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The Hand in Art: Hand of Hope

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Figure 1. Hand of Hope (c. 1970).



Figure 2. Bear and Cub (1957).

Joseph J. Greenberg, Jr (1915-1991). Epoxy over metal armature. Physical location: The Philadelphia Hand Center, Philadelphia, PA.

Joseph J. Greenberg, Jr (1915-1991). Black Coopersburg granite. Physical location: Philadelphia Zoo, Philadelphia, PA.

The “Hand of Hope” (Fig. 1) statue was commissioned for display in the street-level lobby of my practice, The Philadelphia Hand Center, by its founders, James M. Hunter, MD, and Lawrence H. Schneider, MD. The work became a hallmark of the practice’s former Walnut Street location as well as a recognizable feature of its neighborhood.

After a sojourn of several years residing next to Thomas Eakins’ portrait of the operative theatre in “The Gross Clinic,” at Thomas Jefferson University, the sculpture has returned to grace our office’s lobby in the historic Benjamin Franklin Hotel.

The esteemed Philadelphia sculptor, Joseph Greenberg, created the “Hand of Hope.” Regarding his works, he has said, “But you can’t say that the most important thing is to be different. The most important thing is to be good.” Perhaps the artist’s most recognizable sculpture is one enjoyed by generations of Philadelphians and their children at the Philadelphia Zoo, the “Bear and Cub” (Fig. 2).

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