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National Medal of Arts Awarded to GSU Sculpture Park Artist

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The Office of Marketing and Communications		Date: February 22, 2012 Contact: Eric Matanyi Governors State University Phone: (708) 534-4044 Email: ematanyi@govst.edu					
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Events		<h2>National Medal of Arts Awarded to GSU Sculpture Park Artist</h2>					
Production Procedures		<p>University Park, Illinois, February 22, 2012 – Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park artist Martin Puryear was awarded the National Medal of Arts in a February 13 White House ceremony.</p> <p>President Barack Obama presented the award to Puryear whose “Bodark Arc,” at Governors State University’s Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park (NMSP), combines structural elements with trees and landforms to produce an artistic masterpiece.</p> <p>It was the second straight year that an NMSP artist has received the National Medal of Art, the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States Government. In 2011, President Obama awarded the medal to Mark di Suvero, whose towering “Yes! For Lady Day” at the NMSP is recognized as a landmark of contemporary sculpture.</p> <p>The National Medal of Arts is a White House initiative managed by the National Endowment for the Arts. Each year, the NEA organizes and oversees the medal nomination process and notifies artists of their selection to receive a medal.</p> <p>“Martin Puryear transforms mundane and utilitarian materials – wood, stone, and metal – into evocative talismans that quietly and powerfully explore issues of history, culture, and identity,” the NEA citation states. “His unwavering commitment to manual skill and traditional building materials offer a seductive alternative to our increasingly digital world.”</p> <p>Puryear is one of seven recipients of this year’s award; other honorees include painter and printmaker Will Barnett, poet and author Rita Dove, actor Al Pacino, arts patron and philanthropist Emily Rauh Pulitzer, singer and songwriter Mel Tillis, classical pianist Andre Watts, and the United Service Organizations (USO).</p> <p>Bodark Arc was commissioned by NMSP and the GSU Foundation, and installed in 1982. Puryear used a number of materials to create the artwork, including earth, wood, Osage orange trees, asphalt, stone, and cast bronze. Bodark Arc is an example of Land Art, so large that it can be fully appreciated only by viewing it from the air. In Bodark Arc, Puryear orchestrates landscape and scale along with personal and cultural references, offering a site for quiet reflection that reveals itself piece by piece.</p> <p>The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park is located at Governors State University’s main campus in University Park. The park is free of charge and open from dawn to dusk 365 days a year. For more information about the sculpture park, visit www.govst.edu/sculpture or call (708) 534-4486.</p>					
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