

Even Water © Cliff Garten

A Cycle Suite of Eight Sculptures for Raccoon River Park, West Des Moines, Iowa
A meditation on water in the Park.

Supreme good is like water.

Water greatly benefits all things, without conflict.

It flows through places that people loathe.

Thereby it is close to the Way.

Tao Te Ching

The sculpture *Even Water*, for Raccoon River Park in West Des Moines, Iowa is an investigation of the ways that water has shaped the Park. It identifies our relationship to water through a poetic translation of natural and engineered landscape process in the Park. Landscape is process and change over time and in this landscape the constant and the variable is the movement of water through the landscape. Water is what defines Raccoon River Park. The park's geomorphic structures of bedrock, aquifer, lake, and river, riparian zone are a vivid explanation and orchestration of the movement of water in the landscape. The I Ching tells us that water moves everywhere, into every gorge, crack and crevice of the earth, neither shrinking from nor avoiding its natural path. In this way it is true to its own nature. As inhabitants of this landscape the people of West Des Moines enjoy the cool spring fed waters of Blue Heron Lake during the summer, as well as bear the unbridled power of the Raccoon River when it takes over the landscape during peak flood events.

Control of water, the scarcity of quality water, the right to use it, and systems of engineering that manage it will be, in the face of climate change, some of the most difficult issues Iowa and America will face in the 21st century. The populous of West Des Moines will participate in these conditions over the next century and should understand how basic systems such as the rising and falling of the River, and the tapping of aquifers affects their daily lives. Raccoon River Park is a place where the management of water is always evident. The sculpture, *Even Water* takes advantage of chronicling the use and movement of water throughout the Park, by selecting four major processes that are constantly influencing the Park and the greater Des Moines landscape. The events become moments rendered in bronze and mirror polished stainless steel that are poetic interpretations of the natural course of water and its engineered systems in the landscape. The sculptures and poetry are a kind of rebus that must be understood together as the experiential sum to the artwork. The sculptures define forms and processes that allow water to determine the landscape form and landscape process of Raccoon River Park. They are

both natural and engineered structure. The combination of the "natural" and the man made hold the meaning and poetic resonance for peoples understanding of Raccoon River Park. The essential discovery is the confluence of engineering and landscape process. We thought we could determine nature and now we have.

The four poetic sculptures are: *A Changing Lake*, *The Water Table*, *The Oxbow*, *The Well*, and *The Water Balance*

A Changing Lake

A Changing Lake is a sculpture of four frames that asks us to perceive the constant change brought about by people and the landscape. Blue Heron Lake is not a geologically formed lake, but the result of a quarrying operation begun in 1955. *A Changing Lake* chronicles the decades of the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's and 1990's, when the confluence of the quarrying operation and the rising and falling of the Raccoon River brought the Lake and the River together in an unrelenting dance. The quarry unearthed five springs which filled the cavity left by removal of the sand and began to form a lake. Lowering of the earth near the River allowed the River to flow into and join the Lake. At its early elevations and at high water the River and Lake became one. Reclamation of the landscape as a park, again separated the flow of the River from the Lake. *A Changing Lake* is comprised of four bronze picture planes in which the River and Lake are seen as open windows to the other sculptures in *Even Water* and the landscape beyond. Through these "widows" viewers can grasp that Blue Heron Lake was not a part of the landscape 60 years ago and its arrival through human intervention is very recent compared to the long history of the land. Viewing a three-dimensional map or picture with a window that outlines the changing shape of the lake from aerial photos in 1955, 1967, 1974, 1990, viewers also understand that the history and changing shape of the Lake has taken a more stable form through human intervention in the form of engineering.

The Water Balance

The form or process of engineering that makes the present equilibrium of the site possible is described in the sculpture, *The Water Balance*. This sculpture is a metaphor for the pervasive concept to people engineering water on the land. The re-channelization of rivers, diversion of water for roads and land use, creation of lakes and reservoirs, undergrounding of rivers and streams have been and are a constant process through which we change the course of water to cohabit the land with water. The engineering of the flow of the Raccoon River and creation of a dike between the River and the Lake separate the cleaner water of Blue Heron Lake fed by underground springs and the water of Raccoon River, sullied by continual agricultural runoff. When the River is high it moves over the dike and into the Lake. In the natural topography of the site, the River is approximately two and a half feet lower than the level of the Lake. Three engineered pipes, very much like a balance scale redistribute the water from the Lake back into the River until the Lake and River reach an equilibrium again awaiting the next flood in the water cycle. Because the River is lower than the Lake, the Lake will drain into the River until it is below the level of the pipe and cannot drain any more. There is a slight downward slope of the pipe to encourage the water to move toward the River. The bronze and stainless-steel

sculpture, *The Water Balance*, examines this relationship represented by a pipe which is like a balance beam resting precariously on the tip of a pyramid, balancing the flow of Lake water back into the River until the two systems reach equilibrium once more.

The Oxbow

The Oxbow is a slice of the River turned on edge to illustrate the form of a meandering River through the landscape. The sculpture is two stainless steel sections of the Raccoon River, placed back to back, the original form of the Oxbow from 1955 aerial photos and the straightened engineered form of the River from aerial photos in 1998.

