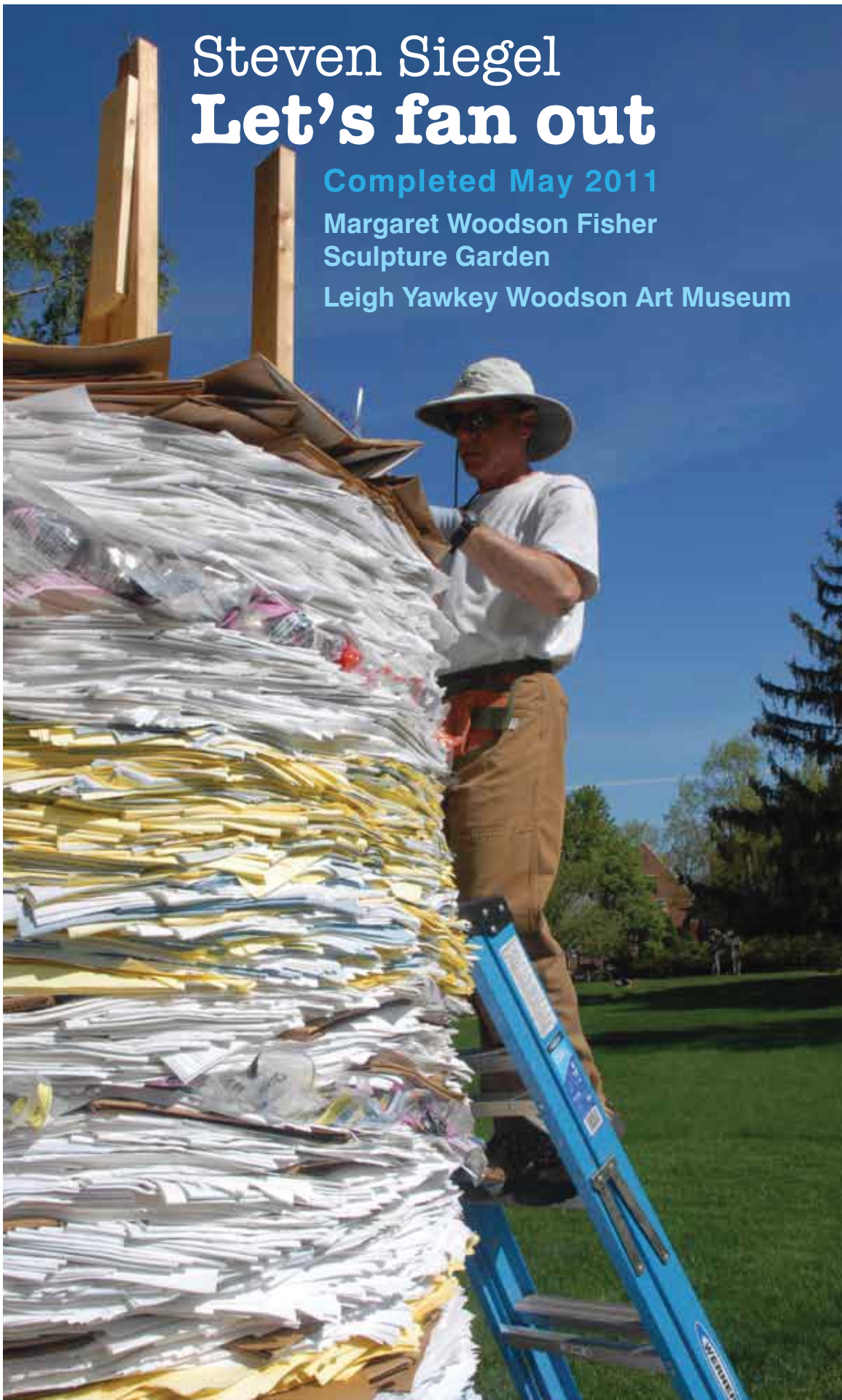


Steven Siegel **Let's fan out**

Completed May 2011

Margaret Woodson Fisher
Sculpture Garden

Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum



For ten days in May 2011, sculptor Steven Siegel directed the creation of a towering and gently curving wall – a site-specific work for the Woodson Art Museum’s sculpture garden made of 24,000 pounds of stacked and staked paper donated by Wausau Paper. Celebrating Wausau’s logging and paper industry roots, Siegel titled his repurposed paper sculpture *Let’s fan out*.

