

Seeing Public Art

*An Idea Book
by Galaudet Gallery curators
Mike Milewski
Vicki Milewski*



**“We do not see things as
they are,
we see them as we are.”**

Order of Seeds saying

***Mike Milewski
and
Vicki Milewski
are the
sibling gallerists
of Galaudet Gallery.***

Seeing Public Art
is more than just looking
or seeing
or thinking

Of course, we can also
just laugh at the day and
enjoy ourselves for a moment

It could involve the
entire sense of being in the world
A sense of the genius loci nearby
A spirit of place approving or
disapproving or
busy doing something else

Same thing happens
We either know it or not

Seeing Public Art
means recognizing a power
inside each of us
and
inside the art

Seeing Public Art

Table of Contents

Public Art Ecosystems (Where)

Let's Surrender the theories first

Are you experienced? (Why)

Aesthetics, Desire and Utility

Identity = Place (Where)

Or Does Place = Identity?

Walking Through that Door in the Wall (How)

First Step is the Easiest

Notes (What)

The What of it all



A photograph of a public art installation in a park. The installation consists of numerous tall, vertical, rectangular mirrors arranged in a grid-like pattern. A person is walking through the installation, and their reflection is visible in the mirrors. The background shows lush green trees and grass. The text "Public Art Ecosystems" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Public Art Ecosystems

Sense of Belonging



All of these ideas create warm fuzzy feelings of belonging, of being special, of someone understanding maybe a little part of who we are. It can also be a lot of fun! All of these things, and more, are what supporters of public art feel can happen when art is thoughtfully placed, curated and free to the public for viewing.

Door in the Wall

Theories are always around art, but have little to do with making art, loving art or truth in art. Displaying art is a part of the process of making it. Viewing art completes the journey of making it while starting some viewers off on another kind of journey

“The man who comes back through the
Door in the Wall will never be
quite the same as the man who went out.”
--Aldous Huxley *The Doors of Perception*

Public art supporters hope to provide an experience for people viewing art and make them laugh, smile, or even go thru the “Door in the Wall”.

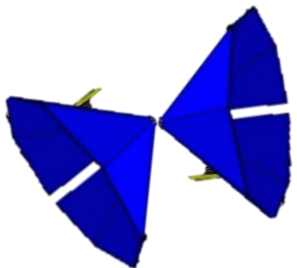


Milk House Door
by Vicki Milewski

Mission

Galaudet Gallery (GG) has worked with public art placements for decades. Here are a few ideas to consider when embarking into the public square:

- ❖ Put a consignment agreement in place so that expectations, liabilities and other concerns are known upfront.
- ❖ Take into consideration the business' mission. If a business sells flowers think flowers; which does not always mean flowered art.
- ❖ Take into consideration who will be viewing art in this business. If there could be children looking at the art then please take that into consideration.



*Blue Solar
Shade Butterfly*
by
Michael Milewski
&
Vicki Milewski

Symmetry

- ❖ Take into consideration the design elements present in the business, for example:

If a business has chosen to write their name on front windows where art might be displayed at least take this into consideration by placing any artwork in symmetry with the business name so that the artwork and business work in tandem with one another. Artworks with corresponding shapes or elements within them work well. Even abstract art works well.

Business Name



Business Name



Business Name



Narrative

- ❖ Take into consideration the community where the art will be present.
 - Are you looking for an individual experience or community experience?
 - A strong narrative accompanying the art can include everyone.
- ❖ Don't forget to put art first, don't stick it in a corner or hide it among merchandise where no one can experience the art.
- ❖ Then get the word out so everyone's hard work isn't just known locally.



Meditating Man by
Marcello Baraghini

Dialogue

This idea book is part of a longer conversation Galaudet Gallery has been having with members of the art world for decades. Parts of it have been presented at symposiums and seminars as well as being published in different media in various forms. The idea of place is tantamount to understanding who we are, what our goals are and having fun.

