



# VOICE

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## The sky's the limit

The Muriel Pollia Sculpture  
Garden takes art at the  
University of La Verne  
to a higher level

# The Sky's The Limit



The sculpture "Inhale/Exhale" by Phillip K. Smith, will be the first piece in the Muriel Pollia Sculpture Garden and the first public art on campus.

The Art Office image

The Muriel Pollia Sculpture Garden will take art to higher level at University of La Verne

By Lisa O'Neill Hill

From poets to woodworkers to sculptors, Muriel Pollia supported artists all of her life and felt that communication through the arts was the most powerful form of communication available.

Pollia, a woman of unique vision with myriad talents, was particularly devoted to nurturing young artists and was interested in cutting-edge creative processes.

It's fitting then that the foundation that bears her name is funding the first public art project at the University of La Verne, a significant milestone in the institution's already strong commitment to art.

The Muriel Pollia Sculpture Garden, near the Sara & Michael Abraham Campus Center, will make art more accessible and send a message to the community and to current and prospective students about art's vitality. It will change the landscape of the campus, showcasing the work of Indio artist Phillip K. Smith III, who has won acclaim for his public art projects that combine the precision of geometry with the organic forms in nature.

Smith is creating two pieces – a 54-foot fiberglass sculpture called "Inhale/Exhale" – and another that he has yet to design. Painted a deep red-orange, "Inhale/Exhale" will be striking in size and form, an arresting work of art impossible to overlook. Yet, despite its boldness, Smith created it to complement its surroundings.

The sculpture garden, along with the introduction of a photography major at La Verne, is pushing the campus to the next level in terms of its dedication to art and will help the university showcase its mission in a unique and very public way.

For years, the Harris Gallery, the Carlson Gallery and the Tall Wall Space in the Arts & Communications Building have drawn community members onto campus and have showcased a wide range of work from artists in a variety of media. The galleries, long well-at-

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tended, have a strong relationship with the art world in Los Angeles and other dynamic areas, and the art department is considered sophisticated. But the lack of significant outdoor art has felt like a void; the Muriel Pollia Sculpture Garden is expected to be a tremendous beginning to public art on campus.

Artists and non-artists alike are excited by the prospect of elevating the campus' profile through public art, something that University President Steve Morgan has been interested in for a long time.

"The institution's willingness and eagerness to pursue this is like electing Barack Obama," said Gary Colby, professor of photography at the university. "It's like this amazing, hopeful thing."

La Verne art professor Ruth Trotter, who chaired a search committee for an artist to create the sculptures, said the committee wanted to find a work of art that represents the future and sets the campus apart in some distinctive way, looking forward. The project sends an important message, particularly to students, she said.

"It says we value art. We value creativity," Trotter said. "We value the creative spirit. As you know, in this climate, art is often the thing that is set aside and marginalized and we are finally including it in a way that gives it the attention it deserves. I think it's going to mean a lot to the students and to their sense of value for their chosen career."

The Muriel Pollia Foundation has provided a major grant of \$250,000 to establish the Muriel Pollia Sculpture Garden at the University of La Verne.

University and foundation officials were looking for a "radically inventive public artwork that should connect to the vitality of student life at the new Campus Center." The artwork should foster dialogue around the ideas it represents and may serve as a catalyst for public art opportunities around campus.

In the course of the search, Trotter and other members of the committee discovered Smith and the innovative work he had been doing in the Coachella Valley.

Smith said he was impressed by what he heard.

"Their concern was the future of art on campus and that it begin around the campus center and that this project be the spark for art on campus," he said. "They basically said, 'Let's not worry so much about the garden,

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From left, John Linarelli, Ken Marcus, Andrea Labinger, Jeffrey Kahan, Tom Harvey, Iraj Parchamazad and Jonathan Reed constitute the original ULV Academy.  
Rusty Evans photo

## ULV Academy established to honor faculty research and publication

On April 28, 2006, the Faculty Research Committee introduced a who's who of scholars, all "Dedicated to Collegial Leadership in Research & Scholarship": Tom Harvey, Jeffrey Kahan, Andrea Labinger, John Linarelli, Ken Marcus, Iraj Parchamazad and Jonathan Reed.



