

**Butte 1979**

**Barry Tinsley**

(American 1942)

painted steel

Gift of the Art Enterprises, Ltd. in memory of  
Burton and Naomi Kanter

Barry Tinsley experienced an “epiphany” as a junior majoring in physics at the College of William and Mary. Stepping into an Art History class he discovered a world in which he knew he was meant to participate. He found his way to sculpture and never looked back.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a fertile period for contemporary, abstract sculpture in the Chicago area. Richard Hunt, Jerry Peart, John Henry, John Chamberlain, Steve Urry, and Mark diSvero were all finding time to make art in the region. Tinsley, who by this time had earned an M.F.A. at the University of Iowa was teaching at Illinois State University in Bloomington. He was included the 1975 landmark exhibition “Sculpture for a New Era” presented at the Federal Plaza in downtown Chicago.

As fate would have it, the selection committee for a large corporation viewed the presentation and commissioned a work. He left teaching and turned to sculpture full-time. Barry Tinsley has completed numerous private and public commissions including a number with the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois Capital Development Board’s Percent for Art programs.

As might be expected, Butte was the result of Tinsley’s travel to the Southwest U.S., Returning to his studio in Chicago, he reflected on the visually striking geology as he experimented with cardboard forms. These three-dimensional “doodles” led him to develop a several sculptures which, through mass, line, and form, expressed ideas and responses to the “gesture” of the forms upon which their titles are based. With Butte, Tinsley seems to turn geology inside-out. The interior, negative, space might reflect the silhouette of a butte while the steel structure implies its columnar geology.

Barry Tinsley lives and has a studio near New Carlisle, Indiana.