

ROSS LEWIS BIOGRAPHY

New York artist **Ross Lewis** studied Chinese landscape painting, calligraphy and the Mandarin language in China and Taiwan over a ten year period. This experience led him to develop a distinct visual language, bringing key aesthetic and philosophical sensibilities of the Eastern artistic traditions to his Western context.

An important force in the field of public art, Mr. Lewis' *fanscapes*, a series of wind-activated painted nylon and steel sculptures, were on view in Central Park's Belvedere Castle in the Summer of 1993. His first *fanscapes*, graced the grounds of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, MA in 1991.

In 1989, Mr. Lewis was one of the winners in the Metropolitan Transit Authority's New York City Arts for Transit, Creative Stations Competition. He was commissioned to create a 96 foot long mural, *Parallel Motion*, installed at the 14th Street and 8th Avenue subway station in Manhattan until 1995, and permanently installed at P.S./I.S. 89 in Battery Park City in 1998. The mural depicts the energy of moving bodies through the subway corridor using brushwork derived from his study of Chinese calligraphy.

In 1993, the artist installed seven translucent painted plexi-glass *windwheels* spanning a creek at Connemara Conservancy Foundation in Dallas, TX. In 1995, *Movement in Space*, a painted metal wall-relief, was installed at the Interbay-Glover YMCA in Tampa, FL. The mural, commissioned by the City of Tampa's Art in Public Places, was inspired by athletic motion and Chinese calligraphy. *Roto-Sphere*, a suspended kinetic steel sculpture with spinning interior rings was installed in the rotunda of the New York Hall of Science in 1996.

In 1997, he created a site-specific installation, *Hidden Meanings*, at the Robeson Center Art Gallery, on the Newark, NJ campus of Rutgers University, incorporating painting, a 30-foot suspended sculpture and lighting. A lighting program shifting from combinations of black to incandescent light continually transformed the walls, which were painted with special fluorescent and acrylic paint. In 1998, he created the installation, *Dancing in Pink Snow*, in a former horse stable for Im Stall Gallery in Berlin, Germany. The work developed on site, and involved painting and chiseling drawings on the floors, walls, ceiling and windows, film projection and black light. A key element was a red children's swing which invited the viewer to experience the space as if in a three dimensional painting.

In the Fall of 2000, Mr. Lewis completed a terrazzo floor painting, *Deep Water*, for the lobby of the Holmesburg Recreation Center. The work, inspired by the history and topography of the Holmesburg area, was the winner in a competition held by the City of Philadelphia's Percent for Art Program. In 1999, he exhibited his *Black & White Shan-zi Series* paintings at Walter Wickiser Gallery and the National Arts Club, and *Scroll Machine* at Ethan Cohen Fine Arts in New York City. In 2002, in collaboration with Staten Island's PS 6 fifth graders, he created *Achieve Believe Create Dream*, a mixed media installation in the school's 40 foot high atrium lobby using dyed resin tubes and letters, compressed pvc sheet, metal tubing and acrylic paint. The result is a 24 foot high suspended metal figure surrounded by colorful organic shapes and forms that reflects the artistic development of children. This soaring multi-media installation was commissioned through the Sites for Students Program of the New York City Department of Education and the New York City School Construction Authority. In 2005 the New York City Department of Education commissioned a new collaborative art work for a 26 foot high by 80 foot long wall in a new school building for P.S./I.S. 260Q to be unveiled in 2007.

Since 1985, Mr. Lewis has been developing black and white motion paintings, *Dance Calligraphies*, from his observations of dancers at several of the leading modern dance companies including Merce Cunningham and Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane. In 1986, the artist collaborated with the dancer, Bill Douglas and flutist, Craig Goodman at DIA Art Foundation. He has designed sets for Doug Elkins and Brenda Daniels Dance Companies and was commissioned to create twelve paintings for The Joyce Theater 1991/1992 brochures.

Paralleling his artistic development has been a growing concern for social issues. He appeared on network TV for *A Day Without Art: A National Day of Mourning in Response to the Aids Crisis* and created an original painting, *The Empower Triptych*, for Oxfam America. Since 1996, he has participated in ARTWALK NY, an annual event benefiting the Coalition for the Homeless, donating his paintings to their auction and opening his studio to the public.

In 1984, he was a guest of the government of the People's Republic of China where he exhibited his works and lectured in Mandarin. He has lectured and conducted workshops on Chinese calligraphy at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, China Institute, The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, The New School, Brooklyn College, and numerous cultural institutions and public schools in the tri-state area.