

# Horology in Art 36

by Bob Frishman, FNAWCC (MA)

**W**hen attendees of the 2017 NAWCC Ward Francillon Time Symposium banquet entered the historic Harvard Club of Boston, they literally came face to face with *Man with Too Much Time on His Hands*. Andover, MA, artist Pat Keck (b. 1955) created this watch-bedecked human figure sculpture specifically for the event. This is the only appearance of sculpture in my series of articles, although I have others in my digital images.

Educated at Skidmore College and Rhode Island School of Design, Ms. Keck has been featured in many solo exhibitions, including a 2003 retrospective at the DeCordova Museum. Her work is included in Massachusetts museums and institutions, including DeCordova, Addison Gallery in Andover, Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, Boston Public Library, and Fidelity Investments.

During a brief presentation at the banquet, she spoke about time-related concepts in her unique work. She explained that the inspiration for her new piece was discovering many abandoned watches among the effects of her recently deceased mother. When I learned of the project, I supplied her with an additional box of watches that I had accumulated over the years.

As expected that evening, many of us in majestic Harvard Hall closely examined nearly 80 watches on the carved and painted wood figure. Standing about 28" tall, he had clothing hand-tailored by the artist, and hair trimmed from her horse, Fox. Mostly wristwatches, the timepieces covered a full spectrum of styles, sizes, and makers, including Waltham, Bulova, Elgin, and Timex. Below the short necklace of a clock hand, Keck's grandmother's gold pocket watch hung from a much longer chain. An engraved Garrard wristwatch had belonged to her husband's father and was donated to the artistic cause. Another wristwatch, however, I salvaged from the stash. It belonged to her late father, MIT mechanical engineering professor James Keck. Pat is happy that I now occasionally wear this circa 1955 round steel case automatic Movado.

We were especially fortunate to have a contemporary Horology in Art example at the Boston Symposium. Unlike the dozens of other artworks projected and discussed by our 18 eminent speakers, we could hear directly from the creator about her thoughts and intentions. As she pointed out, this figure has "too much time..." in contrast to the human mortality message that timekeepers have conveyed in artworks over the past centuries.

*Author's Note:* With the 36th installment, I close a series that has appeared continuously in the *Watch & Clock Bulletin* for six years. The 2017 Symposium is behind us, and I now will focus more exclusively on the 2018 conference at the Henry Ford Museum, the 2019 one in Germany, and future events already in the planning stages. I will, however, continue to research and lecture about Horology in Art. I greatly appreciate the support and encouragement of many NAWCC members for this rewarding project.



Sculpture *Man with Too Much Time on His Hands* by artist Pat Keck.

## About the Author

Bob Frishman has repaired, restored, collected, sold, and researched antique timekeepers since 1980. His business, Bell-Time Clocks, is based in Andover, MA. He lectures regularly about the history, science, and culture of mechanical timekeeping, he has authored many articles for the *Watch & Clock Bulletin*, and he can be reached via [www.bell-time.com](http://www.bell-time.com). He is an NAWCC Fellow, Chair of the NAWCC Ward Francillon Time Symposium Committee, and a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers.