

## 2008 National Medal of Arts

### Jesús Moroles

Sculptor  
Rockport, TX

Jesús Moroles is being recognized as a sculptor. His granite sculptures are created through a "tearing" process where the artist drills small holes in the granite and put wedges into it. Then pressure is applied to the middle of the stone to tear it in a line or in a curve, opening up the middle of the granite to show all the crisp untouched granite.

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1950, Moroles received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of North Texas, Denton, in 1978 and apprenticed under Luis Jimenez for one year immediately after his graduation. In 1979 he left for Italy worked in Pietrasanta, Italy for one year before starting his body of work for which he is widely known.

Critical recognition for Moroles came quickly. In 1981, Moroles purchased his first large diamond saw, which began his journey towards creating a workshop dedicated to his artistic vision. In 1983, Moroles built a studio in Rockport, Texas, where he continues to live and work. The workings of the studio became a family effort with the artist involving his parents Jose and Maria, his brother, Hilario, his sister, Suzanna, and brother-in-law, Kurt Kangas as integral parts of the Moroles Studio. This facility is unequaled in the country for making large scale sculptures.

His most visible public sculpture is *Lapstrake 1987*, a massive 22 feet tall, 64-ton work located across from the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Moroles has received significant national attention with his inclusion in the landmark exhibition *Contemporary Hispanic Art in the United States*, which was shown at major American museums. His largest scale single work is the *Houston Police Officers Memorial*, dedicated in November 1992. The memorial is comprised of a granite and earth rising stepped pyramid surrounded by four equal inverted stepped pyramids excavated from the ground.

Moroles has more than 2,000 works in place in China, Egypt, France, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, and the United States, in museum, corporate, public and private collections. To date Moroles's work has been included in over one hundred and sixty one-person exhibitions and one hundred and ninety group exhibitions worldwide. Among his distinctions, Moroles is a member of the Board of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC, and recipient of the 2007 Texas Medal of the Arts Award for Visual Arts by the Texas Cultural Trust.



The 2008 National Medal of Arts was awarded to **Jesús Moroles** and presented by President Bush on November 17, 2008 in an East Room ceremony. Moroles was honored "for his enduring achievements as a sculptor of stone. His granite monuments grace America's landscape." The National Medal of Arts is a presidential initiative managed by the National Endowment for the Arts. *Photo by James Kegley for the National Endowment for the Arts*



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