

## ABSTRACT

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The focus of this thesis is on temporary artscapes – public installations that are originally-creative and intentionally-temporary in some way. A temporary art installation has the ability to quickly and clearly transform a place, increase our understanding and awareness of a particular site, and redefine and highlight the importance of public space. This design-research thesis proposes that temporary artscapes have the capacity to significantly alter the experience of a landscape. Through the investigation and evaluation of the theories, intentions and working methods of the artists, landscape architects, and architects involved in recent projects, this thesis explores the value of temporary artscapes in landscape-design.

Two key research investigations assist this investigation. *Designing the Experience* explores the artistic process of designing a temporary installation, through the collaborative designing and building of a temporary art installation with a sixth-grade class at the British School of Washington. *Experiencing the Design* explores the experience of a temporary art installation from the perspective of the public audience, through the surveying of people during a temporary art installation in a prominent public space at the University of Maryland.

The outcomes of the investigation and two research investigations determine my strategy in choosing a site within the University of Maryland campus in which to design and test a conceptual temporary artscape.

EXPERIENCING TEMPORARY ARTSCAPES

By

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## **PREFACE**

How can a landscape inspire a temporary art installation,  
and how can a temporary art installation change  
the experience of a landscape?

For my grandmothers,

Mary Hadden Brodie 1927 –

and

Violet May Patrick 1931 – 2013

I would like to thank my thesis committee for trusting and encouraging a unique and personal research and design process.

I would also like to thank the contributions of John Ruppert and Karen Petroff from the University of Maryland, Liesel Fenner from Americans for the Arts, and Simon Bird, Simon Steff and Kathryn Martin from the British School of Washington.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	
Thesis Question	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	viii
Opening Quote	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	2
1.1 Temporary Interventions in Public Landscape	2
1.2 Temporary Artscape Design Process: Artists vs. Architects	4
1.3 Temporary Artscapes	7
1.4 The Experience/Redefining Public Space	9
1.5 Thesis Structure: <i>Designing the Experience/Experiencing the Design</i>	11
1.6 Scope, Aims and Challenges	13
1.7 Key Terms	14
Chapter 2: Temporary Public Art, Architectural Experimentation and Public...	14
2.1 Benefits of Art in Landscape Architecture	15
2.2 Benefits of Public Art	17
2.3 The Role of Sculpture Parks in Urban Development	18
2.4 Tactical Urbanism	21
2.5 Evaluating Public Art	22
2.6 Summary	23
Chapter 3: Temporary Artscape Typologies	25
3.1 Temporary Art Installations	25
3.2 Temporary Land Art	26
3.3 Experimental Architecture	28
3.4 Small Projects/Tactical Urbanism	28
3.5 Critical Position	29
Chapter 4: Designing the Experience	30
4.1 The Artistic Vision in a Project	30
4.2 The Value to Public Space	31
4.3 Shock and Controversy in Public Art	32
4.4 Economic Drivers in Public Art Installation	34
4.5 Investigation 1: <i>Designing the Experience: British School of Wash</i>	35
4.5.1 Investigation Goals	35
4.5.2 Strategy	36
4.5.3 Process	37
4.5.4 Final Installation	44
4.5.5 Summary	45

Chapter 5: Experiencing the Design	46
5.1 The Effects on the Public	46
5.2 Evaluative Techniques	47
5.3 The Role of Memory in Temporary Artscapes	48
5.4 Investigation 2: <i>Experiencing the Design: Hornbake Plaza, UMD</i>	50
5.4.1 Investigation Goals	50
5.4.2 Design Intervention Strategy	51
5.4.3 Process	52
5.4.4 Survey Results	56
5.4.5 Summary	59
Chapter 6: Learning Outcomes and Project Goals	60
6.1 Abstraction of an Idea	61
6.2 Transformation of Dead Space	63
6.3 Improved Understanding of Landscape	64
6.4 Redefining of Public Space	64
Chapter 7: Temporary Artscapes: Key Design Precedents	65
7.1 Highlighting Form: <i>Red Ball</i> by Kurt Pershke	66
7.2 Connecting with Nature: <i>The Garden that...</i> by Balmori Associates	67
7.3 Redefining Context: <i>Pulse</i> by Janet Echelman with OLIN	69
7.4 Collaboration of the Arts: <i>Markings</i> by Hargreaves Associates	70
7.5 Configurable Space: <i>Twig</i> by Alexander Lotersztain	71
7.6 Functional Art: <i>Pink Ghost</i> by Peripheriques Architectes	72
Chapter 8: Design	73
8.1 Design Strategy and Process	73
8.1.1 Application of Research	74
8.1.2 Conceptual Design vs. Built Design	75
8.1.3 Personal Connection to Site Selection	75
8.2 Site Analysis	77
8.2.1 Critical Position	77
8.2.2 Context	78
8.2.3 Human Experience: Bus Stop Conditions	83
8.2.4 Opportunities and Constraints	86
8.3 Concept Development	87
8.3.1 Pole Metaphor	87
8.3.2 <i>Poem Path</i> Concept	88
8.3.3 Collaboration	89
8.3.4 Breaking the Pattern	91
8.3.5 Experimentation	95
8.4 Final <i>Poem Path</i> Design	98
8.4.1 Revealing of <i>Poem Path</i>	98

8.4.2 Day and Night Perspective	101
8.4.3 Signage Construction	102
8.4.4 User Experience/Evaluation Method	103
Chapter 9: Conclusion	106
9.1 Common Themes	106
9.2 Opportunities for Experimentation and Evaluation	106
9.3 Collaboration of the Arts	107
9.4 Value of Temporary Artscapes	108
9.5 Implications of Temporary Artscapes	108
Bibliography	110

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Thesis Process Diagram [Patrick]
Figure 2	British School of Washington Class at UMD [Patrick]
Figure 3	Abstract Exercises [Patrick]
Figure 4	The Language of Shapes Abstraction Boards [Patrick]
Figure 5	Concept 1: Over and Over Again [Patrick]
Figure 6	Concept 2: Circulation Patterns [Patrick]
Figure 7	Concept 3: Growing Hand/Footprints [Patrick]
Figure 8	Concept 4: Four Arches [Patrick]
Figure 9	Concept 5: Flowing Petals [Patrick]
Figure 10	Circulation Concept Development [Patrick]
Figure 11	Entrance into Installation [Patrick]
Figure 12	<i>Walk, Skip, Tag, Cross-Country</i> Details [Patrick]
Figure 13	Location of Twelve Cubes [Patrick]
Figure 14	Child Playing with String [Patrick]
Figure 15	Improvitational Dance Class [Patrick]
Figure 16	Improvitational Dance Class [Patrick]
Figure 17	Suspended Objects [Patrick]
Figure 18	Destructive Configuration of Cubes [Patrick]
Figure 19	The Artificial Nature of Nature Sculpture [Patrick]
Figure 20	The Destructive Nature of Nature Installation [Patrick]
Figure 21	Bus Stop Site Photo Montage [Patrick]
Figure 22	Site Context [Patrick]
Figure 23	Context Word Map [Patrick]
Figure 24	Commute Map [Patrick]
Figure 25	Texture Map [Patrick]
Figure 26	Section looking North from Engineering Fields [Patrick]
Figure 27	Section looking South from Campus Drive [Patrick]
Figure 28	Bus Arrival Movement [Patrick]

Figure 29	Human Behavior at Bus Stop [Patrick]
Figure 30	Human Behavior at Bus Stop [Patrick]
Figure 31	Human Behavior at Bus Stop [Patrick]
Figure 32	Opportunities and Constraints Map [Patrick]
Figure 33	Pole Metaphor [Patrick]
Figure 34	“Floating Words” Concept [Patrick]
Figure 35	Configuration Models [Patrick]
Figure 36	“Draw-in” Concept [Patrick]
Figure 37	“Draw-in” Concept [Patrick]
Figure 38	Early Sketch Concept [Patrick]
Figure 39	Grid Formation [Patrick]
Figure 40	Axonometric of Poles [Patrick]
Figure 41	Pole Installation [Patrick]
Figure 42	Pole Configuration Testing [Patrick]
Figure 43	Sidewalk Division [Patrick]
Figure 44	LED Lighting Experiments [Patrick]
Figure 45	Signage Experimentation [Patrick]
Figure 46	Revealing of <i>Poem Path</i> [Patrick]
Figure 47	Final Configuration Plan of <i>Poem Path</i> [Patrick]
Figure 48	Day Perspective looking East [Patrick]
Figure 49	Night Perspective looking East [Patrick]
Figure 50	Signage Construction [Patrick]
Figure 51	Signage Connection Detail [Patrick]
Figure 52	Section looking at <i>Poem Path</i> from South [Patrick]
Figure 53	Model of <i>Poem Path</i> , 1”=20’ [Patrick]
Figure 54	Section through <i>Poem Path</i> from Approach [Patrick]
Figure 55	Facebook Page [Patrick]
Figure 56	<i>Poem Path</i>

***“Maybe I’m just asking you to pay closer attention to the land”***

- Maya Lin, *Boundaries*, 2006, Pg 4:45

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Temporary Interventions in Public Landscapes

The essence of this thesis is to explore how a temporary design intervention changes the relationship between people, public space, and the intervention. Landscape architecture can contribute significantly to the enjoyment of a public space and many studies have analyzed this relationship – Whyte’s (2008) classic examination of spaces in New York City is one of the most notable studies<sup>1</sup>. Grand, yet ephemeral, artistic interventions can be commonly found in today’s public landscapes. Despite a tremendous degree of variation, all of these interventions rely on collaboration of some sort; collaborative design can enhance a project by getting the best out of various design professionals working together. For example, a successful collaboration between landscape architecture and public art can completely transform a site; Doug Aiken’s recent video installation *Song 1* – at the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C., March 22<sup>nd</sup>-May 20<sup>th</sup> 2012 – brought color and vitality to a space dominated by large government buildings and the museum’s huge imposing concrete form. For the Washington Post, Phillip Kennicott said:

“As an urban intervention, it is brilliant, animating one of the city’s monumentally grim dead zones: the Independence Avenue corridor just south of the mall. It makes the march of government office buildings on the south side of the street seem even more forlorn, almost alive in their sadness, like the inhabitants of a badly run zoo looking out at freedom.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition to collaboration, site is an essential component to any intervention or artwork. Even when the intervention is not site-specific, the location and siting of the

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<sup>1</sup> Whyte, William H. *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Kennicott, Phillip. *Hirshhorn Museum’s “Song 1” is all about projection*. [Washington Post](#). Mar 22, 2012

object(s) is critical to the success of the project; evaluating the “success” of public art is an interesting issue that will be further explored later. My interest in the value of experimentation in urban contexts reflects the type of project discussed in this thesis; for example, most of the great land art projects from the 1960s and 1970s – which intrinsically fused art with the landscape – were so remote and disjointed from human civilization that the public have largely had to rely on photography of those projects to see them. Referring to his awe-inspiring *Lightning Field* in 1977, Walter de Maria stated that, “The land is not the setting for the work but part of the work,”<sup>3</sup> but regrettably for the public the project was in, “an area of seemingly limitless vistas and a numerically negligible human population,”<sup>4</sup> according to John Beardsley. That is not to say that those great land art projects were not important to the development of public art in the city; in the mid-1980s Beardsley stated:

“As environmental art, including sited sculpture, has increasingly become the focus of public commissions, more and more of these commissions have been for inner-city locations... Many environmental artists now desire not merely an audience for their work but a public, with whom they can correspond about the meaning and purpose of their art. In search of this public, many have returned to the city – and to its particular problems and possibilities.”<sup>5</sup>

This thesis explores artistic interventions by artists, landscape architects and architects. The projects vary enormously, but share four key components in common: they are all located in an urban context; they are all influenced or inspired by their siting or landscape; they are all temporary or feature an ephemeral quality; they are experimental. Not all of the projects are considered art; in fact, many of the projects

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<sup>3</sup> De Maria, Walter. The Lightning Field. Artforum, 1977

<sup>4</sup> Beardsley, John. Earthworks and Beyond. Pg 62

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Pg 127

by landscape architects or architects are much more about experimental function or material exploration than art, but often comprise an artistic quality nonetheless.

## **1.2 Temporary Artscape Design Process: Artists vs. Architects**

A fascinating aspect of landscape architecture is its connection with, and dependence upon, time. Landscapes grow over time and their programs often change. Landscapes can inspire the building and/or removal of architecture and engineering. Landscape architecture is generally open to the natural elements and can change on a daily, seasonal and yearly basis. Sustainability and climate change has led to architects having to think more about the importance of time also, which has led to a drastic increase in temporary structures and ‘assemble to be dis-assemble’ projects. Landscape Urbanism encourages us to design ‘in space *and* time’<sup>6</sup> and to allow for future possibilities, new ideas and changing attitudes. Time is a critical element in the built profession and public art or architecture projects that are temporary can quickly emphasize an issue, form or statement through their inherent design and ephemerality; this phenomenon can consequently lead to original, inventive and memorable projects because of their temporal nature, whether it lasts for days or months.

This research-design thesis aims to make a multi-disciplinary examination of temporary landscapes, ultimately focusing on temporary projects which create new temporary landscapes during their existence. This topic is multi-disciplinary because of the fact that there are so many cross-overs and experimentations within the subject,

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<sup>6</sup> Corner, James. Terra Fluxus, The Landscape Urbanism Reader. Pg 29

from artists, land-artists, landscape architects, architects and film-makers; this topic is one of many connected to landscape architecture which successfully bridges several key art forms and disciplines. Moreover, the increase in the awareness of landscape architecture over the last few decades<sup>7</sup> has led to a greater confidence in contemporary landscape architecture firms to experiment with art and/or artists in their work. In 2000, John Beardsley stated that “landscape architecture will prove the most consequential art of our time,”<sup>8</sup> citing population growth and increased leisure time among likely factors. In his introduction to *Ken Smith: Landscape Architect*, Beardsley suggests that Smith has “...clearly positioned himself between the more experimental world of installation art and the more normative world of landscape architecture.”<sup>9</sup> Ken Smith’s installation art and design philosophy will be further discussed in *Chapter 3: Temporary Artscapes*.

While it is not uncommon for a contemporary landscape architecture firm to experiment in installation art, several key distinctions between the architect’s and the artist’s approach in the designing of installation art – temporary or permanent – exist. Generally speaking, an artist’s installation is often a final product, or part of a series of final products, concluding an artistic process of exploration and experimentation within a certain topic – i.e. the recent gun-powder performance by artist Cai Guo-Qiang in Washington, D.C. entitled *Black Christmas Tree* (Nov 30<sup>th</sup> 2012). On the other hand, as Ronit Eisenbach states, “For many architects the installation is not the end product. Rather, it is a preliminary step in an ongoing process tethered to the

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<sup>7</sup> Beardsley, John. *A Word for Landscape Architecture*. *Nature, Landscape and Building for Sustainability*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Pg 29. (Originally featured in *Harvard Design Magazine*, Fall 2000)

<sup>9</sup> Beardsley, John. *Introduction*, *Ken Smith: Landscape Architect*. Pg 12

discipline of architecture...”<sup>10</sup> – i.e. the Schaulager Satellite art pavilion in Basel by architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron (June 4<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2012). Moreover, artists and architects have been collaborating successfully since the Renaissance, when the terms were interchangeable – the collaboration between Cai Guo-Qiang and Herzog & de Meuron for the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympics demonstrated the value of such multi-disciplinary collaborations.

- *Black Christmas Tree* – Chinese installation art Cai Guo-Qiang gave a one-off performance in Washington, D.C. in which the form of a tree was expressed in three different forms of explosion.
- *Schaulager Satellite* – Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron created this unusual small art pavilion for two weeks of ‘Art-Basel’ as “an abstraction of the original Schaulager forecourt.”<sup>11</sup>
- *Beijing 2008 Opening Ceremony* – The two forces combined spectacularly to create another memorable temporary artscape in the form of a firework display from within and around the iconic ‘Birds Nest’ stadium.

In addition to the discussion between the aspirations of architects and artists, Jes Fernie adds that, “The time available to architects to experiment, converse, think and perhaps fail is rapidly diminishing along with their bargaining power in the pecking order that constitutes client, project manager and contractor,”<sup>12</sup> and demands that they fight back for the good of their profession. She adds that, “...is it important that

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<sup>10</sup> Bonnemaison, Sarah. Eisenbach, Ronit. Installations by Architects: Experiments in Building and Design. Pg 183

<sup>11</sup> Herzog & de Meuron. Schaulager Satellite. <http://www.herzogdemeuron.com/index/projects>

<sup>12</sup> Fernie, Jes. Two Minds: Artists and Architects in Collaboration. Pg 15

(artists) are able to contribute to discussions concerning the shaping of our environments without having to reach any pre-determined end point.”<sup>13</sup>

Maya Lin is one designer who has managed to fuse art and architecture together so naturally that she is neither artist nor architect, but both. Her work – which will be discussed further later – is fundamentally inspired by landscape, and although her work is predominantly permanent, her design approach and philosophy is of great significance to the discussion of site-specific artwork – or ‘artscares.’ In *Boundaries*, Lin talks about the pressure to conform to either the art world *or* the architecture world, and states, “My fear was that I would become schizophrenic and that my work as a whole would be disjointed and confused.”<sup>14</sup> As a former architecture student writing a Master of Landscape Architecture thesis on the benefits of public art in the landscape, I find great empathy in the concluding words of Lin’s *Boundaries*: “Maybe I’m just asking you to pay closer attention to the land.”<sup>15</sup>

### **1.3 Temporary Artscares**

The urban landscape varies enormously, as do the many types of public space within the urban landscape. Temporary artscares have the ability to attract all types of people due to their often unique form and inherent temporal nature. Many different types of temporary artscape exist due to their different respective program: art installations; building experiment; experimental furniture; tactical urbanism project

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Pg 15

<sup>14</sup> Lin, Maya. *Boundaries*. Pg 4:45

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Pg 12:12

etc. – and they will be further defined and discussed in *Chapter 3: Temporary Artscape Typologies*.

Temporary and permanent site-specific art installations can vary enormously: they can be habitable or inhabitable; they can be above ground or part of an earthwork; they can be an object or series of objects simply to observe. Every inch of the characteristic and design of the installation must have a reason for its being and should reflect the attitude and stance that I am choosing to make with it. Some types of temporary artscares are shocking and often controversial, which provoke exploration and emphasize elements of the existing landscape; these site-specific projects aim to connect the viewer to their surroundings via the installation of something new, unique and/or intriguing. An intervention may have nothing whatsoever to do with its immediate landscape simply because their intent and value is concerned with something different.

The point here is simply to emphasize that the type, scale and meaning of a temporary artscape can vary enormously and the creator often intends to create something quite subjective; if the installation is not original, unique and intriguing then it might not attract the required response which could jeopardize its value. The “shock-value” that many temporary installations comprise is perhaps the one thing that links the numerous projects discussed in this thesis.

Temporary projects are often aimed at a particular audience. For the many projects discussed here, the community input will become crucial during and after the installation only in order to analyze the project’s positive and negative effects, thus determining the project’s long-term value.

Bishop/Williams define the word “temporary” as, “[denoting] a finite period of time with a defined beginning and end. However, if we take a long enough time period or, for example, adopt the perspective of subatomic physics or Buddhism, everything is temporary...”<sup>16</sup> The word “temporary” can also suggest “secondary” or “interim”. For the most part, the term “temporary” in this thesis refers to a project that has purposefully been designed to exist in a location for a specified short-term time – although this ranges from several hours to several months.

The focus of this thesis will be on temporary artscapes – public installations that are originally-creative and intentionally-temporary in some way. Bishop/Williams state that, “Temporary cultural events and performances are being used increasingly as a stimulus for regeneration”<sup>17</sup> – citing the *Electric Hotel* project as a great example. Built as a temporary structure to stage a dance performance, *Electric Hotel* was intended to provide a sense of place to the new development at King’s Cross, in which the site’s last remaining Victorian gas holder stood in the background. The structure – built from recycled shipping containers and created by Sadler’s Wells, Without Walls and Fuel Theatre Company – appeared in June 2010.

#### **1.4 The Experience/Redefining Public Space**

A key component to this thesis is the investigation into the public experience of the temporary installation. This may be understood through the research of the creator’s

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<sup>16</sup> Bishop, Peter. Williams, Lesley. The Temporary City. Pg 5

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Pg 125

design process and/or intent, as well as through the understanding of the respective landscape. It will also be understood through the landscape performance analysis during the time of the installation. The ability to temporarily alter the experience of a public place in order to make a statement, educate an audience, or learn something new, is normally the central aspect of temporary artsapes. In *Going Public*, R. Klanten expands on the importance of the experience of an urban installation:

“...these multifaceted edifices are places for social encounters, created using imagination and experimentation in their planning, design, and management of public space and architecture. The experiences they make possible and the consequences they have in our lives and in our built and cultural environment are of far more importance than their stylistic language or building structure. Independent of their temporal status as impermanent or permanent settings, their lasting impression capitalizes paradoxically on the nature of their ephemeral power, namely the affect and effect they exercise on the liquid sociocultural statistics of our cities.”<sup>18</sup>

- R. Klanten

Public plazas, parks and landscapes can at time express unexpected and unpredictable acts of protest, demonstration and sometimes violence. The recent Occupy protests took place in some of the world’s best known public spaces, some lasting a week or two and others lasting for several months. These temporary landscapes filled with tents and protesters will always be remembered as one of the defining images of the 2011 financial crisis, but represent the democratic, adaptable and unpredictable nature of public space.

