

Lyra Plaque Text

Lyra is a small constellation. It is one of 48 listed by the 2nd century astronomer Ptolemy, and is one of the 88 constellations recognized by the International Astronomical Union. Vega is the brightest star in Lyra, and is one of the fifty-eight selected navigational stars given a special status in the field of celestial navigation.

Lyra was originally installed at Valley View Mall, outside of Sears Department Store in 1980. Many remember the aluminum sculpture for its bright blue color and its unique lines and form. In the Spring of 1990, the sculpture was relocated to Burns Park in downtown La Crosse and later painted dark brown.

In 2019, the sculpture was restored to its original blue color, and relocated here to the banks of the Mississippi River, downstream from the iconic blue bridges, to assist with wayfinding.

Artist Bruce White's work has been described as "an elegant union of ancient symbolism and contemporary science. His preferred materials are stainless steel and aluminum, although he has created works in bronze and granite, essentially materials which lend themselves to permanence. The artist does not usually begin with a specific idea in mind, but rather, relies on manipulation of the paper or thin sheet metal to generate a "surprise" solution which can only be fully realized three dimensionally. He then pursues the idea on a much larger scale.

His work can be found throughout North America. The artist resides in Illinois as of 2019.