

FALL ART TOUR[®]

NEWSLETTER FEATURE APRIL 2, 2021

TWISTER REBOOT

WRITTEN BY SANDRA LEWIS



Twister sculpture created by Evan Lewis

A Hollywood agent contacted us in 1995 about collaborating on a movie about tornadoes. Although we were no storm chasers, we made wind-powered kinetic sculptures.

One of the main characters in the movie was a sculptor whose work was mostly kinetic. The movie makers were looking for a real-life artist who had a body of work they could rent.

The set designer also wanted the artist to create an iconic piece of sculpture that would give the lead actors an idea of how to improve their tornado measuring device.

The rest is history; our work became an indelible part of the movie *Twister*, starring Helen Hunt, Bill Paxton, and Philip Seymour Hoffman.

The large operating budget enabled the purchasing agent to rent several sculptures, some of which had to be taken on a loan from collectors. That was not enough, however. More sculpture work was needed!



Movie set sculpture studio



Sculptural artifacts

The agent was quickly dispatched to “shop” for some used farm equipment and machine parts he located in California. He bought a bunch and shipped them by FedEx to our Chicago studio.

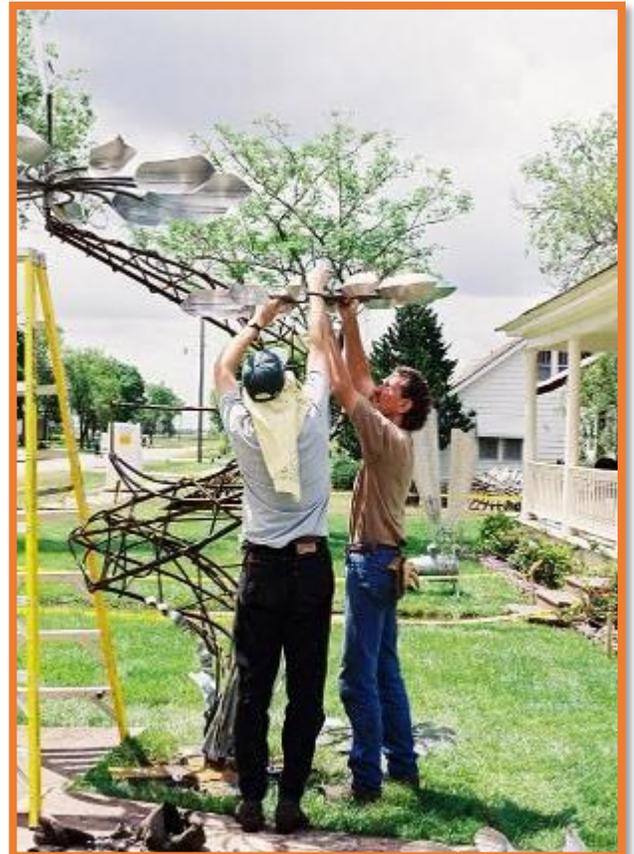
These weathered artifacts were to be used in the creation of new kinetic artwork for the movie. Whatever parts we did not use, the movie makers would stage in the fictional sculptor’s studio as “work in progress”.

We were baffled by the extravagance of Hollywood, and excited to be part of such a wild adventure.

The installation of the work on the movie site in Wichita, Kansas was smooth and fun. The Hollywood agent took great care of us, providing transportation, lodging and an excellent Kansas beef steak dinner. None of this was wasted on us “starving artists”.

Even though we did not get to meet any stars, since the shooting of the movie was yet to begin, we cherished this unique experience.

Once the movie came out, we were pleasantly surprised by the number of people who commented on the artwork in the movie. They could tell that these were real sculptures, made by a professional artist.



Sculpture installation on the set



Beauty Can by Evan Lewis on the set

It took the proliferation of the internet though for people to efficiently find the Evan Lewis Studio. Every time the movie was shown on one of the TV channels, we received emails from fans of the artwork. Some wanted to express their admiration, and some were hoping to commission a sculpture for themselves.

We also found out that at least one enterprising copycat was creating cheap versions of the Twister sculpture and claiming that he was the “Twister sculptor”.

