



Fig. 4-1. Bradley Arthur, *Battle Cry*, cast-bronze common objects, 8 x 32 x 4 inches, © Be-Art 1993, courtesy Bradley Arthur.

## Land O' Lakes

Born in Tampa and raised in Miami Beach, **Bradley Arthur** recalled, "When I was an apprentice for Yasuo Mizui, a Japanese master stone carver, he would say to me 'Why does "Florida Boy" want to work so hard to make sculpture? Florida is already beautiful.' That is true . . . and that is also one of the main reasons I like working and living here." A consummate artist and Amrit yoga instructor, Arthur's sensitivity and deep thought are visually palpable. At age seventeen he first studied metal sculpture at the Coconut Grove School of Art and apprenticed with metal sculptor Hugh Dumont. Having earned a degree in fine art from the University of South Florida in 1975, he then set off to broaden his artistic horizons through apprenticeships in Europe and New York.<sup>1</sup>

Over the decades, Arthur has synergized multiple sculptural mediums into his works. His 1982 series of large metal sculptures has been exhibited in numerous public installations in the Tampa Bay region. One of the pieces, *Chair Muse*, is in the permanent collection of the City of Tampa, sited at City Hall Plaza on Franklin Street Mall. Three other public art sculptures from that series are installed at the Hillsborough Community College Performing Arts Building in Ybor City, Tampa.<sup>2</sup>

Using existing objects, Arthur cleverly brings them to life in figural and expressive forms. His text-based 1995 sculpture *Enough*, from the Richard Brown Baker collection and now in the permanent collection at Yale University Art Gallery, is a slight variation of his 1993 *Battle Cry* (Fig. 4-1). In both works, toy army soldiers cast in bronze interact as they engage, climb, shoot, and leap in a seemingly chaotic formation, spelling the message of "enough," a clear anti-war statement.<sup>3</sup>

Arthur has received several other commissions as well. In the early 2000s, he turned melted guns from Tampa Bay's buy-back program into sculptures in the form of a deputy's star—*Components of Public Safety I* and *II*. The purchase order for these commissions bore a significant date: 9-11-01. Situated in front of a Hillsborough County sheriff's building in Ybor City is *Components of Public Safety I*, a circle composed of five segmented sections representing individual elements working together to form a unified and healing whole (Figs. 4-2 and 4-3). According to the artist, the filling inside four of the five



Fig. 4-2. Bradley Arthur with his *Components of Public Safety I*, 2002, November 26, 2018, © Be-Art, 2001-02, courtesy Bradley Arthur.



Fig. 4-3. Bradley Arthur, *Components of Public Safety I*, 2002, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Operation Center, Ybor City. Commissioned by Hillsborough County's Board of County Commissioners through their Public Art Program. © Be-Art, 2001-02, courtesy Bradley Arthur.

