Charlie Brouwer: All Over the Place

Sculptures installed throughout the New River Valley and beyond.
May through November 2023

About this Project:
Sometimes art exhibitions tour from one museum to another. This 2023 exhibition will actually be a tour of sculptures installed all over the New River Valley region. Charlie’s artworks will appear in libraries, and churches, on university campuses, community & art centers, in front of historic homes, a coffee shop, galleries, farms and in a front yard. A QR code sign at each site will lead to a website with an interactive map created by the Radford University Art Museum.

About the Artist:
Radford University Professor Emeritus Charlie Brouwer describes himself as an artist in search of beauty, truth, and goodness. His search has been visual, and internal, public and private, local, national and international. His work ranges from large and small-scale sculptures made mostly from wood to monumental installations, and to works on paper or canvas with water-based mediums. He also works collaboratively with other individuals or whole communities making art in ways he could never do alone. His work is philosophical and spiritual, personal and universal, serious and humorous. It is “all over the place.”
The project features 28 participating locations, including:

1. 1009 3rd Street, Radford, VA
2. The Alexander Black House Museum
3. Alum Ridge School
4. Bent Mountain Community Center
5. Blacksburg Presbyterian Church
6. Blacksburg United Methodist Church
7. Calfee Community Center
8. Christiansburg Library - MFRL
9. Deer Park Farm
10. Eleanor D. Wilson Museum
11. Fancy Gap Cabin & Campground
12. Floyd Center for the Arts
13. Glencoe Mansion Museum
14. Jackson Park, Pulaski
15. Jesse Peterman Memorial Library
16. Mc Connell Library, Radford University
17. Miller off St. Main Galleries
18. Montgomery Museum of Art and History
19. Old Church Gallery
20. Out There - Studio and Sculpture Trail
21. Red Rooster Coffee
22. Radford University’s Selu Nature Conservancy & Observatory
23. The Raymond F. Ratcliffe Memorial Museum of Transportation
24. Virginia Tech - Solitude
25. Virginia Western Community College
26. Wilderness Road Regional Museum
27. The Benediction Project
28. Pulaski Train Station
ARRIVING HOME -
1009 3rd Street
Radford, VA 24141
Access - View anytime from the street

The most satisfying moments in my life have involved some kind of coming home.
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FUTURE AND HOPE -
Alexander Black House & Cultural Center
204 Draper RD SW
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Access - the sculpture is located on the lawn

Martin Luther King JR. often quoted this from the prophet Jeremiah: “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope”. I made these 7 multigenerational and diverse figures all looking up.
After learning that this beautiful old building had once been a Floyd County Public School, I asked its owner in 2014 for permission to install 52 of my old orchard ladders bursting out of its windows because the school had operated for 52 years and its students had taken their education out into the world. The project was enjoyed for several months and then I removed the ladders. With permission from its current owners, I have reinstalled the ladders for a few months thru November of 2023. The orchard ladders were provided by Frank Levering of Levering Orchard.
LONG WALK HOME -
Bent Mountain Community Center
10140 Tinsley Ln.
Bent Mountain, VA 24059
Access - located on the lawn in front of the entrance

Life is a long walk home -
a pilgrimage. We can have moments of feeling perfectly at home in the here and now and yet we are all on our way to our final home.
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THIS IS THE DAY -
Blacksburg Presbyterian Church
701 Church Street SE
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Access - go to church office Monday - Friday 9-4pm
blacksburgpres.org

My daughter, Jennifer Hand, and I have occasionally collaborated on individual works, installations, exhibitions and on commissions like this one. Everything, including us, seems to rise from deep roots, pass thru space and time, and on into eternity.
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THESE PRAYERS -
Blacksburg United Methodist Church
111 Church Street SE, Blacksburg, VA 24060
Access - located in the church Fellowship Hall
Wed. from 1 - 5pm or call church office 540-552-5424 from 9-5pm M -F

