

Sextant Yoke 2000

Mike Baur (American, b. 1951)

cast concrete, steel

Gift of Lila Hensley in memory of Dr. James Harvey Hensley, Community Professor 1981-2001
Collection of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park
2007.01

Mike Baur completed his BFA in sculpture after the loss of his studio to a tornado during his senior year at Arkansas State University. He continued his education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, completing an MFA in 1976. The artist lives in West Chicago, Illinois. Collecting materials from a variety of sources, Baur creates sculpture at a wide variety of scale, from table top to monumental.

Sextant Yoke reflects Mike Baur's interest in using materials which show evidence of their history, not only in the rough-hewn and hardscrabble edges that characterize the concrete he often employs, but the manner in which his sculpture proudly displays its slow decay. That the work is reminiscent of an artifact, "*. . . things no longer intact and functional, that were pulled up, dug out of the ground,*" is intended.

Often his objects are deceptively simple, pared to a formal essence that carefully balances hand-wrought and machined form. Nothing is withheld from the viewer. Baur's work is a straightforward orchestration of shapes, texture, age, and subtle coloration. He asks the viewer to observe and appreciate it as such.

The title, **Sextant Yoke**, directs attention to its association with astronomical measuring devices. A sextant is a measuring device with which mariners find their position on the ocean. The sculpture's soaring steel beam was coaxed into its present form by the artist's use of a cold bending process. The cast concrete pedestal demonstrates Baur's attention to detail with its trapezoidal shape, layered surface texture, and spatial penetrations, which reveal interior details and diminish as a viewer circles the piece.