Siegel creates public art in natural and urban environments, generally using recycled materials. He is driven by a desire to create beauty from the detritus that human beings leave in their wake. Much of his previous outdoor work has been made from newspaper, so Siegel relished the opportunity to integrate a subtle variety of colors and textures into the Woodson paper wall by using white, blue, and yellow paper along with plastic and cardboard packaging elements.

With pallets of cartons containing reams of paper at the ready, Museum staff, volunteers, and Steven Siegel began constructing the A-shaped framework for the ten-foot-tall, twenty-foot-long hollow wall on May 16.

After a day of constructing and completing the framing, crew members turned their attention to building the base of the paper sculpture. Workers fanned out stacks of white and blue cardstock and yellow paper and then nailed through the stacks to hold them in place. Creating curves in the wall necessitated more overlap – and thus more height – of stacked paper in some places, and less overlap in other sections of the wall. To prevent dips and to keep the wall’s height level, flattened cardboard boxes and folded paper were incorporated. Poultry netting was twisted into bow-tie shapes, nailed into the paper, and wrapped around the frame to keep the paper wall pulled tight against the wooden structure.

Day 1



To be able to come every day, meet Steven, and work with like-minded people interested in art was just a great experience. It was a throwback to art school. I really looked forward to working with the group – a community of creative over-thinkers!

David Jones, volunteer

Day 2



I was fascinated by the whole process. While Steven’s ‘plan’ seemed almost improvisational and random, I was astounded by how the sculpture came together, part of a larger pattern – a gorgeous design, really – that I hadn’t been aware of even as I unpacked paper and worked on it.

Marguerite Donnelly, volunteer

Day 3



Day 4



Day 5



Seeing how my small paper-folding task fit into the bigger sculptural process felt rewarding. Since I'm a recycler at heart, participating in the Siegel project made sense to me. Museum visitors will enjoy watching Let's fan out 'mature' over the next couple years.

Marcia Theel, volunteer and retired Woodson Art Museum associate director

Working with Steven gave each of us the opportunity to be the artist. While Steven guided the work and the design of the sculpture, each volunteer and Museum staff member was able to dictate the use of color and amount of paper, thereby influencing the sculpture on an individual basis.

Matt Foss, project assistant

Drizzle didn't keep the work from proceeding. In fact, Siegel said dampened paper actually eased the work. When wet, paper fibers loosen, making driving nails through the stacked paper less difficult. Once dry, the paper's strength returns.

Day 6



The project required individuals with carpentry skills as well as teens and adults who opened the boxes and packages of paper and folded and fanned appropriate amounts to keep the workers nailing paper on the wall well supplied.

Day 7



Siegel's design continued to evolve as he saw how incorporating the colored paper, plastic packaging, and cardboard highlighted the various layers of the serpentine structure that grew taller day by day.

"Steven came here knowing that working with this donated material would be different than working with newspaper, which is rougher and stacks faster because it doesn't slide. Anyone who is an artist is a problem solver. It's about creative evolution," said Andy McGivern, curator of exhibitions. "The idea develops and evolves, and that comes from working with and understanding the material."

Excitement about the project continued to build as the wall developed and altered before workers' and spectators' eyes – a process that will continue as the sculpture weathers. Siegel, particularly interested in how his biodegradable sculptures visually impact their surroundings and how they change over time, expects the wall to take on an organic texture similar to the bark of a tree and eventually to resemble an exposed hillside comprising layers of ancient rock.

