

Outdoor Sculptures on Campus



Jan Zach "Mermaid"

Installed in: June 10th, 1986

Location: In front of the Natural Sciences Building.

Native Czechoslovakian, Jan Zach, had studied at the Superior School of Industrial Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Zach arrived in the United States in 1939 to decorate the Czechoslovakian Pavilion at the World's Fair in New York; however, his return was hindered by Hitler's invasion to Czechoslovakia during World War II. During WWII, he then traveled to Brazil and remained there from 1940-1951 where he compiled a volume on Brazil's industrial development. From 1951 to 1958, Zach opened a school of painting and sculpture in Victoria, B.C. Shortly after, he was invited to join the University of Oregon's faculty.

The nine-foot, cast aluminum statue erected in front of the Natural Science Building is said to be a reflection of a sea image on one side and then on the reverse a human image. The mermaid is a representation of the evolution of the human body emerging from the sea.

The funding for this sculpture came from the University, the Western Foundation, the Oregon Arts Commission, and Professor Anton Postl and his wife.