Storied Sculpture

The Memorial Art Gallery counts down to its centennial celebration in 2013 with a new sculpture park.

An outdoor work of massive limestone sculptures and smaller bronze figures by the artist Tom Otterness will highlight a new sculpture park that’s designed to celebrate the Memorial Art Gallery’s 100th anniversary in 2013.

Scheduled to be completed in spring 2012, the work is the gallery’s largest acquisition and will be the centerpiece of a surrounding park—named Centennial Sculpture Park—located on the gallery’s campus at the corner of University Avenue and Goodman Street.

Otterness, who has completed several outdoor commissions in the United States, Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands, is known for narrative works that are at once lighthearted and socially pertinent. He has multisculpture installations located in New York City, Indianapolis, Grand Rapids, Mich., and Beverly Hills, Calif.

His Rochester proposal—featuring limestone sculptures intended to echo the surrounding buildings as well as smaller bronze figures—is designed to tell the story of a sculpture from quarry to finished product. The work is also expected to serve as a gateway into the museum.

“The Otterness installation is the first site-specific sculpture in the gallery’s long history and, with its sense of whimsy and wonder, seems a fitting way to celebrate the gallery’s centennial,” says director Grant Holcomb. “The work will animate the site and serve as an enticing invitation to explore the grounds and, eventually, the treasures of the gallery.

“The installation even seems reminiscent of the old town square concept where people meet to carry on public conversations.”

Preparatory work will begin this year on several acres at the southeast corner of the gallery’s campus. Installation of the Otterness sculptures is scheduled to begin in summer 2011 and be completed in spring 2012.

The project will be underwritten by the gallery’s Maurice R. and Maxine B. Forman Fund for art acquisition.

In addition to the Otterness installation, the new park will showcase works from the gallery’s collection by such national and local artists as Deborah Butterfield, George Rickey, Tony Smith, and Albert Paley.

The sculptures and the park will be opened to the public as the gallery counts down to its 100th anniversary in 2013.

For more about the gallery, visit http://mag.rochester.edu.