An oxbow lake is a U-shaped body of water that forms when a wide meander from the main stem of a river is cut off, creating a free-standing body of water. This landform is so named for its distinctive curved shape, resembling the bow pin of an oxbow. Though the form you see in the *Oxbow* sculpture represents a classic oxbow shape of a river, in this case rather than creating a separate body of water from the River, the River and the space of the oxbow have been subsumed by the Lake. With a civil engineering, the Raccoon River still runs free, around Blue Heron Lake. The River is always moving and slightly changing its course. The oxbow in the River has now become a part of the Lake and a dike separates the Lake from the River. This is a temporary condition and the river seasonally joins the lake during peak periods of flow.

The Water Table

The Water Table is a table whose top surface is the form of Blue Heron Lake in the decade of 2011-2020. The shape of this Lake is what most people in West Des Moines probably understand as a "natural lake", when in reality it is a Lake whose form has been determined not only by natural forces, but by our manipulation and engineering of the landscape that have brought the Lake into equilibrium with the River. At most the Lake is only 30 feet deep, a depth set by the depth of the quarrying operation that formed its bottom. The depth has been magnified in the sculpture in order to create the thickness of the Lake you see in the sculpture. If you look beneath the Lake you will see five small extensions that reach into the bedrock of the landscape. These springs are fingers of the water table or aquifer below the Lake and provide a yearly flow of cold water through separations or cracks in the bedrock, into the Lake. This prevents the water from warming and creating the algae blooms that clog so many other lakes which do not have a supply of cold water to prevent its growth. The eutrophication of water from Iowa's prolific agriculture bring so many nutrients to its waterways that it creates the perfect condition for the growth of algae. The Raccoon River is rich in nutrients from fertilizers that end up in the water from agricultural runoff, but do not generally affect the Lake because of its separation from the River. The people of West Des Moines enjoy clean water throughout the summer because of these springs.

The story of water in Iowa and on this particular site is much deeper. Hundreds of feet below the surface are a series of aquifers, like the layers of icing in a cake, these aquifers are underground rivers that sometimes surface as springs. We always go down to the bedrock to find the water table when digging a well. Some wells are hundreds of feet deep, tapping

aquifers below ground. As climate change warms the earth and our population seeks clean water, many aquifers have been depleted of their supply of water that may have been the result of millions of years of geologic formation in different phases of the earth's climate. There are eight wells on the site that take water from the water table below Raccoon River Park.

The Well

The Well sculpture is a diagram of tapping the water table for potable water. After drilling, piping extends down to the bedrock where the water table rests and water is more prevalent. The eight small well houses mostly located surrounding the playing fields in Raccoon River Park each have a pump with piping extending into the earth. These wells were drilled deep into the earth and use a pump to bring water up into the City's water system, where this water is piped to a central location, cleaned and blended with water from other sources.

Paetic text on the Sculptures of *Even Flow*, All text and poetry © Cliff Garten

A Changing Lake –

The Shape of Blue Heron Lake 1955
The Shape of Blue Heron Lake 1967
The Shape of Blue Heron Lake 1974
The Shape of Blue Heron Lake 1998
The Shape of Blue Heron Lake 2017

The Water Table –

Deep beneath the earth, aquifers:
Mississippian,
Devonian,
Silurian,
Cambrian-Ordovician
Ancient rivers still fed by rain
What we see on the surface
Is a small part of what lies below

The Well --

Tap the earth
Drink the water
Fix the pump
Drought, no Drought

The Oxbow –

One can't bend a river like a river bends itself
First it is here, then it is there
It has its own mind
We can build a dike
But the river moves itself
A constant subtle power

The Water Balance –

I saw the river, it was my enemy
I saw the river, it was my friend
I pushed the river over there
It pushed me back to here
Engineering equilibrium for a lake
A thread of land and a pipe for balance
A precarious stable state
I was thirsty and I drank

**Temporary Artwork, Community Event,
The Raccoon River Park, Art on the Lake Biennial © Cliff Garten Studio, 2018**

**Hexagram 29
K'an / The Abysmal (Water)**

Water sets the example for right conduct. It flows on and on, and merely fills up all the places through which it flows; it does not shrink from any dangerous spot nor from any plunge, and nothing can make it lose its own essential nature. It remains true to itself under all conditions.

**The I Ching or Book of Changes
The Richard Wilhelm Translation**

**Temporary Artwork, Community Event, The Raccoon River Park, Art on the Lake Biennial ©
Cliff Garten Studio, 2018**

Water is mercurial. It has the ability to attract and to mesmerize us. In its pure form it is also becoming one of the most endangered substances needed for life on earth. There is tremendous interest in water, for drinking, for agriculture and for every aspect of our lives. Economics and politics drive its distribution and cost. Water will be one of the most legislated and argued substances on earth during the next five decades. However, we don't give enough attention celebrating it as a constant source of life and renewal. Given the opportunity, artists and citizens would be ready and willing to participate in a summer art and water event. The event I am thinking of will be so beautiful that it will go viral on the Internet the evening it is held. People are hungry to know about water and to celebrate community life surrounding water, but are not given the opportunity. The Temporary Artwork and Community Event for this project are the beginnings of what could become a regional and nationally known Art and Water Biennial celebration tied to Blue Heron Lake and to Iowa.

