I often spoke with Dina Wind about art in general and sculpture in particular. In 2012, while taking a break from installing her *Black Islands* in Woodmere's *Elemental* exhibition, she noticed a work that was new to our collection, *Untitled* (*On the Rocks*) (1985), by sculptor Robinson Fredenthal. She expressed her admiration, examined the sculpture with care, and proceeded to elucidate for me her one-time acquaintance's extraordinary skill at welding. She urged me to focus my attention on any one facet of the geometric construction and to recognize that each steel plane was welded to many adjacent others, all at complex angles but cohering to express an abstract notion of geometric order internal to the logic of the work. The neat, linear welds were the structural glue of the sculpture. To be able to weld like that, "with such grace and elegance," she said, was a gift.

Grace and *elegance* are the very words that have stuck with me as entry points into Wind's own work as a sculptor. However, her handling of the muscular process of welding steel—a twentieth-century, industry-inspired method of construction that declares its departure from the cast and carved forms of previous centuries—could not be more different from Fredenthal's. An expressionist at heart, Wind allows the mess and burn of her welding to be more or less visible, as determined by the particular marriage of objects at hand. The elegance of her work comes from her ability to compose something new and magical out of industrial steel, old tools, broken car parts, smashed household items, and other unexpected materials. This is the core of her effectiveness as an artist: the uncanny touch with which she unites and animates disparate metal objects. Welding, for Wind, is a means to compose.

Still Life with Pitcher (2000), for example, is a dynamic conversation between a curious group of found objects, each of which retains its own identity within the larger drama. The blade of an old, wood-handled saw defines a strong vertical axis, and is embraced, even cushioned, by a diversity of metal characters: a hand-cranked brace drill; a dangling bicycle chain; a discarded shopping-cart wheel; an industrial spring; a flow of cable wires; the worn, toothed blade of a circular saw; the half-flattened belly of a smashed fender; and the wreck of an ornamental, nineteenth-century pewter pitcher. The mix of benign, poetical, and aggressive objects is so masterfully counterbalanced that there exists a sense of implied motion. Wind draws a frame-like, flat rectangle at the back of the sculpture with four steel bars, and it seems thrown askew by the implied pulsation of the assembled objects. As here, Wind often draws lines in space with metal bars, chains, wires, cables, chains, tubes, and gas lines; in *Still Life with Pitcher*, the sideways, rectangular frame emphasizes organic contrapuntal activities.

A friend once commented to me that Wind's work was reminiscent of the crushed automobile sculptures by John Chamberlain. This took me by surprise—it had never occurred to me and I disagreed completely. Chamberlain's signature works, like Wind's, may be made of found car parts and junkyard detritus, but my overriding impression is that Chamberlain compresses matter, sometimes

crushing his scraps of metal into cube-like geometric forms or pressing them together into romantic mountains of wreckage. Wind, on the other hand, seems not to press, but instead to expand and lighten the weightiness of her heavy materials through her collage-like, anthropomorphizing process, creating new theatrical objects. *Tilted Curly Hair Bust* (1996) offers a most exquisite drama in tabletop scale, with the fanfare of a circular saw blade, hook, and spiraling spring all balancing on the open mouth of the curved pipe of a defunct muffler. Wind often incorporates these ribbed pipes from mufflers into her work, and one can only surmise that she liked the way the curves and undulating lines suggest intestinal or tracheal motion.

Wind frequently complements the implied organic motion of her sculpture with actual moving parts. For me, this motion creates a lightness that is matched by a whimsical élan. Her *Racing Barracudas* (1997) dash and dart, but don't get too close—their teeth are sharp! Swags of industrial chains are something of a signature element (as are saw blades, manual hedge trimmers, and heavy industrial springs). They drape in space, swaying with errant wind or in response to heavy footsteps on the floor. In *Opera Double Brooch* (1996) and *Cowboy Hat Bust* (1996), Wind drapes together different sizes and gauges of chains, and they *decorate* in the heraldic sense, playing with the idea of the wall sculpture as an ornament for the architectural space. Some of the chains are enormous, with large, sculptural links that conjure thoughts of dramatic mechanical processes, out of scale relative to the chains we know in everyday life. The artist's son John told me that Wind bought a large barrel of rusted industrial chains decades ago at a flea market. This purchase fueled years of experimentation: sometimes she meticulously cleaned the links, other times she encouraged the development of rich a patina. But always she used the chain as an element of distinction.

