



ARTWORK **URNS OF JUSTICE**

ARTIST **DIANA MOORE**

INSTALLED 1999
JOHN M. SHAW U.S. COURTHOUSE
LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA

Diana Moore's depiction of Justice in the form of monumental urns derives partly from her visits to the Louisiana bayou. While exploring Shadows-on-the-Teche and other historic sites in the vicinity of Lafayette, Moore was intrigued by the tall, decorative ceramic vessels she saw there, which are similar to urns she had seen in southern France. Anthropomorphic vessels have been unearthed in archaeological excavations all over the world, suggesting that this practice is somehow innate to human culture. Moore purposefully made the gender, age, and ethnicity of her figures ambiguous to encompass the splendid diversity of American society. This inclusiveness also alludes to the extraordinary breadth and depth of cultural influences that have shaped the history of Lafayette.

Since antiquity, the personification of Justice has been a common depiction in art. She is normally represented holding a pair of scales in one hand and either a sword or a book in the other. During the Renaissance, the standard depiction of Justice included a blindfold to denote her impartiality. While Justice's blindfold is now a conventional attribute, its depiction in Moore's *Urns of Justice* also makes reference to the local culture of Lafayette. The region's earliest hand-loomed fabrics were often a simple striped pattern, which Moore has adopted for her blindfolds. Coupled with the stars that festoon the bases of the urns, the stripes also evoke the American flag.

Moore's sculptures for the courthouse sit atop the plinths that flank the building's entrance. The urns face slightly outward to greet approaching visitors. Each urn measures approximately five feet in height, allowing the sculptures to provide a transition from human to architectural scale. *Urns of Justice* transforms the ancient use of vessels as architectural ornament into a robust expression of civic ideals and iconic emblems of the federal judiciary in Lafayette. MM

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THE WIDESPREAD USE OF THE URN AS HUMAN IMAGE AFFIRMS THE IDEA OF VESSEL AS A SURROGATE SELF. IN THIS CASE, THE VESSEL REFLECTS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL BUT A MYTHOLOGICAL IMAGE WHICH IN TURN REPRESENTS OUR COLLECTIVE SELF. AS THE EMBODIMENT OF AMERICAN IDEALS AND VALUES, THE URNS REMIND THE PASSERBY THAT JUSTICE IS NOT SEEN BUT SOUGHT IN THE MIND'S EYE. - DIANA MOORE

Diana Moore was born in Norfolk, Virginia. She studied at Northern Illinois University and the University of Iowa. Her figurative works are inspired partly by the classical interpretations of the human form in sculpture from cultures of diverse times and places, including ancient Greece, Africa, and Cambodia. These sources allow Moore's work to resonate with historical memory. Her own close observation and skillful rendering of the human form, coupled with a use of contemporary materials—such as concrete and steel—imbue her work with an exciting immediacy. Exhibitions of her work have included shows at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton and the Loeb Art Center at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. Moore's first GSA commission was a colossal, concrete bust of *Justice* (1994) for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Newark, New Jersey. Her stainless steel figure of *Justice* for the Warren B. Rudman U.S. Courthouse in Concord, New Hampshire, was completed in 1997.

MEDIUM CAST CONCRETE

DIMENSIONS TWO SCULPTURES, EACH 5 FT X 5 FT