The Temporary Artwork for *Even Water* will be a performance titled, *Topographic Fires on The Lake* by Cliff Garten. I will create a new condition for the topography of the Lake by placing a thousand small fires floating on the surface of the Lake. These fires will form a concentric shape or constellation of the Lake within the swimming cove and invite the community to participate in the installation and the viewing of a uniquely participatory work of environmental art. The fires burning on the surface of the water will create mirror images on the surface of the Lake, a stunning image and a memorable event that will become a part of the image of Raccoon River Park.

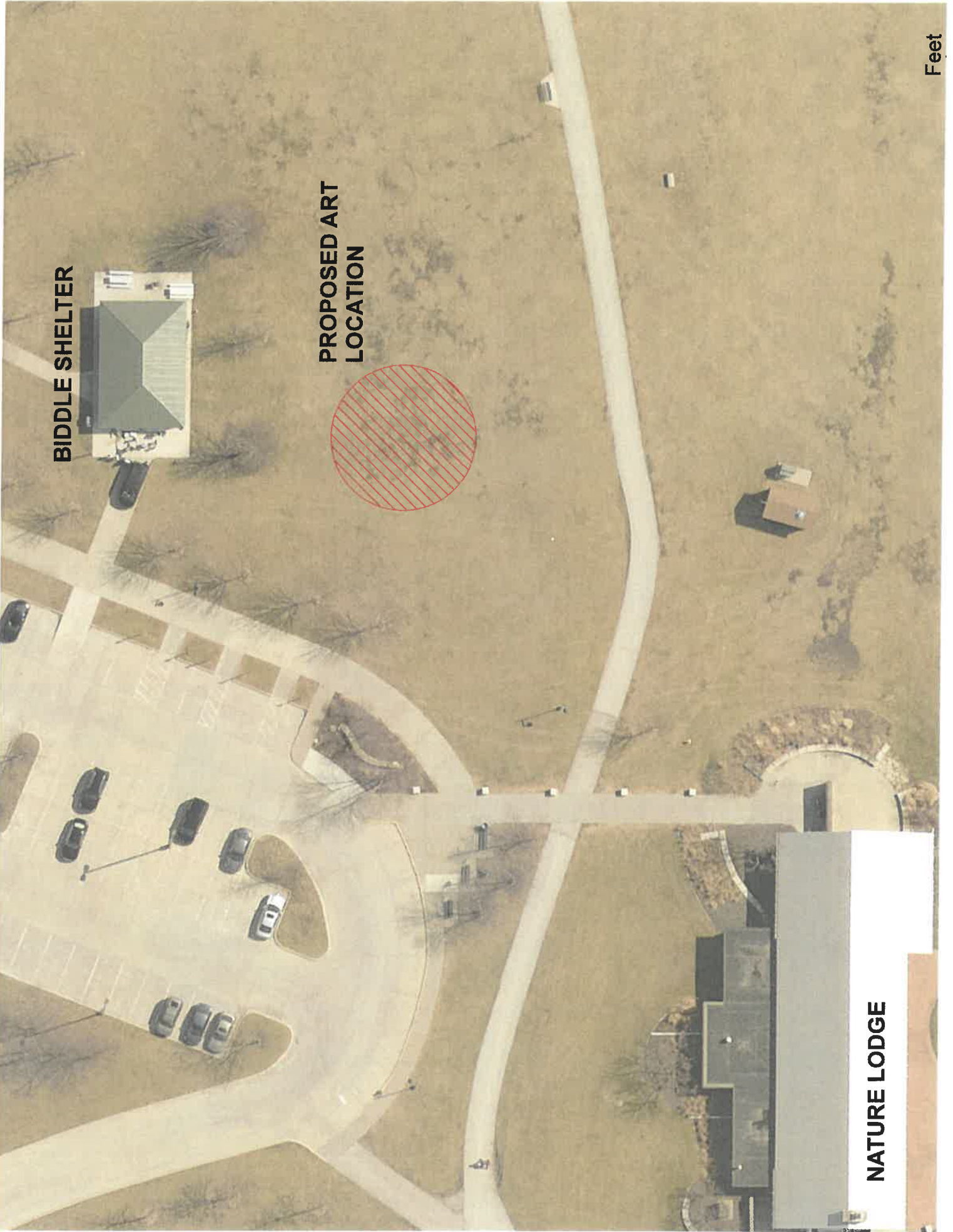
Ideally the fires will burn for four hours starting at dark and consume their material which would be biodegradable and become a part of the Lake bottom. The greater Des Moines Community will be invited to participate in this dramatically beautiful event. The event will be timed by celestial events and coordinated as a reflection of the newly constructed constellation

of fires on the water mirroring the constellations of the sky above. The event is weather dependent and a calm surface on the Lake is the best condition, the only stipulation is that it cannot be windy.

At dusk, the first part of the event that will be a farm to table food event in the Park. Restaurants within a one-hundred-mile radius advertising local farm to table cuisine will be asked to participate by providing food options for the Festival. These vendors will be encouraged through sponsorship and brand recognition with the Art on the Water Biennial. We want to establish a unique event for West Des Moines with partnerships from arts organizations in Des Moines and the region. The water festival will be about Iowa and the West Des Moines region and as time goes on it will create tremendous cache for the region. Its reputation will be built over the years.

The Artwork is a participatory event, that will engage staff at the Nature center and community volunteers for its execution. The first performance of *Topographic Fires on The Lake* will be a test for the participation in a community evening of Art on the Lake. Through this event we will be able to determine the budget, participation, staffing, advertising and logistics of holding such an event at Raccoon River Park. The goal is to establish a framework for a Biennial Art on the Water event at Raccoon River Park.

