

'Garden' of poetry to grace Beloit Armajani sculpture moving to college campus from L.A.: [Final Edition]

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A 3,000-square-foot "garden" of poetry, sprinkled with trees, high-backed chairs, benches and tall ceramic jars, will blossom on the campus of **Beloit College** thanks to the generosity of the Lannan Foundation of Los Angeles.

Iranian-American artist Siah Armajani's "The Poetry Garden," now at the foundation's California headquarters, will be moved to **Beloit College** and dedicated next spring.

The gift, one of several announced by the Lannan Foundation in recent months, turns this Rock County city of 35,000 into a veritable museum of Armajani's work. **Beloit College** already owns one Armajani piece, "Gazebo for One Anarchist: Emma Goldman." Another Armajani sculpture, the 660-foot "Beloit Fishing Bridge," will be dedicated this October. The \$500,000 work, built on a 70-year-old railroad trestle spanning the Rock River, will be the centerpiece of the Beloit 2000 RiverFront project.

Construction of "Fishing Bridge," made of several fishing platforms and a replica of an early railway locomotive, is being underwritten by Steven P.J. Wood, former chairman of Warner Electric Brake & Clutch Co., South Beloit, as a way of honoring his family.

Armajani, who lives in St. Paul, is renowned for his epic-scale sculptures, many in the form of bridges. He designed the huge caldron that housed the Olympic flame at Atlanta and the waterfront plaza of the World Trade Center in New York.

"The Poetry Garden" will be surrounded by dining and residential halls and by the **Beloit College** Park Historic District, a Victorian-era neighborhood that is being repainted and redecorated by the college in cooperation with the city.

Armajani is personally adapting "The Poetry Garden" to its Beloit site. A retrospective showing of his work, acquainting Wisconsin viewers with the sculptor's multifaceted career, opens Aug. 23 in the college's Wright Art Center. Armajani was born in Tehran in 1939. He immigrated to the United States in 1960 and graduated from **Macalester College** in 1963.

Armajani drew inspiration for the rectangular garden, a placid retreat appropriate for lectures and poetry readings, from "Anecdote of the Jar" by American poet Wallace Stevens (1879-1955).

The poem's text, an homage to art's transformative powers, is printed in a narrow band of glazed ceramic that leaps from one piece of furniture to the next just inside the garden's walls. Thirty ceramic jars, glazed in blue and green, are clustered in a corner.

J. Patrick Lannan Jr., president of the foundation, stressed during a visit to the campus that the foundation is making the garden a gift to **Beloit College** students. He and Armajani agreed that it was vital for the garden to be sited in a residential quadrangle.

Beloit College President Victor E. Ferrall Jr., who called the garden "a magnificent gift," is brainstorming the precise location of the garden with Beloit students.

The Lannan Foundation is shifting its focus away from collecting. Last month it gave portions of its holdings to the **Art Institute of Chicago**, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

The foundation will continue to operate national grant programs that support contemporary visual art, literature and American Indian communities.