**Milestone**  
**#6**

Born of a mandate to develop a Researcher of the Year award, the ULV Academy is the product of years of discussion and careful consideration. The two distinguishing characteristics of members of the ULV Academy are demonstrated quality research (or creative work in art, music, photography, theatre, or other creative arts) and commitment to the University of La Verne.

"When I came to this university about 20 years ago, research was not an important component of this university," said Parchamazad, a professor of science at La Verne who is also co-chair of the Faculty Research Committee. "Now, we are very

happy to tell you that at this university, the majority of the faculty are involved heavily in their

research. Through the Academy, we believe we can encourage people and we can show them how they can publish, and why research is really important, even for their life (away from the university)."

The ULV Academy encompasses a wide spectrum of academic interest, from literature and language to science and history to business and law. The Faculty Research Committee, which, in addition to Parchamazad, is composed of Kathy Lamkin, Jay Jones, Kahan, Jack Meek, Jan Pillegreen, and Rita Thakur, spent months poring over research and published materials to determine the members of the original Academy.

The goal of the Academy would be to add one or two members per year, with the members to vote on that. Since the Academy's inception, five members have been added: Donald Dunn, Glenn Gamst and Lamkin in 2007; and Patricia Long and Ken Scambray in 2008. Its formation has proven to have had an impact not only on current faculty members but prospective ones as well.

"Other universities have things that they do to promote scholarship, like 'Researcher of the Year' award and things like that, and funding and so on," Linarelli said. "I think what's unique about this is that it's an attempt to create an institution to deal with it."

# New provost and deans set fresh academic course

As construction on the Campus Center Project proceeded, the university was rebuilding its academic leadership.

After a nationwide search, the University of La Verne chose **Dr. Alden Reimonenq** to be its chief academic officer, succeeding **Richard McDowell** as provost.

Reimonenq came to La Verne from California State University, East Bay, where he had most recently served as Dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences. A widely published scholar, Reimonenq is a noted educator, and distinguished himself as an academic leader.

Reimonenq's first major move was to hire **Mark Goor** to succeed **Leonard Pellicer** as dean of the College of Education and Organizational Leadership. Pellicer retired in 2006 following six years as CEOL dean.

Bringing 35 years of experience as an educator, Goor came to La Verne after 13 years at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. During his tenure at George Mason, he served as a professor of special education, coordinator of the university's Special Education Program, and as assistant and associate dean for Academic & Student Affairs.

On May 15, 2008, **Allen K. Easley** was introduced as dean of the College of Law. With nearly 30 years of successful experience in academia and intimate knowledge of the ABA approval process, Easley stepped in to replace Dean **Donald J. Dunn**, who had passed away four months earlier, and Interim Dean **H. Randall Rubin**, who served in the law school's chief post since August 2007 when Dean Dunn began medical leave.

On July 1, 2008, **Ibrahim "Abe" Helou** succeeded **Gordon Badovick** as dean of the College of Business and Public Management. Badovick retired at the conclusion of the 2007-08 academic year following six years as CBPM dean. Helou first joined the La Verne faculty in 1993 and served as CBPM associate dean for five years prior to his appointment as dean.



**Milestone**  
**#7**



The artist's rendering shows a potential second sculpture near the west end of the Abraham Campus Center on the University of La Verne campus.

The Art Office image

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let's worry about art.' ”

The nexus between the foundation — which supports activities that celebrate historical or innovative creative process — and the university is Jay Rodriguez, chairman of the board of the Pollia Foundation and a University of La Verne trustee emeritus. Rodriguez knew of Morgan's interest in public art on campus, and Jerry Luedders, president of The Muriel Pollia Foundation, said La Verne seemed like fertile ground to achieve Pollia's interests.