By establishing a framework for the event, Raccoon River Park and the West Des Moines Art Commission will have the opportunity to create a nationally unique venue for Art and Water. It could also be held alternatively in the summer on soft water and in the winter on hard water. This Artwork is conceived as the beginning event of a regional and eventually national Biennial Water Festival on Blue Heron Lake.



BIDDLE SHELTER

**PROPOSED ART
LOCATION**

NATURE LODGE

Feet

Site Plan

The Shape of Blue Heron Lake, 1968

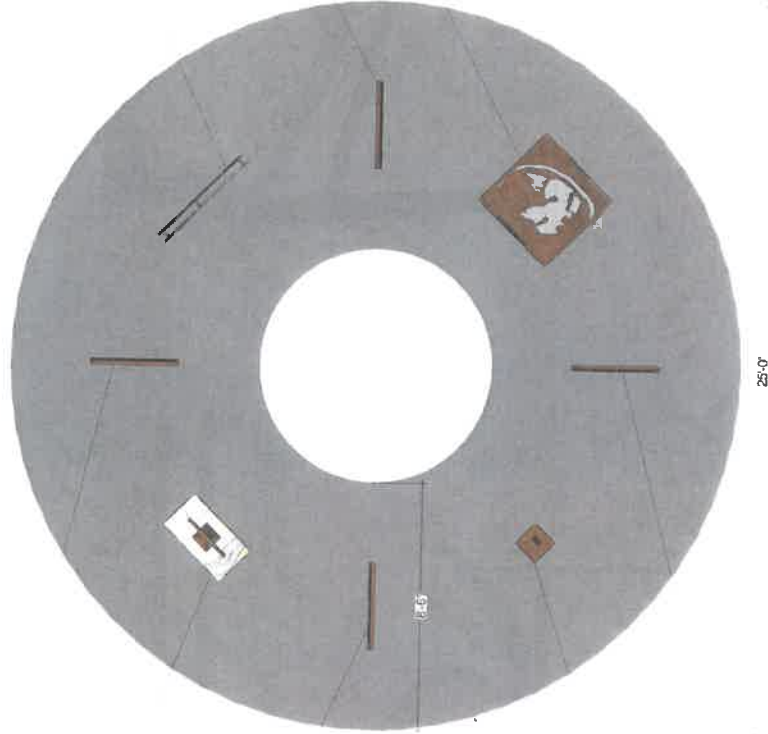
The Water Balance Sculpture

The Shape of Blue Heron Lake, 1974

25' DIAMETER CONCRETE PAVING
1 1/2" THICK

The Well Sculpture

The Shape of Blue Heron Lake, 1967

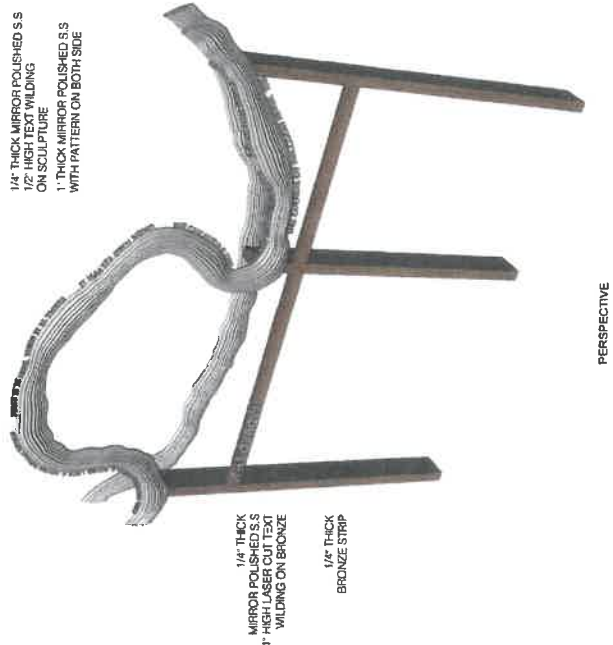


The Osbow Sculpture

The Shape of Blue Heron Lake, 1955

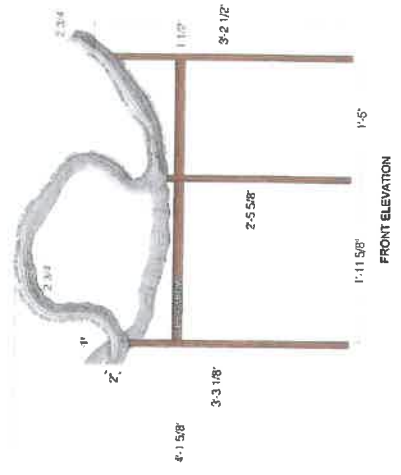
The Water Table Sculpture

Sculpture Drawings



1" THICK MIRROR POLISHED S.S.
WITH PATTERN ON BOTH SIDE

TOP VIEW



Sculpture Drawings

J. L. F. JAPTEH, A.S.T. (M)



1 1/2" X 1 1/2" BRONZE
PIPE

1/4" THICK
MIRROR POLISHED S.S.
1" HIGH LASER CUT TEXT
WELDING ON BRONZE

1" DIAMETER PIPE
SCULPTURE
"NOT STRUCTURAL"

