

Cold Hollow Sculpture Park directly engages an essential American question—how do we, as Americans, inhabit the land? Beyond the keystone of possession—a property purchased by David Stromeier in 1970 after his return from a cross-country bicycle trip—there is the vision for the land. This vision has animated David and Sarah Stromeier’s inhabiting the acres that became Cold Hollow Sculpture Park. It is a vision attuned, from first to last, to aesthetic awareness. Such an awareness is born of creativity—the making of sculptures; commitment—the day-in, day-out work of shaping a life devoted to creating; sharing—the acknowledgment that personal sensibility is for public nurture; and honoring the rootedness of the endeavor—here, not elsewhere.

In honoring aesthetic awareness, Cold Hollow Sculpture Park puts forward an uncommon value: while technologies and fashions come and go, the opportunity to be among sculptures in vast fields surrounded by ancient mountains is an abiding one. Whatever way the sculptures speak to each individual is how they are meant to speak—the gestural presence of each piece is ineffable yet located on this piece of earth. No museum can hold the earth. The Emersonian thrust is thus plain at Cold Hollow Sculpture Park—let art live in the fields where men and women can breathe freely. Let the aesthetic proclaim itself organically, arising from the lives of the dwellers on the land and based, at once, on a plethora of details and decisions and on a large, encompassing vision. The possibilities realized at Cold Hollow Sculpture Park include contemplation, engagement, appreciation, and, above all, awareness of how aesthetic consideration recognizes the great gift of form without which there is no life. Not only does each sculpture offer a distinct, unrepeatable experience, but the sum of the sculptures—the fields, the day’s weather, the crows in the nearby trees—offers a presence that evokes the largest sense of form, what Walt Whitman, to cite another important American forebear, designated the “kosmos.” The array of programs offered at the Park exemplifies this vision—all the arts are relevant and welcome.

Cold Hollow Sculpture Park offers a vivifying awareness that many cultures over the course of ages have cherished. To partake of such a vision in the United States—a still nascent culture—is to realize the possibility of respecting and enjoying a truly sensible vision, one rooted in lives, toil, inspiration, and gratitude to the land that makes and has made all this created bounty possible.

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