“Muriel always supported artists, and that included writers, sculptors, poets, woodworkers and Zen Buddhists, so it was appropriate to have her foundation fund the sculpture garden at the University of La Verne,” Rodriguez said. “It is her first public art project and fits in nicely with the dream of President Steve Morgan who has always wanted art on the campus, and with the City of La Verne, which encourages public art.”

The public art project is taking place not long after the Harris Gallery, the Carlson Gallery, and the Tall Wall Space were brought together as a consortium under the leadership of curator Dion Johnson, whose office is now in the Harris Gallery.

“The art department, along with the music and theater departments, sees itself as a strong cultural center for the community, one that will only be heightened with the addition of the public art project,” said Johnson, who is director of the university galleries. “The sculpture garden will bring a sense of individuality to the campus and engage the idea

that La Verne is a progressive, cutting-edge institution.

“It will literally change the landscape of the campus and in a way that puts the focus on the fact that the university is embarking upon really sort of showing that we're an institution not only of higher learning but of higher culture and that's a really wonderful way to put things forward.”

The public art project will make the university even more accessible to area residents and others.

“I feel that public art and a sculpture garden is something that welcomes and opens up the university to the community and in that way creates a wonderful dialogue,” Johnson said. “Art is meant to be viewed and experienced and to have spent time with. It requires an audience and that's what we want to engage the community with.”

“I think this will have such a tremendous impact in that it will provide an experience that is both intellectual as well as a purely wonderful sensation, and undertaking something in such a scale is really a commitment.”

Brandon Spiegel, a 21-year-old art major, said he is excited about the university's commitment and the potential to bring more recognition to La Verne's progressive art school.

“Hopefully, it draws our community into our school a little bit more,” Spiegel said.

“I think putting something in the public display makes the people that don't normally walk into a gallery see something and wonder about it. It's just all about getting it in their

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The completion of the Muriel Pollia Sculpture Garden will provide distinctive and interesting additions to the new Campus Center landscape.

The Art Office image

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## \$250,000 Grant for Sculpture Garden Fits Muriel Pollia's Vision

The Muriel Pollia Foundation has provided a major grant of \$250,000 to establish the Muriel Pollia Sculpture Garden at the University of La Verne.

Indio-based artist Phillip K. Smith will install two sculptures, located in close proximity to the Abraham Campus Center, prior to the grand opening of the new building in September. The project will initiate the development of a program of public art on the university's campus.

Based in Los Angeles, The Muriel Pollia Foundation was founded in 2006 to honor the life and work of Muriel Pollia. Dr. Pollia was a humanitarian and an avid supporter of the arts with a passion for life, creativity and spirituality.

"Dr. Pollia developed a remarkable philosophy and approach to life," said Jerry D. Luedders, president of the Muriel Pollia Foundation. "She believed that by following the expression of beauty, order and harmony through art, dance,

music, mathematics, architecture, design and the like, an artist creates a silent expression of that power which is responsible for its inception through inspiration. The constant awareness of peace, harmony, and beauty is the highest order of consciousness. Like quality and consciousness attract. Communication through the arts and beauty is the most powerful form of communication extant. Dr. Pollia was convinced that as the consciousness of a single individual is raised through these means, the consciousness of humanity is also raised."



Muriel Pollia  
The Muriel Pollia  
Foundation image

Luedders said the foundation lends its support and encouragement to organizations and institutions that practice and hold such qualities to be honorable and of the highest value and spiritual significance.

"We are hopeful that the public artwork will be a highly visible feature of the campus and may serve as a catalyst for future public art opportunities around the campus," Luedders said.

The Sculpture Garden will also support the university's commitment to quality education through exceptional contemporary art and complement its new Campus Center building.

