

ARTnews

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The Rise of the Tattoo Artist

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The Dalí Sculpture Mess Continues

Jackson's Other Actions:
Pollock's Sculptures



Man of Steel

For years, **Leonardo da Vinci's** famed 1487 drawing *Vitruvian Man* has been confined to a vault at the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice and only occasionally comes out for display. But now a shiny sculpture of the impeccably proportioned Renaissance hunk can be seen on the grounds of Enterprise Corporate Park, a 65-acre site in Shelton, Connecticut, with office buildings and sculptures by the likes of **Sandro Chia**, **Richard Erdman**, and **Stanley Bleifeld**.

The *Vitruvian Man's* contemporary incarnation is the work of **Babette Bloch**, who used 5/8-inch-thick stainless steel to enlarge him to 16 feet in height and 5,000 pounds, with two identical figures sandwiching a third—framed in the familiar circle and



Babette Bloch working on her *Vitruvian Man* sculpture.

square. (The original was a diagram for a theory of proportions by the ancient Roman architect **Vitruvius**.) The sculpture's patron is **R.D. Scinto**, a private real-estate developer. As Bloch points out, Scinto has been fascinated by Leonardo da Vinci since he was a boy and even had a portrait of the artist on the wall of his bedroom.

Bloch replicated the *Vitruvian Man's* features—the stoical face, shaggy hair, and well-defined musculature—by piercing the steel. Everything

was hand-drawn, she says: "I didn't do this on the computer. The beauty of the lines is there to the thousandth of an inch." The piece took about four years from the maquette stage to its final realization, and required the input of engineers, who figured out how to cut the steel by forcing 60,000 pounds of water and garnet sand through jets the size of ballpoint pens. The perforated



***Vitruvian Man* installed in Shelton, Connecticut, 2012.**

surface allows light to pass through, and the polished steel reflects the surrounding foliage and New England skies.

—**Ann Landi**

CENTER: JAMES NICOLORO;
RIGHT: RICHARD LERNER