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## CARE AND MAINTENANCE FOR MILD STEEL SCULPTURES WITH RUST

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**Preventative Measures:** Try to limit exposure to any foreign elements. With indoor pieces for example, move the sculpture before spraying Windex or any other cleanser on nearby surfaces, and do not set objects like drinking glasses on them. When placing a sculpture outdoors, think about exposure to water. Rainwater will wear down many finishes over time, but municipal or well water from lawn sprinklers will react much more quickly with many surfaces so more frequent maintenance is required. Also pay extra attention to sculptures under trees, which can drop sap or pollen, or in areas that receive salty ocean air.

Mild steel sculptures with rust patinas should be raised above fine carpeting, rugs, or hardwood floors with small wood, plastic, or masonry blocks to prevent condensation and staining.

Mild steel sculptures with rust patinas should be raised above decking or paved surfaces outdoors with small wood, plastic, or masonry blocks to prevent condensation and staining. Slight staining that may appear over the years even with this precaution can be removed with Naval Jelly (available at most hardware stores).

**Cleaning:** Your sculpture should be kept clean on a regular basis by simply dusting the piece with a clean, soft, lint-free cloth, and washing with a mild liquid soap and water as needed. For more stubborn dirt or stains (most commonly bird droppings), use mild, non-scratching abrading powders such as typical household cleaners. Bon Ami is the most reliable product we can recommend. These can be used with warm water, sponges, or clean, soft cloths. Dry all surfaces completely before applying oil sealer (see next step).

Clean off bird droppings as soon as possible, as they are acidic and can damage the finish.

**\*Oiling (Optional):** Once your sculpture is clean, completely dry, and cool to the touch, apply a coating of (1) part boiled linseed oil mixed with (2-3) parts mineral spirits, using a clean, soft, lint-free rag. Apply a thin, even coat over the entire piece, wiping excess oil as you go. Try to avoid streaking and build-up. A very thin coat is all that is necessary.

How often a piece should be cleaned and oiled depends on the location and environmental factors. Generally speaking, an outdoor mild steel sculpture with a rust patina should be oiled 2-4 times per year. We recommend at least every six months. A dry but shady day or earlier in the morning is best, and the temperature should be warm but not hot. Too much sun makes the oil dry too fast and makes it hard to apply evenly.

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The temperature of the sculpture should not be too cold or too hot to the touch, and it must be completely dry before any oil can be applied. Always try a small area first.

*\* Oiling your mild steel sculpture helps darken the finish of the rust patina more quickly, and helps maintain that color over time. Many artists prefer to simply let their rusted steel sculptures weather naturally over time and do not apply an oil sealer at all. If no oil sealer has been applied before your delivery and installation, starting an oil maintenance program is entirely optional. HOWEVER, once you start oiling the sculpture, you must keep it up with the recommended twice yearly refresh coats. Letting an oiled finish go without refresh coats can alter the finish in an undesirable way.*

**Misc. Notes:** Please ask the gallery if your sculpture was oiled before delivery/installation if the information has not already been provided. We are also happy to advise if you are considering starting to use a sealer on a naturally weathering surface.

Feel free to call the gallery if you need additional information or if you have any questions.

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