

## **Oscar's Inclination 2003**

Michael Dunbar (American, b. 1947)

welded and painted steel

Gift of Dr. Christopher Graf

Collection of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park

2004.01

Michael Dunbar lives and works in Springfield, Illinois. After earning his B.A. from Illinois State University, he returned to graduate school and obtained a master's degree in Community Arts Management.

**Oscar's Inclination** is a transitional piece for the artist. Until the early 2000s Dunbar's 'palette' of form consisted of angular elements that emphasized mass and visual weight. With **Oscar's Inclination**, Dunbar 'broke through' to a mature style which incorporates fully articulated curves and begins to value balance and movement over earlier concerns with mass.

Dunbar's sculpture titles are often tied to music, from which he believes they receive their "sense of implied animation." **Oscar's Inclination** reflects Dunbar's enthusiasm for jazz and particularly the music of the legendary pianist Oscar Peterson.

Of this recent work, the artist has said, "*Threading through [the] work are the parts of clocks, armillary spheres, astrolabes, sextants, compasses, transits, and other mechanical instruments used to measure time, distance, and space.*" The reference to solar-oriented measuring devices is clearly evident to any visitor who happens upon the piece on a sunny afternoon.

Artists who work at a monumental scale often create models of their sculptures in order to identify technical problems before they arise during fabrication of the finished piece. The Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park owns a *maquette*, or model, of **Oscar's Inclination** which effectively demonstrates the artist's vision for this final version. It is on permanent view in the atrium of the Faculty Office Center (G-Wing).