ATHENA FOUNDATION /1977–1986

FLOUNDER—Mark di Suvero

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Anita Contini, President—Founder and Director, Creative Time Inc.
Barbara Haskell—Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art
Irving Sandler—Art Historian, Professor, SUNY Purchase
Ruth Cummings—Independent film and video producer

SELECTION COMMITTEE
Anita Contini
Monroe Denton—Contemporary Art Historian
Jene Highstein—Sculptor
Laurace James—Sculptor/Painter
Mary Miss—Sculptor
Elizabeth Murray—Painter
Christopher Wilmarth—Sculptor

Donors
Adirondack Furniture
Michael Bradley
Brite Electric Sales Corp.
Mark di Suvero
Sidney Felsen
Gemini G.E.L.
Charles Ginnever
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Jacobson
Oil & Steel Gallery
James R. Patton Jr.
Agnes Gund Saalfeld
Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Scull
Robert C. Scull Foundation
Rick Timm

Thanks to:
Paul Frishman
Leifer Brothers Steel Co.
Long Island General Supply
Materials for the Arts
Elizabeth Murray
Jack Nahoum
Ed Potokar
Thomas Ruse

Special Thanks:
Richard Bellamy
Enrico Martignoni
Scott Pfaffman

The Athena Foundation is a tax exempt, not-for-profit, private foundation incorporated under the laws of New York State.
Copies of its annual report are available from: The Athena Foundation Inc., 193 Front St., N.Y., N.Y. 10038.
Athena Foundation / Flounder's Statement

The Athena Foundation (Inc.) is dedicated to the arts for the people. In a culture which is vital, the unity of joy between the people and the works of art becomes one of the great bases for cooperation: people's spirits when they sing together make a celebration of the world and human life. The Athena Foundation will try to help artists realize their visions which their creative imagination proposes, so that the society shall become healthier, more cooperative, happier, and more unified.

To this end the Foundation shall search out artists (through the recommendation of other artists, on the basis that artists know art best) and shall provide materials/time/space or other dimensions as required. The Foundation shall find and raise funds for these programs, and the Board of Directors shall try for flexibility and innovative vision in their programs. The Foundation in its larger format shall help communities to realize a work of art (art in the park) or construct a public sculpture space.

Art reaches the human spirit, beyond skin color or sexual differences, beyond age or the scars of handicap; therefore the Athena Foundation shall base itself on equality and shall not discriminate racially, sexually, nor by age nor handicap.

1977-1985 Mark di Suvero
Society, although enriched by the work of artists, does not always grant them recognition or reward them financially. As one who remembers the struggle involved in the attempt to make art with inadequate means, Mark di Suvero organized the Athena Foundation to help other artists. The Foundation proposes to "encourage the arts, expand the culture and support science" by giving grants, materials, workspace, and encouragement to artists.

The activities of the Foundation, since it gave its first grant in 1977 to Philip Glass, are chronicled in this catalog. Artists have received monetary grants, some to further their work in general, others for the completion of specific projects. Additionally, artists have been given residency grants at di Suvero's Long Island City studio. These grants have provided artists with workspace, materials and equipment to undertake large scale projects.

Artists are considered for grants once a year. A search committee solicits applications and considers nominations made by previous grantees. The artists are then recommended to the Board of Directors which makes the awards.

Support for these activities has come in the form of direct donations as well as the proceeds from the sale of donated works of art. Additionally, merchants in the Long Island City area and Materials for the Arts, a program of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of New York, have made in-kind contributions.

