

# News Bulletin

November/December 2012



**George R. Anthonisen, FNSS**  
**Sculptor Profile**

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"My work combines our ancient roots with our recent past, giving validity to the present," states George Anthonisen. The Bucks County Pennsylvania artist's works are included in the permanent collections of the U. S. Capitol, Capitol Visitors Center; World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland; New York's Carnegie Hall; The James A. Michener Art Museum, Doylestown, PA; Berman Museum of Art, Collegeville, PA; Center for Interfaith Relations, Louisville, KY; in Philadelphia at Please Touch Museum, Curtis Institute of Music, Woodmere Art Museum; University of Alaska at Fairbanks and more than two dozen other sites. Select honors Anthonisen has earned over the years include: U.S Department of the Interior Fellowship for first Sculptor-in Residence, Augustus Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site (1971); Exemplary Achievement in the Arts Award, Bucks County Chamber of Commerce (1985); and an Honorary Degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA (2009). Anthonisen has exhibited in group and solo shows throughout the United States and was elected Fellow of National Sculpture Society in 1973.

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## **Pages 17-18: Associate Profile: *Susan Geissler***

Susan Geissler is a full-time working artist with a studio overlooking the Niagara River in the village of Youngstown, NY . Over the last few years, she has placed some 30 pieces of public art or monumental sculpture throughout the United States and Canada. She is also currently participating in five sculpture-on-loan programs in various communities nationwide.

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**Cover Image**

*Aspiration*

George R. Anthonisen, FNSS

Bronze

35" x 30" x 29"

Photo credit: John Hoenstine

**Below Image**

*Untitled*

George R. Anthonisen, FNSS

Plaster

15" x 15" x 6"

Photo credit: Carla M. Klouda

# George Anthonisen

## Sculptor Profile

### Your parents were psychoanalysts. How did their work impact your career?

A given is the persistence of looking for the truth within oneself and within others. Growing up in their home taught me to try and find out how things are, not how they seem. A person represents one image, but may, in fact, be oriented to a totally different set of values. Making sculpture involves seeking the truth and that means to get the right gesture, to understand a vocabulary through gesture and look.

### It wasn't until after college that you decided upon a career in sculpture. Why was that? What steps did you take to pursue one?

After serving in the army, I made the decision to pursue college and in my junior year at the University of Vermont, I signed up for a sculpture course. I learned that my thoughts could be immediately translated in clay through my hands. I intuitively understood that this was something I could do if I worked hard at it.

Paul Aschenbach (abstract sculptor and my sculpture professor) recommended that I move to New York and study the figure at the National Academy of Design. I studied the figure for four years; two at the Academy and two at Art Students League; subsequently, I had the privilege of studying a cadaver at Dartmouth Medical School.

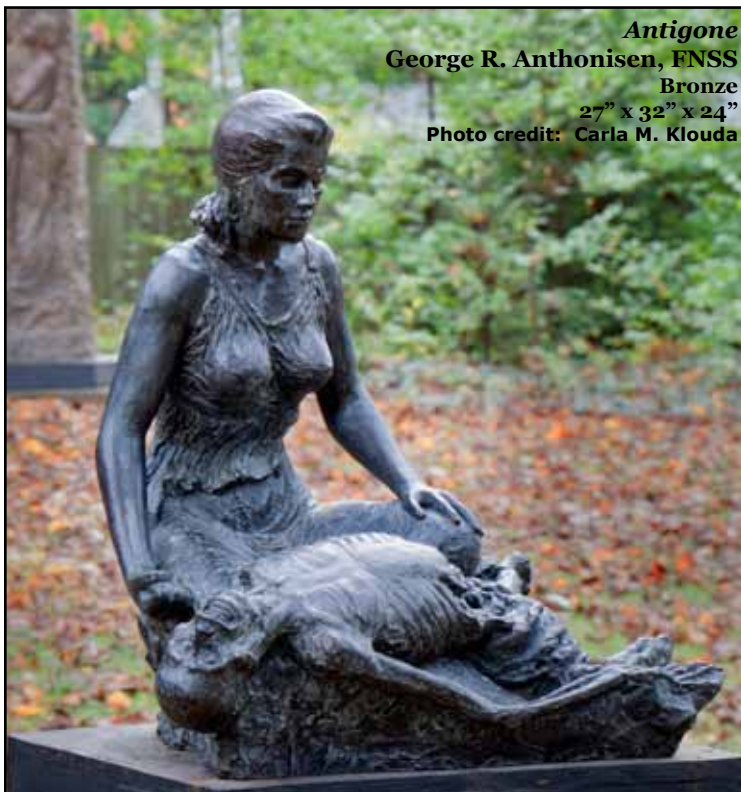
### Please discuss the role "family" plays in your work.

In my work with the family, in sculpture and fresco, I have extended the sense of the constructive and destructive values of a human being. First, there was my family; then, my family in relationship to my wife and our children; from that, my work evolved to concern for the entire human family.



Photo credit: Carla M. Klouda

**Creation**  
George R. Anthonisen, FNSS  
Bronze  
23" x 24" x 14"



**Antigone**  
George R. Anthonisen, FNSS  
Bronze  
27" x 32" x 24"  
Photo credit: Carla M. Klouda

The message I try to convey is the concept of family — the entire human family. I try to promote understanding and tolerance through my work. At the same time, I am looking within myself to explore mysteries — to the find out why we are, why we have prejudices, and what factors make for security and insecurity.

### Who are your favorite artists and why?

Michelangelo, Rodin, Saint Gaudens, Maillol, Lehmbruck, Goya, and Rembrandt. They are able to put their egos aside in behalf of their talents and had the strength not only to perceive the truth but to put it down.