While Siegel holds definite political and social views, he leaves the interpretation of his work to others. His main concern centers on the aesthetics of each piece. Pleased with the outcome of his Woodson Art Museum sculpture, Siegel invites all who view it to form their own impressions that may well evolve along with the work in ways both dramatic and subtle.

It is important to me to get to know the people who work on these projects, with the knowledge that they will be returning on a regular basis to see the sculpture as it mellows. Let's fan out was like a traditional barn raising. The piece is not just about paper and mass, it is also a testament to the people who built it.

Steven Siegel

Day 8



It's not about anything; it's something that's there and is. It's monumental. It's a mass. The size and texture – its visual elements – are all that there is and all there's supposed to be. It's a subconscious element in the environment – like the landscape or rock – eroding over time. It slowly seeps into your mind.

Andy McGivern, curator of exhibitions

Day 9



Day 10



Steven Siegel's work in context

Throughout more than two decades, New York sculptor Steven Siegel has constructed monumental outdoor works – often made of newspaper and more recently of plastic containers and glass combined with natural materials such as straw and grass.

Included here are a few of the more than fifty outdoor sculptures that Siegel has created since 1983. Most of his work, however, is on a different scale and is made in the studio. For example, *Biography*, comprising a vast array of items from wrapped wire, twine, and fiber to craft sticks, wire nuts, and beads, was on view at New York's Marlborough Chelsea gallery in February 2011.

If left undisturbed, Siegel's outdoor paper-based sculptures develop the appearance of exposed sedimentary rock and its many layers. Other examples resemble paper wasp nests, especially after the paper has aged and faded into shades of gray.



Like a rock, from a tree?, 2008, paper, Gongju, Korea



Big, With Rift, 2009, paper, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts



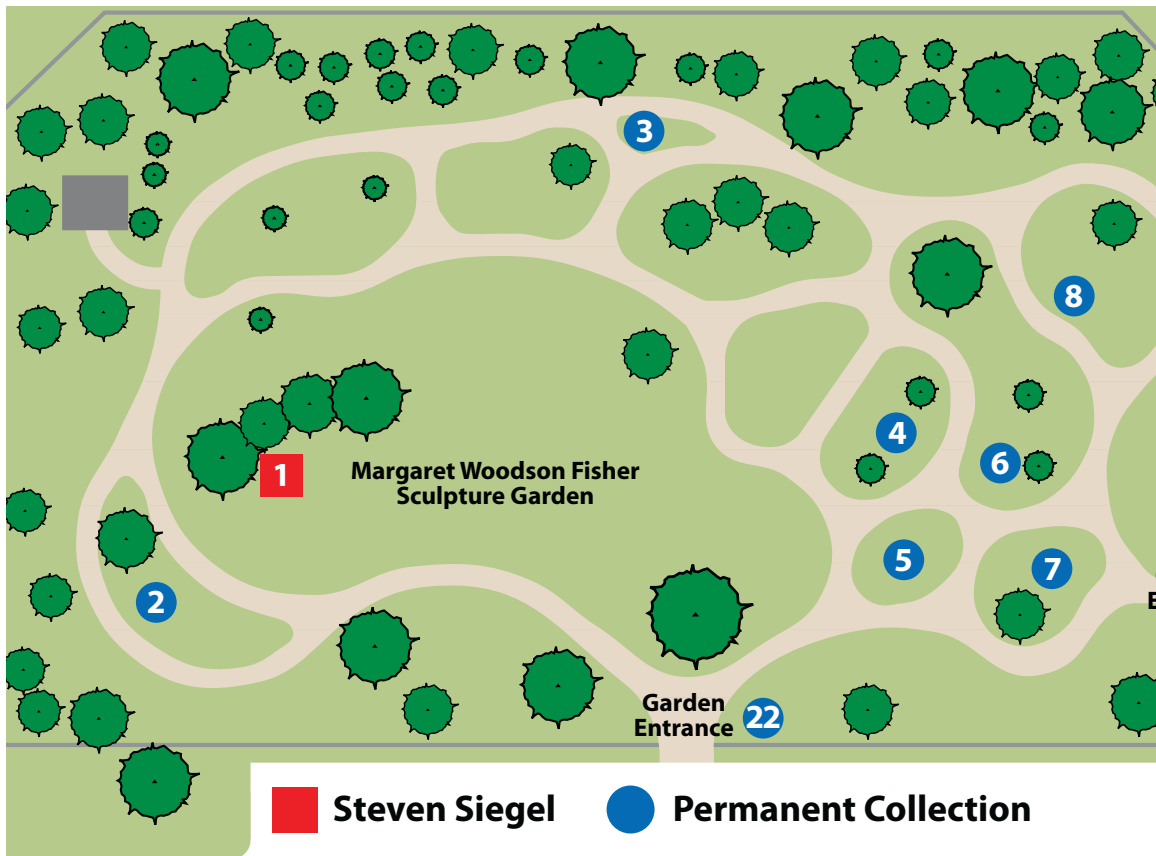
Biography, 2008, mixed materials, collection of the artist, photo by Douglas Baz



