Curry College sees first commissioned sculpture

By Tom Pilla
Times Staff

For the first time in its history, Curry College has a permanent sculpture on its campus that was commissioned by the 135-year-old college.

“Geometric Eye,” an original creation by professional Somerville-based sculptor Obie Simonis, was installed this summer on the lawn in front of the student center. It has two parts, with bases made of so-called Weymouth granite from a Hingham quarry, and from each rock emerges highly polished, stainless steel tetrahedrons and pyramids.

The creation process involved the artist working in close conjunction with the senior seminar class taught by Laurie Alpert, a professor of fine and applied arts and graphic design director at the college, in which studio art and graphic design majors consulted with Simonis throughout the nine-month design and creation period.

“I joined a class, and then we started out with what we hoped to achieve and what kind of design we wanted to do,” said Simonis in an interview with the Times. “Different stages of the design I brought to the class, and we reviewed what I was up to.”

The piece is part of Simonis’ ongoing sculpture portfolio, “Stone & Steel,” which combines natural rock with highly worked stainless steel forms.

Simonis described what he was trying to achieve with the sculpture: “What I’m trying to do there is, I’m trying to bring together the notion of the beginning of time, the primordial form, which was the raw stone. And from the raw stone I am trying to show the evolution or the emergence of these geometric, highly technical, mathematically, scientifically or engineer-derived forms. … It’s really a way to show an evolution or emergence of the mind out of stone.”

The artist, who has had many commissions for sculptures in Boston, the region and around the country and world, said that he particularly enjoys working on college campuses, and that the sculpture should also resonate with the fact that students’ minds are emerging, as the steel does from the rock, through their pursuit of learning.

“It was an amazing learning experience for the students,” said Alpert, who is currently on sabbatical working on college campuses, and that the sculpture should also resonate with the fact that students’ minds are emerging, as the steel does from the rock, through their pursuit of learning.

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