### What sculpture do you feel is the single-most perfect piece of work and why?

Michelangelo's *Medici Madonna* is a sculpture that I was drawn to early in my career and one that never ceases to move me profoundly. A loving composition between a mother and baby, the work is the epitome of the concept of love between two human beings. Its overall structure is simple and direct; it lacks unnecessary ornamentation. There is a grace and rhythm and sensitivity in the

“The more I study who we are, the more mysterious we become. At seventy-six, I have more ideas than I know I will be able to complete in my lifetime. No matter how advanced we are technologically, we remain human beings adapting and changing to the environment. Art helps us understand ourselves and our fellow humans. //”



*Rising*  
George R. Anthonisen, FNSS  
Bronze  
32" x 48" x 21"  
Photo credit: John Hoenstine

“**F**igurative sculpture is a reflection of our own image. It tells the story of the past, the present and will tell the story of the future. Because we are curious and interested in ourselves, the future of figurative sculpture remains solid. //”

*I Set Before You This Day*  
George R. Anthonisen, FNSS  
Bronze  
37" x 29" x 48"  
Photo credit: John Hoenstine





*Meditation*  
George R. Anthonisen, FNSS  
Bronze  
79" x 28" x 18"

hands and in the whole gesture as well as the movement of the garments from top to bottom. There is an unfinished aspect to it that gives a sense of the emergent so that I never lose track of the fact that this was carved and that the carver is a breath of air away from his creation. The ultimate profundity in the work is the gaze of the Virgin mother who understands the beauty of the present and the inevitability of the end of human life.

### **What do you hope people see in your work?**

A sculpture or painting is worthless unless it says something to somebody. My hope is that viewers do not simply recognize an image but are moved by the work, returning to view it from time to time. I hope people can relate to the ideas that I put before them and find the rendering of the ideas satisfying. I would like to believe viewers see and feel the truth in a work. If that works, my hope is that viewers carry with them their own interpretation and feeling from what I created.

### **You have an interesting bond with Ursinus College which is located in neighboring Collegeville, Pennsylvania. Please discuss that.**

I have enjoyed a long-time and most satisfying relationship with the Ursinus College that began twenty years ago as a result of my first solo museum exhibition at the Woodmere Art Museum in Philadelphia. I met Lisa Tremper Hanover, who until July of this year was the dynamic, effective and full of fun director of The Berman Museum at Ursinus College. The result of our meeting was a one person exhibition four years later (1996).

Aside from friendships formed at that time, the exhibition resulted in the Ursinus alumni of 1941-1949 commissioning a World War II Memorial for the school grounds. The memorial, *Promise/Anthem*, consists of two 6' x 8' reliefs, and is installed in the college's student

center. Currently, there are seven of my works and three Lynn Chadwick sculptures permanently installed on the new Berman Foundation Sculpture Terrace. There are three more bronzes on campus to be installed within the year.

My wife, Ellen, and I have experienced first-hand how The Berman Museum works with Ursinus students and are impressed with the education program that truly cares for art and works diligently toward enriching the student, staff and administrative community. As a result, upon our deaths, we will bequeath my remaining bronzes plus frescos, rubbings, drawings and archival materials to the College to be permanently stored in the "Anthonisen Archives."

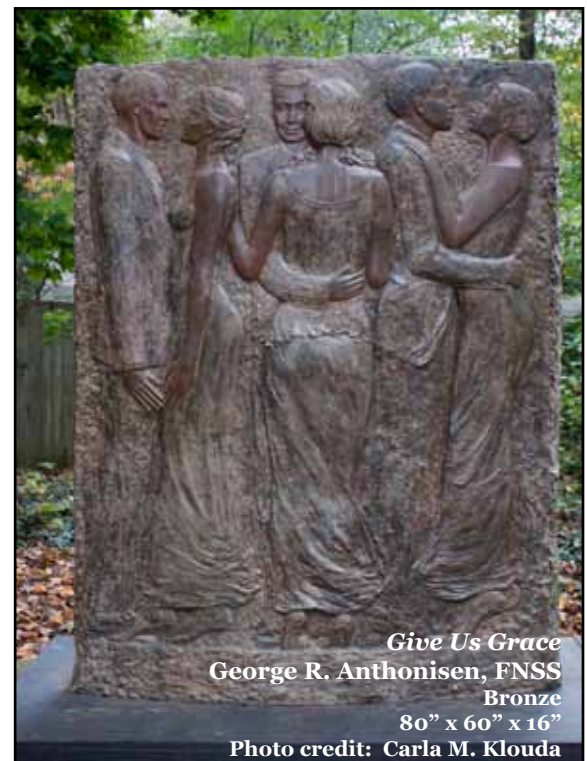
### **What are you working on now?**

I recently completed a seated nude, the first in a series of three. Simultaneously, I am working on the second figure. At the same time, I am working on a planned series of drawings of the nude, twelve drawings in each series. I am about to start the second group.

Throughout my career, the split in our society between the profane and virginal woman has been disturbing to me. I work on the concept of embodying the whole female person: intelligent, sensual and vigorous, with a full range of feelings.

### **What advice do you have for young sculptors beginning a career?**

Follow your passion, persist and people will notice. Making sculpture goes back to building a world of values. Within one piece, there is a structure of values; a body of work is a network of values. A work must be harmonious not just within itself, but also to a body of existing work. What I figured out for myself is that if I am working at least eight hours a day, I better be interested in the ideas with which I am working.



*Give Us Grace*  
George R. Anthonisen, FNSS  
Bronze  
80" x 60" x 16"  
Photo credit: Carla M. Klouda