CAST BRONZE SURFACE

Sculpture Drawings

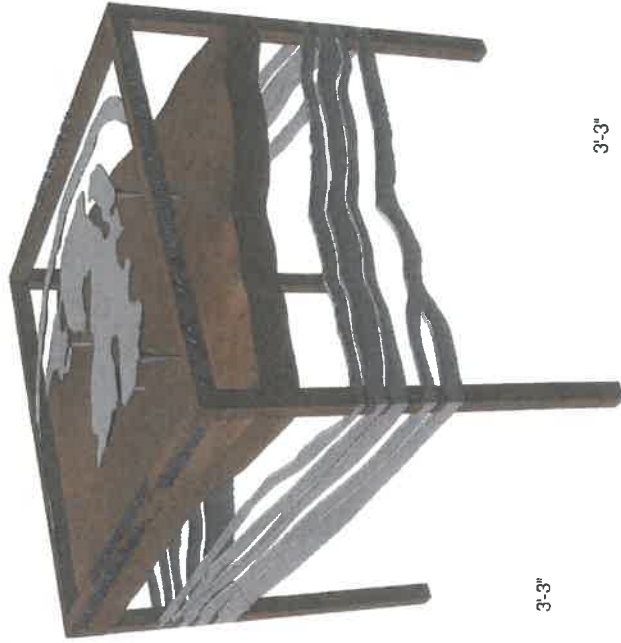
1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME
MIRROR POLISHED
1/8" THICK CAST S.S.

1/4" THICK CAST BRONZE TEXT

CAST BRONZE PLATES
WELDING IN FRAME
3" THICK

MIRROR POLISHED
3/8" THICK LASER CUT S.S.

1/4" THICK
MIRROR POLISHED S.S.
1" HIGH LASER CUT TEXT
WELDING ON BRONZE



3'-0 3/16"

3'-3"

3'-3"

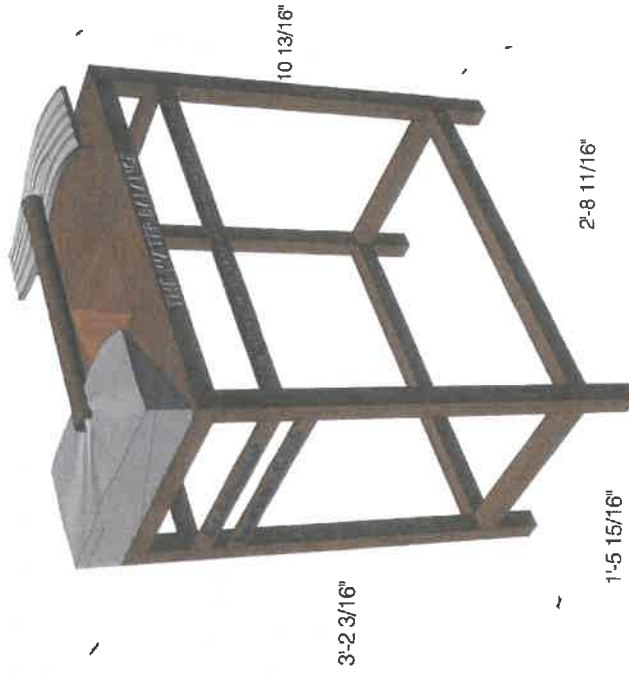
Sculpture Drawings

MIRROR POLISHED S

1/4" THICK
MIRROR POLISHED S
1" HIGH LETTERS
WELDING ON BRONZE

1/4" THICK CAST BRONZE TEXT

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME



Sculpture Drawings

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME 1 1/2"

1 1/2"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

3'-0"
TOP VIEW

LEFF GARTEN STUDIO

2-8 1/2"

5-0 7/16"

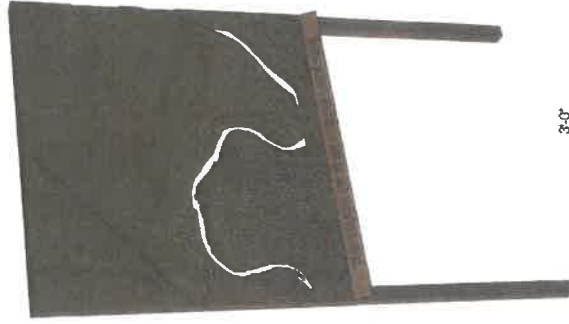
2-2 7/8"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

3'-0"
ELEVATION

5-0 7/16"



3'-0"

PERSPECTIVE

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

1/4" THICK CAST
BRONZE STRIP
WITH 1/4" TEXT
1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

Sculpture Drawings

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME 1 1/2"

1 1/2"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

3'-0"

TOP VIEW

• CLOSER EARTH STUDIO

2'-9 1/2"

5'-0 3/8"

5'-0 7/16"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

2'-2 7/8"

ELEVATION

5'-0 7/16"



3'-0"

PERSPECTIVE

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

MIRROR POLISHED
1/4" THICK LASER CUT
S.S. LETTERS

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

Sculpture Drawings

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME 1 1/2"

1 1/2"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

3'-3"

TOP VIEW

FF LARTEN STUDIO

2-9 1/2"

