

Annotated Bibliography for Robert Cole

- 1. Alexander, Sandy, "Merriweather pavilion dances to a new tune." *The Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 2004. (photos by Kenneth L. Lam)**

"More than a dozen sculptures have been added to the lawn area, as well as a sculpture garden. ...a towering silver figure with waving hair by Washington-based Robert T. Cole...visible all over the property."

- 2. *Art Crowd Magazine*; Joel Hochman and Laurence Leichman, Publishers; Spring 2000**

On page 43 there is a full-page picture of *Vanishing Cowboy*, (asking price \$35,000) with Robert's contact information.

On page 102 under Select Artist Bios: "Robert Cole is a nationally recognized sculptor. Cole is also an articulate philosopher whose theory of essentialism maintains that great art combines technique, emotion and design to create the most direct and complete expression of the artist's ideas. Cole's artwork is featured at many Washington D.C. locations.

- 3. *ARTnews*; Milton Esterow, Ed./Pub.; April 2004**

On page 73 there is an ad for Mother of Peace.

- 4. Brace, Eric, "Raising The Bar on U Street." *The Washington Post Weekend, On The Town*, April 10, 1998. (photos by Tyler Mallory)**

"...and along those walls, deco candle holders (by local artist Robert Cole) add to the casual elegance." (reference to The Bar at 1418 U St.)

- 5. *Dupont Circle Citizens Association, (Booklet designed by Martin Moeller), 30th Dupont Circle House Tour, Article Type: Brochure***

"The entire renovation of the carriage house was accomplished by Mr. Cole personally. The studio is essentially one large, utilitarian space, enlivened by the sinuouse mezzanine, which, not surprisingly, is made of steel and was designed and fabricated by the owner. A preference for curves is evident, starting with the almost Art Nouveau entry gates and louvers on the outside of the building, which, along with the electric meter enclosure and mailbox, announce the owner's vocation. The mezzanine's railings, the "Bridge of Sighs" stair over the door, and the mezzanine's whimsical lights are all creations of the owner.

'Mr. Cole...has been a working artist for over forty years. Initially he constructed wood musical instruments, and later became involved in plastic sculpture. He has worked exclusively in metal for the past 10 years both as an artist building his own visions and as a craftsman building the designs of architects and furniture designers."

6. *Figuratively Speaking: Art in Public Places. Heyman Properties in Partnership with Stamford Town Center & The Advocate/Greenwich Time. Summer 2006.*

"After extensive exploration in plastic, stone and wood as sculptural media, Robert Cole ultimately evolved a direct metal technique for building small to monumental-sized sculpture by hand. This method satisfies his need to work in a medium that is large scale, can survive in the outdoors, and be made entirely in his studio, by hand."

"A highlight of his career was the building of a large figurative sculpture in Italy, Madre della Pace. Exhibited at the Florence Biennale in 2003, it was awarded the Lorenzo de' Medici Gold Medal."

7. *Georgetown, The (?), "Penn Quarter's Art-On-Foot Celebrates Thriving Community, November (year unknown).*

"A child slowly falling asleep under the mysterious, deep-eyed and moving face sculpture made by Robert Cole, who in a fit of day-long enthusiasm is explaining how and why he works to tourists from the Midwest at the sculpture garden across the street."

8. *Hahn, Fritz, "Rock-Star Treatment, It's Written In the Ink," special to The Washington Post, The Washington Post Weekend, On The Town, Night Life, Jan 11, 2008. (photos by Michael Temchine)*

9. *InTowner The, "Around Our Community", April 2002. (photo unattributed)*

(text from press release)

10. *InTowner, The, "Around Our Community," November 2006.*

(text from press release on Mid-City Artists)

"Among the pioneers in the group are artists like...Robert Cole, who located in the neighborhood before it became so popular."

