## Grace In Metalwork

## SCULPTOR JOE GITTERMAN CAPTURES FLUIDITY OF MOTION

ERENDIPITY. A sweet sounding word and, for those whose good fortune it is to experience such a fortuitous confluence of events, the end result is often life changing.

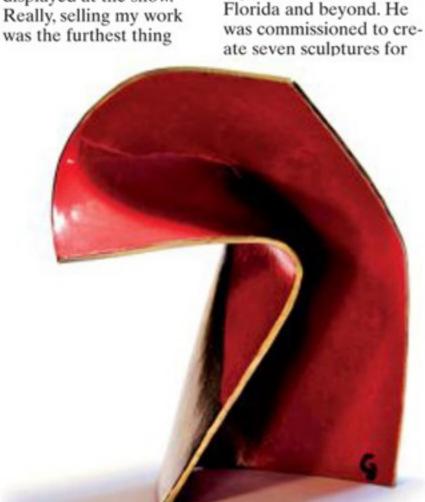
Joe Gitterman of Washington had spent almost four decades making metal sculptures, basically for himself, his family and a few close friends. He wasn't looking for fame or fortune; he just loved working in steel, bronze and other metals and capturing his vision of fluidity of motion in his sculptures. It was three years ago when fate intervened and Mr. Gitterman, now at the, ahem, mature age of 77, found himself with a whole new purpose for his art. The public has,

well, found him. "I like to say I had a 40-year hobby," says Mr. Gitterman, as he sits inside a cozy café in Washington Depot on a summer morning. "Then I had a show with painter Susan Monserud at the Behnke-Doherty Gallery in Washington Depot and all hell broke loose," he

adds with a laugh. Indeed, Mr. Gitterman's works drew instant praise from those attending the exhibit and he began to

versation at the show was that people didn't know that I was a sculptor." sell his works and receive So, okay, the word was

commissions. "I couldn't believe it," he says. "I think if I wanted it to happen it wouldn't. Yes, it was serendipitous that I displayed at the show. Really, selling my work



from my mind. The one common thread of conout and Mr. Gitterman, who formerly worked on Wall Street, quickly came into demand. He pieces are in collections ranging from Connecticut to

Above, Joe Gitterman of Washington framed by one of his sculptures. Left, "Movement 5"; contributed photograph.

16 LCT August 2014 the Royal Sonesta Hotel

in Houston, Texas. "They have a wall entrance and there were eight-foot-square niches that they wanted to fill

with art, so they commis-

spaces with seven-foot-tall

fall pieces. They are made

sioned me to fill those

of mirrored stainless steel." Mr. Gitterman, who works in a modest studio in his home, is most proud of being asked to display at the Governor's Sculpture Park in Hartford. One of two "Couple" sculptures, made of stainless steel on a bending-rolling machine from a copper maquette (model), is located in the park, which also features a number of Connecticut artists, including former

owner Arthur Carter. The surface of the 90-inch-tall sculpture (the other "Couple" is in a garden at a private home in Vineyard Haven, Mass.), was burnished

Litchfield County Times

with an abstract finish to heighten texture and produce a mild reflective quality. The two elements of the sculpture may at times touch each other in the wind, producing a pleasant sound. "It was such an honor

to be asked to display at the Governor's Sculpture Park," he says with a smile. "It's a beautiful exhibit

and the public can take tours of the park, the only one of its kind in the United States, covering 4.5 acres. To be included among such great Connecticut artists is a joy I didn't expect." Mr. Gitterman, who

dabbled at art as a child and then took evening classes in New York City to fine tune his knowledge of his craft, says he has been greatly influenced by the human body, specifically the shapes, gestures, and momentary poses created by dancers. Through observation and sketches, he conceives a

visual image of a motion and attempts to infuse that motion into threedimensional materials. The special properties inherent in each of the materials he works withmarble, plaster, clay, copper, sheet metal, wax, bronze, aluminum and mirrored stainless steelguide him in creating the shape, balance and potential energy that makes each sculpture visually and spatially engaging.

In addition to working on studio-size sculptures that are easily accessible for gallery exhibitions

creates new sculptures in a variety of sizes, materials, finishes and colors for both indoor and outdoor installation. These works can be customized to meet specific site location needs or preferences of individual and institutional collectors. In each case, the sculp-

ture he makes is a unique, individual work of art. For larger pieces, Mr. Gitterman designs a small sculpture and then has it cast by a fabricator and the work's exterior refinished. His sculptures, naturally,







on a piece; photograph by Laurie Gaboardi.



to the surrounding environment and the viewer. (models) for the works being partially powder coated. The pieces in his free hand, from antique copper sheets. In his wax, then cast in bronze, around the wax image that has had wax "pipes" added to it so that when the wax is melted away



space and thus replicate the wax image in bronze). Four of the series were finished with a patina, then hand rubbed with wax.

molten bronze can be

poured into the created

The others were machine polished and coated with polyurethane to ensure they retained their luster. Some of the sculptures have shadow areas highlighted with black paint. Mr. Gitterman, a shock of finely groomed white hair the only hint as to

his real age, and his wife, Joanne (in the theater in New York City for a

portive") have lived in Washington for the past 18 years. The couple has three children and five grandchildren. One son, Paul, is a therapist, Tom owns an art gallery and daughter, Vicky, is an art therapist, all of which has made the Gittermans pleased and fulfilled. "We joke with Vicky that she combined the two boys' careers into

number of years, whom

he says is "critically sup-

one," says Mr. Gitterman, who often spent weekends with his family in Litchfield County during





18 LCT August 2014

lovely place, surrounded by so many talented people. We love it here." He says he has been influenced by many sculptors during his career. "I admire Constantin Brancusi and Henry

Moore and also a number of contemporary artists. I enjoy the work of today's sculptors as much as I do the classics." His works range in price from around \$1,000 for smaller pieces to "tens of thousands" for larger sculptures. "It all sounds

great, but my agent gets a third, the fabricator a third and I get a third." He is represented by Harrison Gallery in Williamstown, Mass., where some of his works are on display, Art and Interiors

of Westport, Corman Arts of London, England, JSO Art Associates of Westport, and Soho Myriad Art Consulting Services of Atlanta, Ga., Los Angles and London. Unwilling to rest on his laurels and churn out

pieces for commission, Mr. Gitterman looks like a young boy with a glint in his eye when he speaks of his next venture. "I'm starting to work with acrylic resins, which is completely new for me." It might have taken Joe

artistic ventures anytime soon, even as he approach-

es the magic "eight-o."



THE LITCHFIELD COUNTY TIMES MONTHLY 19