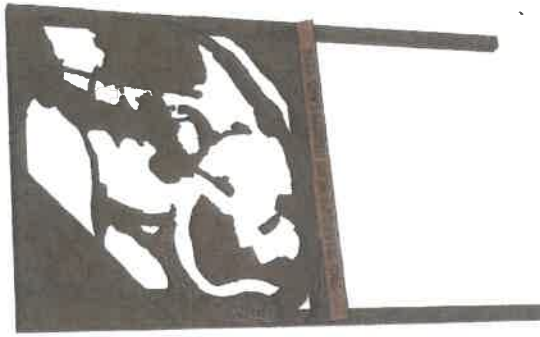
5'-0 3/8"

5'-0 7/16"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

ELEVATION



5'-0 7/16"

3'-0"

PERSPECTIVE

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

MIRROR POLISHED
1/4" THICK CAST
SS LETTERS

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

Sculpture Drawings

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME 1/2"

1/2"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

3'-0"
TOP VIEW

WALTER JARTEK STUDIO

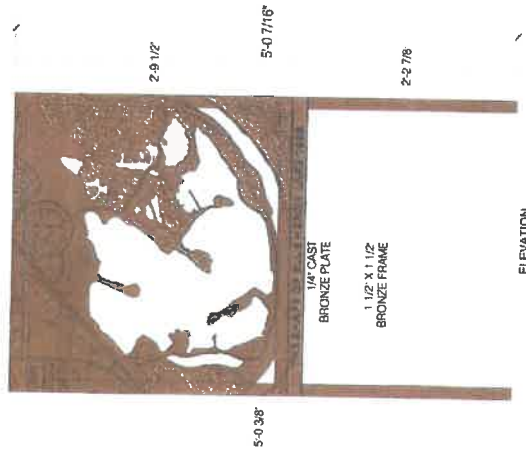


1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

MIRROR POLISHED
1/4" THICK LASER CUT
S.S. LETTERS

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

3'-0"
PERSPECTIVE



5'-0 3/8"

2'-9 1/2"

5'-0 7/16"

2'-2 7/8"

1/4" CAST
BRONZE PLATE

1 1/2" X 1 1/2"
BRONZE FRAME

ELEVATION

Renderings

+ CLIFF GARTEN STUDIO

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CLIFFGARTENSTUDIO.COM

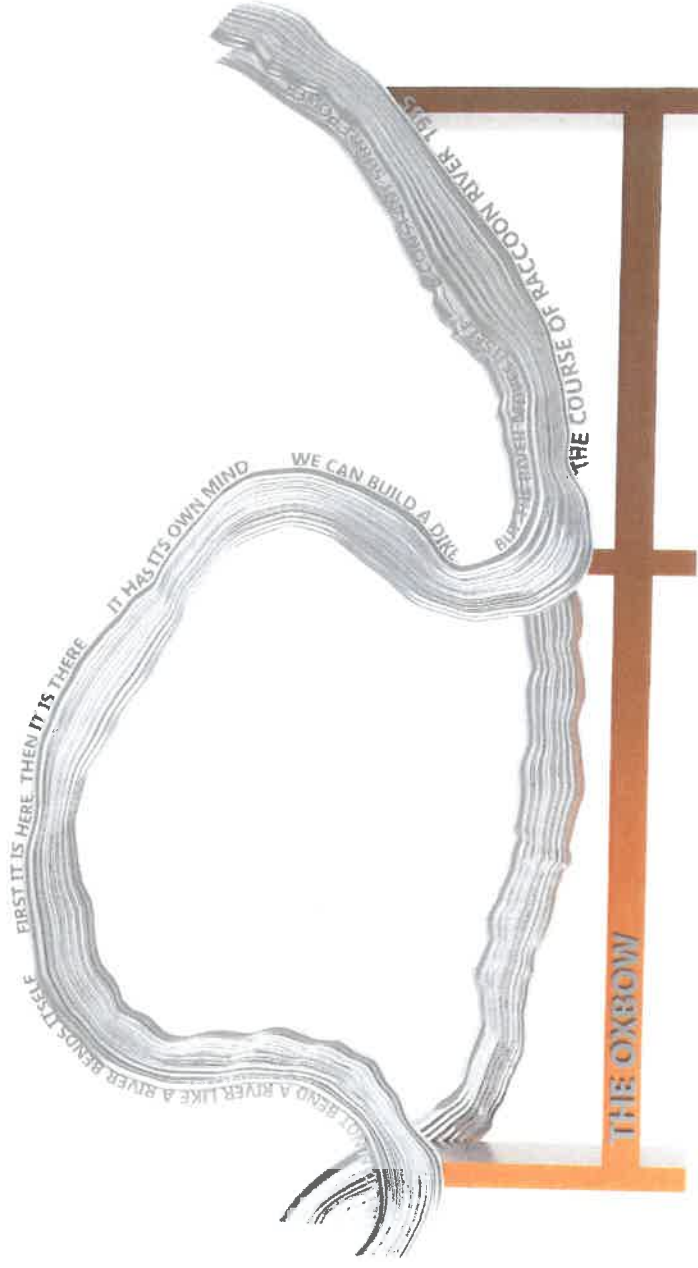
A rendering of a garden design for a client in New York City. The design features a central circular area surrounded by a series of concentric circles and lines, creating a geometric pattern. The design is rendered in a light, sketchy style.

