



DINA WIND

TRANSFORMATIONS



Dedicated in loving memory of Dina Wind

*And with thanks to all who made this
exhibition and catalogue possible*

DINA WIND
(1938-2014)
TRANSFORMATIONS

February 4 – 28, 2015

BRIDGETTE **MAYER** GALLERY

709 Walnut Street Philadelphia PA 19106





I am honored to show the beautiful welded sculptural assemblages of Dina Wind (1938-2014), and pleased to present *Transformations*, her first exhibition with the gallery.

The majority of the 23 sculptures on view were created between 1994-1996, with a few selections from 1983-1986 and 2000. I had the pleasure of working with her husband Jerry Wind, and her sons, John and Lee Wind, in making curatorial selections. Dina was an extremely prolific artist and we wanted to offer an exhibition that captured her spirit, and the essence that defined her studio practice for over thirty years.

I hope you will be delighted, engaged, inspired and provoked with curiosity by the artwork of this wonderful contemporary sculptor. We believe that Dina and the history of her art making holds an important place within the fabric of the Philadelphia art community. I hope you will agree.

– Bridgette Mayer, Director

Transformations Installation View, Bridgette Mayer Gallery

Dina Wind: Transformations

William R. Valerio, PhD, The Patricia Van Burgh Allison Director & Chief Executive Officer, Woodmere Art Museum

6 I often spoke with Dina Wind about art in general and sculpture in particular. In 2012, while taking a break from installing her *Black Islands* in Woodmere's *Elemental* exhibition, she noticed a work that was new to our collection, *Untitled (On the Rocks)* (1985), by sculptor Robinson Fredenthal. She expressed her admiration, examined the sculpture with care, and proceeded to elucidate for me her one-time acquaintance's extraordinary skill at welding. She urged me to focus my attention on any one facet of the geometric construction and to recognize that each steel plane was welded to many adjacent others, all at complex angles but cohering to express an abstract notion of geometric order internal to the logic of the work. The neat, linear welds were the structural glue of the sculpture. To be able to weld like that, "with such grace and elegance," she said, was a gift.

Grace and *elegance* are the very words that have stuck with me as entry points into Wind's own work as a sculptor. However, her handling of the muscular process of welding steel—a twentieth-century, industry-inspired method of construction that declares its departure from the cast and carved forms of previous centuries—could not be more different from Fredenthal's. An expressionist at heart, Wind allows the mess and burn of her welding to be more or less visible, as determined by the particular marriage of objects at hand. The elegance of her work comes from her ability to compose something new and magical out of industrial steel, old tools, broken car parts, smashed household items, and other unexpected materials.

This is the core of her effectiveness as an artist: the uncanny touch with which she unites and animates disparate metal objects. Welding, for Wind, is a means to compose.



Still Life with Pitcher #1, 2000, 32" x 25" x 15",
Varnished steel, pewter, wood, rubber, paint

Still Life with Pitcher #1 (2000), for example, is a dynamic conversation between a curious group of found objects, each of which retains its own identity within the larger drama. The blade of an old, wood-handled saw defines a strong vertical axis, and is embraced, even cushioned, by a diversity of metal characters: a hand-cranked brace drill; a dangling bicycle chain; a discarded shopping-cart wheel; an industrial spring; a flow of cable wires; the worn, toothed blade of a circular saw; the half-flattened belly of a smashed fender; and the wreck of an ornamental, nineteenth-century pewter pitcher. The mix of benign, poetical, and aggressive objects is so masterfully counterbalanced that there exists a sense of implied motion. Wind draws a frame-like, flat rectangle at the back of the sculpture with four steel bars, and it seems thrown askew by the implied pulsation of the assembled objects. As here, Wind often draws lines in space with metal bars, chains, wires, cables, tubes, and gas lines; in *Still Life with Pitcher*, the sideways, rectangular frame emphasizes organic contrapuntal activities.

A friend once commented to me that Wind's work was reminiscent of the crushed automobile sculptures by John Chamberlain. This took me by surprise—it had never occurred to me and I disagreed completely. Chamberlain's signature works, like Wind's, may be made of found car parts and junkyard detritus, but my overriding impression is that Chamberlain



From top: The Cruiser, 1990, 23" x 48" x 35", Stainless steel
Tilted Curly Hair Bust, 1996, 12" x 16" x 8", Varnished steel,
wood, plastic (Alternate view, p. 35)

compresses matter, sometimes crushing his scraps of metal into cube-like geometric forms or pressing them together into romantic mountains of wreckage. Wind, on the other hand, seems not to press, but instead to expand and lighten the weightiness of her heavy materials through her collage-like, anthropomorphizing process, creating new theatrical objects. *Tilted Curly Hair Bust* (1996) offers a most exquisite drama in tabletop scale, with the fanfare of a circular saw blade, hook, and spiraling spring all balancing on the open mouth of the curved pipe of a defunct muffler. Wind often incorporates these ribbed pipes from mufflers into her work, and one can only surmise that she liked the way the curves and undulating lines suggest intestinal or tracheal motion.

Wind frequently complements the implied organic motion of her sculpture with actual moving parts. For me, this motion creates a lightness that is matched by a whimsical élan. Her *Racing Barracudas* (1997) dash and dart, but don't get too close—their teeth are sharp! Swags of industrial chains are something of a signature element (as are saw blades, manual hedge trimmers, and heavy industrial springs). They drape in space, swaying with errant wind or in response to heavy footsteps on the floor. In *Opera Double Brooch* (1996 p.16) and *Cowboy Hat Bust* (1996, p.19), Wind drapes together different sizes and gauges of chains, and they *decorate* in the heraldic sense, playing with the idea of the wall sculpture as an ornament for the architectural space.