*‘At the moment it is critical that the questions facing public space and freedom of expression be consciously addressed. Democracy, as a system, is in a continuous process of evolution. The forms of space we devise to represent it will help determine the structure of the society that lives within. It is imperative in this context that we maintain and even encourage the discomfort of dialogue.’*

7 Beth Diamond, *Awakening the Public Realm: Instigating Democratic Space*, 2004.

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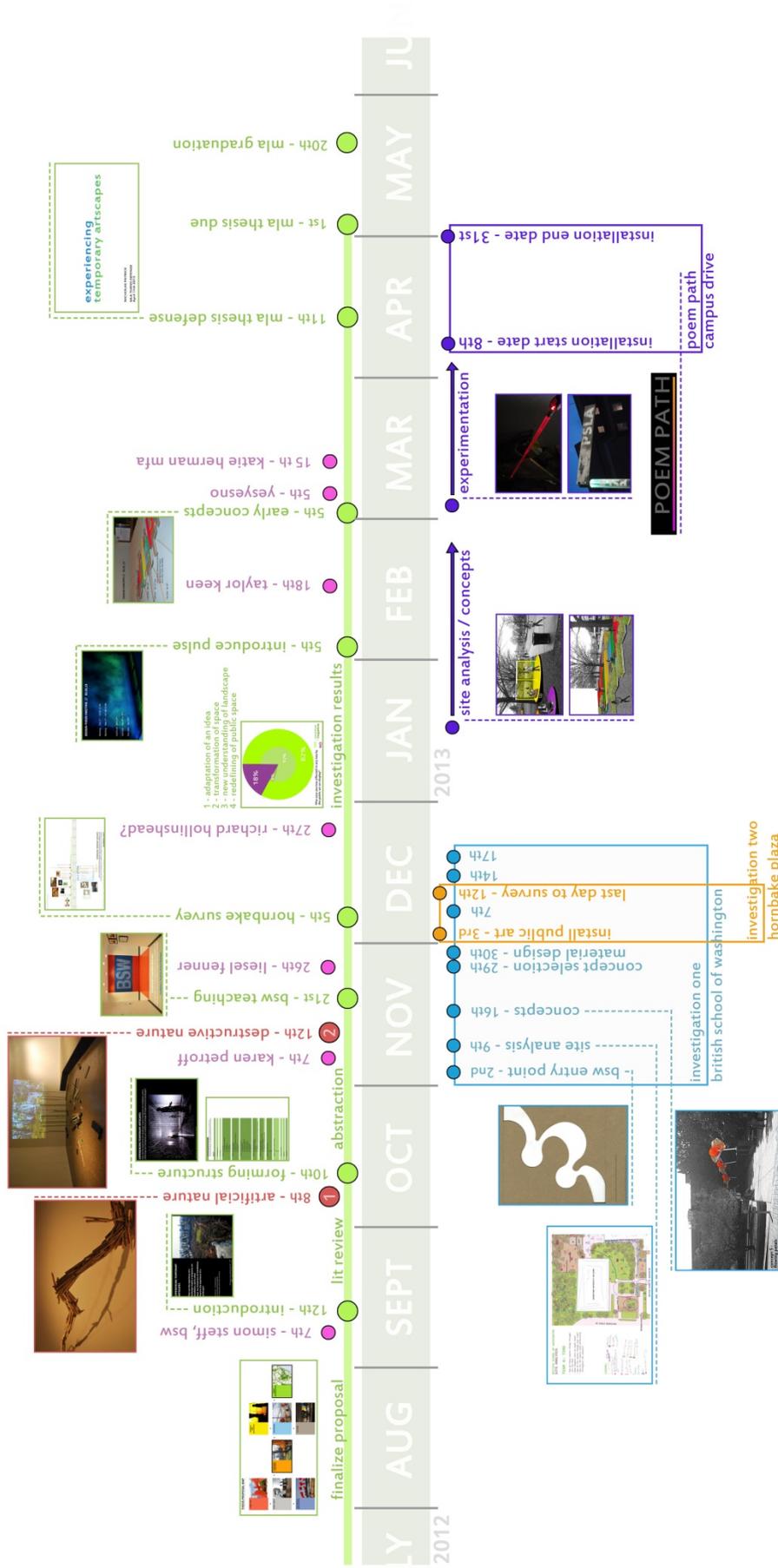
<sup>18</sup> Klanten, R. *Going Public: Public Architecture, Urbanisms and Interventions*. Pg 10

## **1.5 Thesis Structure – *Designing the Experience/Experiencing the Design***

Design inquiry plays an important element in the research component of this thesis, as it does in most design-research theses. As the primary question at hand is twofold and asks us to consider both the design of a temporary artscape *and* the experience of a temporary artscape, two key independent investigations were carried out and assessed prior to any final design undertakings. These two investigations – *Designing the Experience* and *Experiencing the Design* – sought to examine the two opposing sides to the thesis question and provide learning outcomes that would dictate design goals for the resulting design chapter/project.

The following diagram illustrates the creative process of the thesis. The top half shows the day-to-day scheduling of regular committee presentations, key meetings and significant moments of certain project deliverable. The bottom half of the diagram shows the two research investigations (in blue and orange) with the resulting design project shown in purple. This separation of the research question was essential in order to discover similarities and themes in their respective learning outcomes.

MLA THESIS  
NICHOLAS PATRICK



EXPERIENCING TEMPORARY ARTSCAPES

Figure 1: Thesis Process Diagram

Approval from the IRB will be necessary to proceed with interviewing members of the public. It will be necessary to survey people and their reactions to temporary projects for research purposes. Several experiments on campus in public spaces may also be a valuable tool for research; these will require approval and planning. As previously stated, a site will be selected once a thorough analysis of the literature has been made and when further clarification of the project's goals and ambitions has been made.

## **1.6 Scope, Aims and Challenges**

This design-research thesis synthesizes several topics. The outcomes of my research and two key investigations ultimately led to a stance on temporary artscapes, which in turn led to the design of an original temporary artscape as part of a greater landscape architecture design.

Due to the limited time-frame I had to be realistic in my ambitions and schedule. In order to speed up my research I visited and analyzed current sculpture parks and temporary installations, as well as creating several experimental temporary artscapes. Ultimately, these experiments led to the development of a new project within the University of Maryland campus.

## **1.7 Key Terms**

Artscape / Temporal / Ephemeral / Temporary landscape / Art installation / Land art / Site-specific / Public art / Sculpture park / Earthwork / Public space / Urban landscape / Democratic space / Landscape urbanism / Tactical urbanism

## **CHAPTER 2: TEMPORARY PUBLIC ART, ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIMENTATION AND PUBLIC SPACE**

This section examines the role of temporary public art and architectural experimentation in urban spaces and the importance of public spaces devoted to artwork, such as sculpture parks and sculpture gardens. The number of sculpture/art parks in urban contexts has increased gradually over the last few decades; while it is proven that they can perform a number of significant functions, their often requisite large size makes them somewhat of a gamble in terms of efficiency in land use. This review analyzes the research done within this topic in order to determine the importance of public spaces dedicated to artwork in urban landscapes, and will reflect on where more research is and/or is not necessary.

The review is developed through six sections that formed the theoretical exploration and investigation of the thesis: Benefits of Art in the Landscape; Benefits of Public Art; The Role of Sculpture Parks in Urban Development; Tactical Urbanism; Evaluating Public Art; Summary.

## 2.1 Benefits of Art in Landscape Architecture

Van Bohemen (2002) looks at large civil engineering projects and considers the role that art can play when incorporated into their design and implementation. Van Bohemen considers ways in which art and artists can be involved in the design process, and cites Holland as a country that has benefitted from urban spaces that have been transformed into ‘beautiful’ landscapes for the benefit of local people.<sup>19</sup> He concentrates primarily on the technical and scientific benefits of integrating art with civil engineering projects, which offers a much more methodical perspective than the articles discussed thus far.

Bischoff (1995) discusses the importance of visual expressions within greenways; while she acknowledges the rapid increase in greenway projects throughout America, she criticizes those that lack visual artistic expression and meaning. Similarly to Van Bohemen’s approach, Bischoff offers a logical and calculated breakdown of the various elements that can contribute to visual expression, stating:

‘The potential powers of expression, encompassing the social, political, cultural, historic, and aesthetic spectrum, can add a richness to the fabric of the greenway heritage.’<sup>20</sup>

Bischoff’s makes a bold and forward-thinking assessment in the importance of ecological expression in the landscape; the notion that restored streams and natural habitats should visually demonstrate remodeling of the land in order to educate, rather than imitate nature. The importance of education in the landscape is a view shared by Chang/Bisgrove/Liao (2008), who look specifically at how landscape narratives can

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<sup>19</sup> Van Bohemen, Hein. **Infrastructure, Ecology and Art**. Landscape and Urban Planning, Jan ’2002, pg 195.

<sup>20</sup> Bischoff, Annaliese. Greenways as Vehicles for Expression. Landscape and Urban Planning, June 1995, pg 324.

improve educational functions in botanical gardens.<sup>21</sup> The ‘narrative’ here is comprised of physical and artistic techniques in which natural biological systems within parks can be better understood by visitors. Here, they comment on the lack of research done on landscape narrative, but conclude by reinforcing the importance of landscape education by referring to recent government backing.<sup>22</sup>

Nohl (2000) considers the importance of aesthetics in future landscape designs, particularly sustainable aesthetics. Through the analysis of today’s situation, Nohl criticizes the loss of variety, naturalness, ‘rural’ structuring, and regional identity, among other important elements of design.<sup>23</sup> He goes on to describe the impact that technology has had on the landscape, and how it has removed any sense of ‘beauty’ in favor of a new kind of ‘sublime’ aesthetic. Nohl concludes by defining the four types of landscape in which he believes future aesthetics will play a key role: the traditional cultural landscape; spontaneous landscapes; urban-industrial landscapes; and rural-functional landscapes.

Aesthetics clearly plays a very important role in the overall experiential performance of a temporary artscape – the bold, colorful and abstract nature of many of the art installations discussed seek to grab the attention of the public audience quickly in order to effectively demonstrate an aspect(s) of the artwork.

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<sup>21</sup> Chang, Li-Shin. Bisgrove, Richard J. Liao, Ming-Yi. Improving Educational Functions in Botanic Gardens by Employing Landscape Narratives. Landscape and Urban Planning, May 2008, pg 234.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 241.

<sup>23</sup> Nohl, Werner. Sustainable Landscape Use and Aesthetic Perception-Preliminary Reflections on Future Landscape Aesthetic. Landscape and Urban Planning, June 2000, pg 224-226.

## 2.2 Benefits of Public Art

Sharp/Pollock/Paddison (2005) discuss how public art can be inclusionary/exclusionary in projects of urban regeneration; Barcelona is used as an example of a city that has been reinvented through a complex and inter-connected structure of public artworks and schemes in the city, but still questions the extent to which the people of Barcelona may have been polarized through this intensive economically-driven strategy.<sup>24</sup> Sharp/Pollock/Paddison focus strongly on the profitable impact of public art in the city, often criticizing governments for using this tool too readily and easily:

‘It is important to remember here that, regardless of scale and type of intervention, the installation of public art within the urban fabric is inevitably a political exercise.’<sup>25</sup>

It is clearly accepted, however, that the role of public art in the city has an enormous significance culturally as well as financially; but it is the manner in which the artwork is installed into the urban fabric that makes or breaks its integrity as artwork, as opposed to merely an economic, urban-development catalyst.

Hall/Roberston (2010) discuss the pre-conceived benefits that public art in the city manages to achieve – i.e. develop sense of identity, sense of place, address community needs, possess educational value etc. While these benefits are often presumed, Hall/Roberston seek to assess the effectiveness in reality of public art as a driver for urban regeneration. Their key finding is that there is a significant absence of research, and consequently data, on the various ways in which sculpture and art

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<sup>24</sup> Sharp, Joanne. Pollock, Venda. Paddison, Ronan. Just Art for a Just City: Pulic Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration, Urban Studies, May 2005, pg 1019.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 1020.

installations actually affect their sites.<sup>26</sup> A particular cited problem is how subjective artwork can be, and therefore the resulting problems in defining its value in urban development.

While this design-research thesis does not answer the gap in research concerning how public art can alter urban regeneration physically, it does examine the cultural effects of real public art projects to various communities; thus contributing physical research to an ongoing discussion about the value of public art.

### **2.3 The Role of Sculpture Parks in Urban Development**

Sokol (2009) offers a positive analysis of new sculpture parks which have revitalized American cities, most notably Citygarden in St. Louis. Rather than explicitly describing the park, Sokol is more interested in how it has improved its immediate environment and its effect on the people who live and work there: ‘With one stroke, Citygarden has made downtown so much more attractive as a place to do business...And as a place to live, too,’<sup>27</sup> quoting Mayor Francis Slay. Sokol also selects the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park in Des Moines as an important case study, praising the ‘twin benefits of high-quality outdoor space and fine art’ as well as the significance of being able to visit the museum without actually entering the building itself.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Hall, Tim. Robertson, Iain. Public Art and Urban Regeneration: Advocacy, claims and critical debates. Garden, Landscape and Horticulture Index, Aug 2010, pg 22.

<sup>27</sup> Sokol, David. New Art Parks Enliven Urban Centers. Garden, Landscape and Horticulture Index, Oct 2009, pg 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* pg 2.

Hazelrigg (2010) recognizes the importance in urban regeneration that a sculpture park can play. The park was funded by the Gateway Foundation who in June 2007 declared their commitment to the design and construction of a ‘world-class sculpture garden’<sup>29</sup> in between Eighth and Tenth Streets, and now that the park has been realized Hazelrigg questions the future development of the surrounding architecture:

“Planners hope that transformation of the mall’s entire length as a vibrant public space will likewise spur new retail and residential development in its vicinity and serve to tie the northern and southern sides of downtown together.”<sup>30</sup>

When Sokol and Hazelrigg’s Citygarden stances are taken collectively, the reader acquires both a significant overview of the project and a sense of how it stands out from similar parks. For example, Hazelrigg praises that the large sculptures can be ‘freely touched, and where feasible, climbed upon,’<sup>31</sup> which Sokol also cites as a unique feature that park users welcome.<sup>32</sup> The cultural benefits of an urban sculpture park are well documented within these two views, which complement one another well.

The two opinions expressed concerning the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle by Lacayo (2007) and Huber (2008) also complement each another well. Lacayo offers great admiration for the brave intent and clever design of the Olympic Sculpture Park, which is set above and around existing, working railway tracks on a former industrial contaminated brownfield site. Through the discussion of the design by architecture firm Weiss and Manfredi, Lacayo praises how they dealt with an awkward site with

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<sup>29</sup> Hazelrigg, George. Creating an Urban Oasis. Landscape Architecture Magazine, April 2010, pg 121.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 127.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pg 125.

<sup>32</sup> *Op cit*, Sokol, David. pg 1.

very difficult conditions by creatively embracing the immediate environment and conditions:

‘The team’s \$65 million park isn’t just a respite from the city and its environs but a summation of them, an abbreviation for the place in all its aspects – its mountains and its woodlands but also its pipework and its concrete, its airports runways and its boxcars.’<sup>33</sup>

Lacayo cites this creative response to brownfield site design as the future for modern parks all over the world, reflecting on Field Operations’ design for Fresh Kills in New York in which a public park three-times the size of Central Park will emerge on what was once the world’s largest landfill. Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park in Germany is also used by Lacayo as an example of a successful public park built within a former industrial site: ‘The past, instead of operating as a burden...becomes the very opposite, a plaything for the present.’<sup>34</sup>

While Lacayo is clearly impressed by the design of the Olympic Sculpture Park, he finds the resulting integration of nature and culture just as important and impressive: ‘This isn’t just a park in the city. It’s a park with the city in it.’<sup>35</sup> Here Lacayo is referring to the manner in which the park artistically uses its unique urban context to inspire the cultural spaces for artwork within it, forcing visitors to take notice of their immediate surroundings and of how they inhabit their city.

Huber (2008) offers an equally-positive analysis of the design of the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, paying more attention to the symbolic linkages in display here, such as between art and the city, and between city and nature. She cites the

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<sup>33</sup> Lacayo, Richard. Walk on the Wild Side. Garden, Landscape and Horticulture Index, Jan 2007, pg 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* pg 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* pg 1

importance of this ‘linkage’ philosophy by Weiss and Manfredi in the park’s Z-shaped folded shape:

‘The outcome of this approach...bridges the railroad tracks and road, creating a new urban edge that discloses the site’s past as a fishing ground, oil depository, and infrastructural corridor; that facilitates its present use as a landscape for sculpture; and that offers a stage for future users and uses.’<sup>36</sup>

Huber’s reference to potential future use here is also noteworthy, owing to the fact that as many sculptures are simply objects deposited onto the ground plane (as opposed to site-specific sculptures and/or installations) urban sculpture parks can also provide spaces for alternative forms of program.

## **2.4 Tactical Urbanism**

A movement led by today’s generation of bold and experimental do-it-yourself-style designers has led to the emergence of the term “tactical urbanism” over the last few years. Lydon states, “With a surge of interest in urbanism across the country at every level, communities are rethinking public space, or the lack therein. Into the breach, so-called tactical urbanism has surged, offering quick, affordable tools for making a big impact.”<sup>37</sup> Projects vary from low-budget chalk or graffiti drawings on the sidewalk to large buses that transform into a mobile farmer’s market. Urban designers as well as everyday community members are learning the value of taking

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<sup>36</sup> Huber, Nicole. *Olympic Sculpture Park – Seattle, WA.*, *Places Journal*, Dec 2008

<sup>37</sup> Lydon, Mike. *Talking Tactical Urbanism*. *The Architect’s Newspaper*. 06.18.2012

matters into their own hands in hopes of improving their environment. Chester/Pyle note the experimental importance of tactical urbanism, stating:

“Tactical urbanism interventions create a laboratory for experimentation, where ideas can be tested, refined and shared. The power of the movement lies on the premise that small, temporary change has the potential to make a big, lasting difference.”<sup>38</sup>

Tactical Urbanism encompasses a sense of experimentalism that can provide substantial research into various aspects of the built environment; this experimentalist quality became a key feature in the development of the two research investigations.

## **2.5 Evaluating Public Art**

Despite several new developments in the last few years in the discussion of evaluating public art, the topic is still very unclear and complex. In the Public Art Review (Spring 2011), Becker critiqued the “dearth of research efforts focusing on public art and its impact. The evidence is mostly anecdotal. Some attempts have focused specifically on economic impact, but this doesn’t tell the whole story, or even most important stories.”<sup>39</sup>

The main development in this field has been the creation of several matrix-style systems by various research academic institutions. In 2010 *Public Art: A Guide to Evaluation* was unveiled by a research group – sponsored by Ixia – from Edinburgh College of art and Heriot-Watt University. The project is intended to be used in the planning stage as well as during and after the duration of the art project. The matrix is

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<sup>38</sup> Chester, Steven. Pyle, Michelle. *Tactical Urbanism Here!* Engaging Cities. 03.11.13

<sup>39</sup> Becker, Jack. *Public Art Review*. Spring/Summer 2011

divided into four ‘value’ sections – artistic, social, environmental and economic – and supposedly results in an approximate evaluation of the project.

Much of the literature provided on this matter is by Katherine Gressel, who first began her exploration into this subject in her 2007 graduate thesis research. On the aforementioned Ixia matrix, Gressel states:

“It is unclear how widely these tools have been adopted in the UK since their publication, and I did not encounter anyone in the US using them. Yet many organizations are employing a similar process of engaging various stakeholders during the project-planning phase to determine goals specific to each project...”<sup>40</sup>

In a recent ‘seminar webinar’, Gressel met with many interested parties to discuss the matter further. Liesel Fenner of *Americans for the Arts* opened the webinar asking: “How do we measure an art form that is elusive to traditional measurement tools?”<sup>41</sup> The discussion focused on the evaluative significance of public participation in all stages of a design process. The issue of evaluating public art is an ongoing discussion that will always be difficult to control accurately, due to the varied nature of art and culture. While many artists and architects may continue to experiment in public space for personal reasons and without the need of such an evaluation, it is encouraging that there is a significant amount of ongoing research on this complex subject.

## 2.6 Summary

This theoretical framework sought to question the importance of artwork in urban contexts, particularly sculpture parks. The review provided several key case studies which offered praise and acclaim for inventive sculpture parks which tackled unusual

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<sup>40</sup> Gressel, Katherine. *Public Art and the Challenge of Evaluation*. Jan 2012

<sup>41</sup> Fenner, Liesel. *Evaluating Public Art: Seminar Webinar*. Aug 2012

urban sites – most notably Citygarden in St. Louis and the Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle – and transformed their local environments as well as people’s perceptions of a sculpture park in the city. As projects such as these inspire similar ones in the future, perhaps more similar scholarly articles will arise and contribute to the topic.

In terms of more general readings about artistic landscapes and the value of public art, the review offered a diverse collection of interesting articles. The articles provided a collective encouragement for artwork in the city, while revealing that more scientific and calculated research is perhaps required in order to fully comprehend some of the inherent benefits. However the ten selected articles did provide variety, substance and interest, and collectively as well as individually, offer significant support for the inclusion of public spaces dedicated to artwork in urban settings.

A review of the literature revealed a gap in scholarly writing on the subject of temporary landscapes. While some research on the subjects of both temporary architecture and land art projects can be found, a lack of writing about temporary landscapes exists. There are several possible reasons for this gap – perhaps some temporary landscapes fall into different headings, or perhaps temporary landscapes is not a specific enough subject to write about. As with many examples of artwork, it is often difficult to put into words an objective viewpoint, or to calculate accurate systematic outcomes – this is further exacerbated when temporary landscapes are so inherently ephemeral. This lack of research on the subject of temporary landscapes of art, and more specifically on the experience of these landscapes, is encouragement for

further research within this thesis in an attempt to synthesize the numerous elements that lead to temporary artscapes.

### **CHAPTER 3: TEMPORARY ARTSCAPE TYPOLOGIES**

The following list of typologies attempts to refine and clarify this wide subject of temporary artscapes, owing to the fact that projects within his topic vary so much. Each typology is accompanied with one or two key precedents which clearly epitomize that typology. It should also be noted that there are several projects which in fact combine several different typologies, owing to their design or nature. Through the analysis and discussion of the various types of temporary landscape, the various ways in which I can progress with the design-research will become apparent.

#### **3.1 Temporary Art Installations**

Many public artworks are simply an object(s) placed upon the ground or within a site somehow. These works may provide a transitory change in the appearance and experience of a landscape but the landscape itself is not always a key element of the artwork physically or artistically. When the siting *is* an integral component in the design, temporary art installations can evoke a strong sense of place and reinforce site qualities, whether or not the work is site-specific itself.

A good example of this can be seen at the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, London. The plinth has remained without a statue for 150 years and over the last decade has become the setting for temporary art installations. The current piece by

Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset (shown above) is one of the few pieces that relates directly to the plinth, playing on the history of classical statues of horses upon plinths. Bishop/Williams (2012) states that, ‘the installations have not only become a very popular feature of the capital’s cultural life, and an important tourist attraction, but have established an international reputation in the art world.’<sup>42</sup>

Owing to the other three plinths being occupied with statues of General Sir Charles James Napier, Major General Sir Henry Havelock and King George IV respectively, the Fourth Plinth naturally compels the viewer to take better note of their surroundings, their landscape. This unique experience not only highlights the temporal nature of the artwork, but by allowing for changes in the installation it also stresses the importance of outdoor democratic public space. The peculiarity of the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square demands further exploration and the viewer leaves conscious of the fact that the space may look and feel much different next time. This resulting connection to landscape is what makes many temporary art installations so relevant to the discussion on temporary landscapes.

### **3.2 Temporary Land Art**

As previously mentioned, land art relates to projects that make direct connections or associations with their landscape, making them site-specific and therefore usually unrepeatable elsewhere. Land artists such as Robert Smithson, Charles Jencks and Andy Goldsworthy have proved time and time again the endless artistic possibilities within our landscapes, while mainstream artists such as Christo and Jeanne—Claude

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<sup>42</sup> Bishop, Peter. Williams, Lesley. The Temporary City. New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2012. Pg 125.

have had great success too. Landscape architects also have delved into the world of land art, producing temporary projects that are based inextricably within existing landscapes, often to make a bold statement or to test out an idea.

Landscape architect Ken Smith's Glowing Topiary Garden is a good example of experimentation. In February 1997 Smith installed sixteen glowing topiary-inspired cones around sixteen existing streetlamps in Liberty Plaza in the Financial District of Manhattan, New York. Smith stated, 'Our intention was to express the whole space of Liberty Plaza and to reveal qualities inherent to the place but often unnoticed or unappreciated.'<sup>43</sup> The cones were accompanied by acoustic special effects and wind chimes hidden within the surrounding honey locust trees. Smith's attempt to reengage the surrounding community with the plaza through the making of a unique, unexpected and controversial installation proved to be a great success.

The most well-known project to fall within this category is The Gates in Central Park by Christo and Jeanne-Claude, in February 2005. Their site-specific series of 7,503 vinyl 'gates' along 23 miles of pathways in Central Park provided what is surely the most enduring of this type of temporary landscape ever known. The project caused tens of thousands of everyday New Yorkers to explore the park in one of the year's coldest months, while attracting huge numbers of tourists. While the project was generally considered a great success, the temporary landscape caused enormous controversy owing to the subjective nature of the artwork and the hindrance that it caused certain people.

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<sup>43</sup> Smith, Ken. Ken Smith Landscape Architecture, 2009, pg 35.

### **3.3 Experimental Architecture**

This category relates to temporary installations that are actual built structures of some kind within a landscape. Many architects experiment in temporary architecture for a number of reasons: to test out a structure or material; to evoke a certain atmospheric quality; to research a specific space; to make a statement of some kind. Many of these projects are focused entirely on the built structure itself rather than the landscape; it is the projects in which landscape and place are prominent elements of the design that are important to this discussion.

A good precedent here is the With the Wind Civic Center in Shenzhen, China, in 2009 by Liu Jiakun. The temporary structure was inspired by the undulating form of the adjacent building, which was inspired by the local landscape.

### **3.4 Small Projects/Tactical Urbanism**

Temporary artscapes do not necessarily need an enormous amount of space to be successful. Many temporary projects are small and/or simple interventions within a landscape that can still have a dramatic effect and make a significant impact. As long as they're impacting, denoting or influenced by their immediate landscape then they are appropriate projects within this discussion.

'Pop-up' furniture in Utrecht by Carmela Bogman and Rogier Martens, puts the power to generate urban forms into the hands of the users themselves. The community has direct access to the hydraulic pump system in which they can choose

the composition of the three aluminum sheets, creating a stage, picnic table or lounge area.

### **3.5 Critical Position**

The various types of temporary landscape discussed in the previous section vary considerably, while sharing several key things in common. All of the projects, for better or worse, provide a sense of ‘shock-value’ and encourage investigation and understanding of some sort. The designers of the installation projects – artists, architects, landscape architects and land artists – share the notion that installations must be new, unique and intriguing in order for them to be noticed, be viewed and ultimately work for whatever their intent was. I believe that exciting temporary projects have an enormous power to create accelerated awareness while making a bold statement. I believe that the cultural benefits of temporary landscapes are a key ingredient to a city’s evolving and dynamic fabric.

This thesis focuses on the experience of the landscape, with the importance of the artwork, structure or installation being secondary to this. This thesis design investigation synthesizes the various typologies in order to create a new typology – one which acts as a site-specific, landscape-inspired artwork in itself while making a bigger cultural statement of democracy or urban-regeneration, for example. Perhaps the creation and discussion of ‘Typology 7: Regenerative Installations’ could form the argument for temporary landscapes which target urban regeneration within its specific landscape. By synthesizing typologies, I can relate the importance of site-

specific art to democratic urban contexts while making a greater statement about landscape architecture or landscape urbanism; the formation and testing of this new typology is the key ambition of this design thesis.

## **CHAPTER 4: DESIGNING THE EXPERIENCE**

The focus of this chapter is on the creative design process of temporary artscape, in order to investigate how designers intentionally design to affect a public audience temporarily. Common themes and working methods of the various designers are found through the study of *Designing the Experience*.

### **4.1 The Artistic Vision in a Temporary Artscape**

“I have become aware of how nature is in a state of change and how that change is the key to understanding. I want my art to be sensitive and alert to changes in material, season and weather... Nature goes beyond what is called countryside – everything comes from the earth. My work made indoors or with urban and industrial materials is an attempt to discover nature in these things also.”<sup>44</sup>

- Andy Goldsworthy

Landscapes continue to inspire people; ever since the first pyramids were conceived to unite the tombs of Pharaohs on Earth with the Gods up above, humans have been making spaces, structures, and buildings that have been inspired by innumerable places, features and moments within our diverse landscape. The above quote by artist Andy Goldsworthy reflects the great scope in which he sees nature and potential for art. Goldsworthy’s work – most of which is made ‘public’ through

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<sup>44</sup> Goldsworthy, Andy. [A Collaboration with Nature](#). Introduction

photographic documentation, excluding several large-scale public commissions – transforms everyday natural materials into new forms and colors; his artwork is an obvious reinterpretation and abstraction of nature, and demands us to question it rather than merely observing it.

Inspiration for a temporary artscape does not have to come from nature, however. Although ‘nature’ may be lacking in an urban context, inspiration can be found in everything else – location, geography, climate, history, society, culture, architecture, landscape architecture, environmental impact etc.. Ken Smith’s temporary artscape, *Glowing Topiary Garden*, was fundamentally inspired by the site’s geometric layout; he states:

“Our intention was to express the whole space of Liberty Plaza and to reveal qualities inherent to the place but often unnoticed or unappreciated.”<sup>45</sup>

## **4.2 The Value to Public Space**

While it is easy to be inspired by landscape, creating meaning in a project is much more difficult to achieve; inspiration and meaning are obviously directly related in public art, therefore. Whether the installation is focused on art or architecture, the creator must have a clear meaning and significance for the project that may include a set of goals to assess during the time of the installation. An artist may want to address a feature of the site’s climate, for example, and may therefore create something that clearly demonstrates that point to the public audience. A landscape architect may want to address a seating issue, for example, and may want to test out an unprecedented seating system.

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<sup>45</sup> Smith, Ken. Ken Smith: Landscape Architect. Pg 35

“What is important to me is that at the heart of whatever I do are a growing understanding and a sharpening perception of the land”<sup>46</sup>

- Andy Goldsworthy

A fundamental rationale for fashioning a temporary artscape is arguably the key component to its success; the audience’s ability or inability to read a project and to sufficiently comprehend its intended meaning(s), or the designer’s ability or inability to sufficiently assess their work, may determine the success of the project. Ben Tufnell further explores the rationale for making art:

“The development of environmental awareness since the 1960s has stimulated an extraordinary range of work that registers what is widely perceived as a developing ecological crisis, that proposes solutions to specific problems, or that aims to raise awareness and politicize thinking about man’s relationship with the landscape... This...offers a new framework for thinking about the relationship between art, society and the environment. In 1980 Agnes Denes suggested that the ‘new role of the artist is to create an art that is more than decoration, commodity or political tool – an art that questions the status quo and the direction life has taken’.”<sup>47</sup>

- Ben Tufnell

### **4.3 Shock and Controversy in Public Art**

“Urban planners and architects are constantly confronted and concerned with reviving cities, and have come to address urban quality more and more imaginatively. Prior barriers are coming down in terms of thinking about what public space and architecture can mean. We have come to see that a place worth living in and enjoying long-term must treat its spaces joyfully and spontaneously.”<sup>48</sup>

- R. Klanten

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<sup>46</sup> Goldsworthy, Andy. A Collaboration with Nature. Introduction

<sup>47</sup> Tufnell, Ben. Land Art. Pg 94

<sup>48</sup> Klanten, R. Going Public: Public Architecture, Urbanisms and Interventions. Pg 10

The ephemerality of temporary artscapes allows a great deal of freedom to creatively reimagine public space; permanent structures usually require considerably more consent and approval, and therefore, are often more conservative. This added freedom of creativity and expression in temporary projects has resulted in some of the most surprising, controversial and memorable temporary artscapes. Generally speaking, the size, ambition and uniqueness of the project can also help to draw attention to itself, thus gaining a larger audience.

*Discovering Columbus* by Japanese artist Tatzu Nishi – at Columbus Circle, New York, N.Y., Sept 20<sup>th</sup> - Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> – is an example of such a unique and unusual project. The historic statue of Christopher Columbus at the south-west corner of Central Park – originally unveiled in 1892 by Italian sculptor Gaetano Russo – is one of the city’s most iconic landmarks and ordinarily would not be interfered. Nishi’s public art, however, seeks to reimagine known urban artifacts by placing the public audience in a new, previously uninhabited space. In the case of *Discovering Columbus*, a temporary scaffolding structure was constructed around the sculpture, more than 90 feet high, inside of which an imitation contemporary New York apartment was built inside of which stood the 13 foot tall Columbus. When inside this raised imitation apartment, the public perceived the statue completely differently, while observing the rare view of Manhattan that the Columbus statue boasts.

The astonishing ‘shock value’ that projects such as *Discovering Columbus* achieves is often a critical component of the artwork. Experiencing an alteration or re-presentation of a familiar place can be an alarming and potentially unsettling occurrence; but these rare moments of immense artistic expression are essential not

only to the creator in order to best examine a theory or notion, but also to the constant examining and questioning of urban space by society. On the significance of building experiments, Sarah Bonnemaïson and Ronit Eisenbach state:

“Like paper projects and competitions, installations allow architects to comment on and critique the status quo, and to imagine new forms, methods, and ideas in architecture. And as ephemeral constructions, they also offer precious freedom to experiment.”<sup>49</sup>

#### **4.4 Economic Drivers in Public Art Installations**

Writing, photography and other means of documenting are essential components to the process of designing, constructing and assessing temporary artscapes. As previously mentioned, there has been much debate about how best to evaluate public art (owing to its often subjective nature) but at times economics is the easiest and most persuasive characteristic. In some cases economics is the biggest selling point. For example, Mayor Bloomberg anticipated a financial gain of \$80million to New York City during the two weeks in February 2005 when people flocked to experience *The Gates* by Christo and Jeanne-Claude;<sup>50</sup> the project was originally designed in 1979 but took twenty-six years to come to fruition.

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<sup>49</sup> Bonnemaïson, Sarah. Eisenbach, Ronit. Installations by Architects: Experiments in Building Design. Pg 14

<sup>50</sup> Beardsley, John. Earthworks and Beyond. Pg 203

## **4.5 INVESTIGATION 1: *DESIGNING THE EXPERIENCE: BRITISH SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON***

### **4.5.1 Investigation Goals**

In contemplating ways to further analyze the creative process of the designer in this chapter – ‘Designing the Experience’ – I felt that an opportunity to collaborate with young students might give me a platform to teach aspects of what I have learned to a new generation, while educating myself further from a joint creative process. In the summer of 2012 I contacted the British School of Washington in Georgetown, Washington, D.C., and pitched the idea of co-teaching an abstract art class that would result in a collaborative temporary artscape for their campus. The teachers loved the idea, and agreed to let me co-teach their Year 7 (sixth-grade) art/design-technology class each week from Oct-Dec 2012. Furthermore, they choose to use the project as the focal feature of their half-term International Middle Years Curriculum structure (see appendix), which emphasizes the multi-disciplined nature of a project.

I had three main objectives for this project:

- To introduce the class to landscape architecture and to public art
- To plan and undertake a clear and practical in-class design process
- As a collaborative class to design and construct a temporary artscape

In addition to these three key objectives, I wanted to gain as much insight into the pros and cons of making a temporary artscape as possible; I therefore made sure that I documented every stage of the design process through scanning and/or photography. I also relished the rare opportunity to work with and teach young ambitious students;

and on a personal level it was one of my greatest privileges as a Briton to work with the British School of Washington in this capacity.



**Figure 2: British School of Washington Class at UMD**

#### **4.5.2 Strategy**

Creating the framework for this one-off project was a challenge, but I worked hard with the class's art teacher – Mr. Simon Steff – to create a clear and logical structure and to write up a rough class schedule. The class would meet for two hours twice a week, and I would be present for one of those classes. We therefore had roughly thirty hours to teach and complete the entire project – although realistically we knew that additional hours outside of school time would probably be necessary to install the installation.

Our strategy was to begin by introducing the class to the field of landscape architecture and to their involvement in my thesis; this was in the form of a field trip to the University of Maryland's Plant Science and Landscape Architecture Department, in which abstract art would also be introduced in the form of several fun activities. Having been introduced to landscape architecture, the students would then undertake a site analysis of their campus in Georgetown, in five teams of four

students; each team had a different theme – Program, Circulation, People, Time and Weather. This site analysis would lead to the development of design concepts for the installation, relating to their respective team’s theme. An informal critique and class vote would then lead to the choosing of which theme and concept to select; that concept would then be collaboratively designed, detailed and constructed as best as possible.

#### 4.5.3 Process

Field Trip – For most of the class, the field trip to the University of Maryland was their first visit to a university. The day began with a presentation that introduced the students to the topic of landscape architecture; key historical figures and precedents were shown, and a ‘knowledge harvest’ game followed to ascertain the student’s preliminary knowledge.

I then introduced my thesis topic, and how our collaboration would be an instrumental component in my research; this led to a brief introduction to ‘abstraction’ and ‘representation’, and I was encouraged to learn that they had looked at artists such as Munch, Pollack and Goldsworthy before.

Figure 3: Abstract Exercises



As a tool for developing the student's abstract thinking, I devised an exercise called the *Language of Shapes* (see appendix), which required each student to draw a non-literal shape or series of shapes that reflected a given word, such as 'conflict'. Some

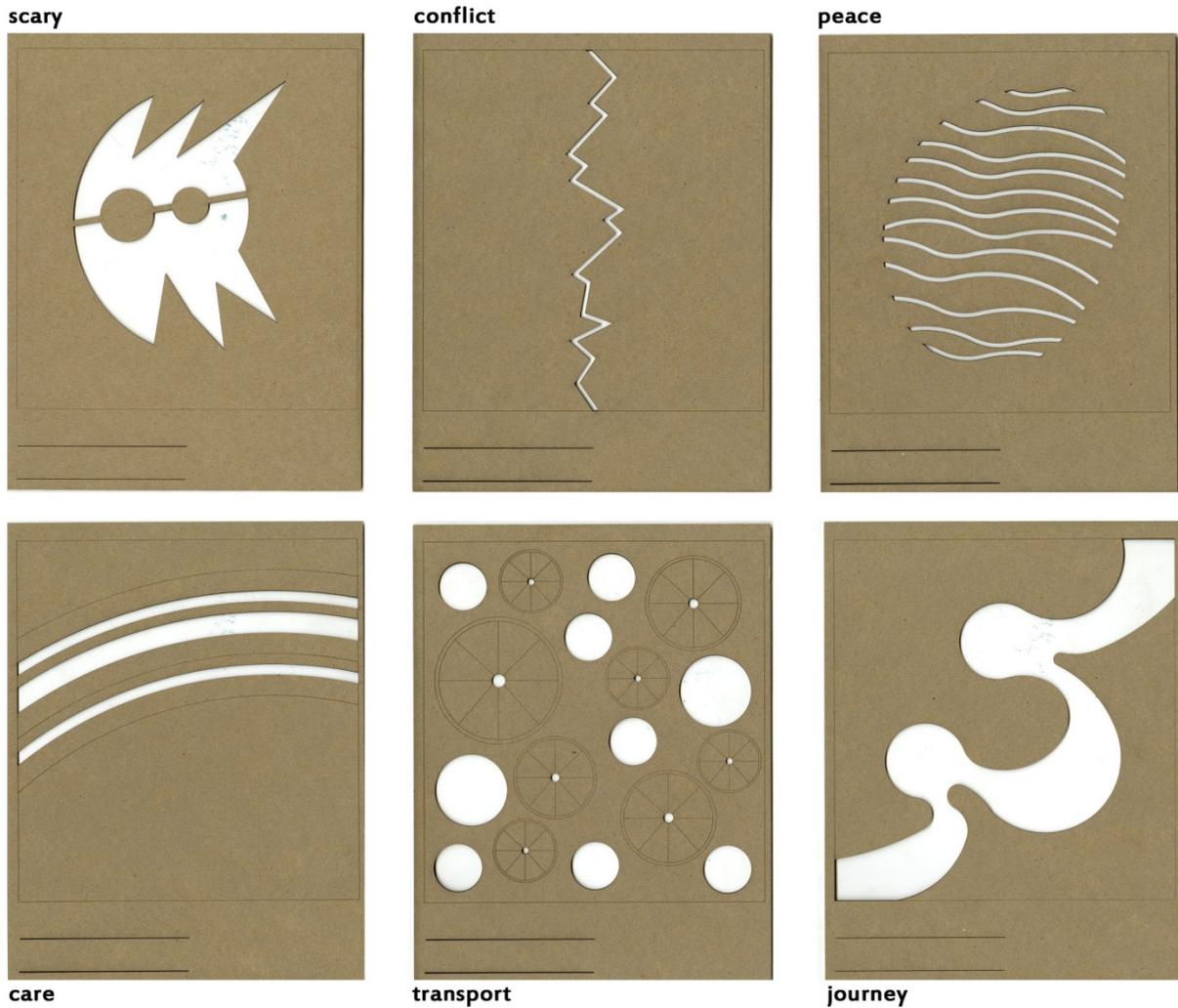


Figure 4: The Language of Shapes Abstraction Boards

of the students needed some guidance in avoiding literal shapes to convey a word, but eventually all students produced an excellent response. Mr. Steff and I then chose each student's most successful/interesting drawing, which they would then re-draw at a larger scale, before abstracting again into a three-dimensional model out of newspaper; this produced a wonderful array of work. While doing this, the students took turns to enter the department workshop with their final drawing, which I re-drew

quickly in Auto CAD in order for a laser-cut board to me made for each student. The students were able to pick and choose how they wanted their board cut, and they were able to assist in the placing of the material and the turning on/off of the laser. Once cut, each student wrote their name and title word at the bottom. For most of the students this component was clearly the highlight of the field trip, while I took great satisfaction in the excellence and diversity of the twenty final pieces. Below is a selection of the boards prior to being named and titled:

Narrative – The in-class work began with a brief narrative exercise, inspired by the working method of Maya Lin, who always begins a project in writing; she states: “I begin my imagining an artwork verbally. I try to describe in writing what the project is, what it is trying to do.”<sup>51</sup> This narrative exercise – which has also been a useful tool in my own work within several design studios – gave the students an opportunity to think about their school campus and how they currently use its various spaces. Though fairly small, the British School of Washington’s campus is very interesting with a great deal of variety in type of outdoor space, which is ideal for this particular project.