EVEN WATER

SITE RENDERING



THE OXBOW



THE OXBOW



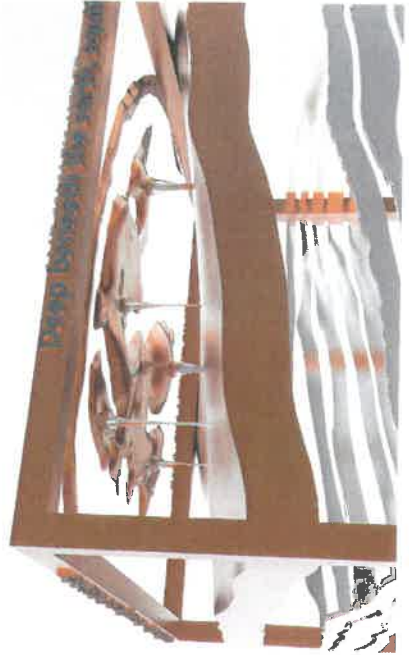
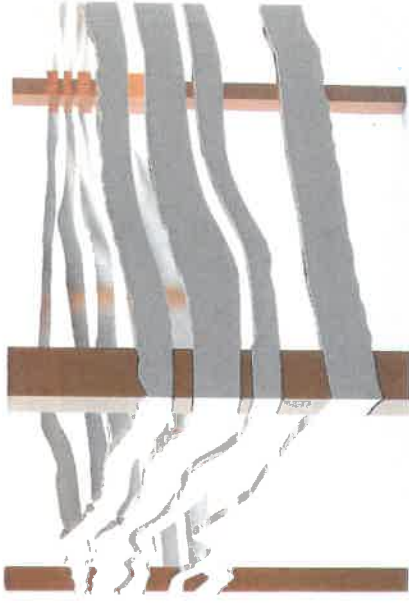
THE WELL



