

David Phillips

Born in Flint, Michigan Phillips moved to Boston in 1970. For three decades he has been involved with public art. He is known for his installations in the United States, Japan, and South America. Local public commissions include 'Bread' at Riverside Press Park on Memorial Drive, "Megaliths" at Porter Square Station, "Spiral" at Quincy Square, Harvard, and "Frogs in Common" on Boston Common.

Phillips's recent studio work consists of iron powder affixed to anodized aluminum sheets using a unique technique employing neodymium magnets. Inspired by his lifelong interest in math and science, Phillips's art presents a Hubble-like view of space complete with interstellar dust clouds, black holes, nebulae, and comets.

Process and material properties are crucial to these works, which are composed entirely of iron powder, lacquer, and sometimes string on aluminum panels. Phillips begins by positioning magnets beneath a metal sheet. Working horizontally he sifts iron powder onto the surface and then fixes it with sprayed lacquer. The magnets are then removed. This procedure is repeated, layer on layer. Tilting the metal sheets influences the flow of the particles. String holds back the iron powder, causing it to dam up. Fine slots penetrate the panels, creating edges where the particles abruptly end. Embossed patterns cause the iron to roll off high points. These multiple methods create intricate webs of lines, delicate traces, and clusters of Fibonacci patterns

Phillips studied at Columbus College of Art and Design and Cranbrook Academy of Art. His honors include grants from the Mott Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pollack/Krasner Foundation, the Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund, and support from the United States Information Service for study in Japan. He is the recipient of a Blanche E. Coleman Award and has also been awarded residencies at the MacDowell Colony and Kohler Art/Industry.