

**Arc 3** 1983

Mike Baur (American, b. 1951)

limestone, concrete, steel

Loan courtesy of the artist

Mike Baur earned his BFA after suffering the loss of his studio and sculpture to a tornado during his senior year at Arkansas State University. He continued his education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, receiving an MFA in 1976. The artist lives and has a studio in West Chicago, Illinois. He creates sculpture at a wide variety of scale, from table top to monumental.

**Arc 3** reflects Mike Baur's interest in using materials which show evidence of their history, not only in the rough-hewn and hardscrabble edges that characterize the concrete he often employs, but the manner in which his sculpture proudly displays its slow decay. That his work is reminiscent of an artifact is intended, “. . . *things no longer intact and functional, that were pulled up, dug out of the ground.*”

Often his objects are deceptively simple, pared to a formal essence that carefully balances hand-wrought and machined form. Nothing is withheld from the viewer. What is seen is what the artist intended. His work is a straightforward orchestration of shapes, texture, age, and subtle coloration. He asks the viewer to observe and appreciate it as such.

Baur's **Arc 3** communicates a quiet strength in its arrangement of cast concrete and limestone lintels. Its placement inside the small atrium-like space created by a stairwell's proximity to the university's main entry lends a meditative quality to our experience, which is augmented by the sensitive placement of gray shale as ground cover throughout the space. How would the experience of **Arc 3** change if it was encountered at the top of a hill in the open prairie?