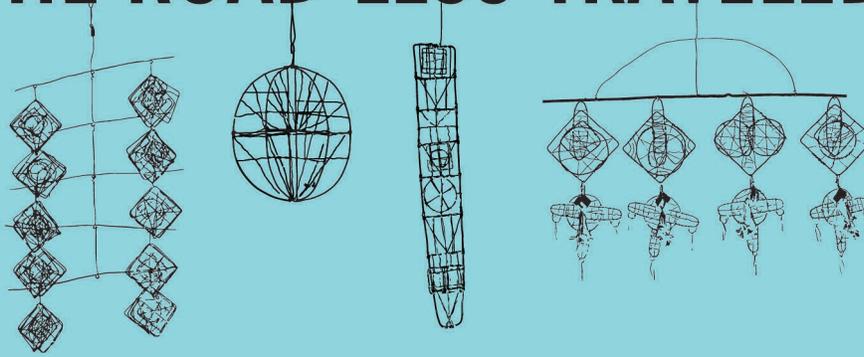


# THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED



Sheboygan, WI September 27-29, 2017

DESCRIBE HOW THE PROJECT ACHIEVED OR DID NOT ACHIEVE EACH OF THE PROJECTED OUTCOMES.

## CONCRETE CONSERVATION

Summer 2017

Cleaning and repair of the *Tower of Faces*, which I located next to the east face of the garage. The sculpture was treated for structural cracks as well as cosmetic repairs to the surface texture.

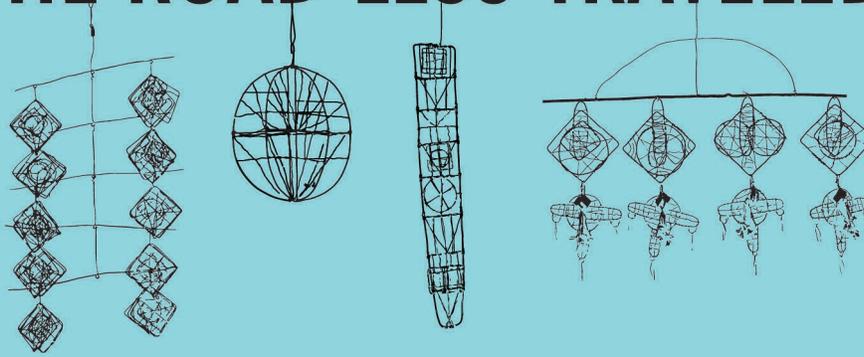
The reinstallation of the two sculptures taken to Chicago for conservation work was finished. The larger, cylindrical figure that sits outside the west window of the kitchen had a new footing poured prior to reinstallation. The smaller head, which sits in front of the south face of the doghouse, was installed on a pipe set into the ground. (See conservation reports for further details.)

A new footing was poured for *Man with Hat*, closest to the southeast corner of the property. The hexagonal base of the figure was reconstructed after the main figure was set into the new footing.

It was discovered the *Dinodog* had been struck by a vehicle at some point during the renovation, which resulted in the breaking off of the arms of the sculpture as well as a major crack through the neck area of the surface concrete. The sculpture had no footing, so when it was struck by the vehicle it was rocked out of its original location. A five-foot-deep footing was dug and poured to receive the sculpture. A comprehensive conservation overhaul was done on the piece with the arms being reattached and the neck crack being repaired.

Work was begun on *Pompeii*, located in the west yard, but halted due to numerous larger challenges uncovered during the work. In the excavation around the basin's edge, a hose hookup was found. It was determined that the plumbing was still functional. The sculpture is surrounded by three large Norwegian spruce trees. The trees had grown a great deal in the time since Mary built the sculpture, and the root structures had begun to crush the foundation of the sculpture. An arborist from Hoppe Tree Service was brought in to assess the trees. He submitted a report to JMKAC in September or 2017. Due to roots and discovery of the fountain aspect, work was halted and a reassessment of needs made. The new needs were included in the 2018 RFP, with *Pompeii* being a high priority project.

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CSOS also biocleaned numerous sculptures which had collected a significant amount of algae growth over the previous seasons.

Prior to finishing work for the season, CSOS conservators did a walk-through of the site with Alex Gartelmann to develop a conservation priority list. This list was used in the RFP process for work being done in 2018 and in the future.