In conjunction with both Isamu Noguchi and Mark di Suvero, the Foundation is developing a sculpture park in Long Island City. It has a 5 year lease from the Department of Ports and Terminals for a 4.5 acre waterfront site. The land, located on the East River between the Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum and di Suvero's studio is slated to open as the Socrates Sculpture Space in 1986. Outdoor studio and exhibition space will be made available to artists selected by the Foundation.
1977  PHILIP GLASS
1978  NEIL WILLIAMS
1979  WILLIAM CROZIER
1980  MICHAEL BALLOU
1980  HARRY HOWE
1980  GLENGA HYDLER
1982  BARRY LEDOUX
1982  SCOTT PFAMANN
1982  HEIDE FASNACHT
1983  THOMAS FAULKNER
1983  GUY SOHOY
1983  JONATHAN WATERS
1983  JASON CHILDERS
1983  PAUL BLOCH
1983  URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD
1983  LINDA FLEMIN
1984  GERMAINE KELLER
1984  KATE HUNT
1984  VIVIEN ABRAMS
1984  MARY CLARE GALVIN
1984  JAMES GARVEY
1984  HENNER KUCKUCK
1985  MEG WEBSTER
1985  HELEN LESSICK
1985  MARILYN REYNOLDS
1986  SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK
Harry Howe—“Bridge Piece”
reinforced concrete, steel & wood, 1980

Scott Pfaffman, Anthony Bowman,
“Dance of the Wild Man” in progress, 1983
Scott Pfaffman—"Frankie and Johnny" in progress, 1983

Heide Fasnacht—"Crazy Gene II," aluminum, 1983
Germaine Keller—"Hathor, Heqat & Isis," in progress, painted wood on mannequin, 1984

Vivien Abrams—"The Coaster and the Racer (Trevira Twosome)" 1984, oil on canvas with assemblage 10'H x 13'W x 9'D

Kate Hunt—cut and welded steel, 1984
Mary Clare Galvin—combined cast iron remnants, 1984

Linda Fleming—wood & steel sculpture, 1984

Linda Fleming—wood and steel sculpture, 1984
Jason Childers—Rehearsal for performance of "Self-Portrait" at the Ethnic Folk Art Center, 1985

Meg Webster—contained watercopper/triangle/maquette 15" x 8" x 8"

James Garvey—"Star #6. Restoring Liberty w/ Local #580" H5' forged steel & stainless, 1985
Marilyn Reynolds—paintings in progress, acrylic on canvas, 1985
Helen Lessick—"Metallic House," 1985

Henner Kuckuck—"MK 12," welded steel with black paint H27" L48" W10", 1985
ARTISTS' STATEMENTS

HARRY HOWE

Two sculptures were built using funds from the Athena Foundation grant. Not only did the money allow me to purchase materials and equipment for these pieces, but the two month respite from construction work allowed me to develop some new ideas. Work I am planning now is dramatically different from anything I've done before, and I am very excited about that, and the opportunity given me by the Foundation is one of the major reasons for this.

SCOTT PFAFFMAN

"Ancient Athens and Ancient Queens"

When fishermen stopped to drink it up in bars off Halletts Cove
We could have hired them to bring the big ones down the Hudson or through Hell's Gate.
But Rob Dermer brought them down on the broken back of his log truck.
Buzz saws drive old natives crazy as much as new.

August, 1984

HEIDE FASNACHT

I had worked almost exclusively in wood prior to the Spring of 1983. The Athena Foundation afforded the purchase of one 10' x 5' x 1' sheet of aluminium and an extensive grouping of blades. At the end of three months the sheet was an extensive grouping of pieces and the blades no more. These pieces, combined into a meaningful whole, produced “CRAZY GENE II,” born of gritty experience.

GUY SCHOY

Les Atehéaı̈ses
Doucement elles apparaissent vives grandis bariolée de couleur dis soleil, elles bougent dans l’encien de la fondation athena auprès d’un maître de notre temps, ‘elles vous aimes vous embrasses’

The Athenaists
Slowly they come alive, breathtakingly painted with the colors of the sun see them move within the athena foundation next to a master of our time.

they love and embrace you

JONATHAN WATERS

I got seven pieces out of this batch of plate. The sculpture evolved from numerous revised drawings done directly on the plate; the cuts are the linear elements defining the structure of the sculpture. The thickness of the plate gives volume to the cut or line. It also determines the scale and proportions within the sculpture.

URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD

The Athena Foundation has enabled me to build several pieces the largest of which required the use of a hoist (my first). It was a pleasure to work in a spacious pier with luches overlooking the East River, with handsome men working about and enough space to the sides and above to give me courage to face and negotiate the more difficult problems in my work. The Athena Foundation is a generous conception having given me generous quantities of space at a time I needed it.

VIVIEN ABRAMS

The Athena Foundation grant provided me with an occasion to produce work of significantly larger scope and scale than ever before. The opportunity to work in the huge studio at the pier suggested to me that I try to make a work that I couldn't make in my own studio (thus the 10'8" height of the piece I did). The gift of money enabled me to invest generously in tools and materials for the piece. The 3 month time allotment gave me enough time to work the piece in depth, without rushing. Some days I accomplished little because I was terrified of the challenge I had set for myself. But in completing the piece, I have the ability to grow by taking enormous risks in my work, and that I can work under a wider range of conditions that I had imagined. I fell that the piece which resulted, "THE COASTER AND THE RACER (TREVIRA TWO SOME)," is the most important work I've ever done because I took so many risks with it, and attempted to pull together many trends from my past work to make a major statement. I'm very grateful to have had this experience and opportunity.

GERMAINE KELLER

My concern is with architectural space. The body of work completed under the Athena Foundation Fellowship is an architectural statement on the human form. The mannequins perform as a base. Their gesture, frozen in 3 dimensional space, is the starting point for my construction. The lattice-like structure develops in linear fashion, sometimes mimicking, sometimes extending, halting or completing that gesture.
ARTISTS' STATEMENTS

PAUL BLOCH
I am an intuitive sculptor who carves directly in marble. The sculpture unravels like a complex mystery revealing my ideas and feelings. I often work with a fixed concept and allow the rock to form itself within those ideas. The beauty of marble is its ability to conform to any shape the heart, head, and hands can conceive of. That plus the soul of the marble result in a enchanting dialog resulting in combinations previously unknown to me.

MARY CLARE GALVIN
Since 1979 I have dealt with the reworking of remnants, mostly cast iron, found among the ruins of late 19th century New York City architecture. I have given special attention to the unusual pieces of metallic detritus found within the devastation of the old West Side Highway. My sculpture involves an orchestration of these remnants while maintaining the powerful presence that many of these metallic fossils have to offer in their own right.

JASON CHILDER
I greatly appreciated the grant for rehearsal space given to me in the summer of 1983 by the Athena Foundation at Spacetime. The time spent there has had a lasting impact on my choreography. I was able to spend important time alone—filtering through excess movement and energy, getting to the roots of what inspires me. Several movement phrases were eventually developed and incorporated into a duet used in a concert of my work, in May of 1984, at the Ethnic Folk Arts Center. The ability to spend time in a rehearsal space, free of financial restrictions, will always be an invaluable asset to myself and other young choreographers.

Marilyn Reynolds
I love working on a large scale, and whenever I am offered a big space in which to work, which happened in the case of the Athena Foundation and Mark di Suvero’s studio, I jump at the opportunity. I suppose ideally, I would like to do a painting that would go on forever, influenced by daily life developments—one continuous piece of canvas. I am thrilled with the expanse of raw canvas before I put any paint on it, and the bigger, the better. It is the ultimate challenge for me, to create works that are over life-size, and stretching in many directions.

HELEN LESSICK
You can’t expand without confusion. Water never boils without applying heat. The Athena grant provided me with a moment of foment, a continuum and insanity which grew into Structural Expressionism. “The Metallic House” was my first large metal piece. The enthusiasm and generosity of the community of artists at Spacetime gave me an impetus to dream.

Photography credits:
EEVA-INKERI, photo of Barry Ledoux’s work
ADAM PEACOCK, photo of Jason Childers
STU CHERNOFF, photo of Mary Galvin’s work
SKY VIEWS SURVEY INC.—Aerial Photograph

Graphic design by Florence Noel