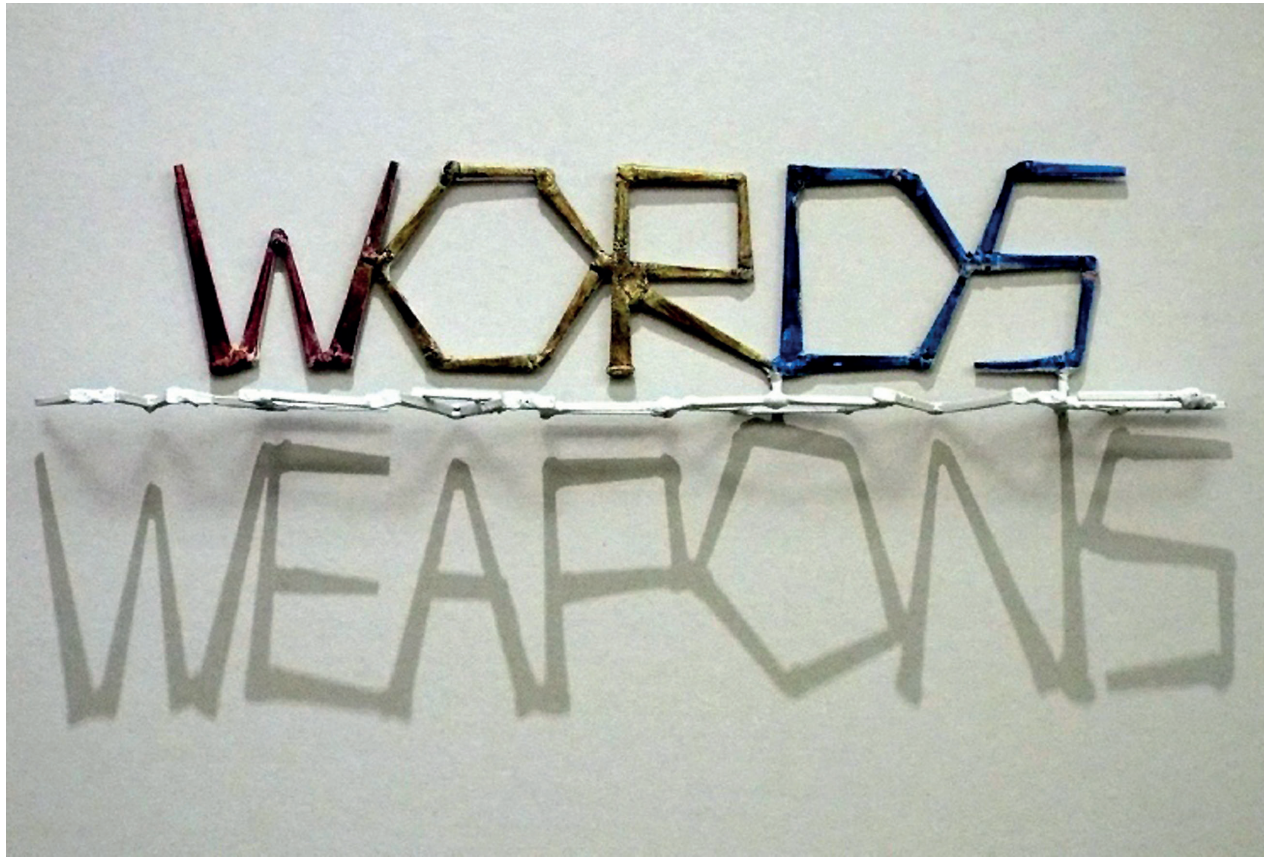


Fig. 4-4. Bradley Arthur *WMD's- Words*, welded steel nails, paint, light and shadow, 4x17x4 (without shadow). © Be-Art, 2004, courtesy Bradley Arthur.

sections consists of round and square billets and rebar, made of the raw steel from the melted weapons. They are meant to corrode, representing “their past and potential danger, as well as destructive effects criminal behavior has on society.” An unyielding and unchanging stainless-steel frame containing the rusting elements is symbolic of the “strength of our laws and how they protect us” and reflective of the “enduring vision of our Constitution.” The dichotomy of the shining stainless steel juxtaposed with the rusting raw steel is an allegory of the battle “between good and evil and right and wrong,” and the empty space above represents Arthur’s hope that someday guns will no longer be needed.<sup>4</sup>

In 2018, Arthur participated in the *Waging Peace* exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts at Florida State University. His dramatic example of a text-based “shadow thoughts” sculpture, *WMD's- Words*, in which the welded-nails declaration “WORDS” is shadowed underneath by another word, “WEAPONS,” was acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts at FSU for its permanent collection (Fig. 4-4).<sup>5</sup>

In an emailed statement to the author, Arthur expressed his feelings about Florida: “Our environment, which is both tropical in the central and northern regions and subtropical in the south, has some extraordinary weather, wildlife, flora, and fauna. The sky exhibits some awesome displays. Massive

thunderstorm clouds building up directly overhead or the amazing sunsets out over the horizon. . . . What Florida and the environment offers . . . is about the interconnection and the natural soulful experience of heat, sky, water and humanity that informs and inspires my experience.”<sup>6</sup>

## Clearwater

The first sculptor in this book to live in Florida was Theodor[e] Kamensky, aka Fyodor Fyodorovich Kamensky (Fig. 4-5). Born near St. Petersburg, Russia, on August 21, 1836, he took instruction at the prestigious Imperial Academy of Arts and received a scholarship for further study in Italy, beginning in the 1860s.

Becoming a member of the Imperial Academy, Kamensky won medals at both the London and Vienna expositions, earned the admiration of critics, and received the patronage of Czar Alexander II, who ordered some of Kamensky’s sculptures carved in marble. But despite the fame that accompanies such royal esteem, Kamensky longed to seek “gradual and unpretentious self improvement,” while dreaming of a “regenerated and just humanity.” In 1866, he had modeled *The Young Sculptor*, portraying a boy carving a clay bird (Fig. 4-6). “Soon,” said Kamensky, according to an acquaintance, “the wings will