

Claire's at the Museum

Claire's at the Museum is more than a name for this waterfront restaurant – it is a tribute to an artist's unique vision and commitment to innovation.

Claire Falkenstein (1908-1997) created *Structure and Flow*, the fountain that is this restaurant's majestic centerpiece and, in many ways, its inspiration.

Through her long and prolific career, Claire explored every medium, from sculpture, drawings and paintings to prints, wallpaper and jewelry. An Oregon native who worked in the San Francisco Bay area, Paris and Venice, California. Falkenstein is best known for her monumental sculptures as well as her more intimately-scaled prints and jewelry. It was the care she took in working small that allowed Falkenstein to think big, constantly fusing unique elements into singular masterpieces.

Largely ignoring prevailing trends, Falkenstein experimented endlessly, learning about metals by melting them in spoons over a kitchen stove. Soon, she was manipulating gold, silver, platinum, brass, copper and steel into necklaces, brooches, rings, as well as large-scale sculpture.

Working in Italy in the late 1950s, she made one of her great discoveries, devising a way to virtually “fuse” glass and metal – two very different materials in behavior and chemistry – into single pieces. This combination of materials became the hallmark of her creative production.

While she was working small, Falkenstein was thinking big. Gradually abandoning traditional media like wood and clay, she began producing large-scale sculptures, fountains and other structures using the innovative glass and metal techniques first explored in her highly experimental jewelry.

With its twisting, weaving latticework, *Structure and Flow*, donated to the Long Beach Museum of Art in 1972, is considered by many to be the pinnacle of her career. The fountain was relocated in 2000 from a far corner of the Museum campus to the center of the patio – here it provides the perfect focal point for those who visit Claire's at the Museum to enjoy the view, the menu and the sculpture garden.

This is Claire's at the Museum: an innovative and welcoming place, inspired by the vision and memory of Claire herself.