



George Boone with Pascal's "Olympiad 88." "The Id, the Ego and the Superego" by T.J. Dixon, above.

## Hidden Gems Sculpture in Residence

### It's Never Lonely in George N. Boone's Garden

There's always a crowd out back at the Boone house. They're a quiet bunch, to be sure, but they have plenty to say for themselves nevertheless. A bronze nymph reclines by the pool, a steel gymnast balances near a hedge. Across the yard, a ceramic dog waits—perhaps for art lover George N. Boone, who relishes coming home to the nearly 50 pieces in what he calls his "Boone Garden of Sculptures." "I want sculptures that make my grandchildren, my children, my wife and I smile when we walk by," says Boone.

Boone's affection for sculpture dates to his youth, when his grandfather would take him to the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, and continued during a career in which he "sculpted mouths" as an orthodontist. In 1987, he purchased the bronze likeness of a windswept girl by San Diego artist Mic Mead to adorn his spacious San Gabriel Valley yard after his children had left home and their swings and slides were dismantled. Next, "I visualized putting one behind the pool to make the garden prettier."

At some point, the outdoor contingent sort of took the place over. "Once you get started, you don't know when to stop," Boone says. "Our objective then was two or three or four [sculptures]. When we got two or three or four, we saw five, six, seven and eight that we just couldn't turn down. Now it's hard to find a place to put another sculpture."

Along the way, Boone and his wife MaryLou became art patrons, establishing the MaryLou and George Boone Gallery at the Huntington Library; the Boone Children's Gallery, an interactive exhibit at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where Boone is a trustee; and the Boone Sculpture Garden at Pasadena City College. In Boone's personal at-home garden museum, the artist "lineup" ranges from lesser-known sculptors to more established artists such as Jud Fine and Michael McMillen.

As the garden evolved, Boone began to focus on showcasing emerging talents when entertaining or hosting community activities at home. He often finds candidates through word of mouth and small or out-of-the-way galleries. Occasionally, an artist whose work Boone has commissioned will recommend a fellow sculptor for consideration—and so his garden grows.

Despite the *al fresco* setting, there are residence criteria: One sculpture on display per artist, artists must be based in California, and work must be tasteful. Boone loves to connect children with art and allows young visitors to climb on the sturdier pieces. Styles on view range from modern to abstract to contemporary, in media such as bronze, corrugated steel, marble, stoneware, copper and aluminum.

The hushed gregariousness out in the backyard seems to be infectious. "We're noticing more sculptures in other people's gardens," Boone says.

—STEVEN K. WAGNER