Site Analysis – Having begun to contemplate the significance of the various spaces in and around the school building, the students were then asked to undertake a simple site analysis in teams on a particular theme. The class of twenty was divided into five teams of four; the five teams/themes were Program, Circulation, People, Time and Weather. The students were asked to consider the site with regard to the many aspects related to their theme, and to add diagrams, notes and sketches to a map that I

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<sup>51</sup> Lin, Maya. Boundaries. Pg 3:02

supplied them with. Each of the five maps produced an effective response to the given theme, while awakening the students to many new aspects of their landscape, such as stormwater collection, topography and shadows.

Concepts – Conscious of our very short timeframe to design and make an installation, we had to move very quickly. The students remained in the five groups and revisited the *Language of Shapes* exercise, this time drawing shapes and patterns related to relevant words from their theme; this gave them a visual dictionary to refer to when beginning to fashion concepts for an installation. We asked each team to work collectively in designing a temporary artscape inspired by their site analysis theme, and to make drawings and models that would ultimately be presented in front of the class.

One slight concern at the beginning of the project was that some of the students would not comprehend the notion of abstraction, but we worked hard to show key precedents that were often very abstract but still clear in their message. The bold and open manner in which the students set about this concept phase was very encouraging and inspiring; the notion of artistically abstracting a single theme into a clear and original design idea is very challenging at any age, but these students rose to the challenge. For each concept, I created a simple photoshopped perspective to further illustrate their design intention. Below are the student's five fantastic design concepts:



Figure 5: Concept 1: Over and Over Again

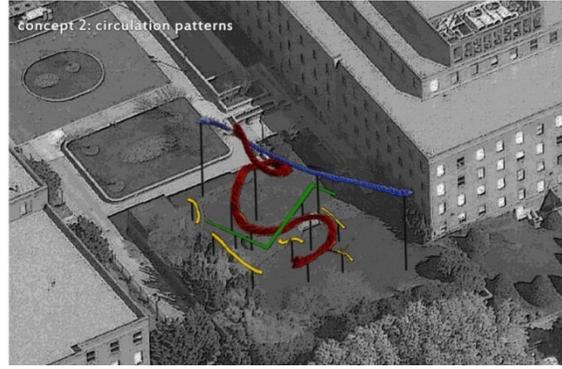
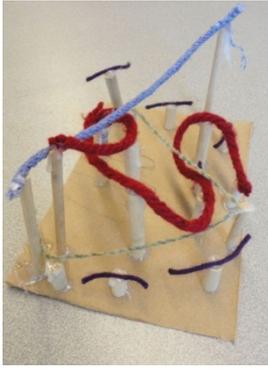


Figure 6: Concept 2: Circulation Patterns

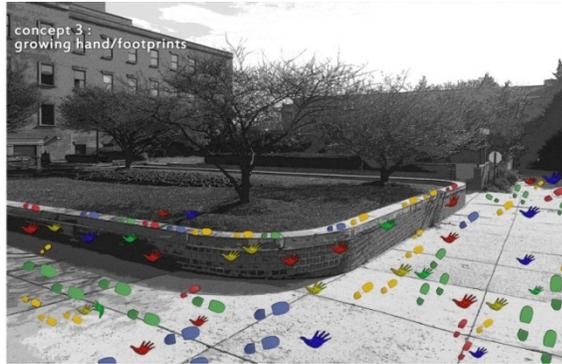


Figure 7: Concept 3: Growing Hand/Footprints



Figure 8: Concept 4: Four Arches



Figure 9: Concept 5: Flowing Petals

The models and drawings created for each project worked perfectly in conveying that scheme's general idea. Each concept was imaginative and well thought out in terms of materials and cost, and most elements of the important criteria that the installation required were met:

- 8 To be an original, abstract representation linked to the landscape
- 9 To be realistic in terms of size, cost, materials and construction
- 10 To encourage recycling and reuse
- 11 To have that 'wow' factor

Unfortunately we could only proceed with one concept, and so a class vote followed the presentation of the five concepts; Team Circulation: *Circulating Patterns* was chosen. The concept was to have four 'tracks' raised on poles – representing the circulation patterns of walking, skipping, cross-country and tag – interweaved within one another in a form that invited people to enter in and around it. Each track would represent the character of its respective circulation pattern – i.e. the 'skipping' piece would be delicate, playful and low to ground to engage with youngsters.

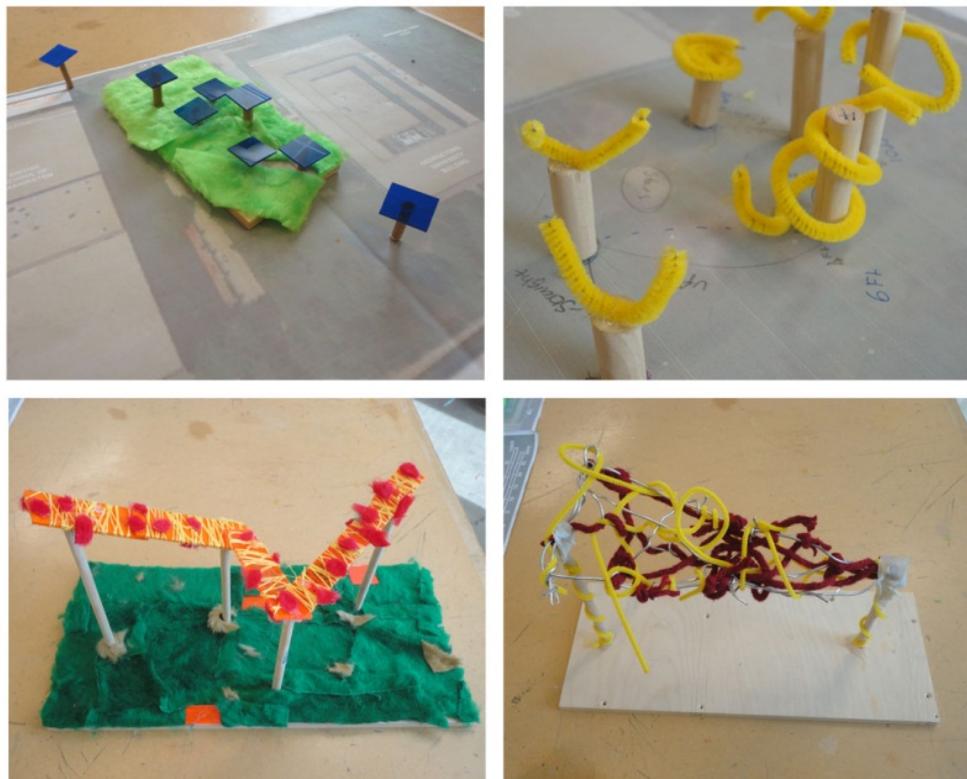


Figure 10: Circulation Concept Development

Refining the Concept – With the general theme chosen, we had to refine and detail exactly how the installation would look and work. I also began the process of acquiring permission to construct a temporary artscape on the campus, which is owned by various parties. To give the project a more realistic and professional feel, I created new teams with job descriptions for each student (see appendix). Each of the four circulation tracks now had its own group working predominantly on that element of the installation, although much collaboration between teams over location and how the pieces would relate to each other was essential. Each group continued to refine the design of their ‘track’ through model-making, drawing and material-testing. The budget for the project was about \$300 and we were therefore very conscious of being creative and efficient in terms of materials for our shopping list (see appendix).

Construction – The construction of the installation started two weeks before the opening date. Various in-class production lines were created to address the repetitive nature of much of the design, such as the ‘walking’ pavers and the laborious making of the rope ladder, for example. This was the class’s first design and technology class, and allowed them to be introduced to many key construction tools and techniques, such as drilling, sawing and digging. While the student were able to create the various ‘tracks’, the placing of holes and hanging of the various tracks was largely done by myself and Mr. Steff.

#### 4.5.4 Final Installation

Figure 11: Entrance into Installation



The final piece of work turned out very well; the colors were very engaging as was the overall form and layout. The students were very happy with the end product, which brought great attention from the other students, teachers, parents and passing public. For six weeks of winter, the installation transformed an under-utilized space, while clearly providing the desired collaborative temporary artscape.



Figure 12: Walk, Skip, Tag, Cross-Country Details

#### 4.5.5 Summary

This investigation was a success on many levels. As an exercise in the process of designing a piece of temporary art with the intention of having an immediate impact on people and abstractly representing an element of the immediate landscape, we accomplished what we set out to do. The end product was well received, and in the student's documented report on the project, many of them spoke of how proud they were of the installation. The artistic process worked well and despite the short time-frame the project never felt rushed or disordered. I learned many things about the reality of construction something of this nature, particularly about dealing with unanticipated problems in terms of administration and materials.

In hindsight, the location of the project makes the project less public than it could have been, which means that it may have had an impact on less people than anticipated; that said, I am not a self-confessed artist or professional of any kind, and so the risks of working somewhere more public would have been much greater. As mentioned in *Chapter 2: Literature Review*, there has been much discussion in recent years about how to evaluate public art. The purpose of this investigation centered on the *Designing of the Experience*, and sought to analyze the working method of the designer, rather than the actual impact that the installation itself made; the following chapter – *Experiencing the Design* – will explore this important component.

## **CHAPTER 5: EXPERIENCING THE DESIGN**

This section focuses on the subsequent effects of a temporary art installation, rather than on the design process or artistic value of an intervention. By separating this study from the design process study and investigating the various ways in which people are affected, the thesis suggests ways to integrate evaluation techniques for continued research value.

### **5.1 The Effects on the Public**

This chapter considers the experience of the public during a temporary artscape as opposed to the object(s) itself, although the two are obviously inherently connected. The ephemeral nature of temporary artscares makes the human experience much less one-dimensional than a permanent intervention, which is unlikely to vary that much over time. The experience that the designer intends to create for a temporary project is a critical and ongoing part of the design process, and is often a critical element or *the* critical element of the inquiry. People's behavior in urban environments is both unsurprising and unpredictable, which makes documentation through photography or any other method essential. One of the most appealing aspects of public art is that during a project's timespan it could have been comprehended or "read" an infinite number of ways by a great range of people; people notice, appreciate and are drawn to different things, which is the fundamental value of subjective art and democratic opinion, and which makes art in the landscape difficult to assess on any level. That said, many of the temporary artscares discussed in this thesis comprise of a high level

of eccentricity and originality, which often makes the manner of the public experience clearer and more attainable to observe, discuss or document:

“These new spaces engender new forms of sociability that both replace and augment basic interaction, including face-to-face communication, situations of co-presence, and identification. Personal as well as collective movements through an increasingly fragmented cityscape therefore become reunified on the basis of both intuitive and playful orientations.”<sup>52</sup>

While some projects can be difficult to assess in terms of the human experience, others are fairly simple. *Touch* by LAB(au) is a digital installation on the facade of the Dexia Tower in Brussels in which people are invited to control the enormous configuration of LED lights from a small booth at the bottom of the building. The intervention results in an ever-changing digital light show that is directly connected to the user and their experience of the installation. As the facade of the skyscraper changes it is digitally photographed and small postcards are produced on-site within the booth for the public to take away with them as a souvenir, thus prolonging the experience. The most unique aspect of *Touch* is how it asks the user to become the artist: “the unique qualities of the building quickly grew in people’s minds, for it was the only one constantly changing in response to public engagement.”<sup>53</sup>

## 5.2 Evaluative Techniques

Evaluating temporary projects, as with permanent ones, is a complex and cloudy undertaking. While a project by a well-known public artist might guarantee large numbers of income to a museum, community or city, it might not necessarily

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<sup>52</sup> Klanten, R. *Going Public*. Pg 89.

<sup>53</sup> Bonnemaison, Sarah. Eisenbach, Ronit. *Installations by Architects*. Pg 175.

contribute much to a community, the art world, or the designer's inquiry. Equally, a project can be ground-breaking without winning awards or much critical acclaim.

It should be stressed that not all projects require evaluating, but those that do can add another dimension to the public experience. For example, the increased use of QR barcodes in museums allows visitors to learn more about a project online, where they may be encouraged to give feedback. The ease and effectiveness of using the internet and/or social media as a method of communication with the public had made the relationship between creator and viewer much more tangible than it has ever been before.

Candy Chang is an American artist who has produced many pieces of work that invite the public to participate by writing or drawing within the installation. Much of her work seeks to engage the many opinions of a community as a tool for developing discussions that might lead to the implementation of community needs. Like *Touch*, her work is able to be evaluated in terms of the number of participants as well as by their own personal response. The educational value of obtaining evaluative feedback from members of the public became an important feature of the design-component of this thesis.

### **5.3 The Role of Memory in Temporary Artscapes**

The Turbine Hall in TATE Modern, London, is one of the world's most famous sites for temporary art installations; annually since 2000, the Unilever Series has resulted in a specially-commissioned installation between October and March. One of the most well-known projects to be displayed in the Turbine Hall was *Shibboleth* by

Doris Salcedo in 2008. Despite over a decade of world-renowned installations, *Shibboleth* is the only one to have truly left its mark on the Turbine Hall. The installation consisted of a deep, gaping crack in the concrete that ran the length of the building's vast entrance; the construction technique used for the process remains unknown, despite being discussed extensively. The installation invited visitors to approach and examine the massive deformity to the familiar space, which represented the artist's impression of the conflict between immigrants and non-immigrants in the United Kingdom. At the end of the project's run the large linear void had to be filled back in with concrete, which resulted in a permanent concrete scarring of the Turbine Hall's floor that outlines the former crack.

Most temporary artscapes are not afforded the chance to be fused permanently in some way into the fabric of their location, like *Shibboleth* is at TATE Modern; however, that is not to say that their presence and disposition will be forgotten. Projects that dramatically transform well-known places such as *Discovering Columbus* at Columbus Circle by Tatzu Nishi or *Song 1* at the Hirshhorn Museum by Doug Aitken are so unique and unexpected that their existence will last far longer than their actual duration, particularly if there's a special emotive connection to the project with the viewer.

## **5.4 INVESTIGATION 2: *EXPERENCING THE DESIGN: HORNBAKE PLAZA, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND***

### **5.4.1 Investigation Goals**

The second research investigation sought to examine the effects on the public of a temporary artscape, rather than on the design process that came beforehand; however, that is not to say that the design component of this study was not of importance as it was another opportunity to experiment temporarily in the landscape, only with a different intent this time. I chose to use the campus at the University of Maryland as the testing ground in which to carry out this investigation.

In 2012 a class of undergraduate landscape architecture students experimented at Evergreen Museum and Library in Baltimore with a series of sculptures and installations; I therefore had a wonderful opportunity to re-use some of the materials to install on campus temporarily while carrying out a survey to passers-by. One class project consisted of a series of large black steel-framed hollow cubes of 4ft, 6ft and 8ft diameters that were inspired by transparency, voids and occupying space; I chose to reinterpret this project on a well-populated urban plaza on the University of Maryland campus called Hornbake Plaza.

The goals of the project were as follows:

- Reinterpret a ready-made project to create a new temporary artscape
- Alter the appearance/configuration of the installation each day for 10 days
- Carry out a survey to the public to analyze the effects of the temporary artscape
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#### 5.4.2 Design Intervention Strategy

The scheduling of this investigation was critical to its success, given the very short time-frame with lots of work involved. Hornbake Plaza is a well-designed public space that acts as a key thoroughfare for pedestrian traffic between class periods, as well as functioning as a flexible space for occasional events, demonstrations or festivals. The entire space is roughly 3,000 sq/ft, about half of which is paved and half is grassed or planted. Hornbake Plaza's irregular flat grassy spaces are its only unused and un-programmed spaces, and so I chose to activate them with the installation.

Several of the precedent projects that I've researched were installed during the winter, the benefits of which are twofold: firstly, they encourage the continued value of public space during the cold season; secondly, a bold and colorful aesthetic can be much more prominent in a winter landscape, as seen with *The Gates* in Central Park. The installation would last seven days beginning the first week of December 2012. One major advantage to conducting the investigation at this time was the assurance that students and other people would use the space extensively, therefore guaranteeing some public engagement in terms of the numbers of people surveyed.

The plan was to quickly install the twelve cubes into the plaza (with the help of the Landscape Services crew) and to transform them daily, somewhat spontaneously, in order to capture people's attention and cause them to question what was happening and why. During various times of the installation I would approach passers-by who had just experienced the installation and I would invite them to take part in a survey about the effects of temporary public art.

### 5.4.3 Process

The initial installation of the cubes consisted of 4-5 hours of hard-work by the Landscape Services crew, whose assistance and support was invaluable, and myself. First, the twelve cubes – five of which were 4ft x 4ft, four of which were 6ft x 6ft and three of which 8ft x 8ft – had to be slowly transported to the site and carefully carried to their location. A metal stake was hammered 8-12 inches into the ground to create four insertion points for each cube's four corners.



Figure 13: Location of Twelve Cubes

Day One and Two – The twelve cubes were laid in a simple orthogonal formation that surrounded the main access paths to the Plant Science Building at the north-east of the plaza and Hornbake Library at the east of the plaza. The cubes increased in size as they got closer to the central opening in the center of the plaza, suggesting an escalation in ‘contained space’ while hiding behind the large trees if arriving from the main staircase at the south-west.

For the first two days I wanted for them to just sit delicately in the landscape, framing various vistas and creating a sense of intrigue in their newly-activated spaces. During the construction



Figure 14: Child Playing with String

and the early documentation of the installation, several passers-by asked me what I was “setting-up”, representing the structural-appearance of the temporary project.

Day Three – A colorful and low-cost addition of brightly-colored thin rope was added to one or two sides of some of the cubes on the third day. While this alteration didn’t drastically change the vacant nature of the cubes, it did add a bright, unrestrained and playful component that contrasted well with the rigid and defined aesthetic that the cubes presented. Furthermore, the fact that the cubes were altered at the same time and rate meant that the transformation of the project had begun.

Day Four – The fourth day was arguably the most successful day of the installation, owing to a simply fabulous contribution by an improvisational dance class. The arrangement of the twelve cubes presented a sense of performativity that inspired me to contact the performance arts department in hope of finding a group that would like to dance or perform within the cubes – to my delight a dance professor jumped at the chance to use the installation to carry out one of his improvisational dance classes during one lunch-time.



Figure 15: Improvisational Dance Class

The confident and appreciative group of performers brought the installation to life during a peak time of pedestrian activity in between classes in the middle of the day. This transformation required an altered survey that now acknowledged the performance quality of the installation. The event also led to one of the biggest surprises and most important learning outcomes of the entire thesis – the class were so grateful for the opportunity to perform in a new and unique manner that the emphasized gratitude that I personally received from them was remarkable. This was a shock to me because of the level of gratitude that I has for them contributing to the installation in such a beautiful and creative way; while I was aware of the lack of student public art on display on campus, I simply had not appreciated that other creative art forms felt equally neglected.



**Figure 16: Improvisational Dance Class**

Day Five – The fifth day of the installation saw the return of the static and unfamiliar nature of the changing cubes. Using clear fishing wire, everyday objects were suspended within the cubes, providing a three-dimensional framing effect that celebrated and emphasized their form and color. The range of objects was important



**Figure 17: Suspended Objects** as there was an opportunity to create shocking moments that would complement the odd mystique in seeing simple ordinary objects glorified in some manner. The chosen objects to be suspended were: an umbrella; a watering can; a briefcase; a pair of indoor soccer shoes; a bicycle:

Day Six and Seven – The installation ended with the cubes drastically moving for the first time. Having stood quietly in a grid formation parallel to the surrounding architecture for five straight days, they were suddenly uprooted into a disturbing and destructive configuration.



Figure 18: Destructive Configuration of Cubes

#### 5.4.4 Survey Results

Fifty people took part in the survey during the investigation, as was the target. While the results of the survey were fairly expected, the extra details provided by participants were very interesting. Question 7 proved to be the most intriguing question, partly because of the varied way in which it was read; many stated “yes” because they felt that public art *should* be an important feature on campus despite the lack of it, whereas some stated “no” referring to the apparent lack of it.

1. Approximately, how often do you pass through Hornbake Plaza?
  - Daily **58%**
  - Weekly **38%**
  - Rarely **4%**

I expected the participants to be regular users of Hornbake Plaza who has a regular connection to the space, so these results were anticipated.

2. Were you surprised to see the public art on display at Hornbake Plaza today?

- Very surprised **34%**
- Fairly surprised **56%**
- Not really **10 %**

I had expected a higher percentage of participants to be “Very surprised”.

3. Was your journey affected in any way by the public art on display? Please give details.

- Yes **82%**                      Positive effect **92%**    Negative effect **8%**
- No **18%**

This was the overwhelming response that I had hoped for; although participants gave very different details explaining how their journey was affected, the fact that they were encouraged to think about it was of most importance to me.

4. Has your impression of Hornbake Plaza changed in any way? Please give details.

- Yes **56%**                      Positive impression **98%**    Negative impression **2%**
- No **44%**

Many participants who said “No” here compared the art installation to any other of the large events that the plaza is regularly used for – this was fair in the sense that Hornbake Plaza is a well-used and adaptable space, but the fact that this was a rare public art installation occupying spaces *around* the plaza meant that I expected a lower negative response.

5. Do you think today's public art experience will remain in your memory for long?

- Yes **38%**
- Maybe **36%**
- No **26%**

This fairly balanced result was fairly expected, owing to the subjective nature of abstract art such as this.

6. Did today's (Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 2013) performance aspect (improv. dance class) of the public art change the experience in any way?

- Yes **94%**                      Positive effect **90%**                      Negative effect **10%**
- No **6%**

The results here were very clear-cut; it should be noted that the time of the performance was the busiest time in terms of participants approaching me, rather than vice-versa. The few negative responses all referred to the participant feeling uncomfortable by performance.