THE WATER TABLE



THE WATER TABLE



THE WATER TABLE

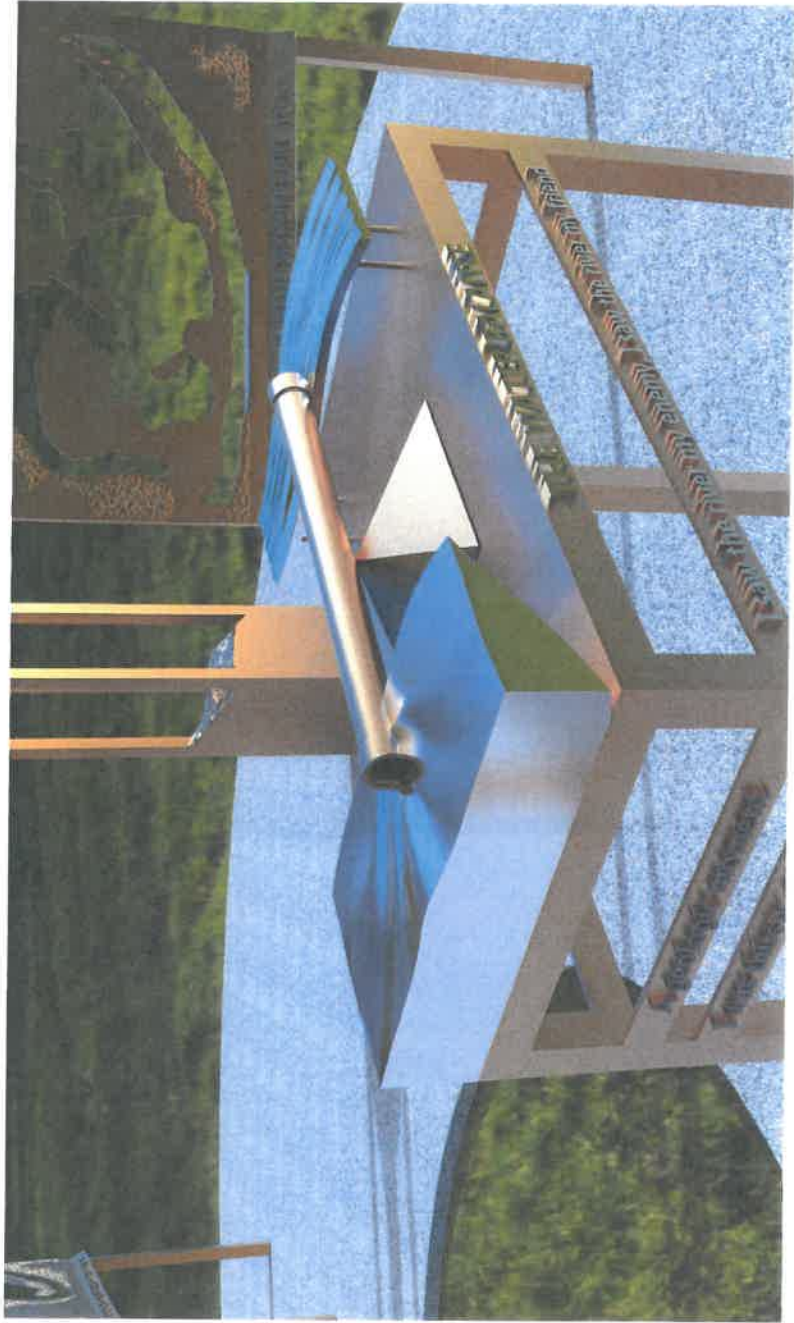


THE WATER BALANCE

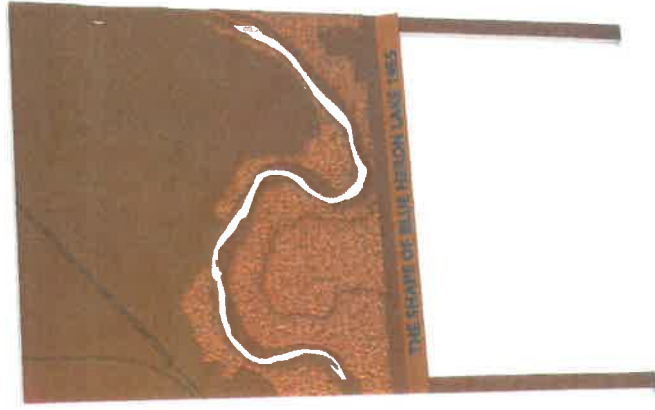


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THE WATER BALANCE



A Changing Lake - Blue Heron Lake 1955



A Changing Lake - Blue Heron Lake 1967



• Clear Lake, 1967

A Changing Lake - Blue Heron Lake 1974



A Changing Lake - Blue Heron Lake 1998



JUFFE GARTEN

www.juffegarten.com

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View 10

View 11



Materials and Maintenance

Introduction

Maintenance of your sculptures begins with sound and controlled fabrication methods. We consult with a metallurgist to ensure that our fabrication procedures for stainless-steel and bronze are the highest standards for the industry. Before fabrication begins the shop areas where the material is stored or fabricated are cleaned so they are free of mild steel debris or iron bearing dust. Surface rusting of stainless can be caused by unclean shops and mild steel (chains, tools, etc.) contacting the surface of the stainless-steel during fabrication. Surface spotting or rust on CCS sculptures is always the result of airborne chemicals or particulate that is inherent in site conditions and is not part of the controlled fabrication environment. If such conditions are present in the sculpture site, then regular cleaning will ensure that there is not a buildup of chemical air pollutants or airborne particulate. The sculptures should be watched carefully to check for environmental build-up of dirt, dust, and/or staining from airborne particulate and/or chemicals. The frequency of cleaning and a cleaning schedule should be based upon these environmental observations. It is best to watch the sculptures during the first year and establish a cleaning regimen based on this observation. We recommend that the sculptures should be cleaned at least once every year. If maintenance is postponed cleaning may become more difficult. We need to emphasize that every site has inherent environmental conditions and that you must adapt your cleaning frequency to these conditions. Your sculptures will be fabricated by Cliff Garten Studio with our metal foundry. Contact Cliff Garten Studio for maintenance issues.

Bronze

Materials and Finish

The raw bronze will have a light sulfur wash applied. Three coats of G.J. Nikolas #11565 Outdoor Lacquer RFU is applied. The lacquer is clear and applied to retain the desired golden bronze finish of the bronze by preventing the bronze from oxidizing. Bronze is a porous metal and—even when lacquered—will oxidize over time, turning a warm brown. The bronze that is coated with the acrylic patina will not oxidize but will remain the color of the patina. Touching the sculptures will not change the surface.

Maintenance

The finishes provided on the bronze will provide years of durable wear. The lacquer on the bronze provides a barrier to these oxidizing elements. This is a similar lacquer applied in the automotive industry and its life should be like that of the paint job on a car. If the coating is scratched or damaged the lacquer can be retouched. The lacquer is commercially available and comes in a ready for use spray. It will be necessary to watch the color change during oxidation and decide when the sculpture would need to be refinished. Repairs for significant damages are specialized, requiring

stripping the lacquer, resurfacing the bronze, and then once again applying 3 coats of lacquer to seal the pieces. Should the piece need refinishing or major repair, contact Cliff Garten Studio.

The anti-graffiti coating called Monchem-Prema Shield Premium can be applied to protect the surface. If there is defacement with graffiti, it should be removed by water and light soap and microfiber or 100% cotton rag. Use a solvent that will not damage the lacquer finish. We recommend using a lacquer during the initial installation and then letting the bronze take on its own warm brown patina as the lacquer fades. We have done many installations in this way.

Stainless Steel

Materials and Finish

The stainless-steel will have a mirror polished finish. This finish is brought up through numerous polishings with finer and finer grit polishing cloths. Do not attempt to duplicate this finish. Contact Cliff Garten Studio for repairs. It is not necessary to apply a lacquer finish, as when the stainless steel is cleaned with 77 Cleaner and Passivator Spray and washed (see maintenance below) the original finish will return. If the surface is damaged or scratched the scratches can be buffed out. To repair scratches, contact Cliff Garten Studio. We do not recommend a graffiti coating or clear lacquer for stainless steel as the Passivator Cleaner works better to restore a new surface when applied directly on the stainless steel itself.

Maintenance

The stainless-steel sculptures can be cleaned using a hose or pressure washer and Stellar Solutions Ready to Use 77+ Passivator Cleaner and Rust Remover citrus spray. This product will restore the stainless steel to a new luster. Abrasive cleaners or pads should not be used on the mirror polished stainless steel as they will scratch. If there is defacement with graffiti, it should be removed by sparingly applying the recommended graffiti remover in the Monchem-Prema Shield Premium system or paint thinner to the affected area of the stainless steel and scrubbing with a soft cloth. Rinse with water following application of paint thinner.