

**World Mandala Monument  
UN project Nearing Completion**

In January 2002, the United Nations will unveil a new permanent installation in the main lobby of its headquarters in New York. The completion of the *World Mandala Monument* will mark the final act of artist Neil Tetkowski's multi-year endeavor, *The Common Ground World Project*.

*Common Ground* is a collaborative work that brings together people and earth from the 188 UN member nations. It began in the mid-1990s, when Tetkowski developed the concept for a project that would explore how the peoples of the world understand the earth. He took the culturally resonant form of the mandala, which he had been using in his studio work since the 1980s, and began to think of how to transform it into a public sculpture. To gain credibility and financial backing, he approached the UN with a proposal to build a sculpture entitled *The Wheel of Life: Common Ground World Mandala*. After patiently wrangling with bureaucratic politics, Tetkowski was directed to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and finally received an endorsement from UN Under Secretary General Nitin Desai.

With official support he could begin to realize the project. He made contact with representatives from each of the 188 countries and requested that clay samples be sent. A tremendous effort was required in this early stage to recruit, motivate, and coordinate people from around the world, to extract earth from their countries, and finally to send it to New York. Through private donations and the support of the New York Foundation for the Arts, Tetkowski raised over \$275,000. The UN provided recognition and a home for the finished work.

A true cooperative effort, the clay mandala consists of a flattened bed of custom-blended clay consisting of all the contributed samples and sand. At a special ceremony in April 2000, representatives from

each country joined the artist at the UN to place pieces of fired clay from their homelands into the soft blend of "world clay," thereby creating a common symbol of unity. According to Tetkowski, "The borders which divide the world into 188 unequal pieces are a clear



**Top:** Neil Tetkowski, *Installation 188*, 2000. **Above:** Tetkowski, *World Mandala Monument*, 2000. **Initial installation at the UN.**

reflection of the way the human species interacts. Blending these materials together is a powerful symbol to dissolve these social, political, and environmental issues." As permanently installed, the mandala will be supported on a hemispherical mounting structure made of metal and anchored to a block of marble.

The January unveiling is timed to commemorate the 10-year review of the Earth Summit in Rio and the five-year anniversary of the Kyoto

Summit; it also highlights the Commission for Sustainable Development. A related work by Tetkowski, *Installation 188*, is touring various cities around the world, including Buffalo, Mason City, Iowa, and Kanazawa, Japan, through July 2002. To complete the cooperative

died in World War I is considered one of the greatest 20th-century works of outdoor sculpture. It is one of three works by Brancusi, including *Table of Silence* and *Gate of the Kiss*, located in the town of Târgu-Jiu. The remaining two works will be restored by the end of 2001.

Although the column had been replaced twice prior to the restoration, in 1996 the WMF placed *Endless Column* on its Watch List of the 100 Most Endangered Sites. In 1998, the Romanian government and the WMF established a new partnership with the World Bank, which loaned \$2.6 million, to finance the restoration of the entire Brancusi ensemble. The WMF raised over \$600,000, and the remainder came from the Romanian government as in-kind support. After substantial debate, it was decided to conserve (as opposed to replace) the existing spine and to refinish the modules with a polished bronze coating that replicates the original. The column was then reassembled with added ventilation and protection from lightning.

The restoration comes just in time for the "International Year of Brancusi," declared by Romania in honor of the sculptor's 125th birthday. Special events are planned throughout the world, including symposia, exhibitions, celebrations, and visits to the Târgu-Jiu ensemble.

**Cambridge Arts Council  
Sponsors Public Art  
Conference**

The Cambridge Arts Council hosts "Conservation and Maintenance of Contemporary Public Art," October 26-28. The conference will address the gap that has evolved over the past 30 years between the increasing number of public artworks and the scant attention paid to their preservation. While many commissioning agencies are searching for

and educational aspects of the project, six satellite works are planned, and smaller artworks will be made using the world clay on each of the other continents.

**Endless Column Restored  
for the International Year  
of Brancusi**

In December 2000, the World Monuments Fund (WMF), in collaboration with the World Bank, the

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