



## The Herk Van Tongeren Memorial Sculpture Fund

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### KATE GRAVES RECEIVES The 2002 Herk Van Tongeren Memorial Sculpture Fund Award

Kate Graves of Trenton, New Jersey was granted the fifteenth annual Herk Van Tongeren Memorial Sculpture Fund Award. The award, presented on November 25th is given to a member of the Johnson Atelier Technical Institute of Sculpture in Mercerville, New Jersey who shows distinguished merit and ability.

The Herk Van Tongeren Memorial Sculpture Fund was established in 1987 in memory of the late Herk Van Tongeren, former President of the Johnson Atelier. Established through contributions, the fund provides financial assistance to Johnson Atelier artists. Kate Graves was chosen by a selection committee comprised of nationally recognized sculptor/educators Patrick Strzelec of Carversville, Pennsylvania and Robert Cooke of Oxford, New Jersey.

Kate came to New Jersey from Santa Barbara, California. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Asian Art History from Mills College in Oakland and studied for a semester, in 1991, in Nepal and Tibet with the School for International Training's Tibetan Studies Program. She enrolled in Johnson Atelier's Apprenticeship Program in August 1995 and was hired as Foundry Department staff in January 1998. In September 2002, Kate was named as the school's Purchasing Agent.

Kate received the \$1,000 award to fund the creation of the fifth and final sculpture in her 'Zero Tolerance Area' series. This began as a photographic essay documenting the crumbling, often ornate exteriors of the many abandoned buildings in Trenton, New Jersey. The sculptures, created in cast bronze, are scaled-down portraits meant to evoke the buildings' social history. These houses were once the pride of their occupants; their lives intrinsically linked with their structures. They are situated in the midst of active neighborhoods, now abandoned and boarded up in an attempt to prevent illegal activity on the premises. Now, people seem not to see them; they stand mute and blind in a stasis far beyond ever being restored. They are waiting for the inevitable demolition in a phase that may stretch on for years. The series reproduces the disrepair resultant from years of erosion. It is intended to act as a mute reminder that maintenance and vigilance are necessary: that without them, over time, even the most noble built countenances will sag and fall to dust. It is her hope that the sculptures will act as a subtle catalyst within the perception of the viewer: that through the contemplation of what has fallen away, a deeper appreciation for what has endured will be experienced.