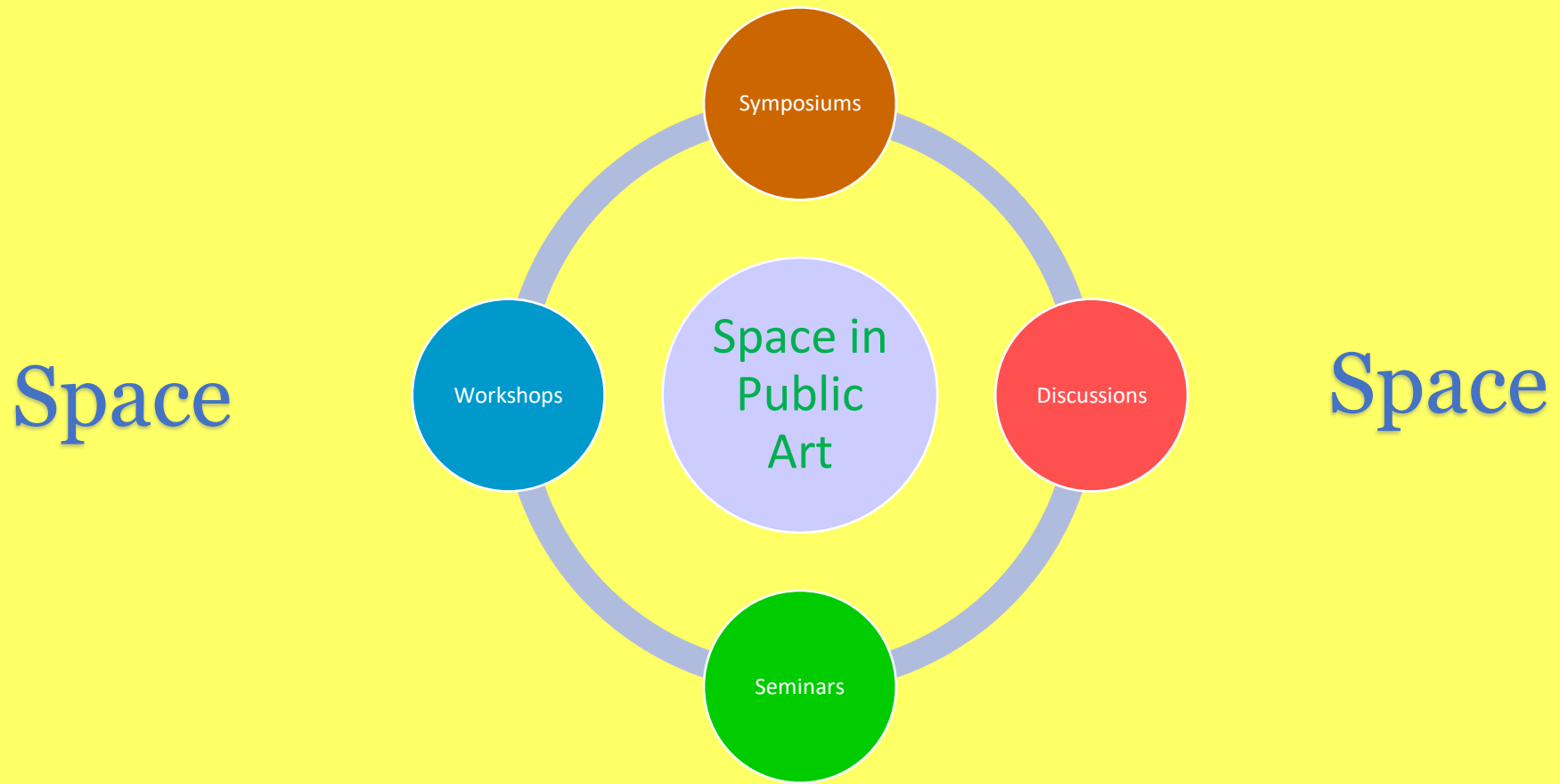
Public art display has many different ideologies and theories, but after years working with public art for local, state and federal governments and other organizations, we can say that art has to be in the forefront, art has to be meaningfully handled and valued only then will a community view it in the same way.



Talking Heads
Speaking in Tongues
Concert Poster by
Robert Rauschenberg (1983)

An aerial photograph of a bridge spanning a river. The bridge's concrete piers are decorated with large, realistic murals of human eyes. The eyes are painted in white and grey, with dark pupils and visible eyelashes. A large crowd of people is gathered on the bridge deck, particularly around the eye murals. The surrounding landscape is lush with green trees and vegetation. The text "Are you experienced?" is overlaid in a yellow, serif font at the bottom of the image.

*Are you
experienced?*



GG has also been a part of symposiums, discussions, workshops and seminars on the idea of space and public art. Artists, curators, museum directors, art collectors, art lovers and more have different ideas about the role space plays in the display and experience of art.

Place

Does art need a dedicated space or can it be placed anywhere?

Most great art is seen as rare and so “if art is everywhere, is it nowhere?”

There is also discussion about “dissolving museums (and gallery spaces) in favor of integrating works of art into the public space” So that any place could have art available to be seen and experienced.



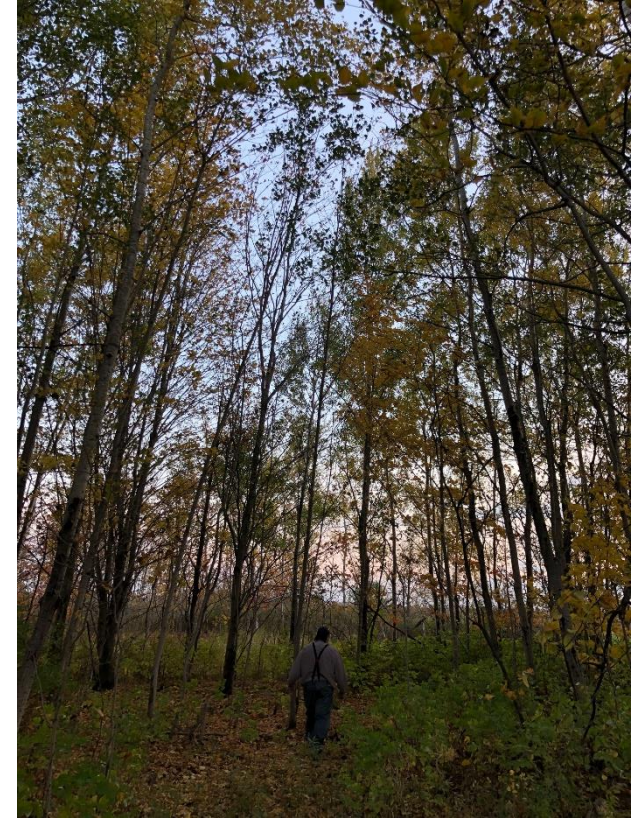
Blue Solar Shade
Land based Artwork
and energy producer
By
Michael Milewski
&
Vicki Milewski

Location

Many feel this might dilute the experience of art and lower its value. When a Jeff Koons' Balloon Dog was placed in a skyscraper lobby Koons did see a decline in his auction results from 50 million to 20 million but this decline has since been corrected. So, do Koons' sculptures in lobbies show a way forward to placing public art?