7. Do you consider public art to be an important feature on campus? Please give details.

- Yes **62%**
- No **38%**

This question was poorly written as it provided a mixed interpretation. As previously stated, many participants answered "Yes" but explained that the University of Maryland does not display any public art – those participants were therefore effectively stating "No".

### 5.4.5 Summary

The investigation was a very useful study on how temporary public art can affect a user's experience of a landscape. The survey results were fairly predictable, but were supported by a great array of personal opinions that represented a diverse and interested community. In hindsight the questions could have been more challenging and/or thought-provoking, but the length and ease of the questions was substantial and suitable in terms of keeping people's attention span.

The survey results presented a number of important facts. It was encouraging that the vast majority of participants were regular users who clearly were happy spending time to contribute to a space of significance to them. I was pleasantly surprised by the level of honesty and openness given in the personal responses (which will remain private), as they revealed thorough considerations of the impact of the installation.

In terms of evaluating the installation itself, the most surveys were conducted during the time of the improvisational dance performance which clearly activated the space more than any of the static configurations; the simplicity of the installation was therefore a great advantage as it was adaptable on a number of levels. The chance to experiment on a daily basis with largely spontaneous and low-cost ways to transform the space was a good exercise on a personal level.

As with *Investigation 1: Designing the Experience: British School of Washington*, the temporary artscape was a fairly gentle and subtle intervention in the landscape, as opposed to many of the grand and/or highly-technological precedents discussed in this thesis. Temporary artscapes don't necessarily have to be seen or experienced from a great distance, but that quality does make human engagement much easier to

attain. While a great amount of time and energy was spent on the constant configuration of the cubes, the cost spent on the investigation, remarkably, was less than \$30 – for the fishing wire to suspend objects and for some black spray paint for the cubes.

## **CHAPTER 6: LEARNING OUTCOMES AND PROJECT GOALS**

This chapter analyzes the two aforementioned research investigations – *Designing the Experience: British School of Washington* and *Experiencing the Design: Hornbake Plaza, UMD*. The two design inquiries produced a great deal of success on many levels, and considered reflection also allows an opportunity to critique aspects of the projects too. Owing to the enormous amount of work and planning that was undertaken to organize and accomplish the two investigations, as a student I was able to learn a great deal more about my undertakings and about myself than I had ever imagined; the following quote by Bonnemaision/Eisenbach reinforces the importance of this learning process:

“Students must...take responsibility for the construction process and learn how to manage their time and materials. Once the piece is built, they experience firsthand the loose fit between intentions and interpretation. Ultimately, they acquire skills in social action and critical thinking, which they carry with them into their professional lives.”<sup>54</sup>

The following sections discuss the four key learning outcomes from the two investigations, which in turn will become the principal design goals for the thesis design project: Abstraction of an Idea; Transformation of Dead Space; Improved Understanding of Landscape; Redefining of Public Space.

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<sup>54</sup> Bonnemaision, Sarah. Eisenbach, Ronit. Installations by Architects. Pg. 17.

## 6.1 Abstraction of an Idea

The many creative forms of imagery and symbolism represented in the two investigations, as well as in the many precedents discussed, reflects the designer's intent to abstractly reinterpret in order to emphasize an aspect of the landscape, culture or site conditions. In *Investigation 1* the students were introduced to the concept of re-presenting simple themes into new forms; their ability to create such imaginative concepts was inspirational. The final installation abstracted the theme of four circulatory patterns on campus in order to develop a temporary artscape that reflected the structure and sensation of walking, skipping, cross-country and playing tag, respectively.

Notions of abstraction were again present in *Investigation 2*, in which the large steel cubes framed voids of space in the landscape as well as framing views into other nearby or distant places. The adaptability of the cubes meant that constant reinterpretation was possible; at times during the installation their form and use represented dancing apparatus and three-dimensional picture frames, among other things.

The recurring desire to draw the public to a feature or characteristic of the immediate landscape, results in a required and essential ability to invent new ideas and forms. Original-design is a fundamental quality in temporary artsapes, as their ephemeral nature requires a public to be engaged in a new and bold manner. In order to actively push my own development of abstract-thinking during the time of the thesis research, I designed the following two projects as part of an advanced sculpture class:



*The Artificial Nature of Nature* – the form of this 10 ft sculpture was inspired by a fallen tree branch in a nearby stream. I reimagined the branch as an artificial object made entirely of free IKEA pencils, giving the branch a new eternal lifespan.



Figure 19: The Artificial Nature of Nature Sculpture

*The Destructive Nature of Nature* –

this installation was inspired by the bike-ride through the Paint Branch trail into the University of Maryland campus. Much of the forest is fairly new growth, owing to a tornado that destroyed



Figure 20: The Destructive Nature of Nature

numerous trees in 2001, which tragically killed several students. I composed a short piano-piece that reflected the calm and steady pattern of cycling through a thirty-second section of the journey, and juxtaposed the music and video with the appearance of the same piano, now violently demolished.

## 6.2 Transformation of Dead Space

The ability for a temporary artscape to bring attention to an undervalued, unused or neglected space is a very powerful attribute, and a quality that I hope to achieve in the design component of the thesis. During the construction phase of *Investigation I*, the British School of Washington received an unexpected negative response from land-owners Georgetown University to our final installation proposal that resulted in the re-siting of the project. This problem quickly became an opportunity to activate a different area on campus that would actually benefit much more from being occupied, owing to its underused disposition. The space consequently became populated by many students, teachers and members of the public while experiencing the installation, resulting in the space obtaining a sense of place and purpose temporarily.

The term “dead space” does not refer solely to undesirable spaces or imply a negative connotation, however. Some installations temporarily activate space to reinforce an important characteristic, such as *Connecting Light* by YesYesNo, which dramatically-illuminated the linear form of Hadrian’s Wall in England through the use of four-hundred large glowing balloons:

"That diversity of environments I found really powerful. I also felt it's very peaceful in places and we wanted to capture that. Connecting Light celebrates the whole of the wall."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Lieberman, Zachary. Hadrian's Wall borders connected through light. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-19320015>

### **6.3 Improved Understanding of Landscape**

The manner in which the temporary artscape was designed and intended will determine the level of understanding that the engaging public will obtain. It is difficult to evaluate exact scientific levels of what this ‘understanding’ is, but it may be studied through the level of interest and engagement in the project. In terms of the designer’s installation education and analysis, both public art projects and experimental architectural interventions may achieve varied levels of new, improved understanding of the examined landscape or human behavior. The desire to highlight a site’s characteristic or a type of human behavior – for positive or negative reasons – will lead to a form that should explicitly reflect the intention of the project in order for it to translate instantly.

### **6.4 Redefining of Public Space**

This final learning outcome and project goal stems from the open nature of temporary artscapes to instigate and emphasize public engagement in public environments. Whether a temporary intervention exists within a known public context such as a plaza or park, or creates a new public context within an unconventional space, their mere presence as a unique and unprecedented project results in the redefining of that space as public, or more public, to some degree. Artists and architects involved in temporary artscapes must share this common interest in the attitudes and behavior of the public – not to mention a dependence on them in terms of a clientele.

The survey results of *Investigation 2* prove that it was very successful in redefining public space; participants gave honest responses, openly expressing how their experience had been affected by the temporary artscape. This public feedback validated the value of discussing democratic space and bringing attention to the views of a community; Beth Diamond states:

“At the moment it is critical that the questions facing public space and freedom of expression be consciously addressed. Democracy, as a system, is in a continuous process of evolution. The forms of space we devise to represent it will help determine the structure of the society that lives within. It is imperative in this context that we maintain and even encourage the discomfort of dialogue.”<sup>56</sup>

## **CHAPTER 7: TEMPORARY ARTSCAPES: KEY DESIGN PRECEDENTS FOR DESIGN PROJECT**

This chapter focuses on six key design precedents that were inspired by the research investigations and the previous chapter, *Learning Outcomes and Project Goals*. The following six key design precedents have been chosen to represent six common themes found in temporary artscares, while collectively reflecting the diverse and captivating nature of such projects; the chosen projects vary enormously in terms of their size, scope and ambitions, but share much common ground in terms of their effect on the user and ephemeral impact:

- *Red Ball* by Kurt Pershke
- *The Garden that Climbs the Stairs* by Balmori Associates

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<sup>56</sup> Diamond, Beth. *Awakening the Public Realm: Instigating Democratic Space*, 2004.

- *Pulse at Dilworth Plaza* by Janet Echelman with OLIN Studio
- *Markings* by Julian Lang and Hargreaves Associates
- *Twig* by Alexander Lotersztain
- *Pink Ghost* by Peripheriques Architectes

The discussion of each project will conclude with an analysis of how it relates to the four *Learning Outcomes of Chapter 6*: Abstraction of an Idea; Transformation of Dead Space; Improved Understanding of Landscape; Redefining of Public Space.

### **7.1 Highlighting Form: Red Ball by Kurt Pershke**

*Red Ball* is a unique and wonderful nomadic art project by Kurt Pershke. The giant inflatable red ball travels across the world, spending weeks in a city in spontaneous locations and positions. The project's exceptional quality is how it manages to continually recognize and redefine its immediate urban environment while always retaining its captivating and engaging character. Klanten states, "By identifying and engaging the sculptural and architectural spaces of a city, this tactile and eye-catching project enlivens the local public imagination and connection to a given space."<sup>57</sup>

One of the most intriguing features of *Red Ball* is its efficiency and effectiveness in terms of its construction and installation costs, particularly when compared to some of the large and highly-technological installations discussed in this thesis; the fact that it is such a simple and adaptable concept means that it is easily translated over any number of possible locations, and its aesthetic minimalism makes it instantly

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<sup>57</sup> Klanten, R. Going Public: Public Architecture, Urbanisms and Interventions. Pg 186.

noticeable and ultimately easily recognizable. However, the concept behind *Red Ball* was to create much more than just an object placed in unusual spaces, as artist Pershke describes:

“On the surface, the experience seems to be about the ball itself as an object, but the true power of the project is what it can create for those who experience it. It opens a doorway to imagine what if? As RedBall travels around the world people approach me on the street with excited suggestions about where to put it in their city. In that moment the person is not a spectator but a participant in the act of imagination. I have witnessed it across continents, diverse age spans, cultures, and languages, always issuing an invitation. That invitation to engage, to collectively imagine, is the true essence of the RedBall Project.”<sup>58</sup>

Abstraction of an Idea: Highly original and successful attempt to engage public life in a new way

Transformation of Dead Space: Identifies and activates unused and unnoticed spaces in cities

Improved Understanding of Landscape: Brings awareness to site context through altered form

Redefining of Public Space: Triggers gathering of lively public interaction at location of project

## **7.2 Connecting with Nature: *The Garden that Climbs the Stairs* by Balmori Associates**

For the Bilbao Jardin Festival in 2009, New York-based landscape architecture firm Balmori Associates designed *The Garden that Climbs the Stairs*. The installation consisted of a continuous two-foot tall flower bed of native and exotic plantings that crept gradually up a major staircase in the heart of Bilbao’s urban center. The project acted as a temporary urban park rather than a public art project, as it encouraged the

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<sup>58</sup> Pershke, Kurt. Artist Statement. <http://redballproject.com/about>

public to stop and linger on the steps rather than merely passing through them.

Founding Principal Diana Balmori describes the intent for the project:

“Envisioned as a dynamic urban space; it moves in time and with the seasons. Its lush planting cascades down as though the garden was flowing or melting, bleeding the colors into each other. In one gesture, it narrates a story of landscape taking over and expanding over the Public Space and Architecture, therefore transforming the way that the stairs and the space is perceived and read by the user.”<sup>59</sup>

Like *Red Ball*, a key component for the success of *The Garden that Climbs the Stairs* is its simplicity and regularity in form and materiality, which helps to present a clear and concise message to the public by dramatically contrasting with its immediate site context. The highly-detailed stepped-configuration and seasonal planting pattern makes this project a truly site-specific one, but it would be good to see the principals of the project translated to other urban sites as a way of extending the life of the project and similarly altering other places around the world temporarily.

Abstraction of an Idea: A new interpretation of a garden that transcends the normal definition

Transformation of Dead Space: Introduces a sedentary quality to a normally-kinetic space

Improved Understanding of Landscape: Reinforces stepped context, horizontally and vertically

Redefining of Public Space: Proposes a ‘taking over of nature’ in urban public space

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<sup>59</sup> Balmori, Diana. The Garden that Climbs the Stairs. <http://www.balmori.com/portfolio/the-garden-that-climbs-the-stairs>

### **7.3 Redefining Context: Pulse at Dilworth Plaza by Janet Echelman with OLIN Studio**

Public artist Janet Echelman worked with Philadelphia-based landscape architecture firm OLIN Studio on their current reconstruction of Dilworth Plaza in Philadelphia – due to open in Spring 2014. Incorporated into a seasonal fountain area, Echelman’s elegant and bold intervention artistically reflects the various subway lines moving below ground; as each train passes by a blast of atomized mist shoots through the site in real time and it lit by lights that reflect the line color of the subway.

OLIN’s transformation of Dilworth Plaza will provide a contemporary plaza below the iconic City Hall, as well as a new celebrated gateway into Philadelphia’s subway. Linda Harris of Knights Arts states: “Echelman’s work will create both a playful and meaningful embellishment on the fountain for this transportation hub welcoming 300,000 passengers into Center City each day...”<sup>60</sup> It should be noted that *Pulse* will be a permanent rather than temporary project; however, owing to the seasonal aspect of fountain-design, *Pulse* will only be in-effect for 6-8 months of the year. Moreover, *Pulse* will provide an intervention in its landscape that is inherently ephemeral and shifting, rather than static and enduring.

Abstraction of an Idea: Real-time representation of below ground site context

Transformation of Dead Space: Intervention incorporated into playful splash fountain

Improved Understanding of Landscape: Identifies and emphasizes transportation hub

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<sup>60</sup> Harris, Linda. Thriving Center City offers Janet Echelman’s ‘Pulse’ increased prominence.  
<http://www.knightarts.org/community/philadelphia/thriving-center-city-offers-janet-echelmans-pulse-increased-prominence> 13 Dec 2012

Redefining of Public Space: Generates a “sense of place” and communal urban experience

#### **7.4 Collaboration of the Arts: *Markings* by Julian Lang and Hargreaves Associates**

*Markings* was recently introduced to me by Mary Margaret Jones (Senior Principal of Hargreaves Associates).<sup>61</sup> The collaborative project between a Native American poet and a landscape architecture firm was originally designed as a temporary installation, but has remained since 2001 owing to its success.

The project reflects its deep Native American roots as well as its industrial development over the last few centuries. The installation creates a simple place for reflection on the underside of a large junction of highway overpasses in San Jose. Lang and Hargreaves devised a rhetoric structure of single words to be displayed on the large silver-painted columns, half in English and half in Karuk (the indigenous Native American language). The English words face today’s civilization and the Karuk words face the Guadalupe River, emphasizing the sense of place and history of site. George Hargreaves further describes the value of *Markings*:

“By exposing the latent conditions of this particular site, the installation was able to suggest a larger implication – that there is content in all of our forgotten, left-over landscapes, and all of these landscapes have the power to affirm the connections between nature and all peoples.”<sup>62</sup>

Abstraction of an Idea: Simple two-way rhetoric structure clearly expresses artistic vision

Transformation of Dead Space: Creates a urban forest of mystique below major traffic junction

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<sup>61</sup> Cultural Drivers. National Building Museum. Feb 25<sup>th</sup> 2013

<sup>62</sup> Hargreaves, George. Hargreaves: The Alchemy of Landscape Architecture. Pg 127.

Improved Understanding of Landscape: Identifies and stresses Native American heritage of site

Redefining of Public Space: Encourages public art and interaction in an otherwise-useless place

### **7.5 Configurable Space: *Twig* by Alexander Lotersztain**

*Twig* is a purchasable piece of furniture that comes in two outdoor materials – smooth, sandblasted concrete and a glowing acrylic plastic – as well as an upholstered material for indoors. The elegant project – created by furniture designer Alexander Lotersztain – is included in this list of key precedents for temporary artscapes because of its intrinsic adaptability and thus its potential temporal nature. *Twig* was inspired by modularity and connectivity and is designed to fit a multitude of configurations when composed collectively; the composition is therefore left to the preference of the buyer, as is the choice of colors and materials.

The potential to create temporary artscapes with *Twig* is endless, and the functionality and minimalist aesthetic of each piece makes for a beautiful and practical installation that could work in almost any landscape setting. In *Urban Furniture Selection*, Krauel states:

“The design’s versatility permits a series of meeting points to arise in between, generating new uses of public space.”<sup>63</sup>

This versatility gives *Twig* a huge advantage as a selling point, which is supported by its increasing use in many well-known projects – most notably by Andrea Cochran at the University of California Berkeley campus. The flexibility of this product

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<sup>63</sup> Krauel, Jacobo. Urban Furniture Selection. Pg 60.

encourages further thinking in terms of how an installation can successfully combine artistic and contemporary design with human comfort and adaptability.

Abstraction of an Idea: Configurable furniture and colors can make many potential compositions

Transformation of Dead Space: Encourages sitting and meeting in any context

Improved Understanding of Landscape: Allows user to question the importance of adaptability

Redefining of Public Space: Encourages public interaction and flexibility in urban design

## **7.6 Functional Art: *Pink Ghost* by Peripheriques Architectes**

In 2002 Peripheriques Architectes were invited to create an urban intervention for the second edition of the Contemporary Art Exposition in Paris. The firm looked to transform a small square consisting of four trees and a streetlight, by creating an installation inspired by “plastic intervention” in the landscape. *Pink Ghost* was constructed by pouring bright pink epoxy over the entire site, with several simple everyday pieces of furniture placed in the site first.

Once again, a key component to the success of the project was in its bold simplicity and unique color and materiality:

“We tried different colors, but pink was the color that created the greatest contrast with the environment. We wanted to create a sense of high artificiality.”<sup>64</sup>

The project has since been rebuilt at the Biennale of Architecture in Venice, where it continues to shock the public while providing a valuable metaphor about artificiality

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<sup>64</sup> Peripheriques Architectes. Installations by Architects. Pg 150.

in the landscape; the ease of repeating this project elsewhere – like *Red Ball* – means that it will always be inherently site-specific and always clear and comprehensible.

Abstraction of an Idea: Artificiality in the landscape represented through bright pink liquid proxy

Transformation of Dead Space: Reimagines underused and undervalued space

Improved Understanding of Landscape: Reinforces site context and message of artificiality

Redefining of Public Space: Boldly references the value of creative and engaging public space

## **CHAPTER 8: DESIGN: PROJECT**

### **8.1 Design Strategy and Process**

This chapter describes the process of design for a conceptual temporary artscape that acknowledges and reflects the extensive thesis research. The gap in research concerning the effects of temporary artsapes and the learning outcomes from the two investigations, led to a defined set of project goals – these goals were created by the discovery of common themes in temporary artsapes. The two research investigations broke down the many stages involved in the design process and post-design evaluation; careful synthesis of these stages and learning outcomes from *Designing the Experience* and *Experiencing the Design* is critical to the success of the proposed temporary artscape. Due to the open nature of this topic, the design could take an infinite number of directions; the chapter thoroughly explains the decision for the

choice of site and the themes of the intervention, which will comprise of both conceptual and built components.

### **8.1.1 Application of Research: Investigations, Learning Outcomes and Precedents**

An essential requirement of the design is that it will contribute significantly to this ongoing research and experimentation with temporary artscapes. As with any design-research thesis, the design section will demonstrate that the research has led to a new understanding of the design and experience of temporary artscapes. The four previously discussed learning outcomes that were produced by the research – *Abstraction of an Idea*, *Transformation of Dead Space*, *New Understanding of Landscape* and *Redefining of Public Space* – endeavor to assist the development of the design concept and implementation, and thus will be referred to regularly. The four key design goals are therefore:

- Adapt an Idea
- Transform a Dead Space
- Create a New Understanding of a Landscape
- Redefine a Public Space

Furthermore, elements of the six key design precedents will be discussed in this chapter with regard to their significance to the design.

### **8.1.2 Conceptual Design vs. Built Design**

One of the early reasons for my interest in researching and writing about temporary interventions was my ambition to actually construct something that could be tested; so much of my previous educational work is purely conceptual and hypothetical and this thesis always presented to me a rare opportunity to experiment in the landscape for real. However, one of the many challenges for this design project – as with the two research investigations – is to carefully balance advanced, theoretical experimentation with realistic and cost-effective materials and techniques. While many of the discussed precedents throughout the thesis were clearly high-tech and expensive to build, there is always a great level of efficiency in their construction. It is fascinating that all the discussed projects have a repetitive or continuous element to them, and one can deduce that their successful execution is largely a result of meticulous experimentation and refining; any proposed design will undoubtedly require a substantial amount of testing and perfecting. There is also an excellent opportunity to propose varied levels of conceptual implementation that may vary in terms of location, scope and budget.

### **8.1.3 Personal Connection to Site Selection**

The thesis has so far taken on a fairly personal approach to investigation; for example, the two research investigations comprised of sites and communities that I have strong affiliations with – the University of Maryland and the British School of Washington. The personal connection to those spaces and communities meant that I was investigating a space that matters deeply to me, which I feel assisted the learning

experience and enjoyment of those respective projects. Similarly, the final design will focus on another space that I have a strong personal relationship with and that I have wanted to explore in terms of design-potential for a long time.

