

The Meditators, 2007  
Lifesize bronze  
Won Lee



# SCULPTURE RANCH

## No Small Undertaking



Long ago, Benini told his young, ambitious artist friends who were turning their eyes toward the East: "Don't go running off to New York where you will be one of 200,000 artists. Success is in getting New York to come to you."

Benini was taking his own advice when he and his wife, Lorraine, established the Sculpture Ranch four years ago, and *the world* is beating a path to their door. At least 2,000 visitors a year find their way to Le Stelle, the Beninis' out-of-the-way ranch on Rattlesnake Mountain seven miles west of Johnson City. They come to visit the Benini Foundation Galleries and to enjoy a walking or driving tour among 70 large-as-life sculptures installed in the natural setting on the 140-acre ranch. The sculptures were wrought by the hands of artists native to Italy, Korea, Iceland,

and seven U.S. states in addition to Texas — and the numbers continue to grow.

"Placing sculptures on the grounds in a nature setting is such a different way of viewing them than, for example, in an enclosed gallery setting," Lorraine Benini says. "It's a European way of living with your art, and these grounds just call for it. But therein dictates what we can and cannot accept. The pieces have to be large scale, they have to be powerful to withstand the serious winds and they have to be of serious construction."

"We are not dealers," she says. "However, the works are for sale. Everything here is paid for by the sale of Benini's paintings. This is his way of giving something back to the world."

Sculptor Won H. Lee is one of the ranch's truly international artists. He was born in Korea, trained in the arts in the United States

and now is living in Toronto. Won's works have been shown and collected in England, Korea, Viet Nam, Canada, Mexico, Singapore — and Johnson City. He shipped his 8,000-pound bronze sculptures, "The Meditators," from China to Texas in May, and Lorraine had them installed at the ranch. Won recently lectured at the Benini Foundation's bimonthly Arts Encounter weekend, which is open to students and art lovers.

The Sculpture Ranch and galleries are open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the suggestion that visitors call ahead. There is no charge, and no donations are accepted. Contact Lorraine at 1-830-868-5244; [Lorraine@Benini.com](mailto:Lorraine@Benini.com) or visit [www.Benini.com](http://www.Benini.com).