Does this also challenge the idea that art can only be experienced in a museum or gallery?

How about art as a forest planted by nature and supported by artists who manage the forest to keep it in balance and allow it to reach its natural successions?



Walking Education Trail

Land based Artwork

By

Michael Milewski

&

Vicki Milewski

Quality

The question everyone involved in public art placement agrees needs to be asked:

“What is the quality of experience?”

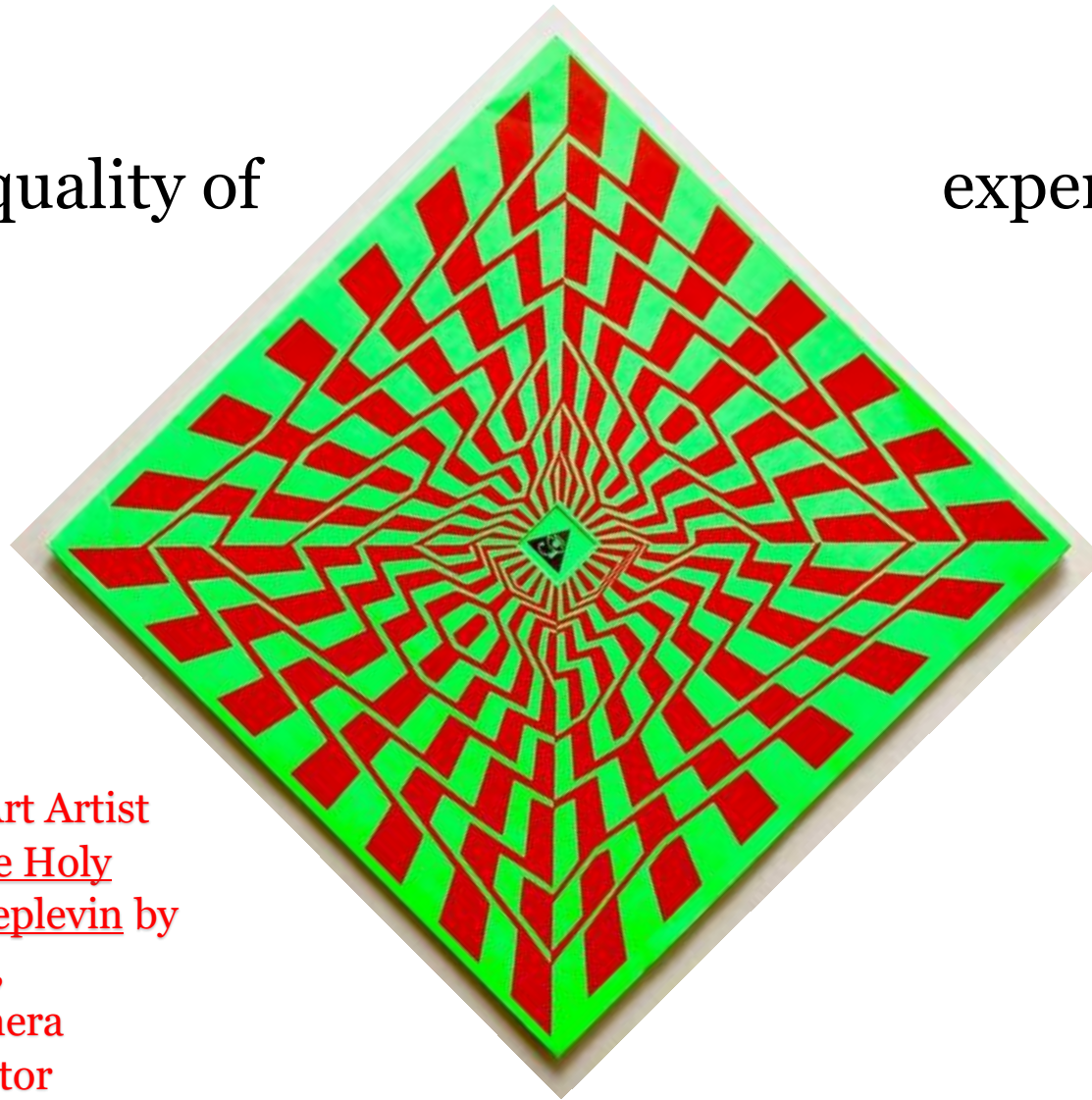


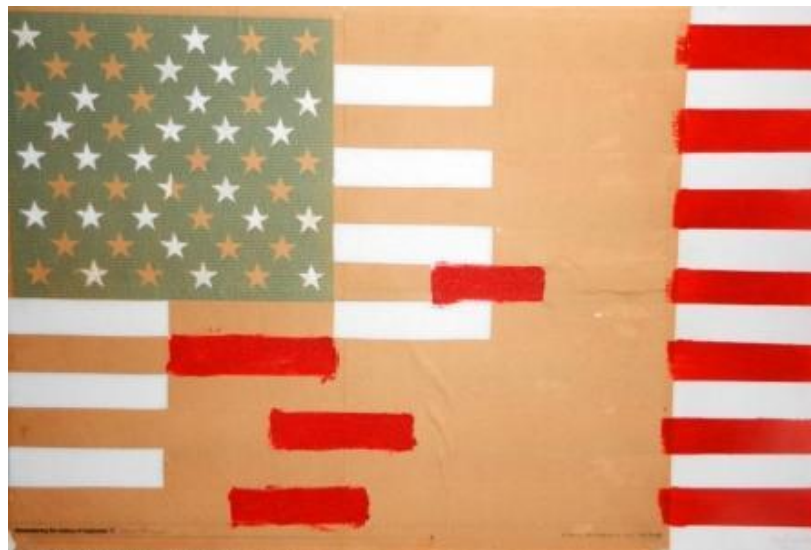
Illustration of Blotter Art Artist
Unknow for book The Holy
Transfers of the Rebel Replevin by
Mark McCloud,
psychedelic ephemera
curator and collector

Experience

But this question has as many answers as people asking. People visit museums and galleries to have art experiences and maybe aesthetic ones. People don't visit a grocery store or ice cream shop expecting to see art. The surprise effect can be a good thing or bad. Placements may beg the question, "Is the art being devalued, disrespected maybe even marginalized?" Proper placement and display need to be addressed as well as the goal for art display. If the goal is to have art seen, experienced and/or appreciated in a new environment then there is the possibility of having real art mix it up with the public.

Goal

Some businesses have asked GG for certain pieces to assist in brand building. GG has to go through a series of questions and understand placement, goals and expectations before any art is released. In the end we have found, if the art is to be valued then lending art is much easier. If a business purchases an artwork and asks for assistance in placement GG goes through the same process looking for the same end result.

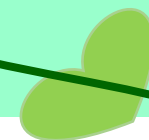
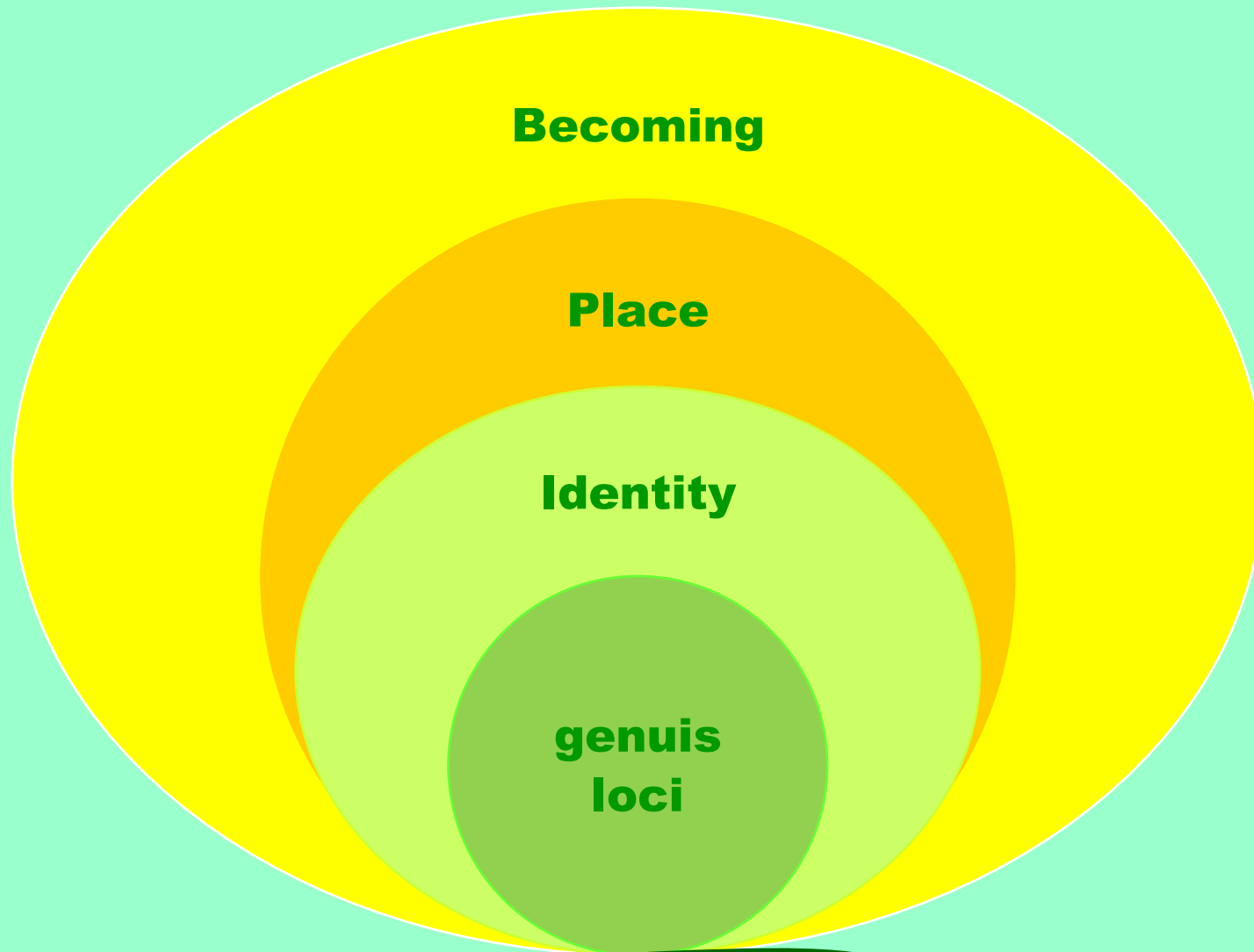