11. *Kelly, John, "Answer Man Sleuths For Missing Sculptures", The Washington Post: John Kelly's Washington, (date unknown). (photo by Julia Feldmeier)*

"Robert Cole, a sculptor who lives in the neighborhood, pitched in too, offering to contribute statues. 'I kind of have a revolving show space there,' said the 67-year old artist.

'Two of his sculptures are there now: 'Fac-Tree,' a tree with limbs resembling smokestacks, and 'Signpost for Humanity,' a sort of Janus-faced piece."

[The full contents of this article have been clipped; Look online]

12. Kirk, Mimi, "Mini Monuments: A DC sculptor tries his hand at the miniature" *On Tap*, Vol. 8, Issue #7, April 2006. (photo by Amy M.)

"At 67, Cole is a DC art icon. Even if you don't know him by name, you've probably encountered a piece or two of his."

"'Sculpture should be outdoors and monumental,' he says. 'It should express the age.'"

13. Kline, Sally. *Washington Maryland Virginia Home & Design: The Magazine of Luxury Homes and Fine Interiors*. "House of Glass: A Thoroughly Modern Penthouse Reflects Its Historic Surroundings" Vol. 9, No. 6; Nov/Dec 2007 (photography by: Kenneth M. Wyner)

(fantastic archival photos of penthouse apartment)

14. KOAN: *Ken Oda's Newsletter*; Ken Oda Ed.; "KOAN Reader's Poll Results: Who You Are and What You Like"; Vol. 5, No. 10; July/August 1997.

Robert is listed as #8 on the list under "Sculpture".

15. Lewis, Nicole. "Bound for Glory: Handmade Books" *Washington Post, Arts Beat* (date?)

"'Girl' Found. Sculptor Robert Cole must have a fairy godmother watching over him. As reported in this column July 2, his work 'Hey Girl' was stolen from the public sculpture garden at 741 Seventh St. NW. Cole recently recovered the piece with a little help from a friend, Yared MacBib, who discovered 'Hey Girl' while visiting a friend's Adam-Morgan apartment. The friend had recently gotten a new roommate, who had 'Hey Girl,' a 150-pound bronze-plated figure of a woman, in his room. According to Cole, the roommate said a friend had given him the sculpture (worth \$10,000) and said he had no idea the work was contraband. Cole retrieved the sculpture and took it home. Phone messages left for the roommate went unreturned. 'It's a dream come true,' Cole said of finding the work. 'I'm on cloud nine.' Since the theft, the park's owners have installed a surveillance camera and procured insurance for the sculptures in it. However, 'Hey Girl' will not be returning. Said Cole: 'This piece will never leave my side again.'"

16. Lewis, Nicole, "Missing and Missed: Bronze, 6-Foot-Tall 'Hey Girl' Stolen From Sculpture Garden," *The Washington Post, Arts Beat*, (date available online). (Photo by Robert Cole)

"Stolen: One six-foot-tall sculpture wearing high heels. Answers to 'Hey Girl.' Friendly. Valued at \$10,000."

"I never expected anyone to steal a sculpture," said Cole, who is experiencing his first bit of personal vandalism after living in Washington for the last decade. He suspects that of the five pieces currently in the space, 'Hey Girl' was targeted for her relative lightness, lack of more bolts and what he calls her 'perky' appeal."

"In case the thief is thinking of selling off pieces of 'Hey Girl's' metal, Cole says there is only \$300 worth of bronze in the hand-hammered piece. 'I thought about going to scrap yards and I couldn't do it,' he said."

17. Lobby Art: A Publication of the World Bank Staff Art Society; World Bank Staff Art Society, Ed. (Regine S. Boucard, Cur.); Vol. 1, No. 2; October 1996.

"Since 1960, Robert T. Cole has made his living from art, gaining national recognition in the 1970s when Steve Allen devoted a complete show to Cole and to his satirical life-size plastic figure work. Leaving plastic as a medium, Cole learned to carve wood and stone and eventually developed a unique technique for carving, welding, and hammering metals, primarily bronze and steel. This well-recognized Washington D.C. artist founded the Essentialism Movement, which embodies a philosophy that artists can apply to all arts."

