

The Washington Post

# Style

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2011

**“He was gnarled and sinewy ... and his tempestuous temperament made him seem to be boiling over.”** Book World, **C4**

#### GALLERIES

##### **Industrial-age sensibility**

Paul Martin Wolff's metal abstractions manage to look substantial yet ethereal, with many pieces suggesting motion.

**C8**

#### THE RELIABLE SOURCE

##### **A headliner in her own right** ▶▶

Meghan McCain delivers for a Newseum audience. **C2**

#### MUSIC

##### **Ivan Fischer's melodic return**

The former NSO conductor does well by Bartok. **C5**



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# GALLERIES

## Heavy metal in motion

### Movement is part of industrial-age pieces in 'Shining Stars'

BY MARK JENKINS

**S**leek yet substantial, abstract metal sculptures have a sense of power and accomplishment. These things are made, after all, with industrial tools and substances. The five artists included in "Shining Stars," the Zenith Gallery-curated exhibition at the Gallery at 1111 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, work in different materials and at various scales, yet share industrial-age skills and sensibilities.

The show ranges from the tabletop-size abstractions of Paul Martin Wolff, a local lawyer whose work is also on display at Heurich Gallery, to Barton Rubenstein's massive stainless-steel sculptures, which are designed for the outdoors. If the most static of his pieces, "Screen (Fountain)," seems incomplete, it's because it's supposed to include running water.

There are also four mixed-media wall pieces by Joan Konkel, anchored to painted canvases or stark aluminum panels; she sometimes breaks their rectangular planes by hanging strips of canvas or mesh ruffles from them.

Metal can't dangle like fabric, but many of these pieces suggest motion. Wolff renders soft curves with such hard materials as bronze and acrylic, and he gives them such titles as "Dancer." His most intriguing piece here, "The Wave," is made of slightly translucent black glass that, like dark water, offers a limited view of what's beneath the surface. Alluding to the ocean in a different way, two of Julie Giardini's steel, bronze and copper pieces take boatlike forms.

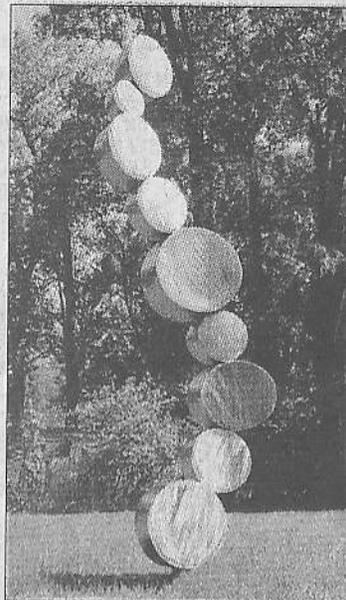
Some of the steel sculptures taunt gravity. Rubenstein's "Wave Roller" stacks circles and slashes

to evoke a swell that's about break onshore, and his "Breathe" is a pileup of metal lozenges that spirals 8½ feet in the air. David Hubbard's contributions include "Monument to Up," which places a chevron atop a sphere atop a rounded pyramid, and "Ascension Model," in which squiggles of seemingly floating steel are joined by three curved rods. It's not quite an illusion, since the rods are visible, as much as an expression of strength. When artists command metal to hover in space, even the airiest of sculptures is a show of force.

#### Clyde Fowler

One of the purported goals of post-painterly abstraction was to eliminate the surface: Pigment and canvas would become one. Some 50 years later, abstract painters are emphasizing the skin of their work, using glazes, resins and other materials to create a topside sheen. Clyde Fowler, whose "Pictorial Choreography" is showing at Long View Gallery, blends diamond dust into oil paint to add a subtle sparkle to pictures on canvas and paper.

Fowler arrays blurry-edged blocks of color with smaller



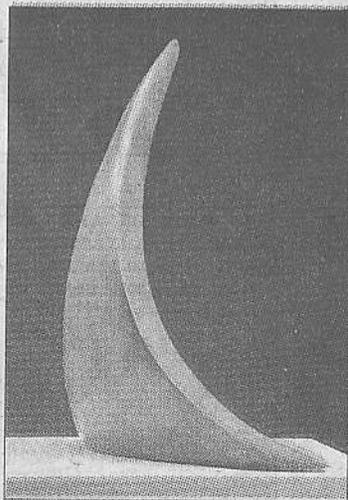
COURTESY OF BARTON RUBENSTEIN/  
ZENITH GALLERY

#### 'BREATHE': Barton Rubenstein's stainless-steel work spirals 8½ feet in the air.

shapes and occasional lines, evoking early-20th-century abstraction and sometimes Paul Klee. The colors are mostly muted, with lots of gray and tan, although the artist occasionally interjects a hot shade of orange. He generally uses a vertical format, perhaps to prevent his paintings from being seen as landscapes. (One untitled work, part of a suite of nine, nonetheless does: Its glimmer of yellow on a field of dark reds and near-blacks suggests light in the distance.) The paintings on canvas are more heavily worked, with some scratching of the paint; the ones on paper are more serene and, in some ways, more appealing. But both glisten alluringly, their surfaces attracting attention to their depths.

#### Friederike Brandenburg

At one time, painters traveled into remote areas to capture scenes of untrammelled wilderness; after the technology developed, photographers did the



COURTESY OF PAUL MARTIN WOLFF/  
ZENITH GALLERY

#### 'THE WAVE': Paul Martin Wolff sees softness in bronze.