"That new building is probably the most beautiful building in the entire city of La Verne," said Jay Rodriguez, chairman of The Muriel Pollia Foundation. "I just felt that the sculpture garden would really be a nice complement to the building and that's why we wanted to appropriate the money."

# The Shape of Things to Come

Geometric sculptures of Indio-based artist Phillip K. Smith will set the tone for a new art consciousness at La Verne

By Lisa O'Neill Hill



Many of Phillip K. Smith's works, such as "Inhale/Exhale," blend geometry with growth patterns of nature. Jay Jorgensen/Palm Springs Life photo

Phillip K. Smith III, who sees beauty in the meshing of pure geometry with the amoebic forms of nature, believes that public art should inspire people and be open to multiple interpretations.

"I think that successful public art should be like looking at the clouds," Smith said. "There is no question that it is powerful, that it is beautiful and that you understand it in its most basic sense. But at the same time, you don't understand it and everyone has their own interpretation of what the clouds look like and how they are the way they are. I think that's very powerful."

Undoubtedly, everyone will have an interpretation of the sculptures Smith is creating for the University of La Verne, the campus' first public art project. Funded by the Muriel Pollia Foundation, Smith will design two pieces that will be installed near the new Campus Center by Sept. 1.

Standing 54 feet tall, made of fiberglass and

painted a deep red-orange, "Inhale/Exhale" will mark the center of campus, serving as a focal point. So many students walk in the area that the sculpture will have a 360-degree exposure, Smith said. After visiting the site, the 36-year-old artist knew that whatever he created had to be substantial to hold up against its context. Otherwise, he said, it would get overwhelmed by the nearby buildings.

"My intent with that was that it would come forward as a very powerful statement that the university has about their art program and about the future of art on campus," Smith said. "What I also wanted to do was bond the student body together. I wanted it to be an inspirational piece for the city."

"Inhale/Exhale" is Smith's biggest piece and his first public art project in California outside of the Coachella Valley, where he has created several

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**Milestone**  
**#8**

## Campus Center Project Reaches \$26.1 Million Goal

A four-year effort by the University of La Verne to fund its Campus Center Project reached a climactic finish on December 30, 2007, as the university officially announced it had achieved its fund-raising goal of \$26.1 million for the three-part capital project.

Thanks to a final flurry of contributions in the closing days of 2007, the university was able to realize its objective before the end of the calendar year, thereby meeting conditions to qualify for a \$600,000 challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation.

The three-part Campus Center Project encompasses renovations to the Sports Science & Athletics Pavilion (formerly known as the Super Tents), creation of the Frank & Nadine Johnson Family Plaza and construction of the Sara & Michael Abraham Campus Center Building.

The Abraham Campus Center is named in honor of

Board of Trustees member Michael Abraham and his wife, Sara, who have pledged \$6.5 million toward completion of the three-story, 42,000-square foot facility. The campus center will provide space for educational, recreational and communal endeavors where students, faculty, staff, alumni, family, friends and campus visitors can come together.

When The Kresge Foundation awarded the grant to the university in December 2006, the university was nearly \$4.4 million shy of its \$26.1 million goal. The time conditions put forth by the challenge grant intensified fund-raising endeavors, which in turn led to a remarkable response of support.

With the goal achieved, construction on the Abraham Campus Center building proceeds, and soon the university will have a sparkling new hub of campus activity.

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public art pieces. In Kansas City, Mo., Smith won praise for a 15-foot glowing sculpture, “Transformed Flower,” for the Richard & Annette Bloch Cancer Survivors Park, which he designed to be a positive image of transformation. He recently was short-listed to create a proposal for a piece outside Oklahoma City Hall.

The son of a housing developer and an interior/graphic designer, Smith was born in Los Angeles but moved to the Coachella Valley when he was a child. After graduating from high school, he went to the Rhode Island School of Design, where he earned degrees in architecture and fine arts. He moved back to the Coachella Valley in 2000 and established The Art Office, a multidisciplinary design studio in Indio.

