



ARTWORK **SWING OVER**

ARTIST **ALICE AYCOCK**

INSTALLED 2004
GEORGE H. FALLON FEDERAL BUILDING
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Traditionally, sculpture is composed of fixed, solid materials that are rooted to the ground. But Alice Aycock designed *Swing Over* “to deny gravity and escape the earth.” Composed of two triangulated trusses and two curved forms, her sculpture loops across the façade of the George H. Fallon Federal Building, weaving in, out, and around the building’s entrance portico, culminating in a group of crossed, horn-like shapes at the composition’s center.

Swing Over draws its inspiration from such diverse sources as the flight patterns of hummingbirds and the phenomenon known as the wormhole. The former can be seen in the way the trusses sweep up and then seem to pause before sliding down again, just as hummingbirds are able to pause in midair before continuing their progress. The wormhole concept is suggested by the central configuration consisting of double horns, each with a mouth at either end. According to theoretical physics, a wormhole offers a shortcut through space-time, much like a real worm that burrows through an apple rather than inching along its exterior.

Sweeping the eye along the dynamic lines of the sculpture, the viewer may recall the exhilaration of riding in a roller coaster car as it climbs a steep incline, rounds a sharp curve, and then plunges down. This experience may be the closest most of us come to feeling free of gravity, and it’s one that Aycock recreates visually with *Swing Over*. In one of those delightful convergences of theory and practice, the company that fabricated this work also produces “sooperdooperloopers,” a particularly hair-raising amusement park ride.

The dynamic quality of *Swing Over* is all the more breathtaking because it is affixed to a building that is a model of unremitting symmetry. In keeping with the Modernist aesthetic of the 1960s when it was built, the Fallon Building is all rectangles and straight lines. Aycock’s sculpture breaks through this geometry with a tracery of lyrical silver lines that glitter in the sunlight and cast whiplash shadows on the flat façade at night. EH

AYCOCK



Alice Aycock has been a pioneering figure since the 1970s in the development of post-minimalism—an approach to art that focuses as much on the artist's creative process and the content and context of an artwork as on the formal qualities of the art object. Her large-scale installations have dealt with the interaction of site, structure, materials, and both the physical and psychological responses of the viewer. While the wood and earth forms of her early career draw on childhood memories and allude to ancient history and architecture, the metal sculptures of her recent work evoke associations with industry and the power, as well as poetry, of the machine.

Born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Aycock was educated at Douglas College of Rutgers University in New Jersey and Hunter College in New York. She had her first solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1977. She has earned numerous awards, including four fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition to being an internationally recognized artist, Aycock is also an educator. She has taught at various colleges and universities, including Yale University and the School of Visual Arts in New York.

MEDIUM ALUMINUM

DIMENSIONS 55 FT X 108 FT X 40 FT

