

News from theNate

DIGITAL

Newsletter November/December 2022, Issue 4



theNate
NATHAN MANILOW SCULPTURE PARK

"Stargazing with Contrails", 2021 by Terrence Karpowicz, was the central feature of Sculpture, Wine & Dine 2022 – pictured here, left to right: Will Davis, Dr. Jason Zingsheim, Angela Sebastian, Dr. Cheryl Green, Terry Karpowicz, Dr. Stuart Fagan, Patricia Mell Ragland, Jeff Stevenson, and Marquis Parks.

Read on to find out more about Sculpture, Wine & Dine, and to see how you fit into the big picture.

News from theNate

NATHAN MANILOW SCULPTURE PARK

The Language of Stones



"The Circle of Gold, Destruction and Renewal", 2012; bronze, 70 inches



"Earth, the Blue Stone", 2012; Blue Bahia granite, 24x38x53 inches

The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park at Governors State University in the Chicago Southland, also known as theNate, presents two sculptures by the **Brazilian artist Denise Milan**: "*Earth, the Blue Stone*" and "*Circle of Gold*".

Both sculptures were part of the large "*Mist of the Earth*" exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center, 2012 that had three themes: Paradise, Paradise Lost, and Paradise Regained - reexamining the medieval myth of Brazil as paradise on Earth since the Age of Discoveries. Milan's vision of the country takes the viewer on a journey of imagination and reflection about its memory and history. The promises of verdant nature of abundance and exuberance, the land has been despoiled and torn as its people and at last the message of hope and healing. This is the culmination and embodiment of the artist's concerns, a testament to the troubling legacy of colonization, the conquest of the land and defeat of the original indigenous populations, the enslavement of the African People, the devastation of whole regions and the life-asserting side of Brazil, its beauty and soaring spirit.

"*Earth, the Blue Stone*" represents Paradise. Why a blue stone? Milan explains her choice for the name and material: "the astronauts of Apollo17 on their way to the moon, saw for the first time in 1972 the entire circumference of the Earth all lit up in space and exclaimed: 'It's a blue marble!' We know that the Earth crust is basically made of what we call stone. We live in a blue stone. To imagine this blue stone spinning

Inside

- New Sculpture from Brazil
- GSU Students and theNate
- John Henry's Legacy

in the vastness of the universe is to understand that we are part of a large family, that we exist and are all connected with our planet, sharing the same experience. The blue stone is found in Bahia, Brazil and Nigeria. I used this connection in the installation "*Amefrica*" (2003, Brasilia). We must recover the time known as Pangea, when Africa and Brazil were united. We must value that memory of our common origin. Blue stone is a bridge that allows us to return to the time when we shared the same beginning. We don't know about our beginning or end. We must share this experience of not knowing.

It's not a question of our identity as children of this father, or that mother – but our planetary identity. This is a symbolic space where we can share the same language. For me, quartz (stone) is a metaphor for the possibility of dialogue because it is present in 70% of the Earth, is part of that origin and it is a structure that talks to all of us."

"Circle of Gold" is the symbol of humanity's adoration of material riches, wealth, and power - as we know from the Greek myth of King Midas and the biblical Golden Calf. In the second theme Paradise Lost, it represents the search for Eldorado, the greed for gold in colonial Brazil that relied on slave labor and led to devastation of the land. However, in Paradise Regained, now gold brings blessings of purification and redemption of the enslaved lives in the past. It is the transmutation of the old wounds, purification of the lost souls and of our Brazilian national psyche in search of healing.

Continued on page 3.

The Language of Stones

Continued from page 1.

Just like in the Middle Ages, alchemists searched for the perfection of all matter on any level, including that of the mind, spirit, and soul, transmuting one substance into another, the “Circle of Gold” becomes a way of transcending the current times to reach enlightenment. As contemporary art, the “Circle of Gold” offers the blessing for the regeneration of a harmonious hopeful future free from any type of enslavement.

Denise Milan is based in São Paulo, Brazil. She works with natural resources, and stones are particularly important to her. She tries to bring out what she calls the “language of stones”. This exhibit at theNate will be on view for three years. **Please join us on Saturday, December 10, 2022 at 1 p.m. for an in-person dedication of the sculpture and brief talk on site, ahead of our annual Winter Walk (see article about the Winter Walk below for more information).**



Also by Denise Milan, (and Ary Perez), “America’s Courtyard” is an artwork composed of fifty-six rectangular blocks of granite configured in concentric circles with four large pieces of marble in the center. The work is part of the City of Chicago public Art Collection. Originally installed near the Art Institute of Chicago, the artwork was moved to a lawn area just south of the Adler Planetarium in December 2000. At its new location, the configuration of the stone elements resembles a spiral galaxy and symbolizes an ancient celestial observatory. Astronomer Phyllis Pitluga helped the artists arrange the stones to create four pathways representing the sun’s passage during the seasonal solstices.

Denise Milan is working in different media, and she has also worked with experts in science and technology, anthropology, archaeology, philosophy, literature, theater, and music. She uses the stone as her creative axis, which leads to a production that embraces public art, sculpture, urban performance, scenic arts, opera, poetry, printing, videoart, and multimedia art. Milan’s works have been exhibited in renowned national and international institutions and she has participated in the 20th, 21st, and 33rd Biennial of São Paulo, as well as the current 13th Marcosul Biennial, where her work “TrincAr” is prominently displayed.



Artist Denise Milan and her installation “TrincAr,” 13th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre, 2022. Photo: Mateus Bruxel. Courtesy of the artist.

From the interview for [this NewCity Brazil](#) article about the installation: Denise, explain to us what moved you to create the current installation?

“The theme of the Thirteenth Mercosul Biennial, “Trauma, Dreams and Escape,” addresses the impact of COVID-19. The world became breathless. My work is about the genesis of the stones and rocks formed in the bubbles of Earth’s magma. “TrincAr” means crack but its last two letters in Portuguese mean “air”: ar. The installation has a fourteen-meter-long fissure on the wall that narrates the “drama of matter” within these “bubbles.” They are made of translucent glass spheres, the place of conflict, of “to be or not to be,” when quartz stone may or may not exist, and might simply disappear. We cannot live without air. In the search of how life continues, I had to look through the crack.” ~ Denise Milan

Winter Walk at theNate

Saturday, December 10, 2022, 1 p.m.
Location: G Building South Entrance

Please RSVP to sdenault@govst.edu by Monday, December 5 – although walk-ins are welcomed.

Winter Walk (departs from G Building South Entrance) 1 p.m. dedication and talk about the new Denise Milan Sculptures

Following the talk, and some hot seasonal beverages, join us for our annual winter walk and tour of the collection, take in views of the sculpture set against the dramatic Illinois landscape which is inspiring during all four seasons. Dress for the weather knowing we will return to G Building lobby, to warm up with some more hot seasonal beverages. We are a hardy people, but in the case of inclement weather, an indoor version of the event will be presented.

