Harry Bertoia, Sculptor

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Preface

The quietly poetic personality of Harry Bertoia so impressed me when first I met him on board the *Cristoforo Colombo* bound for Italy in 1957 that I became interested in learning more about his work. When I returned to America the following year, my first visual contact with the golden sculpture wall in a bank on Fifth Avenue in New York whetted my appetite and I began looking for Bertoia sculptures wherever I went, finding them in museums, churches, and business establishments all over the country. Realization came gradually of the extent and variety of his artistic output.

Surprised to discover there was no monograph available giving details concerning the sculptor and his work, I wrote Bertoia in the spring of 1966 requesting permission to undertake such a study. Permission and cooperation were freely and generously granted, even though Bertoia was (and is) somewhat reluctant to have his work summarized while he feels there is still a great deal more of it to come. His cooperation involved spending many long afternoons with me in his studio answering questions and digging through his files to provide information and photographs. It has included reading through my manuscript and correcting factual errors and misinterpretations on my part while refraining from comment on my value judgments. His patience and kindness as well as his enthusiasm for his work provided inspiration for mine.

My work began in Detroit where this study was undertaken as a master’s thesis under the direction of Dr. Wayne Andrews, professor of art and art history, Wayne State University, whose courses, “The Artist in American Society,” I had been following with interest and benefit. Dr. Andrews has given encouragement and help on many occasions since that time, as has Dr. Bernard Goldman of Wayne State University.

Many persons interested in Harry Bertoia and his work have patiently answered written inquiries or granted personal interviews, for which I am extremely grateful. I have received the cooperation of the art galleries representing Bertoia in New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Detroit. Librarians in Detroit and New York have been most helpful, and personal friends in several cities have performed indispensable services
which have been greatly appreciated. My cheerful and patient husband has always provided me with good counsel when it was needed.

I wish to thank the companies (particularly Northwestern National Life Insurance Company of Minneapolis), museums, and private collectors who have either kindly given permission to publish or supplied photographs for reproduction of works in their possession. Many architects have been generous with their time in checking details, as well as with the photographs lurking in their files.

To all persons, named and unnamed, who have contributed to the production of this volume, go my sincere thanks.

J. K. N.
Kinnelon, New Jersey
December 1968