As an international student without a car, I have had to make full use of local and national public-transport since studying in the United States; moreover, I am a firm advocate of encouraging public transport and environmentally-sensitive methods of transportation in urban environments. The University of Maryland Department of Transportation's shuttle bus service is quite exceptional for an educational institution, and is a credit to the university. There are plenty of bus stops on campus that provide comfort and signage to the many bus users who rely on the buses to commute in and out of the campus and city. However, for some perplexing reason there is a very prominent bus stop in an important location on campus that is completely lacking in terms of the basic expected features of any bus stop – notably seating, shelter and signage. Owing to the nearby location of this bus stop, I have boarded the bus from here when departing campus almost every day – and sometimes multiple times a day – during my three-years degree.

For the design component of the thesis I intend to comprehensively analyze this bust stop space and propose an ephemeral intervention that will result in an original and thought-provoking temporary artscape.

## 8.2 SITE ANALYSIS

This section thoroughly examines the various physical and behavioral elements and patterns that are unique to the investigated bus stop site at the University of Maryland campus.

### 8.2.1 Critical Position

The proximity of the bus stop to the main entrance gateway into the university campus makes it a key site in the arrival experience between Route 1 and the roundabout on Campus Drive that displays the landmark “M” flower motif. There is great potential to display and celebrate student projects, experiments and critical-thinking within the site that will be showcased as part of the arrival experience. Moreover, the lack of furnishings and size of the site makes it ideal for continued experimentation. For this reason, the thesis proposes that the bus stop be used for continued experimentation by students of the built environmental in particular, with this design acting as the first temporary intervention.



Figure 21: Bus Stop Site Photo Montage

### 8.2.2 Context

The bus stop site is located on the south side of Campus Drive, approximately 1000ft from the main gateway entrance into the University of Maryland campus from Route 1/Baltimore Avenue. The bus stop services roughly 25% of student commuters between the campus and various destinations in the Maryland and Washington metropolitan area. The most frequented UM Shuttle bus is the No.104 which travels to the College Park Metro Station and back all day and night.

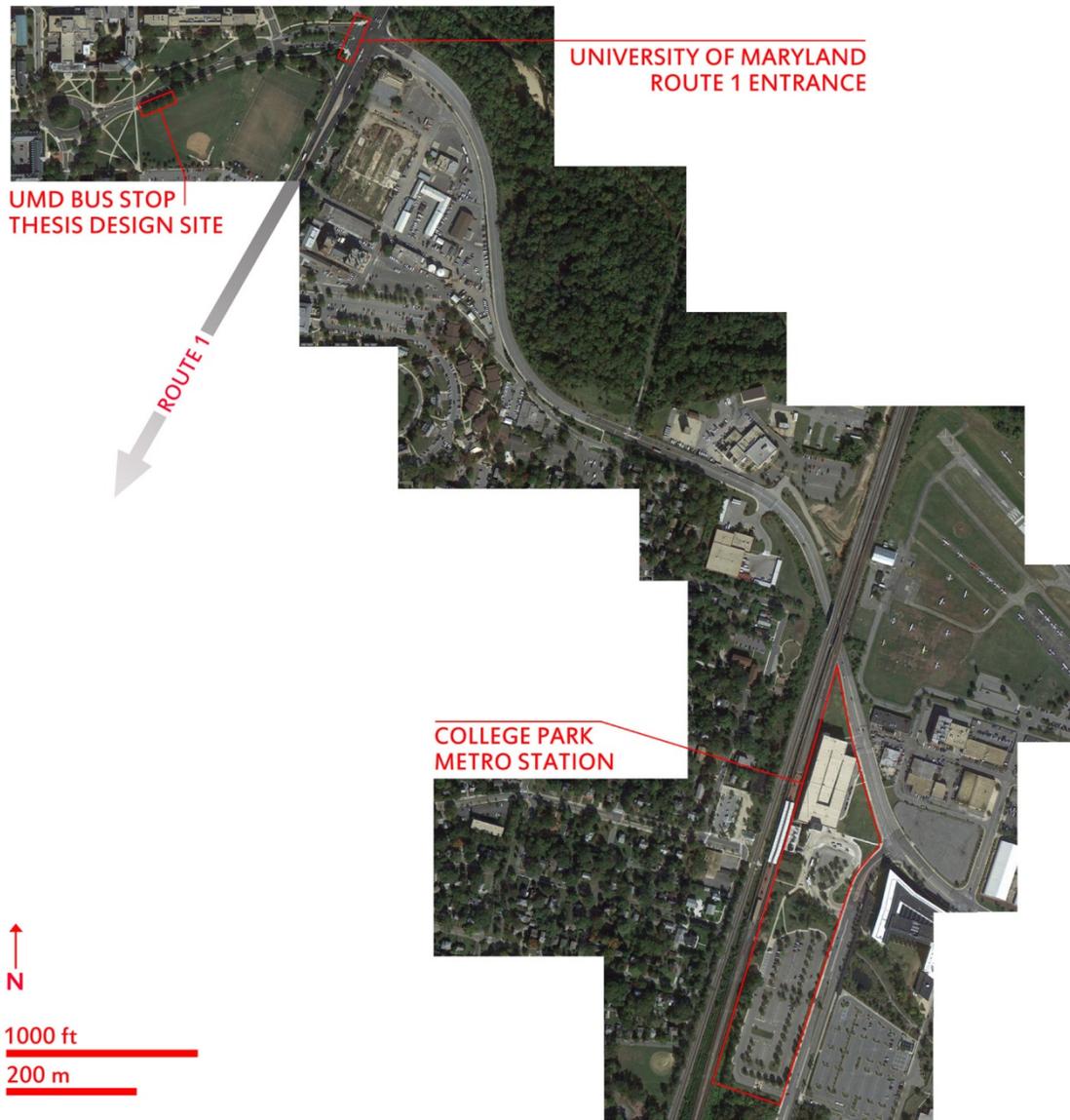


Figure 22: Site Context

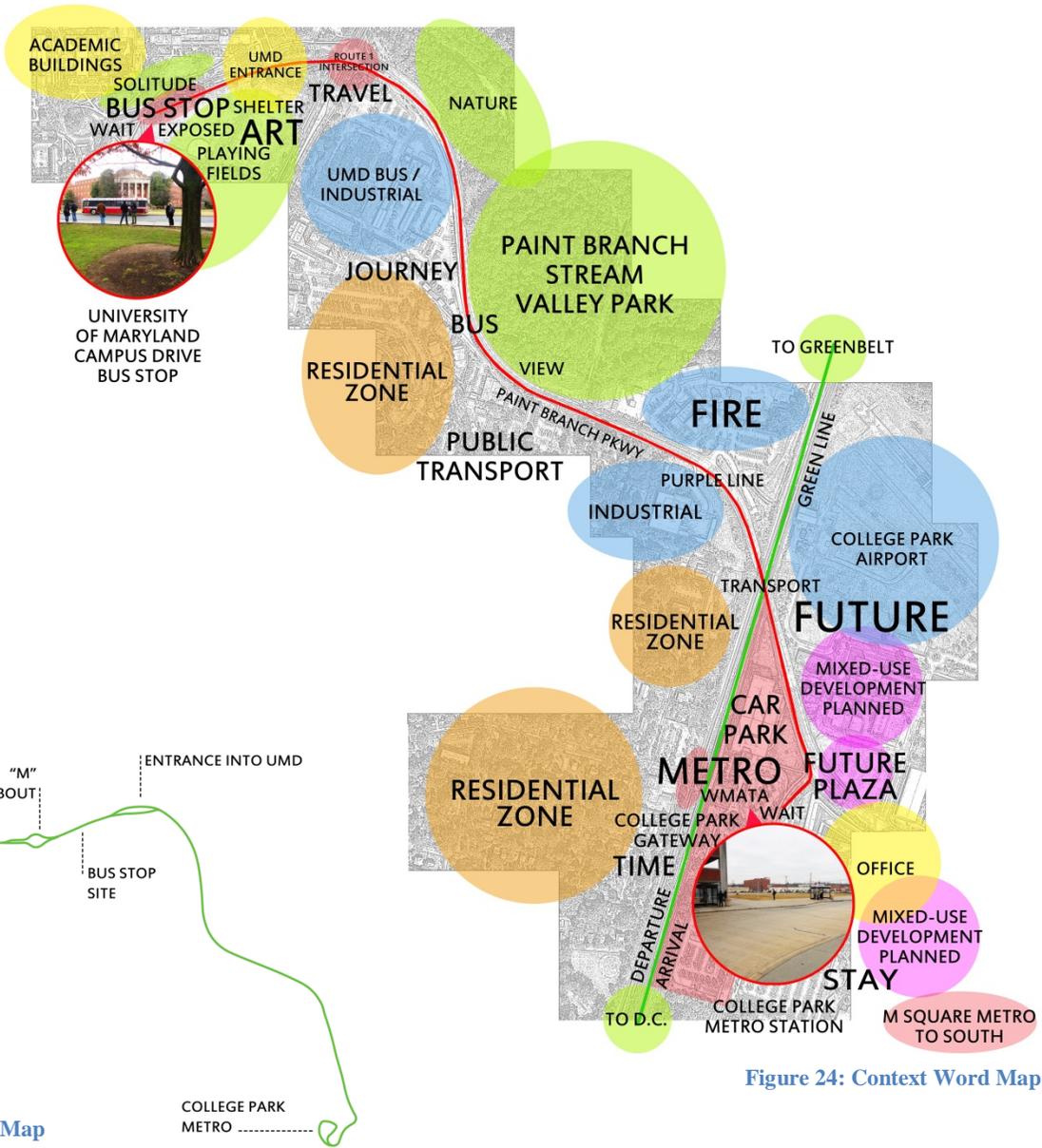


Figure 23: Commute Map

Figure 24: Context Word Map

The context between the UMD site and the College Park Metro varies significantly, considering the vehicular journey is only three of four minutes. On leaving the green and densely-planted university campus, one is faced with the noisy, congested and heavily-asphalted environment of Route 1. The journey to the metro is one of contrasts also, with the forested Paint Branch Stream Valley Park to the left and large industrial buildings and warehouses on the right.

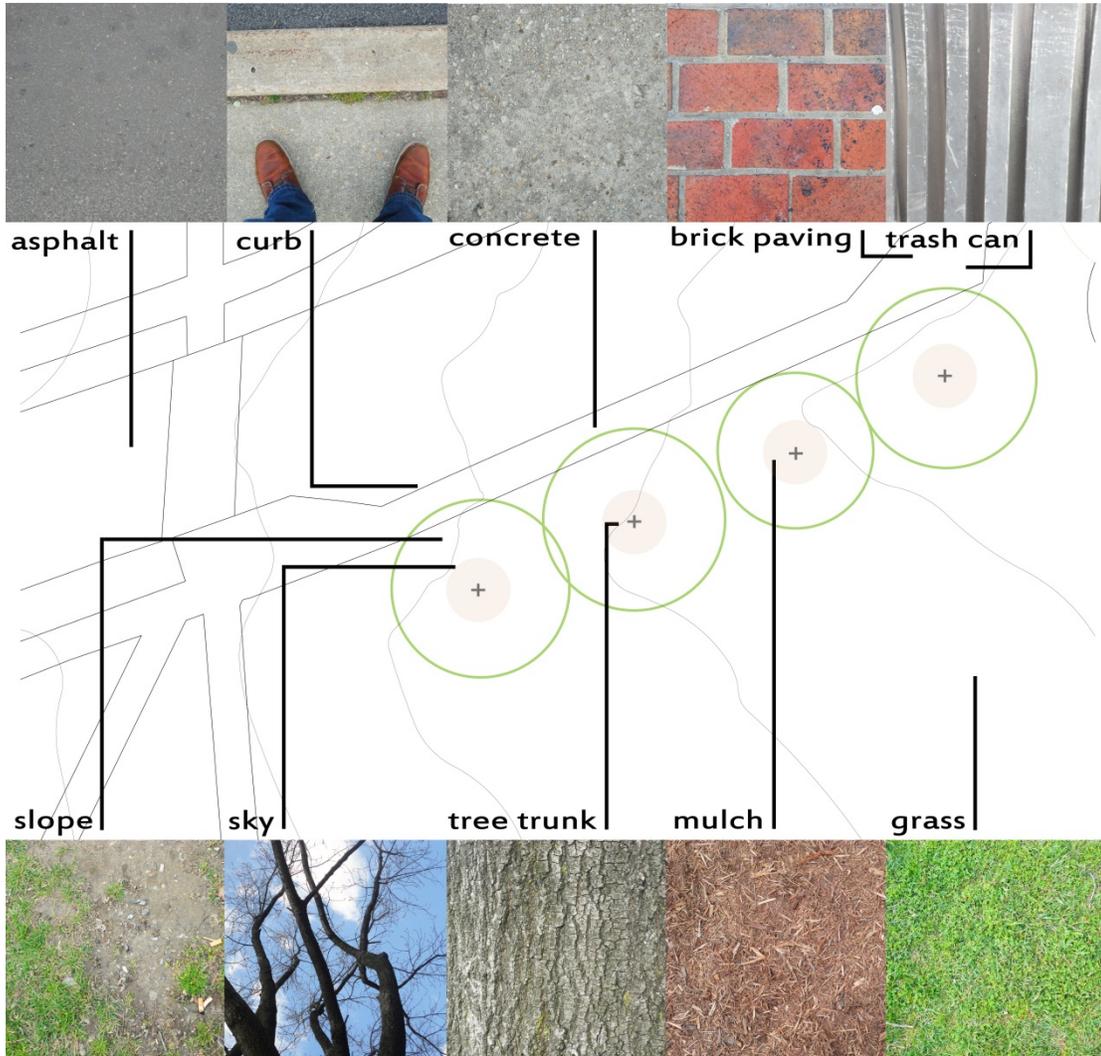


Figure 25: Texture Map

The materials and textures of the site are fairly expected and unspectacular – one of the goals of the project is to break up the pattern of normality and to provide a new aesthetic that is intriguing and that stands out to the public waiting at the site. At present the only site furnishings are a black metal trash can, a tall lamppost and two standard bus stop signs.



Figure 26: Section looking North from Engineering Fields

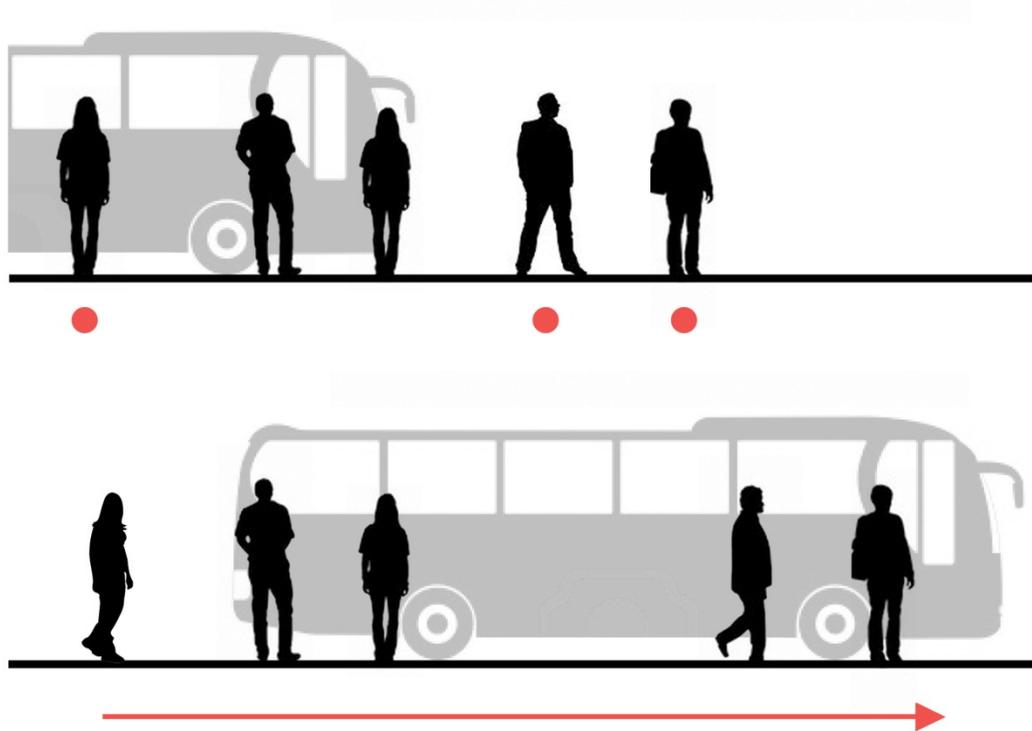
The site slopes at a fairly consistent 4% grade from west to east. Looking from the playing fields towards campus Drive in the distance, the size and prominence of the four Scarlet Oak trees is clear to see; their sheer presence provides an important vertical plane that otherwise would be lacking in what is a very landscape-dominant space.



Figure 27: Section looking South from Campus Drive

Looking at the site from Campus Drive with the playing fields in the background, the few thin, vertical site furnishings are apparent alongside the waiting public. The site is sufficiently lit throughout the night and the nearby entrance gate always contains

one or two members of the campus police, ensuring the safety of public spaces such as this one; an emergency phone is, however, attached onto the site's lamppost.



**Figure 28: Bus Arrival Movement**

Despite the small size and simplicity of the site, the behavior of people here is fascinating. One interesting observation that I made was how people wait in spaces where they know the bus will not actually stop. When a bus pulls into the bus stop it continues right up to the end of the space to allow other buses to pull in behind it; this means that the majority of the time one must walk to the very end of the space to board the bus, as the majority of the time buses do not stack up two or three at a time. But despite this regular occurrence, people wait at all stages of the bus stop and only walk down once the bus is close to arriving. This may be for two reasons: firstly, because people do not want to gather all in one busy space; secondly, because people

might unconsciously enjoy the notion of walking up to the bus as though they've timed their journey to perfection and to ignore the fact that they've been waiting.

### 8.2.3 Human Experience: Bus Stop Conditions

In today's world there are so many social media devices, forms of entertainment and general distractions that it is fascinating to see how people behave in spaces where there is nothing to do – people respond in many different ways, but here are six general categories that seem to be consistent features of all bus stops and other spaces in which waiting for something is necessary, although they are discussed in the context of this bus stop site.



Figure 29: Human Behavior at Bus Stop

1. Anxious/Rushed – Spaces that are linked to public transportation are inherently linked to time also; the lack of up-to-date signage at the site only increases one's awareness of time. While many bus-users arrive early, many

others arrive rushed with a sense of anxiety at the worry of missing their bus or being unsure of its current status.

2. Exposure – The site is incredibly open to the passing traffic and public, as well as the ever-changing climate conditions. Having used the site for almost three years, I know only too well how uncomfortable the space can be in wet or windy weather, and unfortunately the alternative option of moving to the next closest sheltered site means walking up hill for four-five minutes.



Figure 30: Human Behavior at Bus Stop

3. Solitude/Anti-Social – Despite the unavoidable regularity of travelling with the same group of people, there was a distinct lack of communication and interaction between the waiting public. People tended to stand with their face either towards the road or away from the road.
4. Fidgety/Bored – One impulsive reaction that many people had to waiting was to play on their phones and/or mp3 players; this is the same reaction to

initially sitting down on the bus. In today's world everyone has to keep up to date with their emails and updates, as well as needing to look busy and occupied at all times.

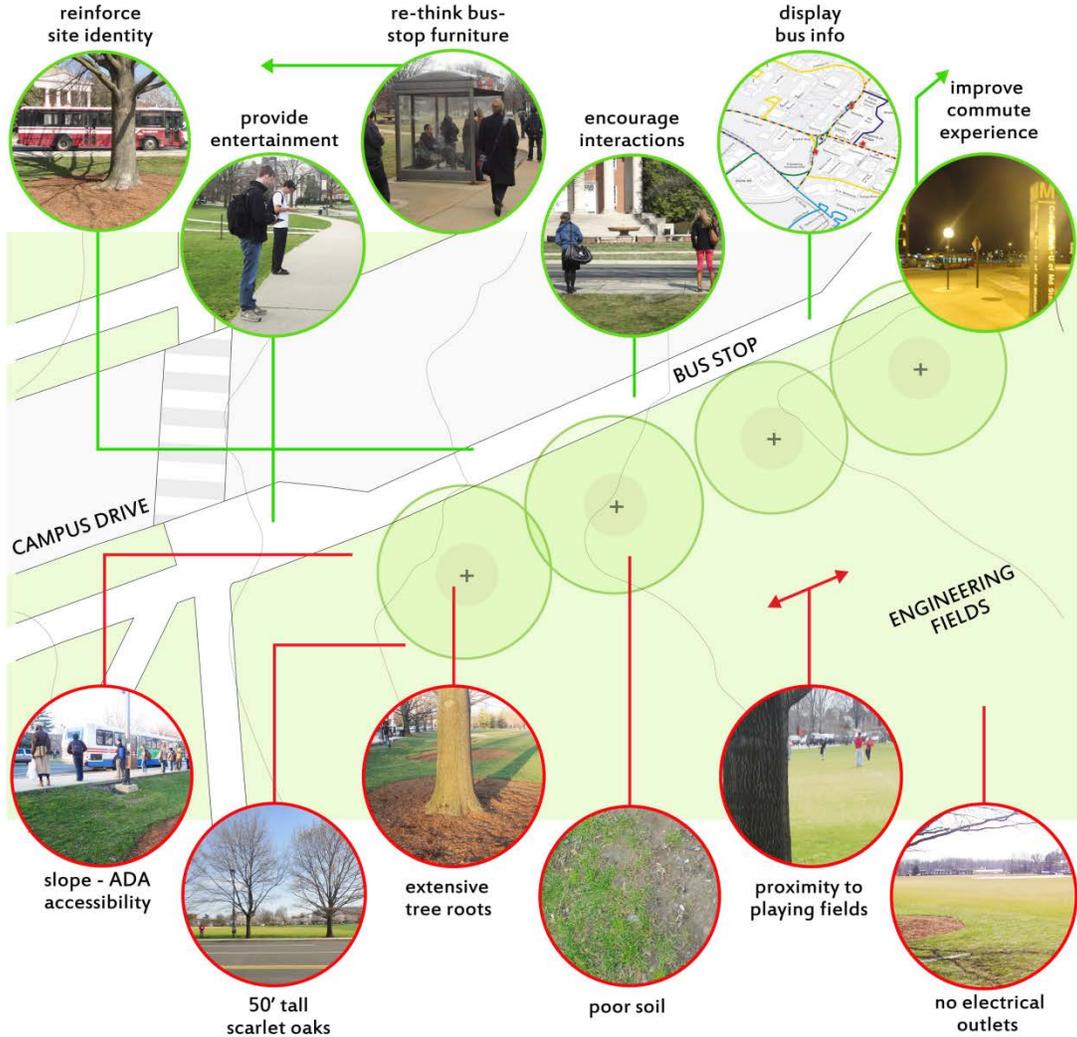


Figure 31: Human Behavior at Bus Stop

5. Lack of Comfort – The lack of seating is perhaps the most significant problem with the site; the rumbling curbside is sometimes used as it is the only option here. As this is such a well-populated location and as there are so many creative and affordable seating options on the market today, it is quite remarkable that no seating exists at the site.
6. Wasted Time/In-between Time – Places such as bus stops – where you are forced to patiently wait – can make you much more aware of your surroundings than spaces where you are preoccupied with something else. While commuting is more affordable, more sustainable and often more

efficient than private commuting, it is not always comfortable and waiting for any period of time can be stressful and unpleasant. Regular users often find ways of coping with this “wasted time” by utilizing the time productively, by doing things like reading, working, listening to music or even napping.