Nest, 2004, paper, Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, California



To See Jennie Smile, 2006, paper, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh



1. Steven Siegel
Let's fan out, 2011

2. Tom Queoff
Avian Repose, 2006

3. Steve Kestrel
Desert Solitaire, 2000

4. Bart Walter
Ostrich, 2001

5. Deborah Butterfield
Kua, 1995

6. Chapel
Harvest Moon, 1996

7. Kenneth R. Bunn
Traveling Companions, 1995

8. Burt Brent
The Heavyweight, 1994

9. Gwynn Murrill
Eagle III, 2010

10. Edith Barretto Parsons
Duck Baby, ca. 1915

11. Kent Ullberg
Great Blue Heron, 1988

12. Walter T. Matia
Great Blue Heron, 1986

13. Rosetta
Mountain Fishing, 1996

14. Tony Angell
Trumpeter Swans, 1987

15. Walter T. Matia
Three Wild Turkeys, 2002

16. Sherry Salari Sander
Wood Ducks on Still Water, 1992

17. Kent Ullberg
Rites of Spring, 1998

18. Eugenie Shonnard
Two Herons, ca. 1924

19. Walter T. Matia
Yard Boss, 1999

20. Robert Refvem
In the Pink, 1993

21. Kent Ullberg
Eagle Rock, 1983

22. Louise Peterson
Antwatch, 2005

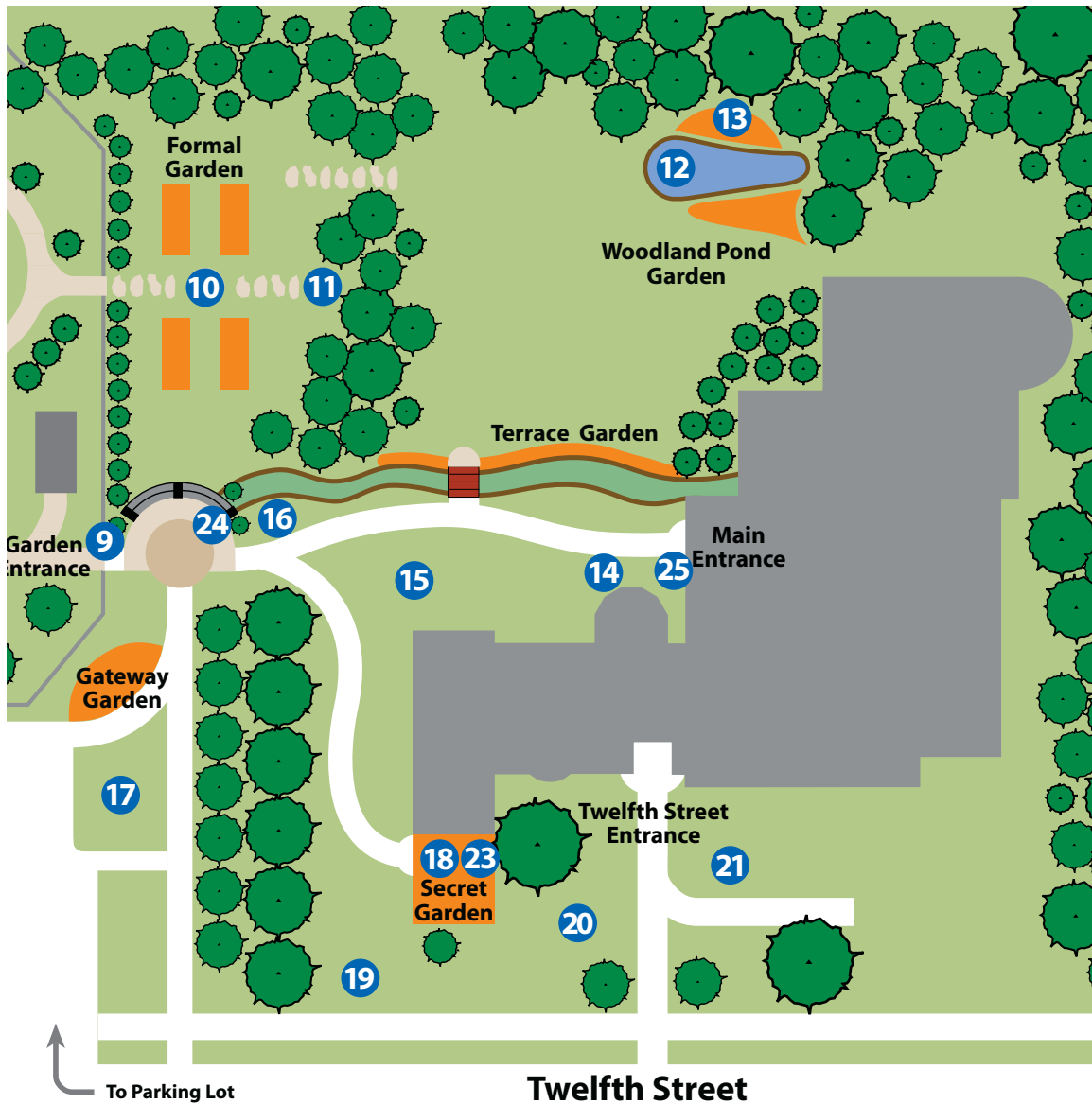
23. Tim Cherry
Flat Fawn, 2010

24. Pete Zaluzec
Cardinal, 2009

25. Ross Matteson
Creeper, 2007

Fast Facts Let's fan out

- 72 volunteers; 654 hours of work
- 24,000 pounds of 8 ½ x 11- inch paper
864,000 white sheets
200,000 yellow sheets
60,000 blue sheets
- 952 flattened cardboard boxes
- 200 feet of poultry netting
- 720 feet of wood
- 185 pounds of nails
- 12 ladders
- 1 nail gun
- 8 hammers
- Too many bruised thumbs to count!



Acknowledgments

The Woodson Art Museum thanks its generous project donors:

Wausau Paper, Wisconsin Public Radio, and the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin's Community Arts Grant Program funded by the Wisconsin Arts Board, Community Foundation, and the B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation.

A Creation and Presentation Grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts sustains exhibitions and programs.

A City of Wausau Room Tax Fund Grant supports the Woodson's regional and national marketing initiatives.

Thank you to Steven Siegel, all of the hard-working volunteers, and Museum staff.

To view a day-by-day chronicle of the creation of *Let's fan out*, visit the Museum's website at www.lywam.org.

For additional information, visit Steven Siegel's website at www.stevensiegel.net

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