

Located near Denver's Fort Logan National Cemetery, *Bridge*, by artist and sculptor Stephen Shachtman, serves as a gateway piece to connect the memorial park to the surrounding community.



PHOTO: STEPHEN SHACHTMAN.





# TALL ORDER

A DENVER ARTIST LOOKS TO THE WORLD  
AROUND HIM TO INFORM HIS DYNAMIC  
COPPER, GLASS AND METAL CREATIONS.

WRITTEN BY TATE GUNNERSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK WOOLCOTT

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The basis of Shachtman's *Lunar #3 at the Race Track*, shown left and opposite, is hammer-forged steel accented with hammered textured copper. Below, the artist creates a piece in his Denver studio. Shachtman's pair of Corten steel sculptures, bottom, from his *Monolith* series, stand tall in Denver's Space Gallery along with his painted-copper works on the wall.

LUNAR #3 AT THE RACE TRACK PHOTOS: STEPHEN SHACHTMAN.

When Stephen Shachtman wants to wow visitors with Colorado's scenic beauty he takes them to Devil's Backbone. "It's close to our Loveland home (a midcentury remodel-in-progress he shares with his wife and infant son) and there's an amazing little hiking trail with great rock formations and views," says the artist and sculptor whose unabashed love of the outdoors is central to his life and his work. Shachtman's earlier sculptures feature organic shapes inspired by an encounter with a giant squid or images of distant cosmic nebulae, while his recent body of work highlights linear forms reminiscent of the monolith in the opening scenes of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. "In a way, all of my work is wrapped around science and nature," he explains. "Gravity just pulls me in that direction."

From the confines of his metal shop near downtown Denver, where he also creates utilitarian pieces like lighting, railings and planters, Shachtman employs a chain hoist to move massive steel sheets and sculptures without assistance. Ultimately, he transforms the raw materials into fine art sculptures such as *Bridge*, voted best new public art by a local publication in 2013. Located in southwest Denver, this minimalist assemblage of Corten steel, polished granite and sheets of laminated glass resembles an open doorway. "I like the idea of my work being used as a gateway," Shachtman says. "I have always been drawn to creating an environment for people to experience going through or around, like a portal to what I imagine."

Shachtman earned his Master of Fine Arts in jewelry design and metalsmithing, both of which he continues to teach at Metro State University and Arapahoe Community College. And while those skills comprise a relatively small portion of his work, they exert a clear influence on his larger creations. "My interest is in applying smaller techniques to larger concepts, and some of my sculptures are actually reminiscent of jewelry," says Shachtman, who calls on jewelry and metalsmithing techniques like enameling, piercings and hammer forming/texturing to create a narrative thread. To add color and patina, the artist incorporates stacked, laminated glass and applies acrylic paint, enamels and various chemicals like liver of sulfur and acids.

"It's all self-driven," Shachtman explains about his solitary process. "My end product always represents me, and it's something I plan to be doing for the rest of my life. There is no exit strategy." **L**





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STEPHEN SHACHTMAN





Photograph by Wes Magyar



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