**Robert Murray**

***Cumbria*, 1966-67/1995**

Robert Murraywas born in Vancouver in 1936, lived in Saskatoon, and studied at the Regina College School of Art before moving to New York in 1960. He now lives in Chester County, Pennsylvania while spending summers on Georgian Bay. He is well known throughout North America for his large, abstract, brightly painted metal sculptures. His use of geometric forms, with their folded, curved or twisted planes, saturated colours and smooth finishes are best understood from different viewpoints, their configurations first perceived as simple, become increasingly complex.

Murray has created artworks for both urban and rural settings in the US and Canada. His work has been collected by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Montreal Museum of Art, National Gallery of Canada among many others, and can be found in places of prominence on numerous university campuses and in sculpture parks such as the Walker Art Center and Storm King Art Center. In 2000 he was awarded the Order of Canada and in 2018, the Barnett and Annalee Newman Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to the arts and contemporary sculpture.

*Cumbria* was first exhibited at Toronto’s City Hall for Sculpture ’67 and then travelled to Battery Park in Manhattan in 1968. The sculpture returned to Canada in 1969 and was installed in a less-than ideal setting beside a gas station on Grant McConachie Way, the roadway that led to the newly-opened Vancouver International Airport. In 1995, Transport Canada donated the artwork to UBC and funded its refurbishment and siting between the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and Lasserre building. At this time, *Cumbria* was the first large-scale public sculpture installed at UBC since 1975. Twenty years later, the sculpture was removed for repair and maintenance with the intention of relocating the artwork to a more prominent site that would provide the distant sight lines the artwork was originally intended for.

In a statement (1967) about the making of *Cumbria*, the artist spoke of how he was prompted by a feeling for two pieces of steel, each weighing five tons, that could shift from being understood as a long narrow line, to that of a hanging heavy slab, or to a weightless spread of colour.