



Mandala After Prayer Wheel

Maurice Van Der Beke

1974 (re-installed 2002)

Surrey Arts Centre, 13750 88 Avenue

Made of pounded sheet copper and measuring almost two metres across, *Mandala After Prayer Wheel* is inspired by the Tibetan prayer wheel, a Buddhist symbol of good fortune. Both monks and laypersons turn those wheels to spread blessings and positive wishes. Van Der Beke wanted to provide a feeling of contact that stays with people. He also likes the discolouration that accumulates on the copper surface—the patina—because of so many hands touching it. The wheel, which has no beginning and no end, is believed to attract Perfection and Peace, key concepts of the Buddhist faith.

By concentrating on the wheel, the user can enter a more meditative, restful state of consciousness. A raised spiral pattern appears to advance when the wheel is spun in one direction and to recede when spun the opposite way. The artist enlarged the form of a handheld prayer wheel to a grand scale so people entering the lobby of the Surrey Arts Centre can see this



whirling illusion. Unsurprisingly, *Mandala After Prayer Wheel* is almost constantly in motion and a favourite among school tour groups.

This is the oldest artwork in City of Surrey's Public Art Collection.

About the Artist

Maurice Van Der Beke was born in Belgium in 1939. He attended the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent where he won the prestigious Delvigne Prize and had a number of solo exhibits across the country. An extensive traveller, he has lived in Afghanistan, India, Nepal, and Germany and has worked in various careers including as a commercial pilot. Now retired, he lives in Langley and runs a honey bee farm.

Van Der Beke was a recipient of a 1974 Local Initiatives Program (LIP) grant to produce an artwork for the City of Surrey.

