

Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library Public Art at Central Library

We are thrilled to bring the work of internationally-recognized artist Peter Shelton to Indianapolis. He was commissioned to create a pair of bronze sculptures for the Central Library; they will occupy the two pedestals at the front of the building, which faces St. Clair Street.

When the Central Library was built in 1917, the Library ran out of funds to put sculptures on the pedestals. With the recent renovation project, it was the ideal time to fill these long-empty spaces.

We reviewed the work of approximately 50 artists whom we thought might be good choices for the pedestals. Next, we narrowed the field to four artists of various backgrounds and paid each of them a small honorarium to develop a proposal for what they would do with the Library pedestals.

A great deal of thought was put into the selection process. *The committee agreed a contemporary work was the best fit for multiple reasons.* First, high-quality existing works from the time period of the Cret building in a matching set were not available. Second, a contemporary work would help to link the new modern addition with the historic original building. At the new Ninth Street Entry, the 19th century bronze sculpture originally commissioned for the first Library building (which was located at the corner of Meridian and Ohio) was placed above the entry for exactly the same purpose. Finally, we all agreed the art should be of the highest quality and wanted to commission an internationally renowned artist. After reviewing all of the proposals and sharing them with the architect, the group (and the architect) unanimously agreed that Peter Shelton's proposal was an ideal fit.

Shelton's proposal, entitled *thinmanlittlebird*, proposes a work for each pedestal of the library. On the left is *thinman* and on the right is *littlebird*.

The Library Foundation is covering all of the costs of the commission, thanks in large part to the generosity donors Ann and Chris Stack. Consequently, no tax dollars will be used for this commission.

We are very excited about bringing Shelton's work to Indianapolis, particularly since the Central Library holds a key downtown location. Users of the cultural trail, library visitors, as well as those visiting the War Memorial will all enjoy this exciting commission.

Indianapolis has a history of wonderful public art. However, we have few pieces of contemporary art downtown. This installation will complement the recent movement to bring new and exciting public art to visitors and residents. Additionally, this work by an exceptional, well-respected artist will help raise Indianapolis' cultural standing. The Central Library, an architectural masterpiece, deserves an extraordinary sculptor to finish the pedestals.