David Henderson's
Soaring Space

IN DECEMBER, DAVID HENDERSON
was artist in residence at the
Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. If you
were there, you might have been
impressed by the freedoms he enjoyed:
the freedom to work in the same
space where the Barnes Foundation
patrons gathered famous paintings of
Western art. You might also have
been impressed by his freedom to
collaborate with art lovers,
educators, and the curators of the
Barnes. Henderson is a born collaborator,
and here he shared his work with new
audiences at the Barnes Foundation.

If you were not there, you might
have been impressed by what you
read in this article about David
Henderson. What can you expect
of a sculptor who finds his inspiration
in the art of the past while
performing his own interpretation
of that art? How can his
contemporary work be
understood in the
tradition of his predecessor?

It is a question that
has been asked about
many artists in our time.
Henderson was asked
by the Barnes to
create a sculpture for
the rotunda that
would be displayed
for the duration of the
residency. The rotunda
was once filled with a
colossal, exuberant
mosaic of black and
gold marble, which
was torn up by a
determined burglar.
Henderson's task was
to transform the rotunda
into a space that would
be both a testament to the
past and a statement of
the present.

Henderson's sculpture
is a group of four
structures made of
fiberglass, steel, and
copper. The sculptures
are shaped like the
forms of ancient
carved stones. They
are mounted on a
series of supports
that are themselves
shaped like the
arches of Roman
architecture. The
structures are
illuminated by a
series of lights that
are attached to the
supports. The lights
create a halo effect
around the sculptures,
and the light from
the sculptures
illuminates the
rotunda space.

Henderson's work
is a celebration of
the past, but it is also
an expression of the
present. His sculptures
are a reminder of the
power of art to
transform and to
contribute to the
greater good.

The sculptures are
installed in the
rotunda and are
open to the public
for the remainder of
the residency. Visitors
are invited to
experience the
transformative power
of art in a new way.