A consultant, Don Howlett, was brought in to do a second walk-through and assessment of the site. He also gave a biocide cleaning training to Alex Gartelmann, who will train additional JMKAC staff in the process as an effort towards a more sustainable stewardship of the site.

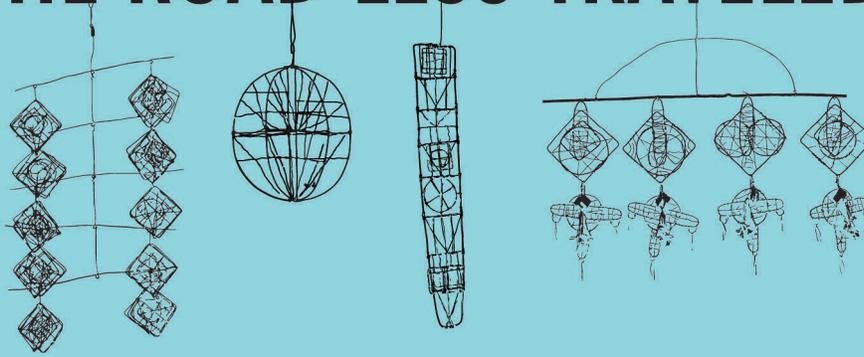
Summer/Fall 2018

The two relocated sculptures (*Seated Couple*, *Reclining Figure*) are being reset this fall. New footings have been excavated and are in the process of being poured. The sculptures will be permanently resettled by the end of the fall. Both sculptures received comprehensive cleaning with steam and biocide. Additionally, the bases of the two sculptures received consolidation work. Loose stones were readhered and gaps in mortar were filled to solidify the base areas of the sculptures prior to their installation on the new footings.

The large tower in the east section of the yard (*Palace*) has had problems with drainage since its conservation overhaul in the summer of 2016. The basin currently has a single drain point (installed by Mary Nohl) in its center, however, several additional low spots were identified in the basin which collect and hold water and natural materials. Due to the challenge of access to these points with equipment, as well as the delicate nature of the construction method used to build the tower component of the sculpture, it was decided to remove the low spots by additive process. Flat stones matching the existing stones in the basin were gathered and will be adhered into the low spots, tapering the basin bottom to the central drainage point. This will eliminate the areas of collection, reducing damage from standing water as well as ice during the winter.

Both sculptures that were removed from the site for conservation work were conserved in the CSOS studio in Chicago and reinstalled in their original location in September 2017.

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The gate columns at the site's entrance are under conservation this fall. The columns will be lifted out using sling cradles with a crane by CSOS. Five-foot-deep footings can be poured to stabilize the columns. Once the footings are set, the columns will be set back in place and leveled out. In addition, corroding ferrous elements (carriage bolts from an earlier gate iteration and conduit from the original illuminated globes) were removed from the columns to arrest further structural degradation to the mortar and stone structure.

## HOUSE CONSERVATION

The exterior paint surface of the house was reproduced working from photographs over the summer of 2017.

Twenty-one exterior wood art reproductions have been finished. There are twenty-two exterior wood art components mounted to the house with documented KFI numbers that remain to be reproduced.

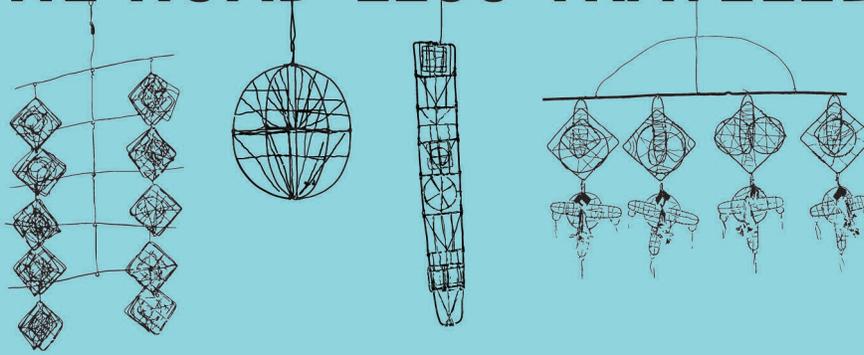
In addition to the twenty-two remaining KFI numbered pieces, there are five exterior wood art components without documentation that are mounted to the south face of the second floor bathroom. These components need to be accounted for and sorted.

There are five-foot pebble-mosaic pieces that mount to the exterior of the house. Three of these (KFI 54, 55, 56) are on the east face of the garage. All three are in poor condition and need reproduction. The originals need conservation work to stabilize the stones and consolidate the paint surfaces. The other two mosaics are in better condition, but should also be reproduced and conserved due to the fragile nature of Mary's construction method and material choices.