We were busy with creating large-scale public sculpture commissions and adding new pieces to a fast-growing collection of hand-made metal furniture by then. There was little time to spare and many emails went unanswered.

The fans were also unaware of the cost of creating a functional wind-powered sculpture that could withstand harsh winters, strong winds, and sun or salt air exposure. Just the material cost could be in the hundreds of dollars and once the cost of the labor was added, the Twister sculptures were out of financial reach of many fans.

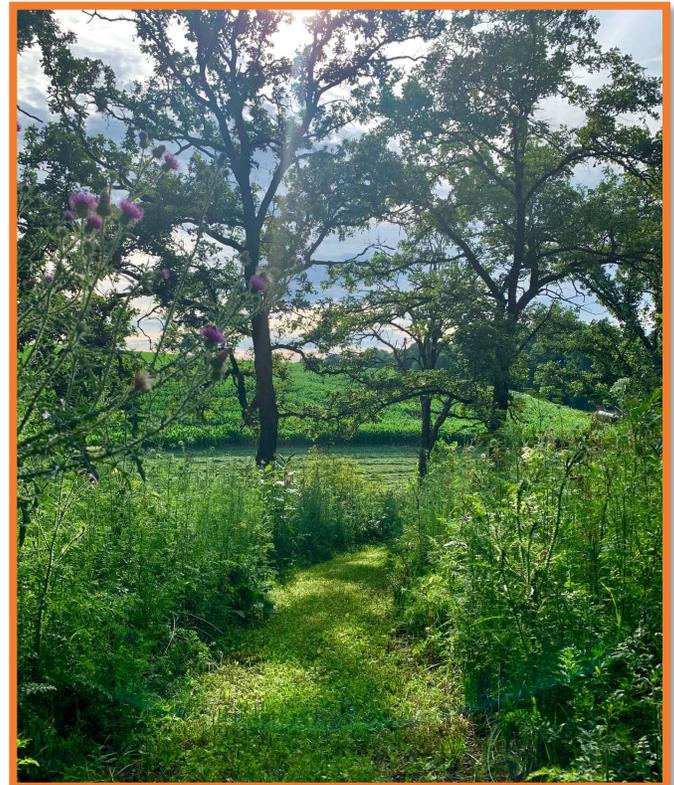
Our city studio location was not conducive to creating a speculative body of outdoor sculpture work. Where would we possibly put all the pieces? We kept dreaming about a large property out in the country where we could test new sculpture work and eventually have a sculpture garden to properly showcase the work.

Fast-forward to 2017 when we decided to move our family and our studio to southwestern Wisconsin. We quickly found the perfect place that had a newish house, a large metal shed, expanses of lawn and an oak savanna. It was love at first sight!

Only after we fell in love with the place, we discovered that it was three miles south of a lovely small town full of artists, artisans, and galleries – Mineral Point. A match made in heaven!

Once we were up and running in the new studio, the first thought turned to the sculpture garden. Let’s make a lot of new work and fill it up.

I also had this persistent thought in my head – we must make the Twister sculpture again. So many people would love to see it, we should have it on display in our new outdoor gallery.



Oak savanna on our property



Small Twister sculpture

As it often works, once you put the thought out there, the universe responds right away. It was barely days after Evan started to work on the first rotor of the sculpture that we received several emails from people interested in this famous piece.

One of them turned out to be a serious client. His partner is a storm chaser and a movie maker. Our client wanted to present him with a special Christmas gift – a sculpture commission from the real Twister sculptor. He even purchased a copper and steel vase made by Evan to put the gift certificate in since the creation of the sculpture would take several months. A few weeks later we heard that the Christmas gift was a “huge success”.



New sculpture in the works

The storm chaser turned out to be a big fan of the original movie and the artwork. He said he must have watched Twister dozens of times since it came out, and he knows the sculptures from the movie by heart.

He is so fascinated by tornadoes that he made a film about them coming out in 2021, starring Anne Heche. Well, we could not be in better “Twister company”.

Evan and I are thrilled to start on this commission. We keep marveling at the synchronicity of it all. What next big idea should we put out there for the universe to chew on? Perhaps a kinetic sound healing sculpture pavilion? May the stars line up!

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF EVAN AND SANDRA LEWIS:

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