

NATIONAL SCULPTORS' GUILD

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CERRITOS AIR DISASTER MEMORIAL

BY KATHLEEN CARICOF & THE NATIONAL SCULPTORS' GUILD

Yule Marble, Negro Marquina Marble, Black Granite. site-specific
Scale: 14ft x 6ft x 3ft, plus plaza and bench
Site Location: City of Cerritos Sculpture Garden
Commissioned by: the City of Cerritos, CA
Date commission awarded: February 2003
Date installed: January 2006 Dedicated: March 2006
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The "Cerritos Air Disaster Memorial" pays tribute to the victims of the air tragedy that occurred in Cerritos on August 31, 1986. The tragedy of the 82 deaths resulting from the air disaster interwove three groups of people including their families and friends. On that date, an Aeromexico flight collided with a smaller aircraft directly above the City, resulting in the loss of 64 people on the Aeromexico flight, 3 people on the smaller aircraft and 15 people on the ground. The tragedy became known as the 'Cerritos Air Disaster' and prompted the implementation of safer procedures for airport approaches and departures. In designing the sculpture Kathleen Caricof and the National Sculptors' Guild design team elected to honor each of these groups through use of materials. The materials range from white and gray marbles, and black granite. The shapes we chose for the memorial are that of abstracted wings. Wings are above all the symbol of flying, that is of weightlessness, dematerialization, release – whether of soul or spirit – and of transition to the subtle body. All traditions, whether Far Eastern, shamanistic, Muslim or Judeo-Christian, from East to West, agree on this point, for the flight of the soul and that of the shaman are both one and the same adventure in so far as they both predicate a freeing from the force of gravity. In no tradition are wings there for the taking; they must be won at the cost of what is often a long and perilous lesson in initiation and purification. In general, wings are an expression of rising to the sublime and of striving to transcend the human condition.

The resulting sculpture is of two free-form shapes in the likeness of abstracted wings. A third element is placed horizontally and serves as a place of reflection.

Caricof gave a speech at the dedication. The people of Cerritos offered the memorial in memory of those who perished in the disaster, and to provide comfort and serenity to those who lost loved ones.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: Caricof has gained many accolades for her stone sculpture and reliefs over the years. Sculpture developed from a background in designing for space having earned a bachelor's degree in Industrial Design from the Art Center College of Design. Professional projects include working with Buckminster Fuller in product design and with PPG Glass in developing a next generation of products. Public art commissions include the cities of Burbank, CA; Broomfield, CO; Cerritos, CA; Long Beach, CA; the University of Denver, CO; War Memorial Stadium Little Rock, AR.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCULPTORS' GUILD: Representing some of the most renowned sculpture artists in the nation, the Guild artists work as a team under the leadership of executive director John W. Kinkade. Our organization works closely with cities, municipalities, corporations and private institutions across the country to successfully enhance both indoor and outdoor venues with creative design and innovative artwork. The NSG design teams have enhanced public spaces in a timely fashion within budgets ranging from \$25,000 to \$2.8 million. When appropriate, the design team grows to include architects, landscape architects, structural engineers, designers and contractors from around the nation. Dependent on the nature of each project, the NSG draws upon this knowledgeable group of professionals with proven accountability in past projects.