

thinmanlittlebird Fact Sheet

How was this project funded?

This project was made possible by the generous support of donors and the Library Foundation Board. No tax dollars were spent on public art.

Who chose the art for Central Library?

The Library asked the Library Foundation to help identify proper art for the building approximately 5 years ago. The Library Foundation asked Bret Waller, Director Emeritus of the Indianapolis Museum of Art, to chair a committee that would identify public art for the new Central Library.

His committee members include: **Kathy Nagler**, director of the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art; **David Russick**, painter and Senior Designer of Exhibitions at the Indianapolis Museum of Art; **Deborah Simon**, civic leader and art collector; **Joyce Sommers**, President and Executive Director, Indianapolis Arts Center; **Ann Stack**, civic leader, founding publisher of *Arts Indiana* magazine, art collector; and **John Thompson**, President and CEO, Thompson Distribution, former chair of the Indianapolis Museum of Art Board, collector of African art and works by African-American artists, and board member of the Studio Museum of Harlem.

Why were the pedestals empty?

When Central Library, designed by Paul Cret, originally opened in 1917, the two pedestals which flank the front steps were designed to hold sculptures. Due to budget limitations, it was decided that designing and placing works of art upon the pedestals would be delayed. William M. Taylor, a member of the board when the facility opened in 1917, stated "We are about ready to turn this new library over to the public. It will be complete in a general sense and it will be completely equipped. But I hope that the public will not come to think of this new library as entirely complete until the two great pedestals on the south side are occupied." The board hoped that a public-spirited individual would step forward to purchase statuary. However, no one could have imagined that 90 years later the sculptures would still be missing.

What was the committee's selection process? Why was contemporary art chosen?

They reviewed the work of approximately 50 artists whom they thought might be good choices for the pedestals. They then 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.

The committee felt that a contemporary work would be 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, the committee 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.

Who is Peter Shelton?

Peter Shelton lives and works in Venice, California. Born and reared in Troy, Ohio, he received his BA from Pomona College in Claremont, California in 1973 and graduated from UCLA in 1979.

Shelton's art is included in major collections in this country and abroad, among them: New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Los Angeles County Museum, the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), the Museum of Modern Art (Lodz, Poland), the Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles), the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, Museo Cantonale D'Arte (Lugano, Switzerland), and the Panza di Buimo Foundation (Italy). In 1998-99 his work was featured in two simultaneous one-man shows in Europe, one at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, the other at the Henry Moore Sculpture Trust in Halifax, England. He recently completed a major, commissioned, multi-part work for the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Is there other public art in the building?

Yes, three other public art installations exist. Visitors to the lower parking garage elevator lobby are greeted by Ed Francis of Kokomo's "Random Information Organization System." His spectacular piece creatively displays several titles from the Library's collection.

Arlon Bayliss, of Anderson, Indiana completed a magnificent piece using dichroic glass. "Light, Words, Life", located in the upper parking garage elevator lobby, features a poem written by Joyce Brinkman.

A third piece, by Tom Torluemke of Hammond, Indiana is a mural in the Indianapolis Room entitled "The Book Of Life: The people we know, the experiences we have and the conditions under which we live." The mural, inspired by *The Magnificent Ambersons* by Booth Tarkington, occupies the space above the bookshelves.