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## New Sculpture Portraying Human Antibody as Protective Angel Installed on Scripps Florida Campus

By Eric Sauter

A strikingly designed stainless steel sculpture dedicated to Richard A. Lerner, president of The Scripps Research Institute, was installed at the entrance to the main building on the new Scripps Florida campus November 5.

The 12-foot-high sculpture features an enormous ring surrounding a fully realized model of a human antibody, an immune molecule that recognizes and helps fight off the body's foreign invaders, such as bacteria or viruses. Entitled "Angel of the West," the sculpture was created by Julian Voss-Andreae, a former physicist who now works as a sculptor in Portland, Oregon.

The sculpture, donated anonymously by a Palm Beach County resident, hails Lerner's "vision, pioneering spirit, and perseverance" that helped make the Scripps Florida campus a reality. Lerner, who became president of Scripps Research in 1987, is well known scientifically for his pioneering work with catalytic antibodies and combinatorial antibody libraries. These advances have led to new uses for antibodies, including as human therapeutics.

The new campus, with some 350,000 square feet of laboratory and office space, and the sculpture will be formally dedicated on February 26, 2009.

"I am honored and deeply moved by Julian Voss-Andreae's work," Lerner said. "By using the structure of the human antibody, the sculpture can be seen as a universal statement about the complexity and beauty of human biology. The dedication should really be shared with all the scientists at Scripps Florida who, through their own deep commitment to biomedical research, are helping to eradicate disease and alleviate human suffering."

The artist, Julian Voss-Andreae, 38, was born in Hamburg, Germany and studied physics at the Free University of Berlin and Edinburgh University. As a graduate student at the University of Vienna, he was part of a team that conducted ground-breaking experiments in quantum mechanics in 1999. Voss-Andreae moved to the United States in 2000 and graduated from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in 2004 with a B.F.A. in sculpture. He lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

Much of Voss-Andreae's work is inspired by molecular structures.

"When I started thinking about a sculpture based on the human antibody, I found a fascinating visual analogy between human proportions, as illustrated in Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, and the structure of an antibody," Voss-Andreae said. "My sculpture plays on the connection between Renaissance culture, symbolized by Leonardo's highly recognizable iconic drawing, and the antibody, the central molecule of the immune system."

The sculpture is called "Angel of the West" for a number of reasons, he said: "The title references the monumental piece Angel of the North by British sculptor Antony Gormley erected in Gateshead in northeast England, while mine refers to Western medicine's almost miraculous promises of healing. Most importantly, the title makes clear that antibodies are, in fact, like an enormous army of angels constantly



The new sculpture features an enormous ring surrounding a fully realized model of a human antibody. Photo by Eric Sauter.



Sculptor Julian Voss-Andreae, a former physicist, was on site to oversee the installation. Photo by Eric Sauter.

protecting us from sickness and disease."

Voss-Andreae began design of the sculpture in mid-2005, and spent much of 2006 developing the software that would translate details of the antibody structure into complex cutting instructions for the special grade stainless steel needed to complete the structure.

"The sculpture was built from 1,400 laser-cut pieces of corrosion-resistant stainless steel," Voss-Andreae said. "Constructing the sculpture, which involved bending and welding each of the pieces and then grinding and sanding them, was very labor intensive. I began assembly in 2007 and finished earlier this year."

To accommodate the sculpture's large size, the sculpture was shipped from the artist's Portland studio via a semi-tractor trailer normally used to transport boats. The sculpture, which weighs approximately 1,500 pounds, measures 12' x 12' x 4' (3.70 m x 3.70 x 1.20 m) and will be visible from much of the Scripps Florida campus.

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*The sculpture, donated anonymously by a Palm Beach County resident, recognizes the contributions of Scripps Research President Richard A. Lerner. Photo by Chris Fay.*