the design of an earlier sculpture, *Wind Orchid,* exploring new movement and forms. *Avian Geometry* mimics the circling patterns of birds soaring overhead and invites viewers to reflect on the balance of form and movement as its elements twist, curl, and flow around each other.

SQUARE WAVE, 2005

Square Wave offers an intriguing exploration of angles, motion, and reflection. Depending on the light and surroundings, its stainless steel surface may appear dazzlingly white or burst into vibrant color, mirroring the shifting tones of sky, clouds, grass, or blooming flowers. The sculpture's graceful spirals evoke natural rhythms like the fluid movement of ocean waves or the synchronized flight of birds. Sherwood skillfully transformed flat sheets of stainless steel, bending and shaping the material to create the captivating spiraling forms.

MEMORY OF WATER, 2014

Memory of Water creates the illusion of motion within a still form. As sunlight dances across its outer shell and inner discs, the sculpture comes alive with shifting reflections, what Sherwood describes as "bathing itself in its own light." This stunning visual trick changes how the viewer experiences the piece, a clever illusion that captures the feeling of movement in an object that is actually still. Departing from traditional mounted designs, *Memory of Water* was constructed without a post or pedestal, offering a rare, intimate, eye-level encounter with Sherwood's work.

WIND ORCHID, 2006

Wind Orchid was inspired by the evolution of simple lines into graceful curves. Rising 21 feet into the air, Its sweeping forms spiral around themselves, revealing new expressions and evolving shapes. "The straight line is a sermon, and the curve is a love poem," says Sherwood when reflecting on the sculpture. *Wind Orchid* features triangular "leaves" at the tips and base of the long, curved "stems" that harness the energy of the wind and set the sculpture in motion. The sculpture's three pivot points create endless variations of form.

SURF, 2013

Surf, a cube of spiraling forms, draws inspiration from Sherwood's fascination with arrays and the harmonious movement of individual objects. As it rotates, the piece resembles a gentle ocean surf. To achieve an aerodynamic shape for each piece, Sherwood bends and flips a flat sheet of stainless steel multiple times until a spiral forms. Each spiral spins independently, yet together they respond to gentle breezes, inviting viewers to appreciate the beauty of synchronized movement. *Surf* offers a dynamic viewing experience that changes with the elements and the viewer's perspective.

ARCANGEL, 2002

ArcAngel is five feet tall, significantly shorter than its later counterpart, *Fusion*, which stands nearly eight feet taller. When sunlight hits its surface, it creates shadows that resemble graceful, moving wings, evoking images of a bird or angel in flight, or the branches of a sapling tree. This piece symbolizes growth as it transitions from a young sapling to *Fusion*, the mature form of a tree. *ArcAngel* embodies the potential of new beginnings, similar to how a tree emerges from a seed. When standing near *ArcAngel*, you can also see *Fusion* in the Vegetable Garden nearby.

FUSION, 2010

Completed in 2010 and standing thirteen feet tall, *Fusion* is the larger counterpart to *ArcAngel*. Its larger form represents an energetic reaction, symbolizing growth and the dynamic essence of life. While *ArcAngel* represents potential and new beginnings, *Fusion* honors maturity and the beauty of achieving one's fullest expression, making it a fitting complement to its predecessor in the nearby Cottage Garden.

COLARIUM, 2016

Colarium combines the words "color" and "aquarium." Sherwood drew inspiration from the rainbow of colors reflected on the surface of water and the hidden mysteries awaiting discovery beneath. While exploring new materials, he became fascinated by the unique qualities of dichroic film and used it in the design. The dichroic discs move independently and are partially hidden by the outer stainless steel shell, encouraging viewers to question what lies beneath the surface. The sculpture provides three viewing experiences: a static colorful shadow from one side, shimmering reflections on the other, and a dynamic display of color when viewed directly.

WAVE CLOUD, 2012

7,000 sails shimmer in the sunlight, shift in the breeze, and unite to move *Wave Cloud* in gentle circles when the wind blows. These "sails" are made of thin, small sheets of stainless steel intricately woven into a mesh of more stainless steel. As you gaze at the sculpture, you'll notice the tiny sails shifting, producing moments of opacity and transparency that evoke patterns similar to clouds or the surface of water. When the sun is shining, take a moment to observe the shifting patterns in the shadows below.

