



ARTWORKS

THE PROGRESSIVE COLLECTION

Foreword by
Toni Morrison

SHARON LOUDEN (B. USA, 1964) THE ATTENDERS, 2003–04 (ARTIST AT AGE 40), MONOFILAMENT LINE, CAGECLIPS, WIRE, AND GLUE, ACQUIRED IN 2004

I create my forms with what I view as beautiful materials that have common, industrial uses. While I focus on the formal aspects of these creatures, I allow the material to change its identity. The groups that I put together, which often look as though they have come from nature, are empowered by their numbers. They have character and humor due to their material, and they participate in the world as a new "species" to be encountered by the viewer.

The Attenders are somber, serious, and at the same time elegant and funny. They are hairlike and "of nature," but are not, in fact, natural. They remind me of stalactites frozen in space or hanging forms standing in conversation with one another. It was Toby who envisioned the piece hanging in a foyer from a twenty-seven-foot ceiling that would allow people to experience a different world overhead. The piece is a drawing in space, consistent with my other works—drawings, paintings, and animation—that are also included in the collection.

The Progressive Art Collection is consistently renewing itself, showing what is in the forefront of the contemporary art world. Progressive is one of the few corporations that commission artists to make site-specific installations within their buildings, thereby providing an exceptional opportunity not only for the artist, but also for the rest of the world to share in the company's bold vision. Progressive believes that contemporary art serves a strong purpose in the culture; by merging these interesting, beautiful, and thought-provoking images with the corporate environment, the company shows its commitment to opening minds. It has been a privilege to have my work included in this collection. I have a great love for Toby, a visionary who has put out so much work in making this collection absolutely outstanding and unique.

Sharon Louden

In my work, I place forms that I see as "beings" in various configurations within different environments. *The Attenders*, made of over sixteen thousand units and 4.5 million feet of monofilament line (ordinary fishing line), was first installed at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri, in March 2003. When Toby Lewis asked me to consider transforming my beings and installing them in a large foyer in a Progressive call center in Phoenix, I saw it as an exciting opportunity to give the work another life.