Scraps and leftovers from 40 years of constructing small and large wood sculptures led to the idea for this sculpture. I started making these 18”x 24” panels in 2000 and finished enough of them to complete the sculpture in 2021. The old orchard ladders were given to me by Frank Levering (Levering Orchard) to use in my installations. Paul Simon suggested the title in his song “Cool Cool River.”
Words in a gospel song “My Lord What a Morning, When the Stars Begin To Fall” inspired me to imagine what this might look like and make this sculpture.
DESIREE KNOWLEDGE MYSTERY -
Christiansburg Library
125 Sheltman Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073
Access - call 540-382-6965 for hours

It seems that we desire to learn, acquire knowledge, and then follow into unknowable mysteries.
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**GARDENER -**  
625 Laurel Creek Rd NE  
Pilot, VA 24138  
Access - Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm

Whether we are active gardeners or not, we are all caretakers of Earth. Take a break, admire your work, but know there is always more to do.
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WINGED VICTORY -
Eleanor D. Wilson Museum at Hollins University
8009 Fishburn Drive
Roanoke, VA 24020
Access - in front of the Museum

Five pointed stars have been part of my visual vocabulary for a long time. I remember first learning to draw a 5-pointed star... I drew them by the hundreds and they still make frequent appearances in my work. Sometimes they are the stars of the universe and other times I see them as exuberant people...arms stretched wide. I made this star for a public art exhibition in Roanoke: “Star City of the South”.
HOPE IS... -
202595 Blue Ridge Parkway
Fancy Gap, VA
Located at Fancy Gap Cabin and Campground entrance
Access - anytime

Hope is always possible, but first we must put our hands on the ladder.
CRAZY QUILT -
Floyd Center for the Arts
220 Parkway Lane S
Floyd, VA 24091
Access - Sculptures are located next to the front parking lot.

An aging sign at the Art Center needed to be removed so I took it to my studio, cut it up and turned it into a “quilt”.

AND THEN ONE DAY....IT HAPPENED -
Floyd Center For The Arts
220 Parkway Lane S
Floyd, VA 24091
Access - Located to the left of the entrance

We wait for it, watch for it, live for it...and then one day it happens - all of our imaginings, our hopes and dreams flow through and rise up in us, and we are one with them.
ORDINARY PERSON -
Glencoe Mansion, Museum & Gallery
600 Unruh Drive, Radford, VA 24141
Access - Sculpture is located on the lawn

I made a monument to all of us ordinary people because the heroes of one age are not necessarily heroes in the following ages. Being ordinary, this person would not take a heroic pose but just sat down to take a look around.
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TOGETHER WE RISE PULASKI -
Jackson Park
40 1st St NW
Pulaski, VA 24301
Access - located in the center of the park

The installation resulting from this community engagement project will be on view from May 6 - June 1 after which all the ladders will be returned. The project was sponsored by the Fine Arts Center for the NRV. 
https://www.facnrv.org/
Domestic life often appears in my work. My inspiration comes from my own family experiences. This is a collaborative work with my daughter Jennifer Hand.
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LIBRARY BOOKS -
McConnell Library, Radford University
945 East Main Street
Radford, VA 24141
Access - for hours, call:
540-831-5364

In 2008 Charlie (who had just retired as Prof. of Art at Radford University) gave McConnell Library 15 book sculptures. They were catalogued and made available to be checked out. The books are currently displayed on shelves in the Library’s Reading Room. The project resulted from contemplating the possibilities of public art.
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WESTERN MAN PAUSES TO THINK -
McConnell Library - Radford University Campus
945 East Main Street
Radford, VA 24141
Call 540-831-5364 for hours

Not finding any women’s names among the authors of “Great Books of the Western World” I made this Western Man bookcase.

