

Mock II, V-Form 1976

John Payne (American, 1929-2004)

painted steel

Loan courtesy of the artist's estate

John Payne's career in the arts spanned four decades and dealt with a broad variety of issues in visual language. A 1959 graduate of Beloit College, he continued his education, earning an MS in Graphics, Painting, and Art History and eventually an MFA in Sculpture Research and 3-D Design from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he studied with Arne Jacobsen, a noted Finnish Urban Designer. After attaining the rank of Associate Professor of Sculpture at Western Illinois University, he was offered and accepted a position at Governors State University, where he remained as the Visual Arts Program Coordinator until his retirement in 2002.

Payne monitored the progress of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park's development even as he established the sculpture program at the school. He proposed, designed, and oversaw the construction of a foundry capable of casting molten bronze.

This provided his students with a window on an ancient medium which continues to be used by artists throughout the world.

"The mind hungers. People need art, just like they need the sun. Without art, the world would be an ugly, gray place," was his appeal to students as he urged them to continue with their work.

Mock II, V-Form is an enigmatic work which appears deliberately unfinished, as if the artist is asking the viewer to complete his thought. Its color scheme – bright orange contrasted with gray and black, conveys an impression of construction underway.