

John Buck

born 1945, Ames, Iowa
resides in Bozeman, Montana and Holualoa, Hawaii

education / professional experience

John Buck received his B.F.A. in 1968 from Kansas City Art Institute and School of Design, studied at Skowhegan School Of Sculpture and Painting in Maine and attended the University of California at Davis for an M.F.A. in 1972. He has taught at Montana State University in Bozeman since 1980 and works a part of each year in the studio he shares with his wife, Deborah Butterfield, and two sons, Hunter and Wilder, in Holualoa near Kona.

THE ARCHER

sculpture, 1991
bronze

located on the entrance lanai to the left of the Museum Shop

description / design

An abstracted, stylized male figure simply presented with a flat frontal view. The dislocated head gestures with a sideways gaze towards the archer's bow and balances a large circular shape. The torso is bound by wire held with nails. The texture and hand carved surface remains from John Buck's wooden original sculpture and is accurately recorded by the bronze casting process. The TCM version of "The Archer" is a sketch (maquette) for a much larger version located outside the Advertiser Building. It is paired with a companion piece also sculpted by Buck.

subject / title

"The Archer" describes the irony of man's role as a protector and provider. Buck is married to the sculptor, Deborah Butterfield, and the father of two boys. He addresses here a primal issue—the very things that in our lives we find constricting are the same things that give life meaning and hold us together.

style

John Buck combines virtuoso craftsmanship with influences of folk art. He draws on the tradition of American folk sculpture, and has also been influenced by wooden figures done by Hawaiians especially the use of elaborate headdresses. He claims no favorites in contemporary art but seeks inspiration from art produced by cultures rather than individuals. The symbols used are those seen often, selected because of Buck's attraction to the forms — he uses a complex and appealing repertoire of abstract signs and symbols, commenting on the social dilemmas of our time. John Buck depicts the human figure as a totemic form moving between representation and abstraction. He uses the figure to explore a wide range of ideas and emotions, commenting on various aspects of the male role. Wood is his preferred medium. In some of his larger installations, John Buck uses sculpture and painting as a tableaux — a meditation on the artist's role as the visual storyteller of the human experience.

tour anecdotes

John Buck is unusual in the art market because he is equally well known for sculpture and printmaking. Long involved with drawing, and a master of woodcarving, he has created many large multicolored woodcut prints, often showing the block along with the prints. The bold stroke and colors of the prints explore with finesse the ideas, symbols and patterns of John Buck's distinctive imagery. The Contemporary Museum holds several of his prints in the permanent collection.