Wind's sensitivity to texture and color evolved out of her honest approach to materials. Steel is an alloy of iron and carbon; the amount of carbon in the mix determines the appearance of the metal and the degree of malleability. Wind worked with the warm gray-black tones of high-carbon steel, varnishing to create sheen and a surface that repels the elements. At Woodmere, we are preparing to install a number of Wind's outdoor works, and the dark steel is a welcome anchor in the seasonal shifting of the "green" environment. At other times, Wind nurtured the sumptuous flat reds and browns of the rusted iron that emerges in low-carbon steel or incorporated the yellow-brown wood of a tool handle to provide a contrasting burst of natural color and texture. Similarly, she would often use the "found color" of a painted object as a leading design element and must have acquired green-painted industrial springs in bulk (as she had the barrel of chains), because they appear in many of her works. To be sure, much of her color comes from the enamel grays, whites, blacks, blues, and reds of automobile bodies, especially fenders. The reds she often uses are the sad red of the junkyard, once flashy, now scarred, dented, burnt, and tainted. When Wind painted her assemblages, she might do

so to unify a composition with a single color to emphasize the dynamics of shape. Conversely, as in *Jewel #4* (1986)—a work that she and I selected together to adorn Woodmere's grand stone envelope of Wissahickon schist—she might apply contrasting dark, light, and medium tones to enhance formal tensions.

Among the sculptures I find most powerful are Wind's assemblages in stainless steel (iron with carbon and chromium), in part because the cleaned and waxed metal becomes fluid and corporeal, sometimes even flesh-like. From one of our discussions, I know that the artist considered *The Cruiser* (1990) to be a particularly satisfying work. A crushed tubular element, composed of welded stainless rectangles, suggests a reclining body; a great tubular leg-and-torso form flattens out, bends at the knee, and billows to some roundness, only to empty into a flat, circular head. Attached are the irregular curving arcs of bent gas lines; a cylindrical receptacle, such as those used for cafeteria utensils; a smashed, almost flattened mixing bowl; a pot lid; and a perforated, quasi-rectangular base that might once have been a shelf. The figurative reclining *Cruiser* is perhaps an odalisque or even a dying slave, both associations that correlate with the overriding iconography of the industrial kitchen. Wind builds another work, *Ironing Domesticity* (1994), around the form of an ironing stand, and incorporates a shining chrome receptacle that suggests the face of a wailing baby or Constantin Brancusi's modernist icon *The First Cry*. The combination of hypersensual forms and broken elements in both *The Cruiser* and *Ironing Domesticity* conveys tragedy. Wind, who was born in Haifa and raised in British Mandate Palestine, served as a Corporal at the age of eighteen in the Israel Defense Force. She was no stranger to the violence of modern geopolitical strife and I would suggest that the social catastrophes of world politics are expressed in the ubiquitous tremors and sense of ruin in her work. I like to think that she injected humor and worked with the plain-speaking objects of everyday life to balance the prevailing tragedy of the destroyed, discarded materials that were her medium. All objects have a useful life; they may or may not be subject to the violence of human activity, but they are all eventually relegated to the junkyards of time.

This discussion of the poetry of matter and decay brings me to my main point: namely, that the spaces *between* the old things that Wind welds together are the spaces we actively fill with our own consciousness. In other words, we insert our own memories and associations into the activated spaces around her orchestrations of found objects and forms. I, for example, recognize in Wind's work some of the hand tools I last saw in the hands of my grandfather, who was a carpenter, and so I can't escape my own nostalgia when I give myself over to Wind's sculpture. Others viewers surely find different associations with places and people living or remembered. I would suggest that the artist prompts this process with her frequent use of construction throwaways and fragments, the negative spaces left over from another person's making of some object.

To create this level of rich association is to have created, over many decades and through many provocative experiments, a great body of work that offers a depth of pleasure and meaning. There is profundity and wistful realism in and around the abstract relationships conjured by Wind and her ongoing animation of objects and space.

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