WE DO NOT KNOW -
McConnell Library
Radford University Campus
945 East Main Street
Radford, VA 24141
Access, call 540-831-5364 for hours

Acquired by the library in 2007 - this sculpture with its “books” on various subjects up on a column serves as a reminder that no matter how much we think we know, there will always be more to learn.
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WORK FOR THE NIGHT IS COMING -
Miller Off Main Gallery
211 Wilson Ave.
Blacksburg, VA 24060
Access - Sculpture is located on the lawn

Pushing a wheel barrow uphill on a landscaping project late in the afternoon had me singing lines from the hymn “Work For The Night is Coming, when Man’s Work is Done.”
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ALL THAT WE DO NOT KNOW LEADS TO DESIRE GREATER THAN GRAVITY -
Montgomery Museum of Art and History
4 East Main St, Christiansburg, VA 24073
Access - Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10:30 - 4:30PM, Saturday - 1 - 4PM

Each sculpture in my 1991 exhibition titled “Traveling” included one or more suitcases. The work referred to many different kinds of travel from earthly to celestial.
SUSTAIN -
Old Church Gallery
110 Wilson Street
Floyd, VA 24091
Access - anytime

Zeus made Atlas bear the Earth on his shoulders. Now we need to help Atlas.
OUT THERE SCULPTURE TRAIL -
Access: To make your appointment, send an email to cbrouwer@swva.net and request a day and time. Charlie will reply to confirm availability.

Charlie's past and current work can be seen in the studio and the trail winds through nine acres of field and woods past 30 of his outdoor sculptures.

The studio and trail are open by appointment.
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BECOMING -
Red Rooster Coffee
823 E Main Street, Floyd, VA 24091
Access - anytime

To live is to be in a constant state of becoming.
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HEDGEROW -
Selu Conservancy
3215 Dry Valley Road, Radford, VA 24141
For access, please send an email to schedule a visit 7 days in advance: selu@radford.edu

Jason Rutledge and his draft horses removed these dead locust trees from the conservancy’s woods and moved them to the site. I added some silhouettes of local flora and fauna and Patrick Hand helped me stand the trees up and attach them together for this commissioned site specific installation. I hope all manner of brush and trees grow in it and fill it out.
Like most Americans, I spend a lot of time on the road. We speed along between here and there in our self-contained cells like pilgrims meditating down the road past signs and scenes. These three sculptures were part of my 1993 exhibition titled “Signs and Roads”.
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THINK ON THESE THINGS -

Solitude Plantation
705 West Campus Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Access - outdoors, open to the public

Black locust wood (figures and benches), and for the tree - salvaged wood from the 350-450 year old fallen Merry Oak that stood on the grounds of Smithfield Plantation.

Commissioned by the Council on VA Tech History for the sesquicentennial celebration. The sculpture is an invitation to contemplate Virginia Tech’s layered histories.
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**DESIRE -**
Virginia Western Community College  
3082 Colonial Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 24015  
Access – in front of the Arts & Humanities Building  
Soon to be installed, please call in advance to confirm that the sculpture has been installed: 540-250-2966  

Sometimes our ladders of hope and desire grow wings and we soar above and beyond our imaginings.
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HALLELUJAH -
Wilderness Road Regional Museum
5240 Wilderness Rd
Dublin, VA 24084
Access - Located across from the Museum on the lawn.

Home is about safety and security and ladders are about taking risks in search of achievements and spiritual enlightenment. Such is life...hallelujah!
THE BENEDICTION PROJECT -

I move this sculpture every 40 days from one place of worship to another – its arms raised as a way of saying “Bless You” to the community. Throughout 2023 the sculpture is traveling in the Roanoke area. For a list of dates and locations see: https://roanokearts.org/benediction/
WAITING FOR A TRAIN OF THOUGHT -
Pulaski Train Station
20 S. Washington Ave.
Pulaski, VA 24301
Visible from the parking area.

Sometimes my thinking is like a train - one thought commented to another. But, sometimes the train becomes “uncoupled” and I have to wait for it to come by again.