



Virginio Ferrari Sculptor

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BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Cavaliere VIRGINIO L. FERRARI is an internationally acclaimed contemporary sculptor, having exhibited his work in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and throughout the United States. Ferrari's monumental sculptures can be found on *street corners* and *public parks*, at *universities* and *libraries*, *corporations* and in *private collections* in Chicago, and all over the world.

Since the early sixties his sculptures have participated with the environment allowing the interaction of sculpture and casual observer, giving the modern city a human dimension. With over thirty monumental public sculptures in Chicago alone and other works acquired by museum and corporate collections in Atlanta, Florence, Gyaquil, Los Angeles, Milan, Philadelphia and Rome, Ferrari has been a consistent presence in the international art world resulting in over 50 solo exhibitions, while participating in more than 150 group shows.

He was born in Verona, Italy where he graduated from the Scuola D' Arte N. Nanni and from the Accademia Cignaroli, where he received his first teaching assignment. His father and grandfather were stonecutters who established a sense of craftsmanship in the household, and Ferrari continued this tradition, having his first solo exhibit in Venice at the age of 24.

From 1966 to 1976 Ferrari was assistant Professor and artist in residence at the University of Chicago and since then has remained in Chicago where he has devoted his full energies to sculpting. His styles and periods have progressed and changed, marrying his mastery of traditional materials and methods with experimentation's in new forms, materials and styles embracing a philosophy of "New Ideas, New Ways, New Means and New Spaces".

Ferrari's stylistic development has included transitions in expressionistic and surrealistic forms and has evolved towards geometric reduction with a minimum of means; sculptures distinguished by massive force and dynamic tension. Running throughout his art even in his most formalistic works is a persistent search for life essences, to the condition of man, to the embracing of male and female forces.

Ferrari's current work has been described as lyrical abstract sculpture in bronze, stainless steel, marble and granite. Integrating sculpture into the architectural environment, often playfully in contrast to it, at other times fully participating in it, consequently his work is preoccupied with creating situations that delight the eye in the parks, streets, squares and corners of the city.

He holds many awards for his achievements, including the Illinois State Service Award for outstanding contributions as a sculptor who has vitalized and humanized urban spaces. Honored by the president of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Ferrari received the Cavaliere Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana medal for his important contributions to the international art world. He also recently received the medal of the city of Verona based on his 2003 anthological retrospective exhibit "Ombre della Sera: 1958-2003" at the Palazzo Forti Modern Art Museum in Verona, Italy.





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PRESS RELEASE – NOVEMBER 2004

Ferrari has just concluded a major retrospective exhibit at the Galleria D'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea - Palazzo Forti in Verona, Italy. The exhibit, "Virginio Ferrari - Ombre della Sera: 1959-2003", was a huge success and the Director of the museum Prof. Giorgio Cortenova believes "that the retrospective show is of great importance to the evolution of contemporary art, deepening the international public awareness of sculptors, like Virginio Ferrari, who have contributed to the major expressive developments of our time". The exhibit was awarded the Illinois Art Council Governor's Grant for 2003 and Ferrari received the City of Verona's official medal as recognition for his contribution as a leading artist to the local and international art world.

On April 18th, 2003 two hundred works dating from 1959 – 2003 were exhibited, as well as thirteen outdoor sculptures, which were installed throughout the historic center of Verona creating a promenade from his studio at the old Arsenal to the Museum. This marked the first time Verona's public spaces interacted with contemporary sculpture. His studio was open to the public displaying works in progress and multi-media installations as well as hosting workshops and lectures. In conjunction with the exhibit a documentary film, "Full Circle" directed by his youngest son Marco G. Ferrari, on his father's life and work was screened for the public at the museum.

Recent commissions in Italy include a monumental sculpture, entitled "La Famiglia" (1998, stainless steel, copper, & bronze, 98" x 167" x 120") which was inaugurated on September 16th, 2001 in the neighborhood where he was born and raised, Villaggio dell' Oca Bianca, Verona. In 2002 Ferrari won a public outdoor sculpture competition for the city of Verona, for the sculpture "Elementi Circolari in Movimento" (2002, stainless steel and rosso Verona stone, m.16 x 60). In 2003 he also installed the sculpture "Ombre della Sera" (2003, painted steel and pietra di Verona, m. 2,20 x 2,20 x 3,50) for the Galleria d'Arte Contemporanea e Moderna – Palazzo Forti sculpture garden. And this year his sculpture "Maximum II" (2003, cor-ten steel, m 2,80 x 2,00 x 1,00) which was part of his retrospective exhibit was permanently installed along the Adige River in the historic center of Verona.

Recent European group exhibits include a 2002 group exhibit of glass and stone decorative objects, which showed in the "Fiera di Verona – Abitare il Tempo", and traveled to Venice for the Biennale of Design. In 2004 Ferrari participated in an international sculpture exhibit entitled "Mostra di Scultura Castello Di Agliè" curated by the Associazione Piemontese Arte for the city of Torino, Italy.

On the American side of the Atlantic Ferrari participated in a 2002 group exhibit of internationally renowned sculptors organized by The International Sculptors Center traveling from Chicago to Denver in raising funds for the center's mission. In Chicago Ferrari is completing an environmental sculpture entitled "Amy Memorial" for the Moraine Valley Community College, in order to raise the awareness of Drunk Driving Deaths, scheduled to be installed Spring 2005. In October 2004 in collaboration with Chicago's Artists' Month Ferrari participated in a series of lectures, exhibits and film screenings sponsored by the Chicago Cultural Center, Istituto Italiano di Cultura and Friends of the Parks. And lastly Ferrari is part of a group sculpture exhibit entitled "Chicago Sculpture on the Move" with the opening reception on December 10th at Verbeek studios 14 N. Peoria in Chicago.

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