

ARTIST  PROFILE

Edward Inks:

A RARE VINTAGE ON STATE

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

REMINISCENT AND SYMBOLIC OF VESSELS USED THROUGHOUT HISTORY TO CARRY WATER

OR WINE, Edward Inks' sculpture on State Street exults one of the most recognizable shapes from antiquity.

"In these pieces, I wanted to revisit shapes from art history," said Edward Inks, whose sculpture *Wedding at Canaan* can be seen through November 15th as one of the eight sculptures in the State of the Art exhibit. *Wedding at Canaan* is a larger-than-life vessel, which lays on its side, and, while made from steel, has a light and open feel. This is the second year Inks' work has been selected to appear in the exhibit.



Edward Inks

Inks, who has been a Professor of Sculpture at SBCC for the past nineteen years, studied fine art, sculpture, and art education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and received an MFA from

Carnegie Mellon University. Inks feels he has been blessed with the ability to find a balance between his academic career and his creative work. "I can't wait to get back to the studio," said Inks. "It gives me the energy to get back to teaching." Inks first knew he wanted to be an artist as a third grader when he drew the winning portrait of George Washington in a school competition. It wasn't until college that he was introduced to sculpture by what Inks describes as a John Wayne-like, very gruff professor with whom he kept in touch for 35 years.

Inks' sculpture, *Wedding at Canaan*, wasn't originally supposed to be in this



Wedding at Canaan, steel by Edward Inks

year's exhibit. It was another sculpture, *The Birth of Bacchus*, that was selected, but it was damaged shortly after it was installed. When Inks first heard news of the damage, he felt very uncomfortable and depressed. "The first several days it was very disconcerting," said Inks. "When you make art, you do open up your soul." But then someone told him they had by chance witnessed what happened when it was damaged: someone became stuck inside and had to push their way out. "It wasn't damaged because they didn't like it," said Inks. "They didn't understand it."

The Birth of Bacchus is another vessel-shaped skeleton made of bronze, a soft metal, which appears weathered and green. Inks chose to name the sculpture for Bacchus, the Roman god of wine, because of his love for Italy, where he has spent time studying sculpture. *Wedding at Canaan* is a longer, narrower vessel made from steel, a much stronger metal. Inks has heard that someone sits inside *Wedding at Canaan*, playing a guitar as people walk by. "I'd like to get a picture of that," he said. *Wedding at Canaan* was originally part of a sculpture garden exhibit of Inks' artwork at Westmont College in 2007 and explores the same concept as *The Birth of Bacchus*. "I've learned about what obligations I have as an artist in thinking about the amount of weight a sculpture can take," Inks said.

This experience has also made Inks think about the role public art has in the community. "We should have hundreds of pieces in the public eye," he said, "so we are more consistently obligated to respond to it." For Inks, art education is crucial for developing respect in the community. "People know not to climb the trees on State Street, why would they climb on the art?"



The Birth of Bacchus, bronze by Edward Inks

Wedding at Canaan is located near the corner of State St and Ortega. For more information, call 568-3994.

Photos by Kimberly Kavish