There are five driftwood sculptures that mount to the exterior of the house. Four of the five are in moderate condition and require conservation work to consolidate the paint surfaces. KFI 66 is in poor condition. It is the largest of the driftwood figures and has substantial degradation to the bottom portions of the backing panel. This piece needs extensive conservation work to stabilize the degrading wood materials and consolidate paint surfaces. A plan for reproduction or replica should be considered for this piece.

The doghouse has Mary's original paint treatment on it. The paint is in poor condition with extensive cracking and delamination occurring over the majority of the structure. A

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conservation consultation needs to take place to determine a process for treating the surface of the structure. Additionally, there are five exterior wood art elements that mount to the doghouse. All five of these require reproduction.

The first floor interior of the house was repainted where cracks in the walls had been repaired, requiring the removal of Mary's hand. The east facing wall of the living room was completely rebuilt. Using some remaining original pieces of material from the wall, paint colors were matched and the wall repainted using Mary's method of texture painting via carpet.

The ceilings in the foyer and dining room were completely replaced. Working from photographs to locate areas with matching paint colors, small sections of wall were removed to match colors.

There was a large area of the kitchen ceiling that required repair. Using the same method of color matching and paint application, this area was in-painted.

Repairs to wall areas in the foyer and dining room required in-painting, again using Mary's method of applying paint with small sections of carpet. Again, small areas of wall were removed to match colors.

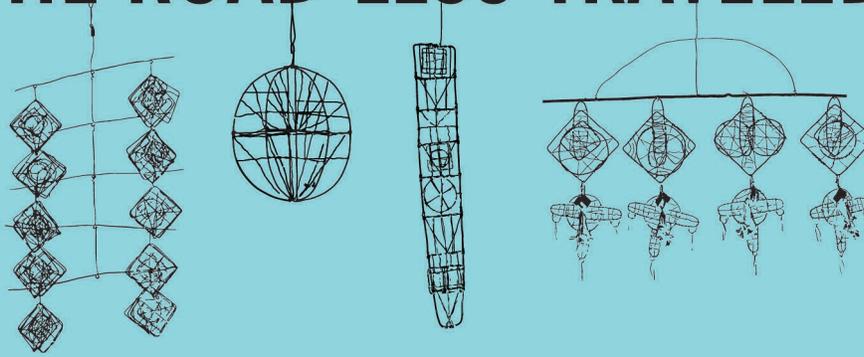
The stairwell and second floor landing also had extensive repairs made to the walls and ceiling area, which required the same method of paint matching and in-painting.

Furniture and artwork from the living room were returned in August 2017 and reinstalled in the room referencing photographs from the JMKAC archive.

Images have been identified in the archive for object selections by curatorial staff, for return to the house and installation in spring 2019. Working with the registrars, the objects in the photographs have begun to be identified and located in JMKAC's collections storage.

**DELINEATE ANY PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED, UNEXPECTED BENEFITS, OR LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE TERM OF THE GRANT.**

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The apparent quickness of Mary's processes and choice of inexpensive materials presents problems unique to each area of work being done, and within that to each individual artwork. Many of the concrete sculptures have very sandy and soft mortar around stones that build the main forms. While this proves challenging for the conservation work, it gives the benefit of a broader insight into Mary's working methods and her logic in construction and engineering. With many of the concrete works, she seems to have roughed out the forms with larger stones and sandy mortar and then applied a 'hard coat' of cement over the top of the forms, which she ultimately sculpted to give detail in each work.

In the exterior wood artworks, we have discovered that many of the Masonite backing panels she used were existing paintings that she cut down. This is another example that gives us insight into Mary's thinking about her studio practice. It demonstrates a lack of preciousness about the work on an individual level, and reinforces her idea that nothing was ever truly finished. If it could serve another means for her that she felt was more compelling, she would do it regardless of the scope or scale of the previous work.

## WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PLANS FOR THE PROJECT'S CONTINUATION?

Conservation work will continue on the concrete sculptures that populate the yard. A priority list of work to be done has been created, with the flexibility of things moving up and down on the list based on annual monitoring and assessment of the sculptures in the yard.

Development of a monitoring and documentation system for the concrete sculptures. This can be used as a historical reference for wear and condition of artworks at the site.