

Fred Roster

born 1944, Palo Alto, California
resides in Honolulu, Hawaii

education / professional experience

Fred Roster received his M.A. from San Jose State in 1968, and his M.F.A. from University of Hawaii. He arrived in Honolulu in 1969, and has taught at UH Manoa since 1971, where he is a Professor in the Sculpture Program. He was raised on a chicken farm and his family built four houses so he had access to tools for creating forts and toys. He overheard parental discussions about design decisions — what color to use and where to put windows, and which woods look best, etc.

JAX BENCH

sculpture,
cast bronze

located on the left of the entry courtyard.

description / design

Three carved quite appealing jax terriers, two standing and one sitting, on wood block pedestals invite museum visitors to join them on a rough hewn half log bench. The legs of the bench are all unique, differing in size, texture and position, with the appearance of natural logs and branches. The asymmetrical assemblage construction is cast in bronze from the original wood pieces, with a handsome gray brown to green patina.

subject / title

Fred Roster's mother raised jax terriers. By creating a comfortable bench about his mother, who was a painter, and her interests, the artist also recalls the forms, textures and personalities of pets from his childhood. 'Content has to be in a form or structure that sets the mood for the proper perception of the message.' — statement of Fred Roster.

style

Fred Roster's strength is the creation of material metaphors — working with the sculptural process (casting and assemblage/construction) to allow materials to speak for themselves and about other forms of experience." (Marcia Morse) His handling of wood, metal and stone illustrates his knowledge and passion for materials, his awareness of their limitations and properties, his enthusiasm for experimentation and process. He will juxtapose rough and smooth to suggest a work in process. Roster has a wealth of ideas to match his technical prowess. While his multifaceted art derives from personal experiences and responses, it also addresses universal feelings or concerns.

tour anecdotes

Fred Roster has outlined 3 significant aspects of his work. (1.) Interest in the human figure and narrative themes, (2.) Notions of time, modular structure, and repetition, (3.) Use of signs and symbols to represent ideas, sound and movement. In an exhibition at the Contemporary Art Center, his large sculpture "Winds of Change" became a contemplative source— to activate the wheels of life. Two large wheels, each with 12 figures representing 12 months and the 24 hours of the day were moved by a "sail" catching wind. "Big work can focus a whole group of people much like a film or a movie can."