As a teenager, Smith said he couldn’t wait to leave the desert. It wasn’t until Smith was away from the Coachella Valley that he realized what he had taken for granted.

“I think that once the desert gets in your blood, you can’t ever deny it,” he said. “I learned to appreciate it once I was away from it.” After living on the East Coast, Smith said he realized how important it was for him to see the horizon line, to have a sense of space and distance.

“It’s very powerful, I think... long, extensive plains and then one tree or one big boulder or some marker that defines the landscape in a way. The other thing you just cannot deny is the light and the color and warmth of the light. I’m always trying to build in light and shadow in the pieces. I think the desert is very powerful for my understanding of putting objects out into the public

realm. I think I have a tendency toward more boldness.”

Yet, Smith is not bold just for the sake of being bold. He says he is acutely aware of creating something that makes sense where it is placed.

That was appealing to University of La Verne Art Professor Ruth Trotter. She said Smith understands the relationship between art and the environment and between art and the existing architecture.

“We felt that was particularly important with

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— Phillip K. Smith

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this first significant public art piece that the work consider the existing physical properties of the campus,” Trotter said. “It was just very clear that Phillip would be ideal for that.”

“Inhale/Exhale” meshes geometry with growth patterns of nature, a favored theme of Smith’s work.

“You have this very controlled, precise, able-to-be-measured thing on one side and then you have this very organic, amoebic growth sort of thing on the other side and I love the idea of meshing those two things together,” he said.

Smith, who will work with a composite art fabricator on “Inhale/Exhale,” said the piece is too big to fabricate in his studio. He will create 10 modules, each 6 feet high that will be stacked on top of each other. The sculpture uses the triangle as its modular form. He has described the piece as “a transformation from a triangle into a triangle into a triangle.”

“It has this ability to be very thin and then also very wide and so as you move around it, the piece is always changing,” Smith said. “It looks like it’s breathing. It looks like it’s filling with air and releasing. Giving nature this kind of precision and giving geometry this kind of life, I think is a really exciting intersection.”

Smith has yet to design the second piece but said he thinks he will create something between 10 and 16 feet high, using rusted steel as a finish.

“It’s huge for me, it’s a real honor,” Smith said of being chosen to do the pieces. “What I really enjoy doing in my work is working with cities and clients that have never done this before. There’s this kind of camaraderie that develops; we’re going through this together. We’re both invested. I sort of feel like I’ve become part of the ULV family.”

Smith said everyone he has spoken to at the University of La Verne is excited about the sculptures and eager to see them installed. The university is conveying an important message about the importance of art, he said.

“I think it sends a very powerful statement about the university’s commitment to the art program and a very strong statement about the beauty of the campus,” he said. “Public art on campus in the last decade has become a very cutting-edge thought. I think to know that a school of La Verne’s size is embarking upon that really sends a message to the community and to prospective students.”

## University Gets Three Title V Grants in Four Years

In recognition of its continued efforts to actively support and educate students among the community’s underserved populations, University of La Verne was awarded three highly competitive United States Department of Education grants in the span of four years.

The latest, a \$3.58 million Title V STEM Grant is a two-year, renewable cooperative federal grant that allows the university to partner with Citrus College, a community college in nearby Glendora. The funds are designed to help students better prepare for their university education in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or “STEM.”

In 2007, the University of La Verne received news of a \$2.47 million Title V Developing Hispanic Serving Institution grant from the U.S. Department

of Education. The five-year grant serves to enhance programs within the university’s College of Business & Public Management.

In 2005, the university College of Education & Organizational Leadership was awarded a Title V grant.

With the largest segment of Hispanic students of any private college in California, La Verne is strongly committed to maintaining a rich cultural diversity in its student population and among its faculty members. Approximately 39 percent of the university’s traditional-aged undergraduate students are of Hispanic backgrounds.

The latest grant funds programs at La Verne for outreach to high school students to foster an interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM.



**Milestone**

**#9**