"*Architectural commissions:* EDG Architects, Maryland; Republic Gardens Restaurant, Washington D.C.; Artscience Warehouse, Washington D.C.; The Chelsea School, Maryland"

"*Selected Exhibitions:* Gallerie 101, Paris; Working Gallery, California; Ann Leonard Gallery, New York; Studio Design, Washington D.C.; Aaron Gallery, Washington D.C.; Martin Luther King Library, Washington D.C."

18. O'Rourke, Ronald. Architecture DC, "A Glass Box In the Sky. Review: Bonstra Architect's Penthouse" Summer 2003 (Industrial Catalogue)

The kitchen and the stainless steel stair leading to the second floor (the latter designed and fabricated by local sculptor Robert Cole) are aligned with this view, and the front edge of the second floor is rotated in this direction, splitting the apartments rectangular footprint along a diagonal that becomes the dividing line for the two halves of the butterfly roof overhead."

(Article profiling penthouse apartment on 1212 M Street.)

19. O'Sullivan, Michael, "Exhibition", *The Washington Post, Weekend's Best*, April 19, 2002.

"You may never have heard of Washington sculptor Robert Cole but if you frequent the U Street corridor, chances are you've passed by – or maybe even leaned against – some of his genial metal-work at Polly's Café, Republic Gardens and Utopia, to mention a few of his local commissions."

20. O'Sullivan, Michael, "Membrane 2: Celebrating the Experimental: Seventh Street Sculpture Park," *The Washington Post, Arts Beat*, (date uncertain). (photo by Samantha Moranville)

"Cole says he hopes the park might become a permanent addition to downtown and would like to see the General Services Administration donate the federally owned lot

to the city. In the meantime, according to the sculptor, the site remains dedicated to art, at least through spring, or 'until the GSA decides to build there.'"

"Cole is realistic about that possibility. 'They're probably going to build there sooner or later,' he says. 'Whatever falls is okay.' He sounds equally mellow about 'Humanity's Throne,' his nine-foot-tall steel chair on view in the gravel-lined space. 'Your feet don't touch the ground, so it makes you like a child, but because of the height, you're also empowered,' says Cole, who encourages passersby to sit on his art. 'Sure, that's what it's there for.'

21. O'Sullivan, Michael, "A Sculptor As Good As His Words: The Visual, Verbal, Robert T. Cole", *The Washington Post, Arts Beat*, May 22, 1997. (photos by Joel Richardson)

"His sculptures typically suggest, rather than depict, the human form, with the graceful shorthand of a twisted metal exoskeleton. 'I try to create a core of realism in order to catch the viewer's eye, while adding a bit of distortion to entice him further, and then a level of abstraction to meditate upon.'"

" 'I created something I called the 'cellino,'" says Cole. 'I like to think of it as the missing link between the viola and cello.' Although he was never adept at playing it (the guitar is really his instrument), he plays with a band and has continued to take the occasional musical gig since returning to his primary vocation of making sculpture."

" 'I guess we're kind of a cross between Dylan and Sting, with some blues thrown in, if you can imagine such a thing,' offers Cole tentatively. Along with his wife, the poet Susan Cole, he plays a style he calls both 'renaissance jazz' and 'primitive folk' in a variety of small local cafes and clubs."

"...Including a six-foot-tall example of what the artist-philosopher calls 'the first essentialist machine, sort of a pop-influenced Wheel of Fortune, meant to expand your consciousness.'"

"...Cole's creations are worthy of consideration..."

22. *Public Art: Civic Catalyst; Participate 2004 Conference Brochure. Americans for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2nd Joint Convention.*

On the cover, a photo of "Pod Tree", the Metro Commission.