### 8.2.4 Opportunities and Constraints



OPPORTUNITIES ■  
 AND  
 CONSTRAINTS ■

Figure 32: Opportunities and Constraints Map

Owing to the open nature of the temporary artscape design project *and* the great potential for creativity at the site, there really were a great number of possibilities for the site. It was important to me that the identity of the site be reinforced in some unique way, and that people might be encouraged to interact more with each other. The site's main design challenge/constraint was the large spread of the tree roots; this meant working around the most densely packed areas and trying to remain at least 7-8ft away from each tree trunk. With it being the Spring term, the number of recreational activities in the playing fields was steadily increasing due to the better weather, and this meant restricting the project to several feet beyond the tree trunks only.

One of the key design opportunities was to rethink and transform the ordinary and accepted perception of what a bus stop looks and feels like; this transformation could be done in highly-technological ways as well as in subtle and understated ways. In fact, in terms of a realistic and manageable design a subtle and cost-effective intervention could have the potential to be of more experimental and educational value than something highly-designed and expensive to construct.

## 8.3 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

### 8.3.1 Pole Metaphor

The solitude, exposure and statue-like appearance of people at the site is a

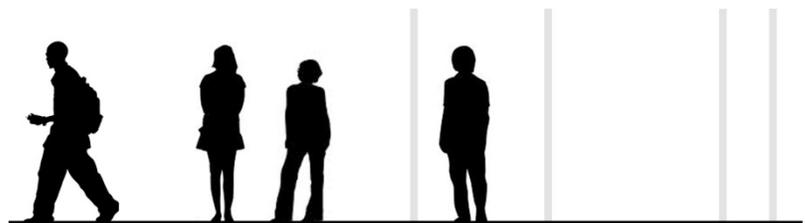


Figure 33: Pole Metaphor

significant characteristic that I wanted to highlight; this would help to redefine the sense of place by stressing the scattered, perpendicular and isolated nature of the public at this bus stop. The in-between nature of the site in the context of each individual's commute renders the site somewhere between "place" and "non-place". I felt that a semi-transparent acrylic pole that allowed some light to permeate through it could provide an abstract interpretation of the lingering general public.

### 8.3.2 *Poem Path* Concept

The general concept for the installation came about after considering artistic ways in which to highlight and celebrate the various characteristics unique to this site. Despite being a small and simple landscape, I managed to research the behavior of people quite extensively. Furthermore, there were many interesting themes that developed that concerned various aspects of time: waiting; arrival/departure; wasted



Figure 34: "Floating Words" Concept

time; seasonality; night and day; morning and evening.

Similar to *Markings* by Julian Lang and Hargreaves Associates, I felt that inscribing the various site qualities into the landscape – rather than abstractly symbolizing them – could result in an elegant redefining of the space that highlighted the existing landscape qualities *rather* than merely highlighting the temporary installation. Words attached to the poles could “float” above head-height on arrival into the site, giving people something to read, see and think about.

### **8.3.3 Collaboration**

The experience with working with a an improvisational dance group from the university for *Investigation 1: Hornbake Plaza*, taught me that there were creative and talented people on campus who would appreciate opportunities to work and perform in new and imaginative ways. I contacted the University of Maryland Creative Arts department and asked for volunteers to work with me on the creation of a poem for the temporary artscape. A Master of Fine Arts student called Katie Herman came forward and said that she would be interested in collaborating with me. Her poetry thesis was on “City Life” and she used the opportunity to revisit a poem that she had once started about waiting at a bus stop.

We worked closely on structuring a poem that could be read from multiple directions and that didn’t rely on the reading of the entire poem; it was important to me that the poem was broken up into many small lines/phrases of one or two words so to equally break up the pattern of walking into the site. The final poem for use in the temporary installation design is as follows:

*bus stop* by Katie Herman

morning  
through conscious  
effort  
unclench  
the muscles  
in your face  
against the cold  
the wind  
the sun  
the most  
important thing:  
don't look  
alone  
while standing  
here  
no:  
alone  
is fine  
just don't  
look lonely  
evening  
count  
the other  
waiting  
faces  
count  
the trees'  
new  
blooms  
can you  
catch them  
before  
the wind  
moves them

The poem works wonderfully on many levels. The deliberate lack of punctuation and capitalization means that each line reads as importantly as the next one. Any one of

the thirty-four lines can stand out and quickly draw you into the rest of the poem. The collection of words covers so many of the fascinating topics that were researched at the site. The creative process that Katie took was of great interest to me, and I wanted to ensure that my use of the poem stayed true to that process; she and I worked closely throughout the remainder of the design process to ensure that the work was used in the best possible way.

### 8.3.4 Breaking the Pattern

The acrylic pole metaphor and the bus stop poem combined to create a concept in which each line of the poem was represented by a distinctive pole.

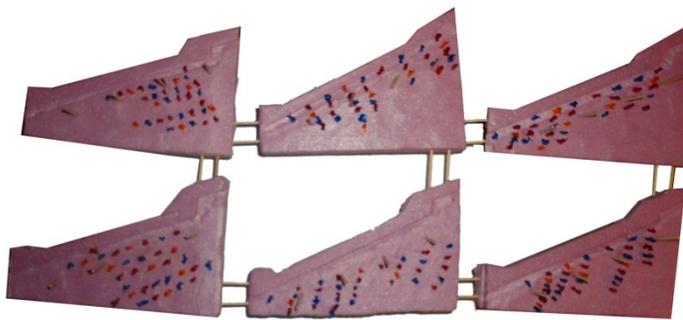


Figure 36: Configuration Models



Figure 35: "Draw-in" Concept

and the poem highlighted key characteristics of the site, I also wanted to break up two key patterns of the site – the perpendicular geometric pattern and the routine pattern of waiting. I felt that these two patterns could be addressed simultaneously through arranging the poles in a formation that slowed down

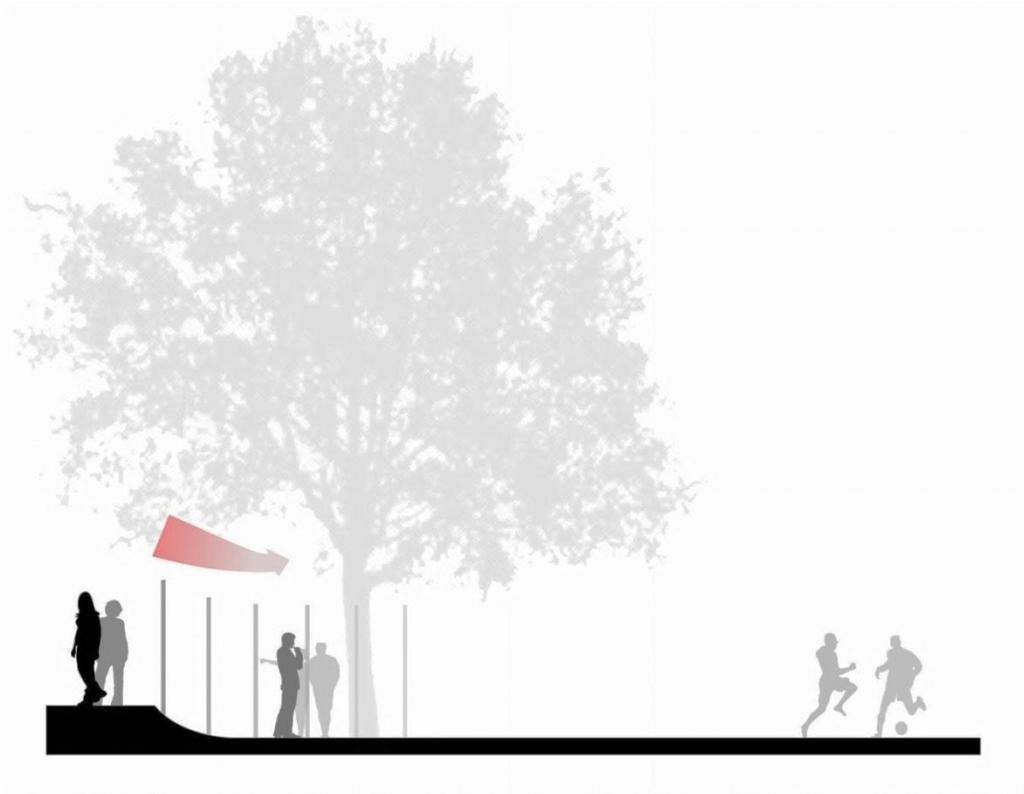


Figure 38: “Draw-in” Concept

pedestrian traffic while introducing a new angle into a landscape largely dominated by the perpendicular. A series of two- and three-dimensional studies helped to assess the various configurations of the thirty-four poles reading from west to east. The slight slope from the sidewalk into the site meant that if the poles were all equal distances above ground then people might be encouraged to leave the sidewalk and walk into the playing fields slightly. From the playing fields the various lines of poles (that represent the undefined stanzas that the poem presents) would be clear, with visibility to the roadside and bus unaltered.

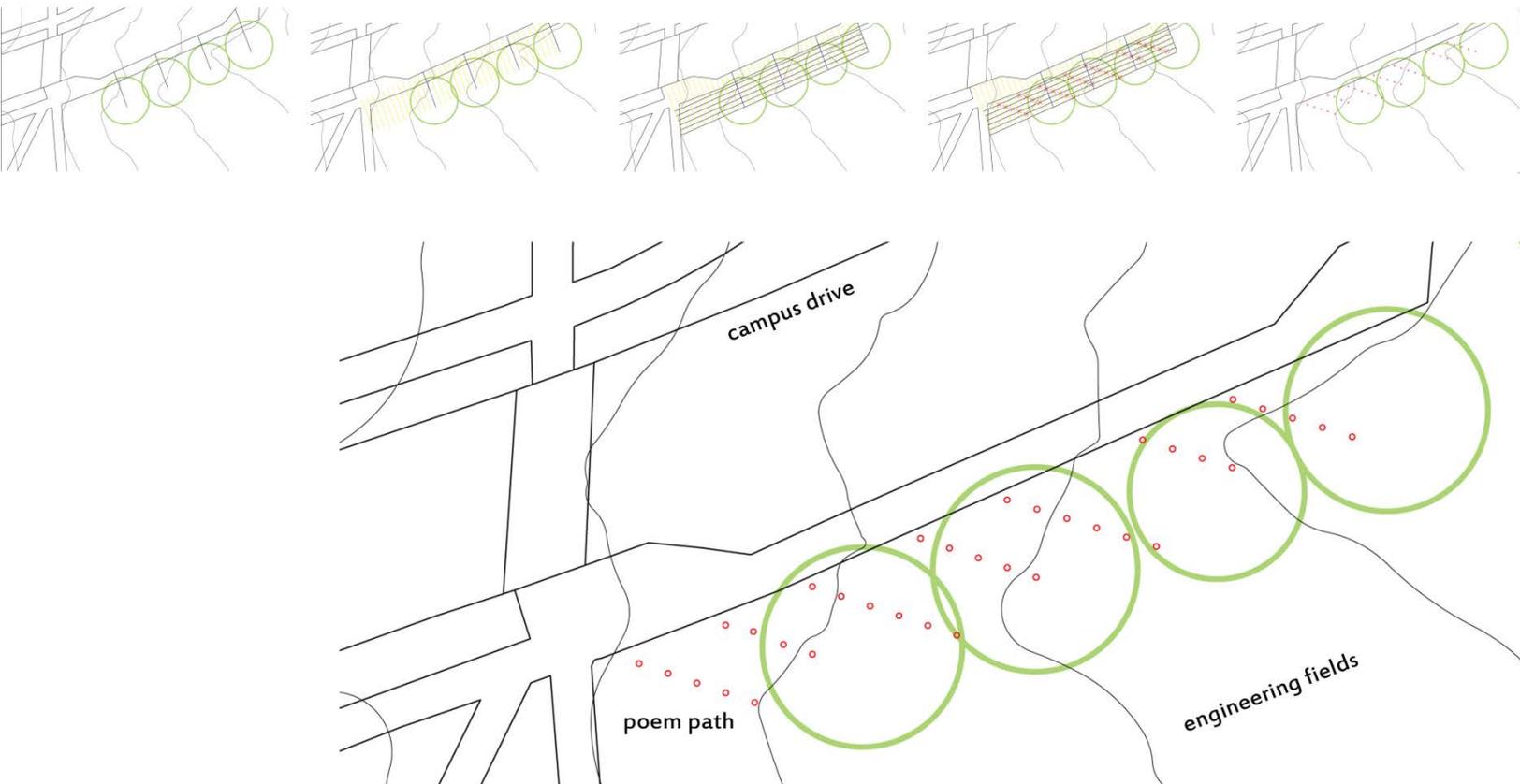


Figure 37: Early Sketch Concept

From the perspective approaching from the west – which is the unanimous direction of arrival to the bus stop –

one can further see how the poles would gently invite you into the playing field area below the tree canopy and beyond the raised sidewalk. The regular spacing of poles allows for order and continuity in the layout of the poem, while introducing a diagonal element to the site's composition. Below is an early sketch of the *Poem Path* concept.

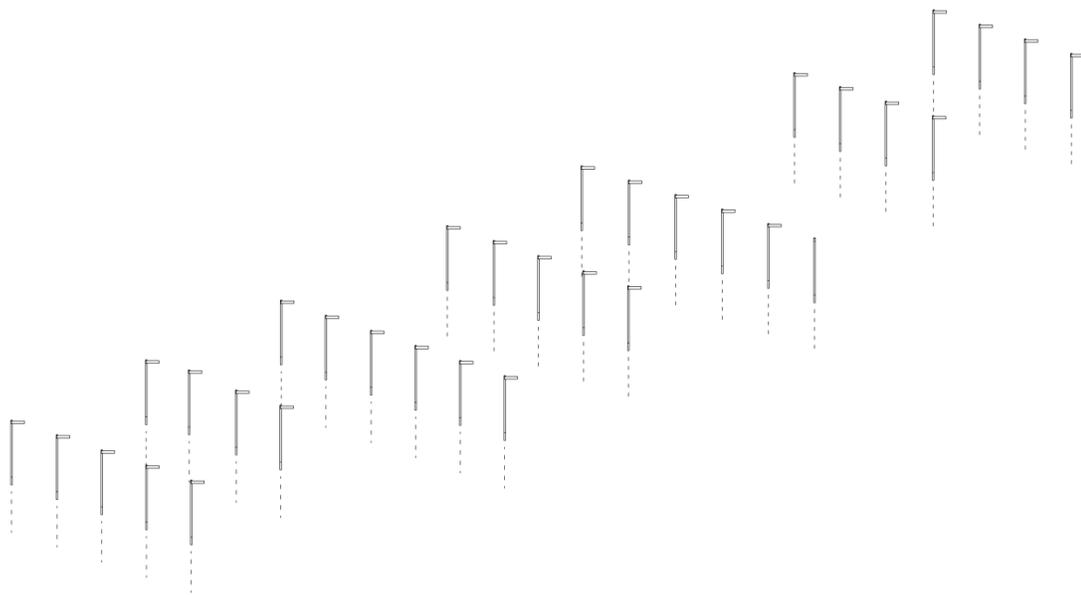
Figure 39: Grid Formation



The introduction of the diagonal form is clear in the above illustration which shows the process of layout design that was inspired by the original perpendicular form of the site. A 115degree angle was produced between the line of the sidewalk and the alignment of the trees to produce a diagonal line that passers-by will advance into on entering the bus stop area. The lines of the poem will read on individually-designed

signs on the top of each pole, beginning with the first pole at the west of the landscape.

The slight irregularity between the spacing of each of the seven lines of poles refers to the various areas of dense roots on the site that had to be avoided for structural and environmental reasons. While there are thirty-four lines of the poem, a thirty-fifth pole was included in the configuration; this gave symmetry to the configuration that allowed for the opportunity for the poem to read from both sides – horizontally on



**Figure 40: Axonometric of Poles**

signs reading from west to east *and* vertically on the poles themselves reading from east to west. For this to work symmetrically, it was necessary to introduce a thirty-fifth pole, which meant that there would be one pole without a horizontal sign element and one pole without a vertical element.

### 8.3.5 Experimentation



Figure 41: Pole Installation

It was important that the design for the temporary artscape be something manageable and cost-effective, and so I tested out different materials as under different landscape conditions and in different configurations. Fifty 8ft acrylic poles were available for re-use having been previously used in a different sculpture project by the department.

The location of each pole had to be mapped over and over again until a configuration that worked with the tree conditions as well as the regularity of the installation was achieved. This meant substantial micro-design on the site itself as



Figure 42: Pole Configuration Testing

well as developing digital options that could be tested out one at a time. The final configuration comprises of several cleverly camouflaged adjustments that make the pattern work from two directions: firstly the aforementioned thirty-fifth pole; and secondly, an overlapping of the first pole of a line and the last pole of a line in several places to use available space more effectively.



Figure 43: Sidewalk Division

The need to micro-design the site meant that I had to become extremely familiar with every aspect of the site. The 6ft concrete pavers easily allowed for a regular spacing of 4' between each of the

thirty-five poles; I mapped this division along the sidewalk using orange tape for the first work/phrase of each line and white tape for the lines in-between.

morning  
through conscious  
effort  
unclench  
the muscles

in your face  
against the cold  
the wind  
the sun

the most  
important thing:  
don't look  
alone  
while standing  
here

no:  
alone  
is fine  
just don't  
look lonely

evening  
count  
the other  
waiting  
faces

count  
the trees'  
new  
blooms

can you  
catch them  
before  
the breeze  
moves them

Figure 44: LED Lighting Experiments



The use of the acrylic poles meant that introducing a lighting element could add a dramatic aesthetic during hours of darkness. I experimented using different LED light sources, some of which changed color gradually and some of which gently turned on

and off. While the installation was designed to be a sensitive configuration of lightweight poles that would elegantly reveal words from a poem, the fiber-optic nature of the acrylic meant that a dramatic demonstration of color could be achieved at night. The most successful light source in terms of cost-effectiveness and size was a small circular LED tea-light that smoothly transitioned from one color to the next, while being able to fit inside the 1.5” diameter of the poles. The material used for sign was also tested extensively. Fiberglass and sheet



Figure 45: Signage Experimentation

metal were both tested for their ability to be cut easily and to display the spray-painted words effectively. While they both looked good and provided durable options, a more cost-effective method of cutting recycled plywood and spray-painting it a metallic-black color was used for continued experimentation. The process of experimenting and making different versions of each component was vital in the success of the proposed installation, which I felt required a sense of practicality and resourcefulness for maximum design value.

#### 8.4 FINAL POEM PATH DESIGN

This section transitions from the development of the *Poem Path* to the final proposal for the temporary artscape.

