

Standing near and walking around these sculptures, the viewer is easily captivated by their physical power yet engaged by the mystery of potential meaning or narrative.



An emotional narrative

DUTCH SCULPTOR HANNEKE BEAUMONT has earned widespread international acclaim for her mood-evocative figures in clay, iron and bronze.

Born in 1947 and raised in Maastricht, The Netherlands, she maintains an active studio practice in Brussels, yet casts her work in the famed sculpture center of Pietrasanta, Italy.

Her work is featured in public and private collections across Europe and the United States, including an enigmatic pair of bronzes, Number 25 and Number 26, in the permanent collection of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.

The history of art is largely populated by figurative sculpture, save for the last third of the 20th century when abstract and non-representational modes of expression were pursued by many sculptors.

Against this background of both recent and extended art history, Beaumont has developed a solid repertoire in recent decades for her stylized figures. Neither decidedly male nor female, and

cloaked in simple garments that are not exactly classical or contemporary, her forms are intended to suggest a widespread universal humanity.

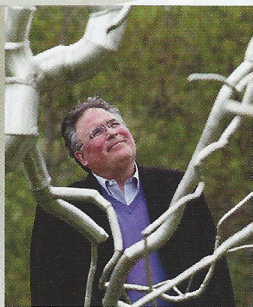
The generalized descriptions of the figures liberate the artist to focus on poses, gestures and physical attitudes that suggest broader psychological and emotional narratives.

Standing near and walking around these sculptures, the viewer is easily captivated by their physical power yet engaged by the mystery of potential meaning or narrative.

Beaumont frequently presents her figures singularly, but pairs and small groups are also encountered. Although Number 25 and Number 26 are shown together and posed opposite one another, they are considered independent works.

The artist rarely comments on her meaning or message for a given work because she wants the viewer to consider a greater depth and breadth of interpretation. Such open and limitless emotional and intellectual engagement with a work of art is one of the most memorable experiences of seeing a sculpture or painting first-hand. — **JOSEPH A. BECHERER**

art
talk



Joseph A. Becherer is curator of sculpture at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park and a professor at Aquinas College.

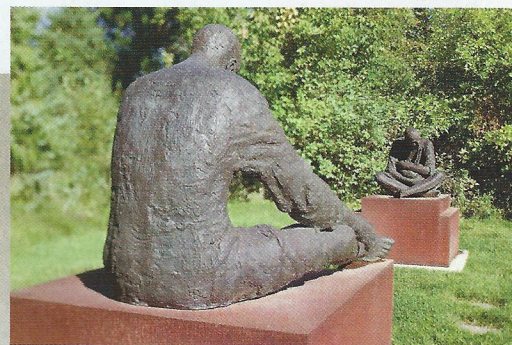
WHAT TO NOTICE ABOUT 25 & 26:

> Although Beaumont has developed a certain type of figure, stand at a distance and consider the ways in which these sculptures compare and contrast.

> Notice the differing positions of the body, particularly the head and limbs, and consider how such physical descriptions help suggest differing moods and emotions.

> Beaumont creates her works first in clay before translating them to iron or bronze. Notice how the surfaces of these two works maintain the surface and texture of the original clay.

> The sculptor has designed the bases for each figure. Notice how the simplicity and geometry of each complements the respective figures.



> After viewing the Beaumont figures, consider nearby historical masterpieces by Auguste Rodin

and Germaine Richier, for example, and consider the heritage of her work.