MN Landscape Arboretum Presents 'Steelroots' Sculpture Exhibition
*Sixteen sculptures...four seasons...infinite wonder...opening April 16*


"We are pleased to host this major exhibition. The Arboretum is a perfect setting for Steve Tobin's soaring and evocative root sculptures," said Arboretum Director Ed Schneider.

Tobin’s sculptures are a dramatic fusion of nature and art. "The landscape and sculptures will work in tandem to encourage visitors to see the wonders of nature as inspiration for my art," said the artist.

This is the first exhibition ever of Tobin’s Steelroots sculpture series in Minnesota, and only its second showing worldwide. (It was most recently displayed at Chicago's Morton Arboretum.) Highlights will include:

- A series of sculptures of massive rolled and bent steel pipes soaring up to 40 feet;
- A pair of bronze root sculptures titled “Romeo & Juliet”;
- A bronze sculpture of a forest floor;
- Steel interpretations of pine cones; and
- Five ‘child-sized’ root sculptures 3-5 feet high.

"Set among the Arboretum’s pristine gardens and peaceful groves, these works will invite you to touch, stroll through or even lie down beneath them, to discover your own unique views of the land around you, views that change with the light and the seasons," said Sandy Tanck, Arboretum manager of interpretation.

Although the exhibition officially opens April 16, many of the sculptures have already been installed at the Arboretum (the process is easier on frozen ground). Plans call for the sculptures to be sited around the Arboretum's Oswald Visitor Center and along a half-mile paved walk from the Visitor Center to the ever-popular Maze Garden. They will rise in scale as the landscape changes from intimate gardens of roses, dwarf evergreens and bright perennials to

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quiet groves of towering oaks and pines. "Is it art framed by nature or nature framed by art? The interplay invites your participation, to see what’s around you with fresh eyes," said Tanck.

"The diverse topography and the amazing sight lines at the Arboretum make it a perfect setting for Steelroots. The interplay of landscape and sculptures will encourage visitors to see the wonders of nature framed by my Steelroots," said artist Tobin. "My work activates rather than dominates the surroundings, making this a perfect marriage between landscape and art. The shadows cast by the monumental Steelroots (up to 40" high) make ever-changing drawings on the Earth."

Plan to refresh your natural spirit through the seasons during the run of the exhibit. "Steelroots" sculptures range in color, deep black, ethereal white or rust-toned patina. As the Arboretum landscape shifts from spring green to verdant summer, fall russet and gold, then winter’s hushed snows, seasonal change will bring new dimensions to the work.

Steve Tobin gained international acclaim in 2004 with the dramatic installation of the Trinity Root sculpture near Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan, the first and only art memorial near the 9/11 disaster site. The sculpture is a bronze casting of the stump and roots of the historic sycamore tree that saved St. Paul's Chapel during the attack on the World Trade Center. The transcendent sculpture is permanently sited on the corner of Wall Street and Broadway where millions of visitors see it each year.

"The function for me of roots is to show the power of the unseen," Tobin told the New York Times. "And on 9/11, we found out about the power of all our unseen connections, the things that nurture us that are hidden below the surface."

"Steelroots: Touching Earth & Sky" will run from April 16 through Jan. 30, 2012. Tobin will be special guest at a Meet the Artist event Thursday, April 14, from 7:30 to 9 p.m., at the Arboretum. For more information, visit www.arboretum.umn.edu.

Presenting sponsor is Mosaic Company, with additional sponsorship provided by C.H. Robinson Worldwide. The exhibition also received support from Country Inn & Suite of Chanhassen, Suburban Chevrolet of Eden Prairie and media partners Comcast and KARE-11.

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the largest public garden in the Upper Midwest, is part of the University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences. It is located 9 miles west of I-494 on Highway 5 in Chanhassen. Open daily except for Thanksgiving & Christmas Day. Adults: $9; free for ages 15 & younger and free for members.

- The End -

(Note to Editors: Call Barb DeGroot at 952-443-1459 or Judy Hohmann at 952-443-1445 to capture visuals of the sculpture arrivals, to interview artist Steve Tobin, for sculpture images or any other media needs.)