

## Richard J. Bertman

Some of my sculptures using steel rod or wire are like drawings in air. As with drawings on paper, the viewer visually fills in the surface between lines to create form and shape. The transparency of the piece expresses both near and distant elements simultaneously. This interaction of elements within the sculpture gives the impression of change as one moves around it. Unexpected images are produced as one “reads” the relationship between parts.

This concept of change and how our perception is affected by change intrigues me. In some of my work, the pieces themselves move. Movement generates interest by varying the relationship between elements, creating variety. In some pieces I have tried to involve the viewer physically as well as visually. So *“Rainmaker”*, *“Star Wars”*, and *“Do It Yourself Aquarium”* require cranking or peddling to make the pieces move. However, this “involvement” prevents one from easily perceiving the changing relationship between parts. My most recent pieces have used motors to do the turning so that one can observe the changing relationships. In these pieces, movement is implied even when the piece is stationary but the movement adds an additional level of richness and variety.

Several pieces have satirical overtones. *“Moose Head”* (which experiments with using flat pieces of sheet metal to build up a three-dimensional form) questions the idea of animals as trophies. *“Rainmaker”* and *“Star Wars”* express how we often try to find simplistic solutions to complicated social, political, and environmental problems.

Tolstoy observed that the business of art is to make that understood and felt which (otherwise) might be incomprehensible and inaccessible. I care about making my “art” accessible to people. It is important to me that anyone not formally educated in art theory can relate to, feel comfortable with, be intrigued or provoked by my work. Often I try to make that connection through humor. Poking fun at some of the things we take so seriously makes them more approachable. I admire folk art and have been trying to instill in my own work that humanness and down-to-earth quality that has a way of reminding us of the complexity, the frivolity, the charm, spontaneity, and vitality in our daily lives.