



FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

1000 East Beltline Avenue • Grand Rapids, MI 49525 • 616 957 1580 • meijergardens.org

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SCULPTURE REDEDICATION CEREMONY WITH FRED MEIJER & SCULPTOR NINA AKAMU

*“Homage to Leonardo” by Nina Akamu
September 22 at 4 PM*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — September 16, 2009 — In honor of the 10th anniversary of Nina Akamu’s *The American Horse*, a special rededication of her master model installed in its permanent location will be held on September 22 at 4 PM at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park.

All media are invited to attend the rededication ceremony. Frederik Meijer, sculptor Nina Akamu and David Hooker, President and CEO of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, are scheduled to speak at the event.

A true homage, the monument represents a deep appreciation of creativity, the connection between artist and benefactor, and the connection shared among artists and audiences over time.

The eight-foot sculpture “Homage to Leonardo” was Akamu’s master model used to create the 24-foot “The American Horse,” which was installed at Meijer Gardens 10 years ago. After years of being temporarily displayed in two locations within Meijer Gardens, the installation and rededication of “Homage to Leonardo” in its permanent location near “The American Horse” is timed perfectly with the anniversary of its larger version.

The now complete DeVos Van Andel Piazza describes the rich history of these sculptures and pays tribute to the four people responsible for the work: Frederik Meijer, Nina Akamu, Charles Dent and Leonardo da Vinci.

In 1996, Frederik Meijer learned of the colossal equine sculpture once envisioned by Leonardo da Vinci. Through Meijer’s support, artist Nina Akamu sculpted “Homage to Leonardo” which was later cast into the 24-foot “The American Horse.” Meijer’s support also allowed an identical casting to be installed in Milan, Italy. Both horses were dedicated in 1999. Decades earlier, Charles Dent, a respected airline pilot with a deep interest in art, attempted to recreate the clay model Leonardo sculpted in 1943. Although Dent’s version failed to gain acceptance within the artistic community, his efforts caught the attention of Meijer. Leonardo’s model was destroyed in 1499 when French troops invaded Milan, but his idea for a colossal sculpture became one of the great legends in the history of art.

What:

“Homage to Leonardo” sculpture rededication ceremony in honor of the 10th anniversary of “The American Horse.”

Scheduled to speak:

- David Hooker, President and CEO of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
- Frederik Meijer, retailer and philanthropist
- Nina Akamu, sculptor

When:

Tuesday, September 22
4 PM – 5 PM

Where:

All media are requested to check in at the Admissions Desk.

DeVos Van Andel Piazza
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park
1000 E. Beltline Ave NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Photos are available upon request.

About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

One of the nation's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park serves more than a half-million visitors annually. The 132-acre grounds feature Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest children's gardens in the country; arid and Victorian gardens; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens; and a 1750-seat outdoor amphitheater, featuring an eclectic mix of world-renowned musicians every summer. The internationally acclaimed Sculpture Park features a permanent collection including works by Rodin, Oldenburg, Calder, Moore, Bourgeois and Plensa among others. Indoor galleries host changing sculpture exhibitions with recent exhibitions by Picasso, Degas, di Suvero and Chihuly. For additional information, please visit www.meijergardens.org.

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