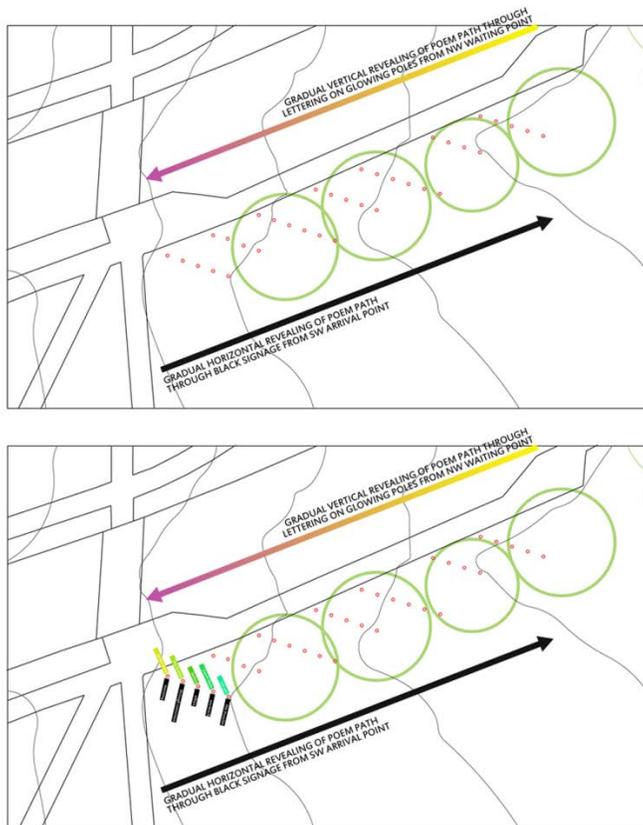
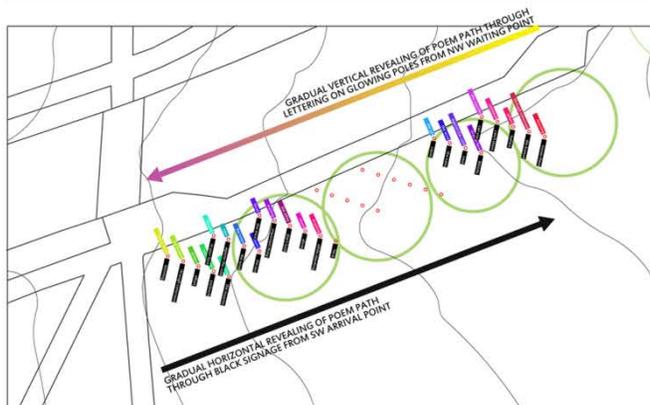
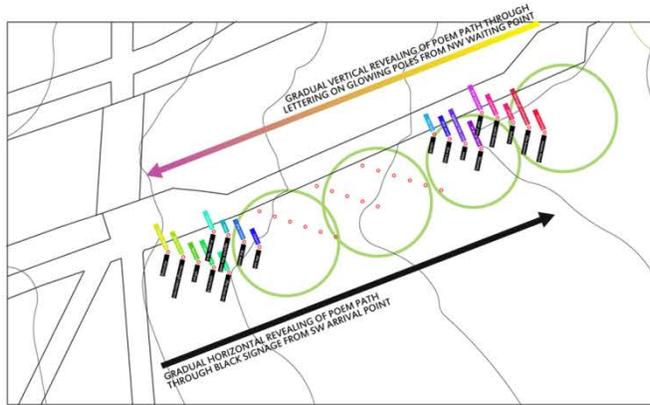
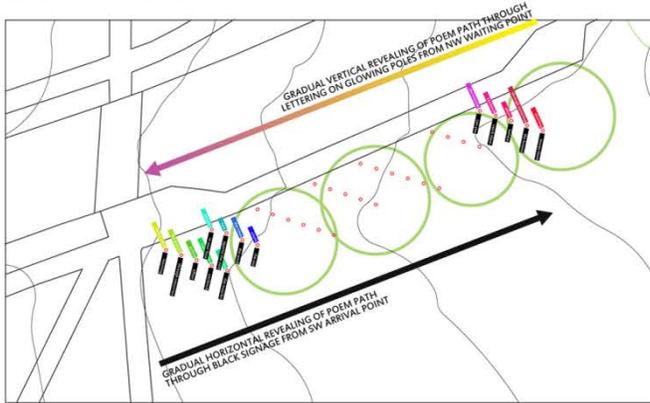
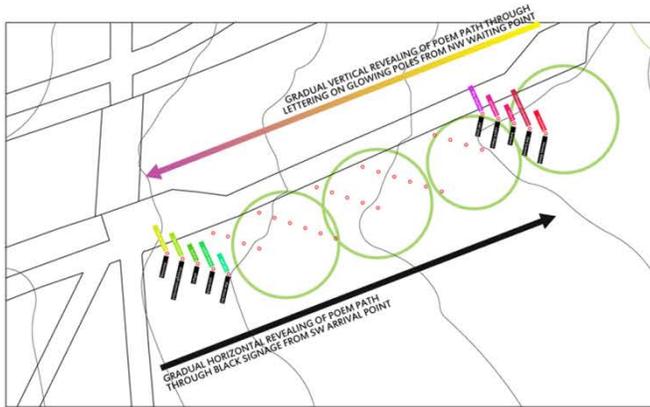
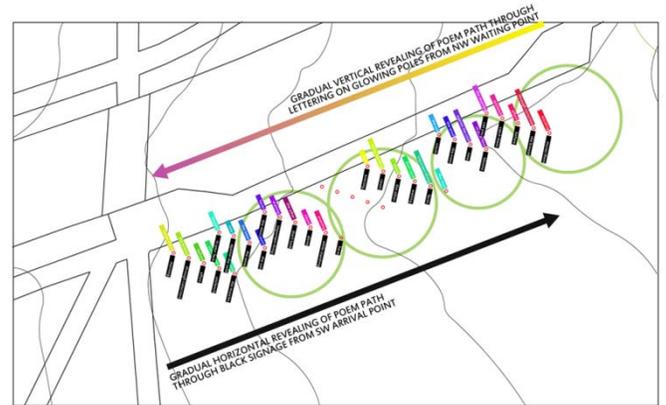


Figure 46: Revealing of Poem Path

**Revealing of *Poem Path*** As various notions of “time” were so important to the development of *Poem Path*, the installation would work best if gradually revealed, rather than the entire project being instantly visible. The proposal suggests a revealing of the poles from both directions over the course of



the initial week of installation. This gradual revealing would begin the sense of intrigue in the installation and would give people an awareness that something is gradually growing in the site, making them aware of their time spent at the site and hopefully giving them something to look forward to in the future. The revealing of the poem would also be fascinating as the various lines/phrases work so well individually as well as collectively; a perplexing sense of unawareness might begin to play out in the missing words and phrases.



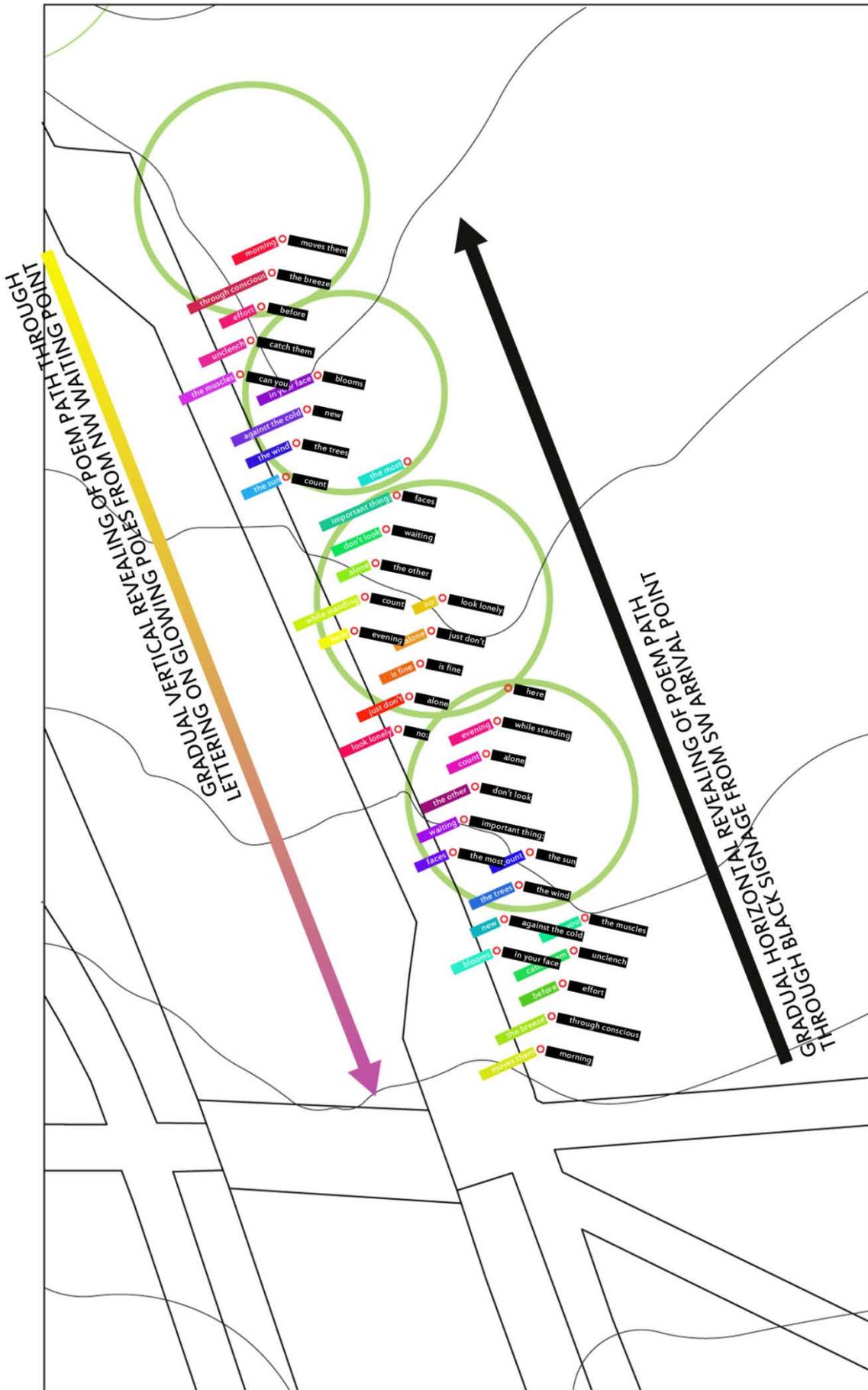


Figure 47: Final Configuration Plan of Poem Path

## 8.4.2 Day and Night Perspective

Figure 48: Day Perspective looking East



The *Poem Path* installation would act as something that passers-by will stumble into on their approach into the site, hopefully causing them to slow down and read through the poem, either by continuing slowly along the sidewalk or by moving into the grassed space between the trees and sidewalk. The proposal suggests that *Poem Path* would create a sense a place and mystery to a landscape that is currently lacking any prominence or identity.

Figure 49: Night Perspective looking East



The night section-perspective shows how the poles would be lit from the top and filter through the acrylic until it fades out at the bottom. The one streetlight at the site would provide sufficient light for *Poem Path* to be safe and secure during hours of darkness.

### 8.4.3 Signage Construction

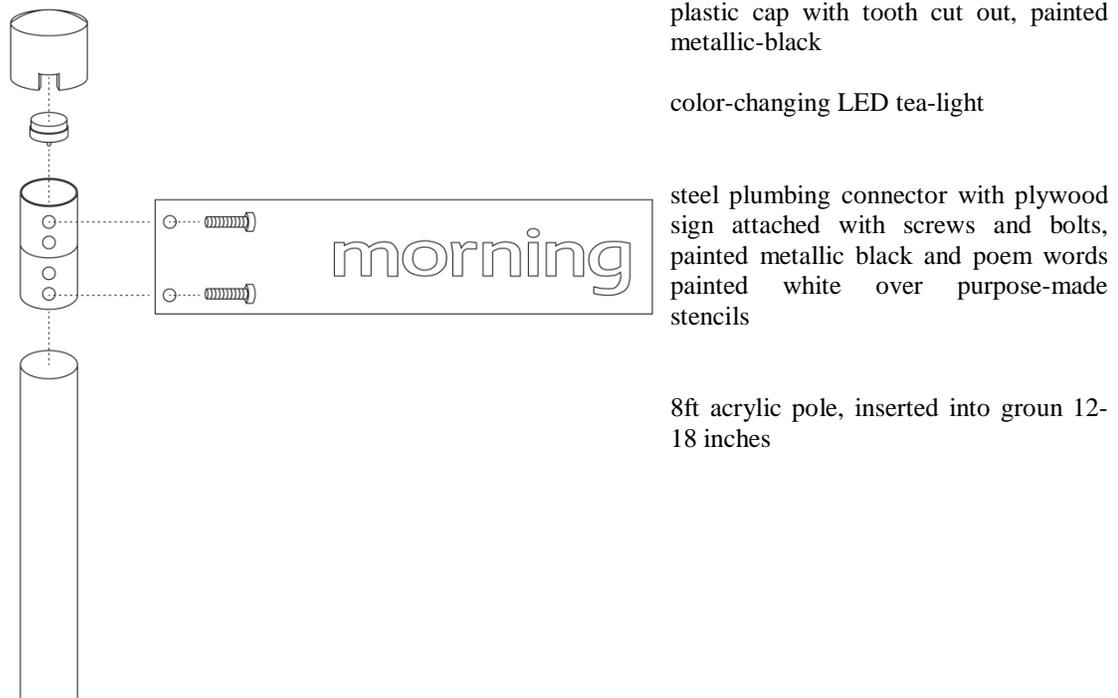


Figure 50: Signage Construction

Working out the ideal construction method for each sign took much effort. I had to experiment with everyday plumbing objects that could work with the diameter of the pole and ensure weather protection of the small LED light, while allowing access to manually turn it on and off. The plastic cap on top conceals the light will providing a tight and secure fit. It was important that the sign construction felt like one deliberate



Figure 51: Signage Connection Detail

and technically-sound piece, rather than a collection of unrelated components.

#### 8.4.4 User Experience/Evaluation Method



Figure 52: Section looking at Poem Path from South

The *Pome Path* would provide a place for contemplation and discussion that would hopefully encourage social interactions between members of the public. The installation would not affect the pattern of vehicular traffic in any way, but the public waiting might behave differently because of the installation. For example, at present very few people stand on the grass below the trees instead of waiting on the sidewalk, but it is hoped that more people would interact with the natural elements of the landscape. The poem itself might also encourage people to behave differently, or to at



Figure 53: Model of Poem Path, 1"=20'

least contemplate some of the poem's themes – such as waiting, climate and time. The evening experience of *Poem Path* might present a more spiritual and contemplative mood because

of the changing lights below the large, dominant oak trees; the experience of the installation would also cover a larger context that would include vehicular traffic that might notice it from far away. In terms of the site's context as part of the gateway experience into the University of Maryland campus, the notion of presenting an example of collaborative student work could be of great value to both visitors and other creative students who could provide a different temporary intervention in the future.

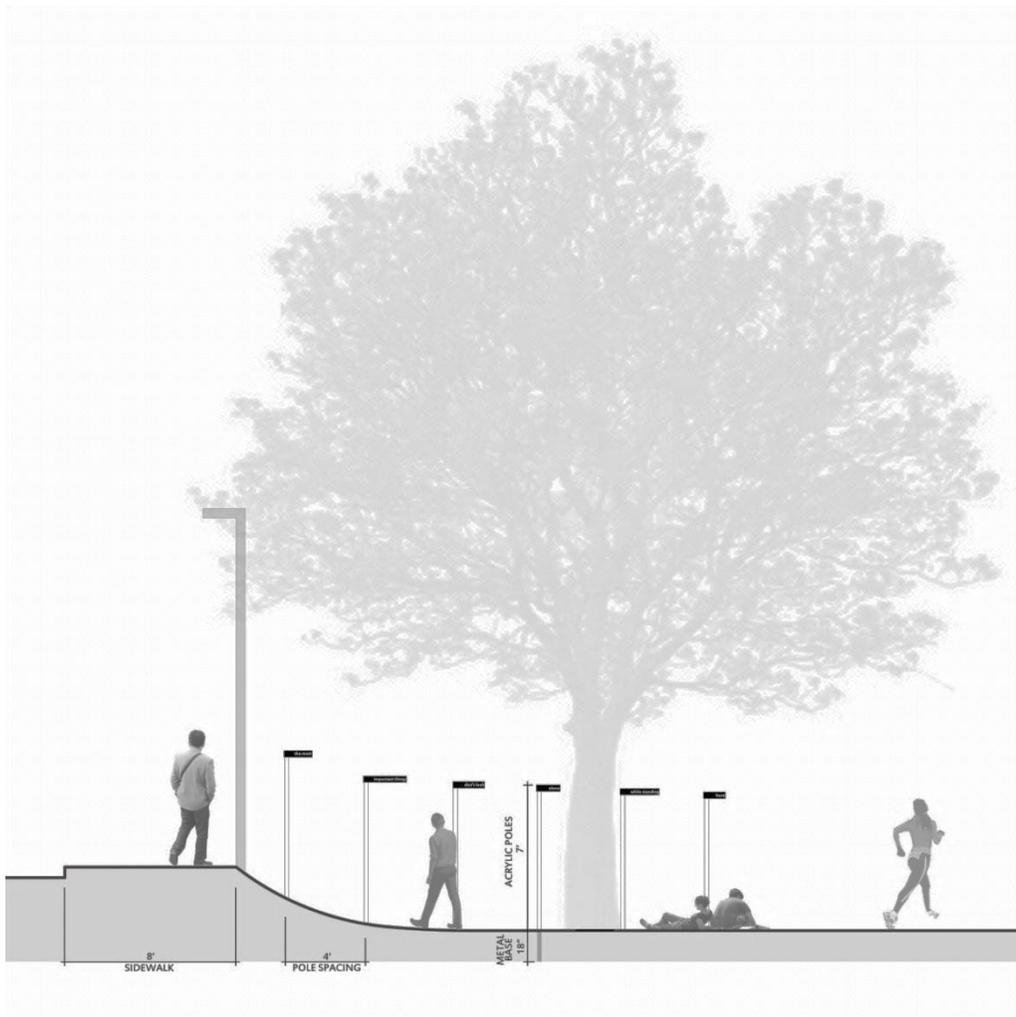


Figure 54: Section through Poem Path from Approach



Figure 55: Facebook Page

There is a great opportunity to evaluate the success of *Poem Path* installation from students, professors and other members of the passing public at the site. The creation of a Facebook page means that people could share their thoughts and opinions in a quick and effortless manner. The proposed installation could be further described on the webpage and could ask for volunteers to present new words and phrases that could replace the original *Poem Path* signs, translating authorship from the designer to the public.

This kind of social-media evaluation could be of great value to me educationally; learning how people experience the installation through their own personal and subjective words could assist in the ongoing development and editing of the overall concept.

Figure 56: Poem Path

## CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

### 9.1 Common Themes

Despite the incredible diversity and assortment of materials, forms and aesthetics shown in temporary artscapes, the thesis has succeeded in uncovering common themes between these types of projects with regard to their intentions, solutions



and findings. The connection between public art or experimental architecture and landscape is integral to the development and experience of each of the many projects discussed. Through the analysis of recent precedents and two key learning investigations, the following four common themes became clear: *Adaptation of an Idea; Transformation of Dead Space; New Understanding of Landscape; Redefining of Public Space*. These four learning outcomes became effective design goals for the development of the *Poem Path* proposal.

### 9.2 Opportunities for Experimentation and Evaluation

The various projects created throughout the course of the thesis had a tremendous effect on the final project, as well as on my personal education of construction design and techniques. The thesis subject allowed for a rare opportunity to build and test large physical structures for experimental, educational, artistic and cultural value.

Each built experiment influenced the next in one way or another; the learning outcomes from each project were critical to the next.

### **9.3 Collaboration of the Arts**

Perhaps the most beneficial learning experience in terms of the landscape architectural education was the mutual value of collaborating with other creative art forms. Collaborating with sixth-grade students on an abstract art installation taught me an incredible amount about design while introducing them to landscape architecture at any early age; the enthusiasm, boldness and ingenuity that they showed in their design concepts was astounding and retaining the high level of energy that they brought to the thesis research was invaluable for the remaining thesis projects.

The opportunity to integrate a dance class into the investigation on Hornbake Plaza proved that creative groups on campus will jump at opportunities to perform in new ways; not only did they activate the steel cubes in an imaginative new way that engaged the public much more than at any other time, they also encouraged me to consider other ways to collaborate on campus. Working with an MFA poetry student during the final design was of value to both of us, as we both had a rare opportunity to learn about each other's creative art form. Understanding and respecting one another's design process and inspirations was an essential part of pairing our ideas together in one sophisticated and undivided form.

#### **9.4 Value of Temporary Artscapes**

The two research investigations – *Designing the Experience* and *Experiencing the Design* – demonstrated that temporary artscales have great cultural and educational value; both investigations transformed previously-unused spaces for the benefit of the public experience. The proposal for *Poem Path* suggests an installation of cultural and educational value in which the bus stop site could become a space for continued temporary experimentation on campus.

The crucial separating of the two research investigations through their respective themes – *Designing the Experience* and *Experiencing the Design* – allowed for a thorough understanding of temporary artscales from the perspective of both the designer *and* the public; this was key to the design process of *Poem Path* which focused attention on how the site would be most effectively experienced by its public audience.

#### **9.5 Implications of Temporary Artscales**

People today have become so reliant and trusting in superfast digital information, wireless technology and social media, that the spirit of community, public space, and human-interaction has been somewhat eclipsed by digital communication. Temporary artscales in public landscapes are necessary to keep people acknowledging and questioning the role, disposition and structure of their built environment, particularly their public space. Artistic interventions and architectural experiments ensure that the designers of the built environment keep researching and educating their own work, while activating and transforming everyday spaces – such as bus stops – to maintain

an ever-changing discourse with an ever-changing public audience in an ever-changing world. This discourse – even if undesirable – is essential to the experimental development of new ephemeral artscapes that boldly transform and activate old or everyday landscapes, for the benefit of our communities.

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