There, you had to be there
by Micahel Milewski

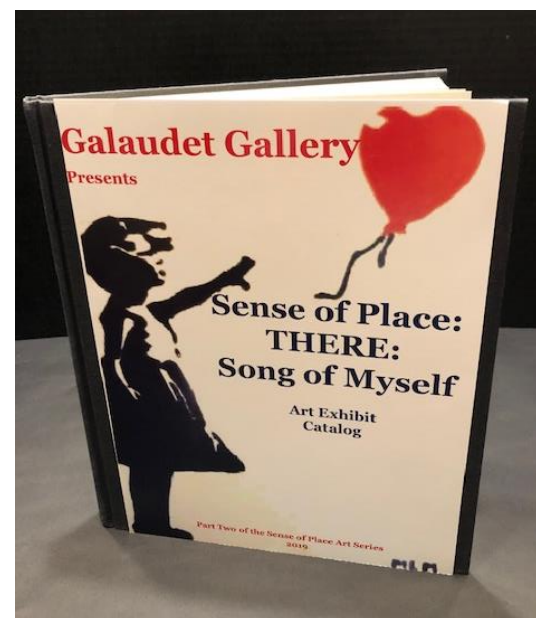
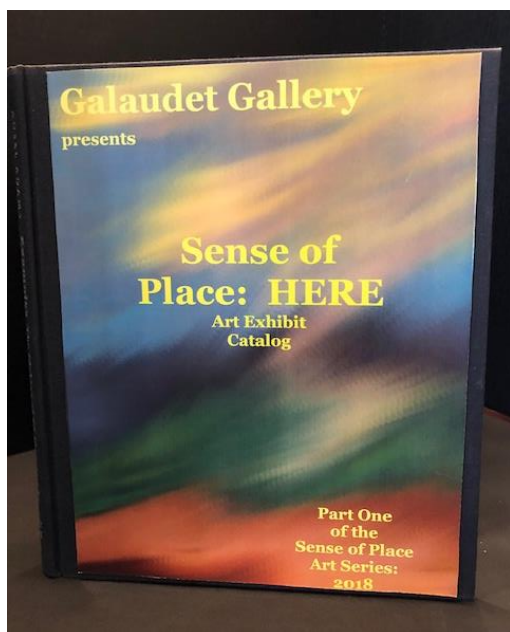
A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a large tree with yellowing leaves stands prominently. To the left, a bronze statue of a nude male figure stands on a small pedestal. A paved path leads through the park, flanked by manicured hedges and more trees. The background shows a dense forest of trees with autumn foliage. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

Identity = Place

genius loci



In our research for GG's 3rd year of the Sense of Place art exhibit series, we are looking into the idea of genius loci—that a place, a location, has a spirit. This spirit is a part of each place and can imbue it with character, emotion, meaning and more. GG is adding this to the idea of public art. Like two spirits meeting the art and the place work together to create experience....and then we come along.



Two of Galaudet Gallery's art exhibit catalogs for Sense of Place: HERE and Sense of Place: THERE

identity



Gauludet Gallery
in Washington D.C.
from left to right:
Vicki Milewski,
Kim Blake,
Michael Milewski,
Margaret Meiser

“When we
identify
with a place,
we dedicate
ourselves
to a way of being
in the world”



Walking Education Trail Part 5

Land Based Artwork

By

Michael Milewski

&

Vicki Milewski

Shown is artist Michael Milewski and the
trees which will one day line this iteration
of the **Walking Trail** artwork series

influence

“Identifying with place” emphasizes the influence place can have on individuals. If this is true than the proper placement of public art is tantamount to an upwardly moving evolution of a place and person. If we install meaningful art which is respected and valued in public places, then there is a chance that our being in the world may be respected and valued or at the least made a little more tolerable.



Installation of “The Picasso”
in Daley Plaza Chicago 1973

Within this context, Minnesotan Fred Lukermann asserts that

“Geography is a way of seeing the world.”

Do we see the world as us?

Do we see the world as something other than us?

As the title of this essay suggests we see what we want to see.



Map of Tenderness
Renaissance Board Game

becoming

Placing art within a geography of natural or built environments contributes to those places. Placing art within a community contributes to each person. Understanding that place and people are in continual states of “becoming” who or what they are means public art might play a part in both.



Prairie Propitiation

Public Art/Land Art Installation of
TIPI 1.0

By Michael Milewski & Vicki Milewski

Much of the Milewski Sibling's work is
about finding a balance between the
natural world and how we live within it.

Public Art is a specific art genre and as such is seen as a specific art practice. When we provide art, even as a temporary art installation, we are creating art in a specific way. Public art seeks to show public or universal ideas which are not usually advertising, political or personal. The above discussion of genius loci is a universal idea which lends itself well to public art installations.

