The choice that I make in the subject for each of these sphere pieces is dependent on really how identifiable that object is when translated into this alternative form. The recognizability of that subject is very important to me because the way I want the sculpture to function is that there is an immediate recognition of what that subject is, when seeing the sculpture. But then at the same time while making that connection as to identifying what the object is meant to represent, you simultaneously are conflicted in that the form is completely non-sensical to what you recognize that object being originally. So for example, a UPS truck, in how standardized they are, always being brown and boxy, and with that unmistakable logo, to see the same sort of basic information that we recognize as being the elements of a UPS truck in the form of a sphere, we have that sort of conflicted moment of mistaken identity.

Lars Fisk
Making deCordova Into a Ball
*DeCordova Ball* is meant to represent one very specific piece of the deCordova Museum itself, and that is a turret which is on the lakeside of the building. It’s a cylindrical architectural form that appealed to me because it was already very stripped down into a basic non rectilinear form. Being cylindrical and then topped with a conical roof it was already sort of paired down into basic forms. So then to
push it into a completely different and even more simple form had some logic to it that appealed to me. It was also very minimal in the amount of detailing that existed on that particular piece of the building. Aside from the column of brick, there was really just one detail that for me made it interesting, which was the bricked-in arch window, and then beyond that, the roofing material of the slate and the details, and the copper flashing, and the finial were all very succinct and specific details of that building element that all went into the DeCordova Ball. So there wasn’t really much editing when it came to deciding what elements from the turret that I wanted to include into the sculpture.

Lars Fisk
Fabricating the Bricks
The DeCordova Ball was certainly one of the most difficult in that I had never laid bricks before. I had no skills as a mason, and no training at all. Beyond that, the initial challenge there was to not only figure out a way to lay those bricks, but to design and build the bricks individually first, and then learn how to set them into mortar, and build them into a sphere. I started with the raw clay that makes up a brick. I was able to convince a brick manufacturer to give me a pickup truck-load full of processed clay that was fire ready for their kiln. And what I did was trowel this wet material to a certain thickness over an armature, which was a concrete under-sphere. Essentially I skimmed over the whole concrete sphere with a certain thickness of this raw clay. And, then as the material dried on the surface, I carefully cut each course of the bricks, sliced into the drying clay, and mapped out the whole surface of each brick. Then as the clay continued to dry, the bricks had to be removed one by one from the surface and numbered and labeled in a specific system so that this puzzle could be rebuilt when they were fired. So the clay, after it was dried, was removed from the under-sphere, and relocated to a kiln, fired in a kiln, and then replaced onto the under-sphere according to the labeling system.

Nick Capasso, curator
Fisk’s Spheres
At the beginning of Lars Fisk’s career you could say that he was obsessed with spheres, but it turns out what he’s really obsessed with is objects, and poetic transformations of objects, so one way to poetically transmogrify it and to turn it into a sphere. He’s made spheres out of architecture, out of objects, out of vehicles. At one point we exhibited here a Volkswagen Beetle that he turned into a sphere. I know he also turned a John Deere tractor into a sphere. He turned a Harlem brownstone into a sphere, and a New Hampshire barn into a sphere.

Nick Capasso, curator
Variety of Materials
The other thing I should say about Lars is he is undaunted by materials. For example, in the DeCordova Ball, Lars had to design the bricks. He also taught himself how to cast bricks. He taught himself the masonry skills necessary to mortar the bricks together, and he did all of this in the space of about nine weeks. When Lars built his VW Ball he transformed a VW Beetle into a sphere, but he made it all
himself. He learned how to do the steelwork. He learned how to do the automotive painting. He learned how to do automotive upholstery. He even once did a school bus ball, and the door opens, and you can look inside the ball. And when you look inside you will see very familiar green school bus upholstery with the white plastic piping. Lars had to teach himself how to do all of that, and he executed it all himself. This is very rare for contemporary art. Most contemporary artists who would be dealing with a project like this would contract out a lot of this work because, you know, the idea takes precedence over the execution. Not Lars. Lars has got to manage it from soup to nuts, come up with the idea, plan it all out, design everything, figure out how to make it, and make it himself, and put it all together.

**Mystery Family Tour**

You are looking at a sculpture by Lars Fisk called *DeCordova Ball*. Listen and look carefully to solve the mystery of how this sculpture relates to deCordova. What is this sculpture made of? Be sure to walk around the entire ball to see all the materials. Hint: there are four. The artist made this piece just for deCordova. What on deCordova's grounds do you think inspired the artist to make this piece? A sculpture, a building, or the Park? What else can you see that is made out of brick? What shape is this sculpture? If you said this piece looks like a giant ball or is a circle shape, you’re right! This artist has been creating ball-shaped sculptures for several years. He has made ball sculptures that look like a red barn, a John Deere tractor, and a street. The sculpture that looks like a street is in the Sculpture Park. Look at your map and see if you can find it. The artist wants people to look at everyday objects, places, and things in a new way. If you thought that this piece was inspired by the museum building, you were right! What would you want to see made into a ball sculpture?