23. "Robert Cole Sculpture on Long-Term Loan" Author/Publication Unknown. (photo by Irv Molotsky)

"Local sculptor Robert Cole has generously placed on long-term loan in the S Street park at New Hampshire Avenue and 17th Street two, large stainless steel works of his that has [sic] been previously installed in the plaza in front of the National Portrait Gallery."

24. Shott, Chris, (article title unknown), Washington City Paper: Show & Tell, May 21, 2004.

"D.C. artist Robert T. Cole has already contributed three pieces to the project, including his 16-foot tall, stainless steel Mother of Peace-No Weapons and Potention-The Legacy, and is busy finishing up a fourth. He also hopes to cash in on his other Merriweather sculpture, The Guitar Player, which he plans to parlay into a line of T-shirts to be sold at the venue. 'Who knows?' the artist says. 'They may buy [the image] as a logo. It could become one with Merriweather.'"

25. Sowers, Scott, "Sculptor Robert Cole", ChesapeakeHome, Vol. 15, Issue 1, February/March 2007 (photography by Robert and Susan Cole)

"Making signs for the Army, building guitars, working at a lamp factory, Dialing-for-Dollars, and appearing variously on several other TV talk shows are only footnotes to the life of Robert Cole whose sculptures depict the human form as seen through the lens of a classic formalist with a sense of humor and of the kinetic."

"Robert Cole draws, paints, composes, and writes but his heart belongs to metal. 'Basically, I'm a modern classical Greek sculptor,' says Cole. 'My job is to find new ways to represent the human figure, something we've been doing for 5,000 years.' Cole's art has won a gold medal at the Florence Biennale and appears in public parks, nightclubs, commercial businesses, and venues including the Merriweather Post Pavilion and the Pimlico Race Track. His sculptures have found their way into countless private collections and onto *The Steve Allen Show*, known today as *The Tonight Show*. His visions of humanity range from tabletop size busts to giant creations that can only be moved by cranes and flat bed trucks. Like all art, the pieces have unique stories, and in this case are linked to the interesting background of their creator."

"A guy turned me onto metal and I got to fool around with that,' says Cole, 'like wood or leather it's a real material, so when you're finished with it, you're actually done.' Cole set up a makeshift studio in the garage where he began working on something totally unique. 'Nobody was doing figurative work in metal but I didn't know how to hammer a face yet."

"Every time I do a big piece I reach a point where I feel like falling down and crying, because I'm thinking 'it's too big, I can't build this,' says Cole."

"Metal is wonderful...it's like forever, it has permanency. It'll be there for your children, your children's children. It can go outdoors or inside and each kind of metal has it's [sic] own quality.' For Cole, inspiration comes from the most common yet infinitely fascinating source. 'It can be the way a person stands...certain gestures and movement. I want to try and capture that and make the sculpture feel like it's about to move. I'm trying to get a sense of life."

"Artistic dedication and a creative approach to life can be seen in the studio and in all of Cole's works, regardless of the size or the mix of materials. A single new room or a park full of furnished work brings joy to any artist, but for Cole the journey provides as much pleasure as the final destination. 'It's always a feeling of joy when you're finished and hopefully you've come close to accomplishing what you've set out to do. But the

process of seeing it come to life, the creative tricks to make that happen is fun and inventive. Solving it is the fun part."

"DC artist Robert Cole specializes in bringing a creative approach to metal sculpture."

26. Tanaka, Karen, "Art That Works: These Local Artisans Create Designs for the Home in Wood, Steel, Fabric and Tile," *The Washington Post Magazine*, April 26, 1998. (Photos by Evan Sklar)

"Robert Cole has lived many lives as an artist..."

"His 15th Street studio...is a vision of creative energies harnessed..."

"He's left his mark around the city..."

"His work...combines whimsy and character into something long-lasting."

"Says Cole, 'I want to promote the idea that artists live in this city.'"

27. "[full title missing]...Tangled Legacy..." Author unknown. *Publication unknown (newspaper)*. Oct. 16, 1997.

