



Brandywine unveils a new bronze sculpture in front of Museum entrance



Rikki Morley Saunders (b. 1951), *Tipping Point* (detail), 2019, bronze. Purchased with funds given anonymously in loving memory of George A. "Frolic" Weymouth.

Chadds Ford, PA, June 21, 2021—Following its grand reopening to the public, the Brandywine River Museum of Art has unveiled a towering new sculpture at its front entrance by local artist Rikki Morley Saunders. Titled *Tipping Point* (2019), the sculpture is cast in bronze and features two majestic and fearsome peacocks intertwined in mid-air battle. The life-sized sculpture measures almost seven feet tall with a length of six feet and a width of over five feet.

Inspired by nature, Saunders focuses exclusively on animals in her sculptural practice, capturing the passion and spirit of various creatures in intricate detail based off her direct study. In *Tipping Point*, the artist's largest work to date, Saunders explores the drama of peacocks, conveying the

complexities of a bird that is prized for its serene beauty—yet is also remarkably strong and fiercely territorial. As portrayed in *Tipping Point*, peacocks fight by rising into the air on their massive wings and using their beaks and talons. Despite the weight of the bronze, Saunders created a buoyant, spiraling composition that reveals and obscures aspects of the two birds as you walk around it. The sculpture symbolizes defining moments—the tipping point referenced in the title is revealed here as the last moment in which an action can be stopped without repercussion.

“I am and honored and thrilled to have *Tipping Point* in the Brandywine’s collection,” said artist Rikki Morley Saunders. “I have lived with and observed peacocks for over 30 years. I hope my sculpture conveys the raw beauty of these magnificent creatures—with their powerful, swirling aerobatic maneuvers and intense exploitation of feathers—that depicts a fleeting moment when the outcome of their impassioned encounter is still unknown.”

“Rikki is an artist with a remarkably astute sense of form,” added Thomas Padon, The James H. Duff Director of the Museum. “Over the years she has created a large body of sculpture depicting animals. Through intense observation she captures these creatures in minute detail and infuses their spirit into each sculpture. *Tipping Point* is her most ambitious piece to date, and it is with great excitement that we now introduce this sculpture to generations of Brandywine visitors.”

Based in Chester County, Pennsylvania, the artist has exhibited at the Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY; the National Sculpture Society; Brookgreen Gardens; Murrells Inlet, SC; and The Philadelphia Show, presented by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where her work was included in the collection curated by Martha Stewart. Saunders is also included in many prestigious private collections across the United States and Europe. A fellow of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Saunders is an active member of the National Sculpture Society, the California Art Club, the Society of Animal Artists and the Audubon Society.

In addition to *Tipping Point*, the Museum’s campus grounds are home to four other bronze sculptures: *Boy with Hawk* (1971), by Charles Parks (1922-2012); *Miss Gratz* (1984), by J. Clayton Bright (b. 1946); *Helen* (1989), by André Harvey (1941-2018); and *R. B.* (2004), by Dan Ostermiller (b. 1956). Formerly at the entrance to the Museum, *Boy with Hawk* was recently relocated to a new home on the Brandywine’s campus overlooking its Monarch Migration Station, which features plantings of milkweed and other native flowers enjoyed by local pollinators. The late artist Charles Parks originally intended for this sculpture to be viewed at ground level so that visitors could interact spatially with the larger-than-life figure and could see the details of the doves and hawk. The sculpture’s new location along the Brandywine’s inner campus trail will offer visitors a fresh perspective of this beloved sculpture surrounded by nature.

Following a temporary closure for renovations to its second and third floors, the Brandywine River Museum of Art reopened to the public on Sunday, June 20, 2021, with its new special

exhibition, *Ralston Crawford: Air & Space & War*. On view through September 19, 2021, the exhibition explores U.S. aviation and military history through the art and personal experiences of American Modernist Ralston Crawford. The extensive collection of nearly 80 works on view by the artist includes drawings, photographs, paintings and lithographs from the 1940s that narrate Crawford's involvement with aerospace and World War II. In addition to the new exhibition and building renovations, the Museum's other galleries have also been refreshed with paint and rehung to include new acquisitions and loans, rarely seen works from the permanent collection, as well as many visitor favorites. Summer hours of operation are Wednesday-Monday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (closed Tuesdays). Capacity limits and other safety measures, including timed ticketing, remain in place and will be adjusted as needed. Up-to-date information about visiting the Brandywine can be found at www.brandywine.org/now-open.

About the Brandywine River Museum of Art:

The Brandywine River Museum of Art features an outstanding collection of American art housed in a 19th-century mill building with a dramatic steel and glass addition overlooking the banks of the Brandywine. The Museum is located on Route 1 in Chadds Ford, PA. Admission is \$18 for adults, \$15 for seniors ages 65 and over, \$6 for students and children ages 6 and up; free for children 5 and younger and Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art members. Hours of operation can be found at www.brandywine.org/hours. The Museum is one of the two programs of the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art.

About the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art:

The Brandywine Conservancy & Museum of Art preserves and promotes the natural and cultural connections between the area's beautiful landscape, historic sites, and important artists. The Conservancy protects the lands and waters throughout the Brandywine Valley and other priority conservation areas, developing sustainable approaches to emerging needs and assuring preservation of majestic open spaces and protection of natural resources for generations to come. The Museum of Art presents and collects historic and contemporary works of American art, engaging and exciting visitors of all ages through an array of exhibitions and programs. The Brandywine unites the inspiring experiences of art and nature, enhancing the quality of life in its community and among its diverse audiences.

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Press Release Details

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Monday, June 21, 2021

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