



PRESS RELEASE

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**Exhibition Title:** *Harry Geffert – A Place Beside the Road*

Exhibition Dates: October 14 – December 16, 2023

**Opening reception: Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 5 – 8 pm**

Conversation with Harry Geffert's partner, artist Linda Ridgway, and Sara-Jayne Parsons, Director & Curator of The Art Galleries at TCU: Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 4pm



Harry Geffert (1934-2017)

*Kingdom* (detail), 1996

cast bronze with patina

134h x 59w x 43d in

Cris Worley Fine Arts is proud to present *Harry Geffert: A Place Beside the Road*, a retrospective celebrating the early narrative work of legendary artist and bronze master Harry Geffert (1934 – 2017). This retrospective exhibition features several of Geffert's monumental sculptures from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, many of which dotted the landscape of his home, studio, and classroom, The Green Mountain Foundry in Crowley, Texas.

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The largest allegorical sculptures in *A Place Beside the Road* once melted into the Texas countryside, with the trees, grass, and foliage setting the scene for each fantastical tableau. Unlike later bodies of Geffert's work, humankind plays a prominent role in this period, tripping down and traipsing around each bronze-cast scene, grappling with nature, and adding a sense of folly as many great mythologies do. Surrealistic symbolism is rampant throughout the work, featuring animals, agriculture, broken eggs, pitchforks, and Geffert's iconic cast water and delicate foliage.

For example, in *Kingdom* (1996) a large bare tree sprouts from the top of a globe balanced on a rocky landscape. While a group of people descend tenuously from the branches, animals and humans sit in harmony at the base in a Garden of Eden-like display. While many artists would have long-written soliloquies prepared to explain every symbol, the full interpretation of this fable is private and purposefully withheld. Ever the teacher, Geffert requires his viewers to untangle the scene in front of them and slowly unearth the narrative of the piece.

The Green Mountain Foundry, the original home to these sculptures, was an artwork in and of itself -- entirely built by Geffert's hand. It was a site of immeasurable creation as Geffert used his incomparable skills casting the most delicate and ephemeral of forms in molten bronze to teach and collaborate with many other Texas greats like Frances Bagley, Clyde Connell, Joseph Havel, Lucas Johnson, Ken Little, Linda Ridgway, James Surls, Vernon Fisher, and Virgil Grotfeldt. The magic created onsite through Geffert's artistry, his adoration of the natural world, and his collaborative spirit seeps through every piece that was once part of the land. While the property is gone, the dignity and gravitas of the space remain with these extraordinary works in bronze.

Over six decades, Harry made an indelible impression on the artistic landscape of the Southwest through his work as an artist and educator. Each work that he brought to life was imbued with the humor, intelligence, and joy that he felt in embracing the complexities of casting in his studio. For Harry, there was no greater pleasure than bringing an idea into 3-dimensions. His essence as a sculptor is represented by his description of a series of wooden figures he whittled as a child, "I just had to do them, you know? I had to get that pocketknife blade open and do them, that was important; other than that, who cares?" This ceaseless drive to create would call Harry into his studio up until the day he passed.

Harry Geffert was born in Live Oak County, Texas in 1934. He received his Bachelor of Science from Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos and his Master of Arts from New Mexico Highlands University in 1961. He spearheaded the Sculpture Department at Texas Christian University in 1962 where taught for twenty-seven years. In 1980, he established The Green Mountain Foundry, where his guidance and knowledge were sought after by artists across the country.

He was awarded the Mitchell W. Wilder Merit Citation for Excellence in Publication and Media Design in 1983 for a video installation on a bronze casting in collaboration with the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth. Harry went on to receive a Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1990, and in that same year, presented a solo exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Art. He was bestowed with a Legend Award from The Dallas Visual Arts Center in 1998. In 1999, Geffert closed the foundry to the public to focus solely on his own artistic interests.

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