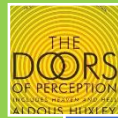


Public Art at Memorial Park
by Michael Milewski &
Vicki Milewski

The image is a collage of five panels, each showing a wooden door set within a blue wall. The door is made of vertical wooden planks and has a small handle. On either side of the door, there are vertical columns of decorative items. To the left of the door, there are eight circular ornaments, each with a different colorful pattern. To the right of the door, there are eight rectangular ornaments, each containing a different colorful floral or geometric design. The entire scene is set against a dark blue wall. The text "Walking Through that Door in the Wall" is overlaid in a large, stylized font across the center of the collage.

Walking Through that Door in the Wall

Wrap up



Belonging

- Change Identity
- Change Place
- Change how we see the world



Identity

- Wider Experience
- Wider Sight
- Wider Perception of Reality



Doors

- Pleasure
- Enjoyment
- Fun

Where

Walking through that door in the wall could forever change identity, place and how we see the world simply by allowing an artistic experience to widen the experience of a moment. This means taking a first step, the easiest in this journey.

Wrap up

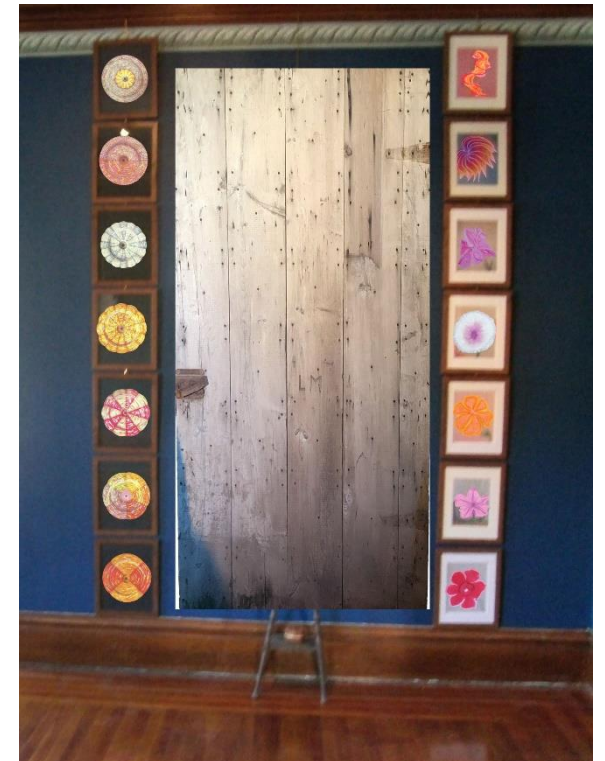
Why

Seemingly conversely but really in keeping with most artistic practices, GG agrees with Don Knuth, Stanford University Professor of The Art of Computer Programming when he says,

“Pleasure has probably been the main goal all along.”

This can be said of any art placement

Installation View of
Beyond Wood Artists and
Curators Michael Milewski
&
Vicki Milewski

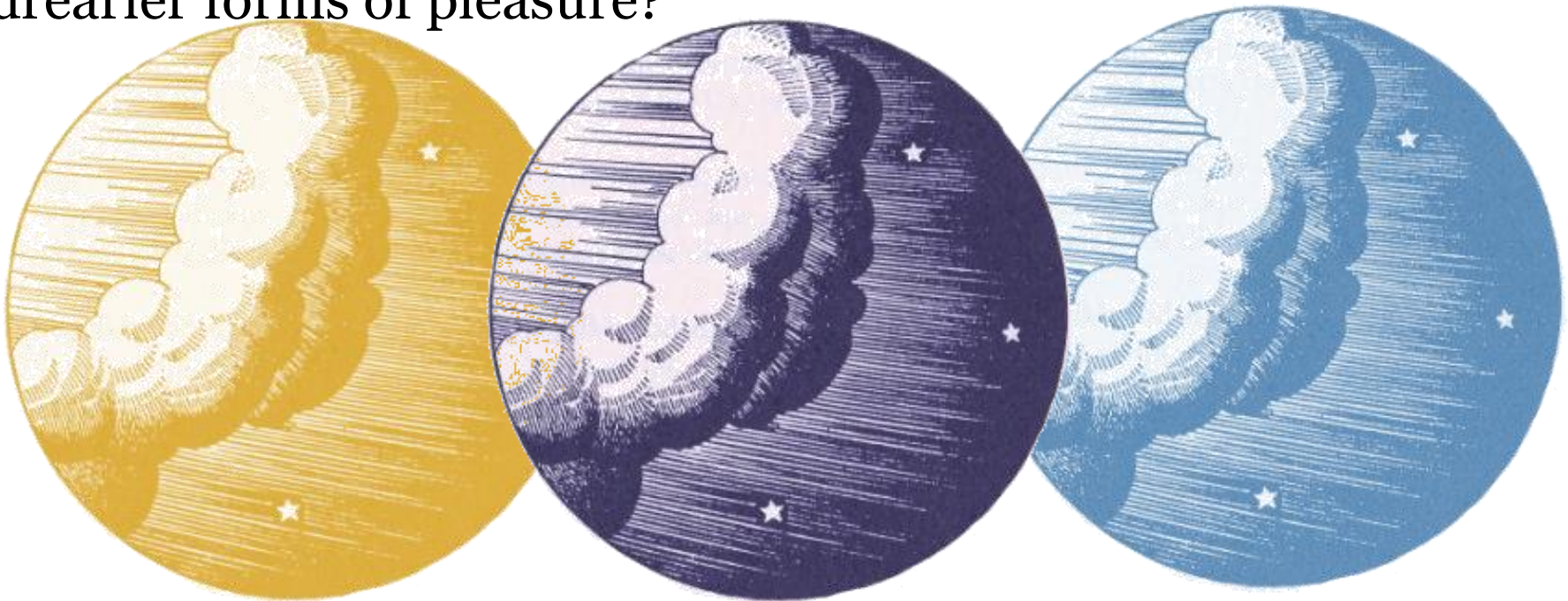


Wrap up

How

Which leads us again to words from Aldous Huxley's journey with mescaline in his *The Doors of Perception*:

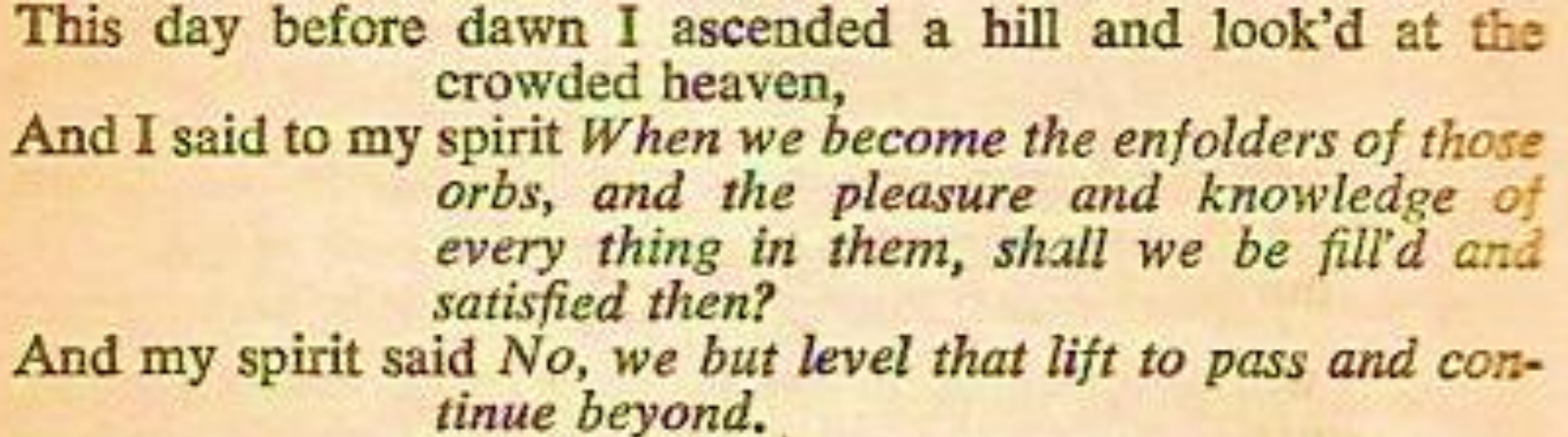
“When we feel ourselves to be sole heirs of the universe, when ‘the sea flows in our veins...and the stars are our jewels,’ when all things are perceived as infinite and holy, what motive can we have for covetousness or self-assertion, for the pursuit of power or the drearier forms of pleasure?”



Wrap up

When

So after a few ideas on public art, both inside and outside, and a chance to see that art can be deep, heavy, fun and jokey we understand that for GG art is the chance to see a new our lives, our loves and our jokes. We at least urge everyone involved in public art selection, placement and curatorial statements to take a little time, have a little fun and enjoy your end result. We end with a selection from Walt Whitman's Song of Myself, a typical morning for the poet



This day before dawn I ascended a hill and look'd at the
crowded heaven,
And I said to my spirit *When we become the enfolders of those
orbs, and the pleasure and knowledge of
every thing in them, shall we be fill'd and
satisfied then?*
And my spirit said *No, we but level that lift to pass and con-
tinue beyond.*

Continuing beyond is part of art's goal and mission.

Wrap up

NOTES FOR Seeing Public Art

What

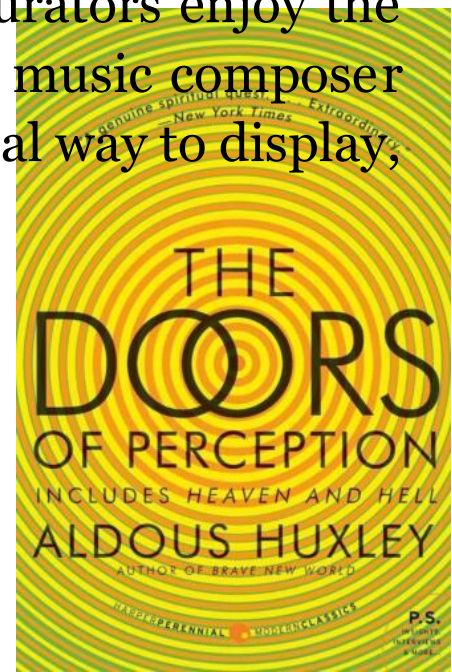
**“We do not see things as they are,
we see them as we are.”**

“We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are.” Is an old Talmudic saying from the first tractate, Berakhot (Blessings), of Seder Zeraim (Order of Seeds) of the Mishnah and of the Talmud composed ca. 30 BC—200 AD. In using this saying as our subtitle, we not only posit that each person has a unique way of seeing the physical world but also the mental and emotional worlds as well. Fine art is predisposed to this individual way of seeing and an artwork viewed with this in mind is given another depth and connection to the viewer.



Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1954) was the beginning of Huxley's journeys to discover other dimensions, ways of seeing and understanding and toward defining the human potential movement of the 1970's which his journeys are based upon. We are looking into Huxley's journeys in an ascetic fashion using art instead of drugs to find the same way forward. Aesthetic experience has been likened to drug experiences since the mid 1500's when monks wrote about enjoying certain pieces more when they were inebriated. Since then, the use of drugs to elicit aesthetic experiences has frustrated artists and curators who believe that art can create these sought after experiences on its own.

The use of symmetry in design and display has been found to create the easiest way for people to see different pieces within a whole as well as having been found to be the most pleasing way to display. Although Galaudet Gallery curators enjoy the use of asymmetrical design, and it mirrors the love of atonality music composer Vicki Milewski has, we still believe symmetry is the most beneficial way to display, design and communicate.



Using public art to generate a community experience has been used for Millenia from ancient temple construction and pyramid designs to recent earth artists who manipulate how we see certain landscapes in order to elucidate how a community places itself within its geographic boundaries.

In *Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement*, by Doreen Bolger Burke, et al. (1986) is an indispensable tome for understanding the evolution of art in America. Certain essays go even further in the suggestion that “art everywhere could mean art nowhere” by also discussing at length the historic use of the word “artful” which leads to a further discussion of how “Postmodern critics might call Aesthetic interiors ‘artful’” in that certain Aesthetic period rooms may have had too many items—“too much art”—or that “artful” means that not another piece of art can fit in such interiors.



The book *Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago* by Josef Paul Kleihues by Andrea Mesecke and Thorstern Scheer 1996 is an interesting collection of essays by primarily German theorists and architects attempting to explain a reason for the MCA's design which has been vilified by many. Udo Kultermann's forward "Merging Tradition and the Consciousness of Crisis in The Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago" does the best job of giving reasons why a brutalist structure like MCA's Kleihues designed building takes into account the use of the geographic space over the history of Chicago. That many in the artworld started to vigorously discuss not having art museums after the construction of MCA gives one an idea of the distaste for the architectural style chosen for this museum.

Jeff Koons' *Balloon Dog* was placed in the lobby by its owner (who also owned the office building) and so it was not Koons himself that placed this large sculpture into a public space; nevertheless, auction prices for Koons' sculptures have not attained their once highest status since the placement.



“What is the quality of experience?” has been asked of art for centuries if not longer with essays written about it dating in the 500’s AD. And even as humanity has evolved into technologies and modes of transportation among other areas, the pursuit of a quality art experience has remained signaling many philosophers, theorists, artists and curators that this singular experience may be a key to a commonality or archetype which all humans share.

Using art for brand building is most easily seen in Nike’s use of their “swoosh” taken from the wing of a Greek statue of Nike who is Winged Goddess of Victory.

Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture by Christian Norberg-Schulz (1985) is not the only literature which looks into the Genius Loci which is first seen around 800 BC by Classical Romans who saw genius loci as the protective spirit of a place. Since then many authors have looked into the idea of Genius Loci, Mircea Eliade felt it is first made evident by the physicality of the place but any destruction of tangible dimensions would mean the genius loci could still persist in memory at individual or collective levels (1961). Marilena Vecco also sees Genius Loci as significant in terms of being both the mediator and medium of social interactions which occur in certain places such a spirit of place may reside.

Minnesotan Fred Lukermann not only asserts that “Geography is a way of seeing the world.” but that the character of the world is in a continuous “becoming” rather than in a present” state. Seeing “Geography as a Formal Intellectual Discipline” which “Contributes to Human Knowledge” causes Lukerman to make the connection that if a place is in a constant state of becoming, of changing, then so too are the inhabitants of this place and that the two influence the “becoming” of each other.

Sometimes learning computer coding from someone like Don Knuth is a practice of alchemical aesthetic experiences stretching between dimensions while laughing at a silly joke.



Rocks and Grass
Public Art/Land Art Installation
By
Michael Milewski
&
Vicki Milewski

“There’s a balance here about letting the grass grow wild and to seed and pushing the rocks up against it. There’s a relationship present that didn’t exist before we made this installation”
Michael Milewski

And back to Aldous Huxley's journey with mescaline in his *The Doors of Perception*. This quote is a good one for remembering that we are heirs of a greater becoming which we only see small pieces of and in that recognition of our inheritance we can let go of the meaningless motives which can make us pursue power or the lesser forms of pleasure.

To end with a favorite quote from Walt Whitman who echoes the quote from Huxley while also saying we will "continue beyond" we will continue becoming, we will continue...



Cupola 1 & Cupola 2
Public Art/Land Art Installation

By
Michael Milewski
&
Vicki Milewski

"The service these cupolas did in venting our farmer barn is repurposed in venting our ideas about community, art and the balance both need"
Vicki Milewski

To learn more about Galaudet Gallery's work
visit Galaudet Gallery at our three locations:



Chicago
Eau Claire
galaudetgallery.com



Contact Galaudet Gallery at
mike@galaudetgallery.com

715-513-9994
Have a gala-day!

On the Cover:
Hope There is Always Hope and
Cupola 1
By Michael Milewski
&
Vicki Milewski

