

# Texas Artist George Tobolowsky at Tyler Museum of Art

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## The Shape of Things to Come



Discarded steel and scrap metal are reborn in the exhibition Substance & Form: The Art of George Tobolowsky, on view at the Tyler Museum of Art September 5 through November 28, 2010 in the Museum's Bell Gallery. Texas sculptor George Tobolowsky is known for his dynamic repurposing of discarded metal pieces into energetic and compelling large-scale sculpture. Works weighing up to 3,000 pounds will be placed in and around the TMA, both inside the gallery and outside on the grounds. This exhibition was organized by Grace Museum, Abilene. The

final selection of works to appear at TMA will vary from those shown in Abilene. Collectors' Circle sponsors are Betty and Dick Summers.



A Dallas native, George Tobolowsky earned business and law degrees from Southern Methodist University in the early 1970s. While there, he minored in sculpture and became life-long friends with his mentor, the renowned sculptor, James Surls. In the years following, Tobolowsky remained involved in the arts through personal collection and voluntary service to arts institutions, although his primary focus was on his corporate career. It wasn't until 2006 that the distinguished businessman and attorney had his first solo exhibition at the Gerald Peters Gallery in Dallas. His work immediately captured the interest of the art world, and in the months following the exhibition, Tobolowsky began shifting his focus to life as an artist, exhibiting his unique works and creating new sculpture from his Mountain Springs, Texas studio, which is situated on his ranch.

"Tobolowsky has earned recognition in the world of contemporary art because his works recall a long legacy of steel sculpture while maintaining a

uniquely new quality,” says Kimberley Tomio, TMA Director. “He has been compared to sculptors like Julio González, Pablo Picasso, and David Smith, all pioneers of abstract sculpture. While his works recall the legacy of past artists, Tobolowsky forges his own way, composing pieces that connect with a 21st century viewer.” The artist’s corporate background certainly colors his work, with titles like *The Auditors* and *The 600 lbs Deal Breaker* suggesting a humorous context to each piece.

In order to find materials, Tobolowsky visits metal scrap yards where he routinely picks up 1,000 to 2,000 pounds worth of raw material from vast heaps of discarded steel. The materials come from a variety of sources including machine and heavy-duty fabrication shops. These industrial castoffs are to some degree familiar to anyone who has observed a working engine or a large machine of some kind. Fan blades, gears, and coiling metal strips are transformed by Tobolowsky, who uses the materials to create works that are both familiar and foreign. Rather than constructing something that is a sum of its parts, Tobolowsky redefines form and function by building three-dimensional abstractions, often suggesting anthropomorphic postures, and succeeds in elegantly proving that the sum is indeed more than the parts.

*Source: Tyler Museum of Art*