



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Nicole Orlando, Marketing & Communications Manager
314-615-5277 / norlando@laumeier.org

Laumeier’s Largest Sculpture to Undergo its Largest Conservation Ever

Laumeier Sculpture Park will complete a major restoration of Alexander Liberman’s THE WAY in 2023

(ST. LOUIS, MO)—At a soaring 100 feet high and a hefty 55 tons, Alexander Liberman’s *The Way* was the first massive artwork purchased for Laumeier’s collection, and it remains the Park’s largest piece. Over the years, it has become Laumeier’s signature sculpture, a favorite of Park goers, and an icon for the entire region. Made of 18 salvaged steel oil tanks, *The Way* will undergo its largest restoration in its 40+ year history throughout the spring and summer of 2023.

Care and conservation are ongoing needs for any art collection, but arguably the most pressing for those that are in outdoor settings like Laumeier, where works are exposed every single day to extremes of temperature and precipitation, bird and animal residue, and touching by Park visitors, among other factors. Since its completion in 1980, *The Way* has had minor treatments and was re-painted in 1996 and 2011. However, the current combination of faded and patchy paint, chipped concrete, and corroded metal indicate that it is time for the work’s most thorough conservation ever.

Phase one of *The Way* conservation project was a structural, material, and concrete base assessment. A 3D scan of the sculpture was created and used to evaluate the structure and metal materials of the oil tanks. This phase started in fall of 2020 and is now complete.



The upcoming restoration phase will be a carefully choreographed execution of the needed repairs, focusing on three main elements: metal, cement, and paint. It will begin with a material blasting of the sculpture using an eco-friendly abrasive to remove layers of paint and primer. Any areas that have metal rot, rust, or other signs of damage will be replaced or repaired. Welding will be used to blend new metal seamlessly with the existing structure. Once all repairs have been finished, the entire surface will be primed and then painted in “Toreador Red,” the sculpture’s signature color, and a topcoat applied to seal paint layers and provide additional protection from the weather. *The Way* is currently fenced off to visitors to prevent public



access, and the restoration work is planned to begin in April and be completed by late summer. A celebration event will be planned in the fall, once all the work is finished.

The team overseeing the conservation initiative consists of Laumeier curatorial staff, members of the Getty Conservation Institute of Los Angeles, and the preferred conservator for the estate of Alexander Liberman, Crosby Coughlin. Coughlin has overseen all restoration work for The Liberman Trust since 1999 and has been advising Laumeier's staff on the ongoing maintenance of *The Way* for almost twenty years. Various local contractors will perform the metal, cement, and paint work.

The expected costs for completing the needed restoration work is \$335,000. Laumeier is currently conducting a fundraising campaign to ensure that the entire conservation project is fully funded. Community members can make a donation to support *The Way* conservation at www.laumeier.org/the-way-conservation. Laumeier has received support for this project from the Louetta A. Buechler Trust; National Endowment for the Arts; the Mark Twain Laumeier Endowment Fund; Henry Moore Foundation; and many generous individuals.



About Laumeier Sculpture Park

Founded in 1976, Laumeier Sculpture Park is one of the first and largest sculpture parks in the country. Laumeier presents more than 70 works of large-scale outdoor sculpture throughout its 105-acre campus. Laumeier serves 350,000 visitors of all ages each year, with a world-class art collection, indoor and outdoor temporary exhibitions, education programs, and public events. Laumeier is an internationally recognized museum, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization operates in partnership with St. Louis County Parks.

Laumeier Sculpture Park's ongoing operations and programs are generously supported by St. Louis County Parks; Regional Arts Commission; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; among other corporations, foundations, individual donors, and members.

For more about Laumeier Sculpture Park, please visit www.laumeier.org

LAUMEIER

Images

High-resolution images available upon request.



ALEXANDER LIBERMAN

The Way, 1972–80

Eighteen salvaged steel oil tanks

780 x 1224 x 1200 inches

Laumeier Sculpture Park Collection, gift of Alvin J.

Siteman and with funds from the National Endowment
for the Arts

Photo taken after *The Way* was repainted in 2011.

###