"...the grand opening of a sculpture park in an empty lot on Seventh Street across from the Shakespeare Theatre (featuring a nine-foot stainless steel throne by artist Robert Cole)"

28. Tischler, Gary, "Arts on Foot Festival celebrates Penn Quarter: Annual event offers performances, food, fun" *The Washington Times, Washington Weekend*, September 15, 2005.

"Renowned sculptor Robert Cole, who was a fixture with his eerie and visually bold, masklike works for years at a Seventh Street outdoor sculpture garden, will display sculptures in the plaza leading to the Landmark Cinema, which is part of the Gallery Place complex."

"He and his wife, Susan, will also perform together as part of the band "Blue Judy," a stint they've done off and on for years.

Last year, Mr. Cole says, Gallery Place was just nearing completion around this time.

'We had the sculpture garden in a vacant lot," he says at his studio behind 1708 15th St. NW, where a well-known sculpture of a motorcyclist sits outside. 'It was a little different then. There wasn't a central location and people just came by. It was used as a performance space too.'

"Also new this year is a preview of the upcoming 2006 Capital Fringe Festival, scheduled for July, a riot of performance art that will be staged in various places, including a stationary Downtown Circulator Bus parked at Eighth Street. Last year the buses, designed to serve the downtown area, were not yet up and running."

29. UrbanLand; Rachele L. Levitt, pub.; Vol. 60, No. 2; February 2001.

"On the Cover: 'Steela', DC Unite Sculpture Park, 7th and E Streets, N.W., Washington D.C."

30. Washington D.C. Style, Photo unattributed, Nov/Dec 2006, p. 22. Associated text by Philippa Hughes (does not mention Robert)

31. Washington Post Weekend, The, "Republic Gardens: Cultivating Cool," August 9, 1996. (photo by Tyler Mallory)

"Barnes asked a neighbor, artist Robert Cole, to create the sign hanging out front, a huge steel star with the club name wrapped around it. That began an astonishingly creative collaboration between Cole and Barnes, one that affected nearly every interior detail of the club. 'Marc treated the building as an art project,' says Cole, a 57-year old sculptor specializing in steel and bronze figures, 'and I looked at this as a chance to bring art back into popular culture, to where it's a part of people's everyday environment.'

'Robert and I ended up sharing a vision on this,' says Barnes. 'I'd ask him to create a mirror for me, and he'd come back two days later with this beautiful object.' Cole and Barnes point with pride to the edge of each table, each mirror, the fronts of the club's four bars, the lamp fixtures, the cue-stick rack by the pool table. Each is an art object unto itself, made from steel sheeting, hammered and ground into a waving, sparkling surface. On top of the steel, Cole has added bronze detail, raised ripples of hard metal. The main bar downstairs is a sweeping 20-foot river of half-inch steel plate. Somehow it goes perfectly with the polished wooden floors, seeming light and whimsical rather than heavy and industrial.

Throughout the club's two floors and six rooms, Cole's semi-abstract sculptures demand attention. Lifesize figures: a cowboy by the front door; a woman with copper strips for hair playing flute; a soulful upright bass player, his fingers stretching across the bronze strings. 'The bass player is my favorite,' says Barnes, 'I've seen patrons come back with friends just to show him to them.'"

32. Washington Post, The, Home Section, "Living Where the Buggies Used to Be", March 7, 2002. (photos by Mark Finkenstaedt)

"Although the idea of making a home in a carriage house has a certain romance, the decision to live there full time should not be made lightly, said Susan Cole. 'The issue of privacy is not the same because it is a single space. You really have to like the person you're living with.'"

(This article was primarily about the studio and did not contain any references to the artworks themselves.)

33. Webb, Linda and Jeffrey Webb, ed.; Beatles Art: Fantastic New Artwork of the Fab Four. Boxigami Books, Dunlap Illinois. 1st ed. 2006