

at Morley Health Center was a \$25,000 gift to the city from Summit Steel Corp. vice president Frank Sheba.)

Drumm thinks of his outdoor sculptures as totems — “(tall, linear structures oriented to the sun” — and they are not really “finished” until several years of weathering take place.

“Sky Notch,” for example, is made of welded Cor-Ten steel, an alloy including copper that develops a self-protecting coat of rust as aluminum does. “For the first year or so,” Drumm says, “it will throw off a superficial coat of yellow rust. Then it changes to a deep purple-brown. ‘Sky Notch’ has been up there long enough that it should be developing its final coat of rust now.”

Drumm’s work is big and getting bigger. Recently-completed commissions included a 14-foot-high steel sculpture for a senior citizens’ housing complex in Miami, and a similar piece 20 feet high for the Baltimore elementary school where Drumm got pelted with stones. In the lobby of Orangewood Place, an office complex in the the Cleveland suburb of Beachwood, four relief panels by Drumm soar five stories into the air.

“I’ve made it a goal,” he adds, “to take

on a new material or learn some new process every year. Each object you do—you never feel it’s complete in itself. It’s a stepping stone on a road that never ends.”

DESPITE HIS long association with campuses, Drumm insists the academic atmosphere is stultifying for the artist and that “the only way to learn is to get out of the university and into the real world.”

“I wouldn’t be content with putting one or two things in a faculty show every year,” he says. “The universities are a curtain against the real world—they’re so out of tune with what’s happening.”

While Drumm’s work has found wide acceptance, it has its critics, too—and ironically, Drumm draws fire from opposite ends of the public spectrum: Those who are totally unsophisticated in their visual taste find his work baffling, and some who are highly sophisticated find it not nearly baffling enough.

A sampling of not-very-perceptive sniping was evident in a meeting of the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, which operates the senior citizens’ facility in the old Akron Tower Motor Inn. Drumm’s work for the building was

the butt of some presumably jocular remarks from AMHA board members — and while the comments supposedly were offered in levity, they were revealing of the speakers’ underlying confusion about the nature of art.

“If this had cost us something, I’d have complained,” said board member James Alpetter. “If I’d paid for it, I’d be bitching,” said Alpetter’s board colleague, Fred Nimmer. (The cost was borne by private developers who bought and remodeled the building under contract with AMHA.)

A more thoughtful critique of the Drumm style comes from a graphic designer, who began by agreeing that it’s better to have Drumm’s work filling the urban landscape than whatever would probably be there otherwise. But his assessment of Drumm’s output continued like this:

“Quite honestly, I think he’s superficial. He deals with pure form—and as a designer I don’t have anything against pure form, but I don’t think of that as art. I think an artist begins with an idea—with conceptual thinking—and builds form around the idea. I think Drumm starts with his materials, and while he exercises perception and taste in how his