

## **Bodark Arc 1982**

Martin Puryear (American, b. 1941)

earth, wood, Osage orange trees, asphalt, stones,  
cast bronze

Commissioned by the Nathan Manilow Sculpture  
Park, GSU Foundation

Collection of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park  
1982.02

**Bodark Arc** is an example of Land Art, so large it can be fully appreciated only by viewing from the air. Another example of this approach to sculpture can be found in Mary Miss's **Field Rotation**, also in the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park.

As a youth in Washington, DC, Puryear developed his interest in craft by creating guitars, bows and arrows, and other objects of interest. He spent time in Sierra Leone during a stint in the Peace Corps and earned an MFA from Yale University. He also attended the Swedish Academy of Design. He has created both installation artwork and discrete objects during his distinguished career.

In **Bodark Arc**, Puryear orchestrates landscape and scale along with personal and cultural references to offer a retreat from our daily activity.

The landscape sized work reveals itself slowly, piece by piece:

- The meadow is bordered to the north by a line of Osage orange trees. French *voyageurs* named the wood "*bois d'arc*" (wood of the bow) because of its use by Native American Indians for their hunting bows. Anglo settlers shortened the word to 'bodark.' This arcade of trees forms the "string" for the 400 foot diameter asphalt and wooden arc that creates a monumental "bow."
- A gate, topped by a crescent of steamed wood, bisects the arc and heads an asphalt path that leads to a small, cast bronze chair.
- The chair's design is based upon a West African elder's throne. Seated here, a visitor might find a moment of quiet reflection.