Richard Serra, *Sylvester*, 2001



Richard Serra, *Sylvester,* 2001.

1 Close Looking and Principles of Design

- What do you see as you approach and walk around the sculpture?
- What do you think the artist was trying to communicate about movement or space?
- What do you wovnder about the choice of material or the way it's placed in the landscape?

*Consider using terms like **line, form, scale, balance,** and **negative space.***

2 Learn More About the Artist:

- Richard Serra (1938–2024) was an influential American sculptor known for his massive, curved steel sculptures that invite viewers to move through and around them.
- Born in San Francisco, he was inspired early on by working in steel mills and shipyards which informed his approach to working with heavy steel and his focus on labor and hands-on engagement.
- Serra studied literature and art at UC Santa Barbara and Yale, where he explored painting before shifting to sculpture. Serra brought a thoughtful approach to sculpture that helped define the **Post-Minimalist** movement of the 1960s and 1970s.
- His **contemporaries** included figures like Robert Smithson, Donald Judd, and Eva Hesse, with whom he shared an interest in material, form, and process.

About the Artwork:

- *Sylvester* (2001) is a strong example of Serra's work. It's made of huge, curved Corten steel plates that create a winding path. When visitors walk through and around it, they see changing views, hear echoes, and feel the surprising closeness of such a large structure.
- Serra's works aren't just for looking at—they are meant to be experienced. Moving through them is like a personal dance between your body, the artwork, and the surrounding land.
- The weathered **patina** of the steel shows the passing of time. The shape and size of the sculpture remind people of natural rock formations, and connect with the environment around it.

Glenstone Connection:

- Serra helped choose exactly where and how *Sylvester* would be placed at Glenstone to make sure it fit his artistic vision.
- Glenstone's Design and Construction team worked with Serra and his studio to prepare the land and build a strong base that could hold the heavy steel and match the sculpture's curves and entry point.





Richard Serra. Still image of Artist Oral History by Glenstone.



View from above the sculpture.



View of the sky from inside the sculpture.

3 Reflect

Worldview and Social Impact

- How does moving through the sculpture change your experience compared to looking at it from a distance?
- How do you imagine that the artwork was pieced together?
- Does moving through the sculpture bring up any feelings or memories?

This invites discussion of empathy, interpretation, and perception.

Details and Material

Examine a section of the steel closely.

- How has time affected the surface?
- What sounds, views, or physical sensations do you notice? How does the size affect your awareness?
- What relationship do you notice between the sculpture and the landscape?

*Introduce words like **patina, oxidation, surface,** and **contrast**.*

Personal Reflection

After moving through the sculpture, reflect:

- I feel... (emotion or reaction)
- I think... (insight or idea sparked)
- I am... (state of being or identity)

Connect art to personal meaning, mindfulness, and self.

Richard Serra, Sylvester, 2001 © 2023 Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
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Accessibility Note: Path narrows, not wheelchair accessible.