Lannan Donates A Sculpture Garden

The establishment of the J. Patrick Lannan Sculpture Garden at Palm Beach Junior College and the acceptance of four major marble works of art are announced by Dr. Edward M. Eissley, PBJC president.

“We are grateful to the Lannan Foundation and are pleased to be selected as the site for sculptures that are already famous throughout the art world,” Dr. Eissley said.

“We are looking forward to continued cooperation with the Lannan Foundation as they develop Mr. Lannan’s interest in art and in Lake Worth and South Florida.”

Dr. Eissley said that it was the work of Reuben Hale, chairman of the Division of Humanities, with both Mr. Lannan and the Foundation which resulted in the garden and the on-going relationship with the Foundation.

Hale said that during his lifetime, Lannan accumulated more than 5,000 pieces of contemporary paintings and sculptures.

“This was certainly one of the world’s largest and best collections,” Hale said.

Some of the art was housed in the Lannan estate in Palm Beach, and some in the Lannan Museum on Lake Avenue in Lake Worth.

“At the time of his death, Mr. Lannan was considering building a large museum on his campus to house the entire collection and future acquisitions,” Hale said. “There would be an endowment of $90 million for maintenance and additions to the collection.”

As the news of his death spread throughout the art world, however, the board of the Lannan Foundation received bids from major museums and cities throughout the world for the Lannan collection.

Among those making determined bids were the Art Institute of Chicago, which was prepared to spend several million dollars and build a new wing, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Denver museum, the San Francisco museum, and many others.

The new board of the Foundation made a decision to retain the Lannan Museum in Lake Worth, and to donate works of art to major museums throughout the world.

The board also decided to keep much of the sculpture in South Florida. These works would be split between Palm Beach Junior College and the South Florida Consortium-Palm Beach, Broward and Dade counties.

The donations to PBJC, four works by three artists, two German and one Japanese, are now in place, and the Garden is nearing completion.

All of these works were commissioned by Mr. Lannan. The artists executed the works in Maine. All the marble is Maine marble. The works were then transported to Lannan’s estate in Palm Beach.

Parts of two of the sculptures were visible from A1A, and are well known to many residents of the area for this reason.

The westernmost piece of the Garden is by Yassur Mizui. It is titled: “L’echo du Rive,” and is 10.5 tons of pure white marble. It is 7’8” high and 6’ wide.

Proceeding east, the next two pieces are by Karl Prantl. The one to the right is a marble cube, 6’ by 6’ by 4’10” high. It is called “Marble Cube” and weighs about 20 tons.

The long Prantl work to the left, nearer the Library, is called “Meditation Stones.” It is 4’5” by 14’ by 2’10” and weighs 16 tons.

“Meditation Stones” is not yet complete. The indentations on the top of the sculpture are for a number of marble spheres of various sizes. They were simply lying in place at the Lannan Estate, but in their present setting, it will be necessary to devise a means for anchoring them firmly in place as unobtrusively as possible.

The composite is by Eric Reischke, and the 16 pieces have a combined weight of about 15 tons. The title of this work is carved around the corner of one of the pieces.

In German, it reads: “WIR SIND NOCH KEINE MENSCHEN IM HUMANISTICHEN SINNE.” This has been translated as “We are not yet human in the spirit of humanity.”

The Garden, designed by Mark Hampton, the Miami-based architect who redesigned the art deco movie theatre in Lake Worth which now houses the Lannan Museum, is nearing completion. A hedge and the removal of some lighting fixtures are all that remain to be done.

The hedge will not border the entire garden, and it will remain open for people to view the sculpture from close range.

The PBJC Foundation provided funding for the placement and transportation of the sculptures from Lannan’s estate and museum.

The artists are known throughout the world, possibly a little better in Europe than in the United States, Hale says.

“There will be photographs of these works in almost every major art magazine in the world,” he said. “Palm Beach Junior College will be on the list of places to visit by those who are seriously interested in modern sculpture.”

As time permits, the art faculty at the college will write material about the artists and about the individual works and place this material in the library."