MEMORY OF FIBONACCI, 2013

Memory of Fibonacci is comprised of more than 300 stainless steel discs mounted independently to a carefully structured mesh backdrop. These discs are meticulously arranged in intricate spirals that capture the essence of the renowned Fibonacci sequence. As sunlight reflects off the polished surfaces of each disc, the artwork comes to life, revealing the beautiful patterns inherent in the sequence. Gentle shifts in the wind set the discs in motion, creating a mesmerizing dynamic interplay of light, shadow, and movement.

BENEATH THE SEA, 2025

Beneath the Sea is making its public debut with the *Art in Motion* exhibition. As an avid swimmer living near the coast of MA, Sherwood drew inspiration from the interplay of light and moving water as viewed from below the surface. The 16 stainless steel hanging spirals each have their own motor and are controlled by a computer with movement variations that operate on a loop. You might observe one spiral rotating clockwise, multiple spirals moving in unique directions, or all the spirals moving in harmony. This is the only motorized sculpture in the exhibit.

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT, 2023

A River Runs Through It elegantly captures the essence of flowing water and dynamic perspectives. This mesmerizing piece invites viewers to perceive it as a simple two-dimensional line gliding across a flat surface or as a complex line that curves and twists around itself in three-dimensional space. It transforms the viewer's experience, reflecting the ever-changing nature of water and the fluidity of perception.

FLOCK OF BIRDS, 2013

Flock of Birds embodies the beauty of movement, where multiple components come together to mimic the dynamics of nature. Sherwood drew inspiration from groups in motion, such as schools or fish or a flock of birds in flight, specifically starlings. To create each individual piece, Sherwood bends and flips a flat sheet of stainless steel multiple times until a spiral forms and he achieves an aerodynamic shape. The sculpture exhibits secondary and tertiary movements, as individual elements shift while the entire structure rotates, creating a captivating visual symphony of motion.

OCTAVE OF GYRES, 2022

The design for *Octave of Gyres* was originally commissioned to support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at Sherwood's high school alma mater, The Kent School, in Connecticut. This piece celebrates the diversity of life while also referencing musical notation. The eight rotating arms symbolize the eight octave lines found on sheet music and the elements at the end of the arms represent the notes of a musical melody.

BIRDS, 2001

The movement of birds inspired Sherwood's first explorations in kinetic sculpture design and also one of his first sculptural commissions. Different body and head shapes combined with just the right balancing point allow the forms of *Birds* to dip, rise, and turn, creating almost lifelike movements.

TURNS, 2015

Throughout his artistic career, Sherwood has used the movement of birds as inspiration for his sculptures. Some are literal representations, while others simply hint at their movements. The sculpture pair *Turns* was an exploration of different bird body shapes. The conical skirt-like body shape of *Turns* creates variation in form and movement as compared to the figures represented in *Birds*. Each sculpture has "baby turns" underneath to act as counterweights that help create nearly continuous, playful movement in the sculptures. *Turns* is part of the Garden's permanent collection.

ART IN MOTION
GUIDED GOLF CART TOURS

Join us for a Guided Golf Cart Tour of the *Art in Motion* exhibit. Every Thursday from 11–11:45am for the duration of the exhibition.

INCLUDED WITH ADMISSION

GARDEN MAP

ART IN MOTION

25 YEARS OF SCULPTURE *by George Sherwood*

Explore from May 3 through October 12.

1. Wind Sphere
2. Lily Pond
3. Avian Geometry
4. Square Wave
5. Memory of Water
6. Wind Orchid
7. Surf
8. ArcAngel
9. Fusion
10. Wave Cloud
11. Colarium
12. Memory of Fibonacci
13. Beneath the Sea
14. A River Runs Through It
15. Flock of Birds
16. Octave of Gyres
17. Birds
18. Turns **permanently at the Garden*

Learn more at nebg.org