



ARTWORK **PILLAR ARC**

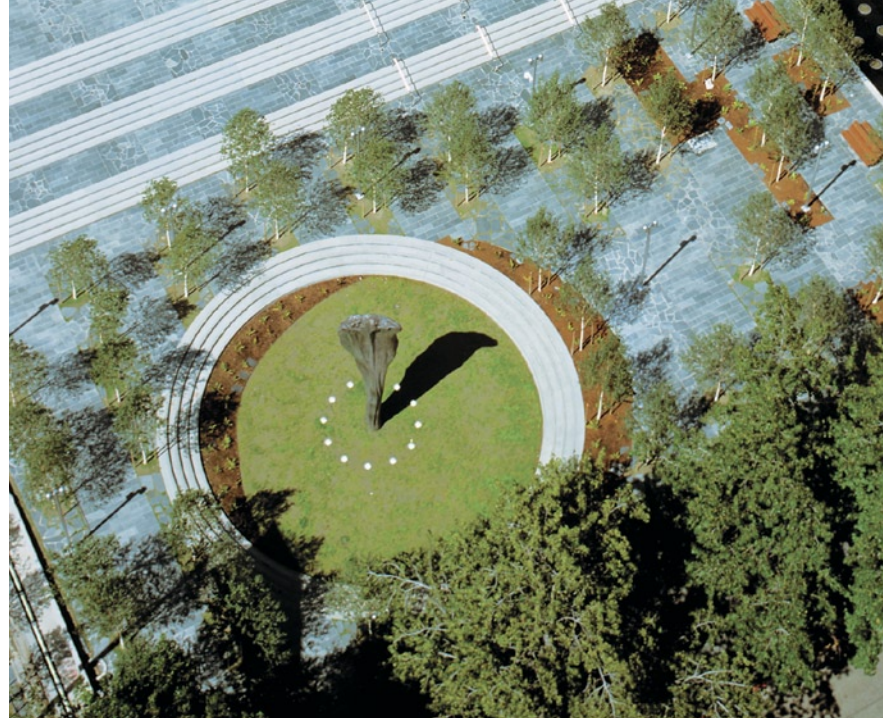
ARTIST **MING FAY**

INSTALLED 2004  
U.S. COURTHOUSE  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Fantastically oversized and poetically evocative sculptures of plants, flowers, fruits, vegetables, seedpods, and shells are the subjects of Ming Fay's art. He crafts these natural forms out of various materials—including metal, wood, paper, glass, and wire—and arranges them in room-sized installations that are both visually spectacular and densely layered with meaning. These sculptures represent the physical, psychological, and spiritual nourishment provided by the botanical realm. Fay's art is also imbued with humor and wide-ranging cultural allusions. His depictions of gigantic plants are reminiscent of the mysterious-island and forbidden-planet adventures of 1950s and '60s science-fiction movies, while his jumbo fruit sculptures evoke the surreal *Garden of Earthly Delights* by the Renaissance painter Hieronymus Bosch. Fay's sculptures also play with the traditional Chinese connotations of certain fruits—such as peaches (longevity), cherries (love), and pears (prosperity)—that he adapts for his own metaphorical uses. Overall, Fay's work reveals the innate wonder and complexity of even the humblest natural forms, which are part of the vast ecosystem that we share.

To create *Pillar Arc* for the courthouse in Seattle, Fay took inspiration from a single scale of a cedar cone. Fay selected the cedar because of its spiritual and historical connections to the Pacific Northwest. Some of the largest Western Red cedars grow on the Olympic Peninsula. The tree also has special symbolic meaning and practical uses for the area's Native American communities, who for centuries have used its pliable bark for weaving and its durable wood for building longhouses and canoes. Fay enlarged the cedar-cone scale to the monumental stature of a tree, a transformation that emphasizes, in the artist's words, "the inherent beauty, nuance, and poetry of the form." *Pillar Arc* also possesses an anthropomorphic quality; its upright posture and elegant curves suggests a human figure. The well-balanced sculpture embodies the function of the courthouse metaphorically. WC





**Ming Fay** was born in Shanghai, China, in 1943, raised in Hong Kong, and now lives in New York. He came to the United States in 1961 to study at the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio, and later received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in Missouri and his MFA from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Institutions that have exhibited Fay's work include the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai; the Whitney Museum of American Art at Phillip Morris and the National Academy of Art in New York; the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia in Virginia Beach; and the Berrie Center for Performing and Visual Arts at Ramapo College in Mahwah, New Jersey. Fay's other public art commissions include *Ginkoberry Gwa* (2003) for the Oregon Convention Center in Portland; *Delancey Orchard* and *Shad Crossing* (2004) for the Metropolitan Transit Authority of New York City; and *Árbol Mágico* (2005) for the city of Yauco, Puerto Rico. Fay is a professor of sculpture at William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey, and an artist-in-residence at the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.



MEDIUM CAST ALUMINUM

DIMENSIONS 27 FT 6 IN HIGH

