

Barry Cogswell /

TWO COLUMNS OF SPACE No. 5

I like wood as a material for working with, the quality of the finished surface. The first sculptures I made in B.C. were wood — and let's face it, if you want to build anything in this part of the world it's the obvious material. I'm of the opinion that soft woods are better for indoor pieces, particularly wall pieces that people are not going to climb on with studded boots. And you have to watch large laminated boards out of doors because they are very susceptible to cracking and splitting due to the uneven expansion and contracting resulting from the changing moisture content of the wood. You can imagine what happens when a board that is full of water freezes and expands.

Luckily by the time I came to do the symposium piece, I'd become intrigued by the use of graphic divisions of surface, where the surface is built of parallel and repeating units and I was taking this approach to my works in Corten steel and aluminum. It seemed natural to build *Two Columns of Space No. 5* of separate planks of various widths. I've been careful to leave a $\frac{1}{8}$ " space between each plank to ensure the piece will hold together properly, to allow for water run-off on the horizontal surface, to give a little room for each plank's expansion. Wood expands and contracts quite seriously across the grain, but very little along the length. And you have to take this fact into account to prevent the piece from tearing itself apart. The end of each plank is secured to the frame with two bolts, but only one is snug in the hole in the frame to keep the plank in position; the second bolt is in a larger hole which allows the bolt to wander with the movement of the expanding plank. The symposium gave me an opportunity to see how *Two Columns of Space* (a work I had previously done in steel) would translate into wood.

I think when my work is installed in the proper place at Klee Wyck, it's going to look really nice. I like the intimacy and scale of the park. It's going to be set near the pond with a sweeping view across The Lions from the South and East. And there's the potential of planting shrubs or trees of my choice behind it as a backdrop. It will sit on four concrete slabs four inches wider all round than the four base units in *Two Columns of Space No. 5*. And the whole area under it will be mossy. So I think I can have it exactly as I want.

As for the symposium . . . I remember the joy of working in the hot sun, and the charge I got from doing my piece at certain stages of its development. I had to work under a lot of stress to get the sculpture finished. I think it is amazing that we all finished within one or two days of the deadline.

— BARRY COGSWELL



