



ART LIBRARIES SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

36th Annual Conference
Grand Hyatt, Denver, Colorado, May 1-5, 2008

Opening Plenary Speaker: Lawrence Argent

Saturday, May 3, 2008 8:30 – 9:30 am

Thank you Peggy for inviting me here for the opportunity to share some of my public art works

Denver and the West from Pat Limerick, CU

PUBLIC ART

- As a creator and facilitator in this dialogue I am **attempting to somewhat reduce the hierarchical nature of what is assumed to be art**. So much of what audiences gather as the definition of art, particularly contemporary art, is a **fear of not knowing what "it" is** supposed to be. My philosophy is to break down these barriers. I do this not by placating to the generic, but perhaps confronting this generic and **reinventing a presence that can illuminate and stimulate**.
- **For me my public art works are part of a larger whole. I am an artist that utilizes assorted mediums and venues to engage the viewer in questioning the assumed. Somewhat providing a vehicle by which stimulus opens a plethora of response that defies a name.**

Talk about Bear and construction



Notion of a "Convention Center"

- **Meeting place**
- **Exchange of ideas, transference of information**
- **Regional western art and the thought of what that is from a non-resident's perspective**
- **The natural surroundings of Colorado**
 - **architecture and site - not conflicting , scale.**
 - **mountains** (the assumed idea of Colorado).
 - **psychological peaking** of one's interest to the sense of **wonder and curiosity**
 - **what can capture Colorado - what is all of Colorado - no one entity but there are icons**
 - **fauna** being representative of the mountains - humorous.
 - **the black bear** - the inherent natural landscape, we see it on many levels as a **not so natural landscape.**
 - **"Regional Western Art" aesthetic.**
 - **Posture**
 - **Reflecting nature upsetting the balance of the viewer and the viewed.**
- I have always been **interested in the relationship of perception and the way in which we digest our visual landscape. How one experiences and processes this information. And it's relationship to Objects, Materials and the inherent language of associated subjectivity**
- **Humorous parody with the familiar and the sublime**

Overview of some public artwork



"Whispers" link to introduction to the digital

As I had an opportunity to exercise the ideas surrounding **"communication"** within an educational environment, I became interested in the way one **absorbs information**. Education is about communication on all levels. And the essence of what that entails in this environment - is oral communication.

As we take a moment to rest and sit atop a bench, maybe our receptors for information and the conscious filters we normally apply, are in a state of flux, rather than overtly ignoring the assumed of what we think we know. At this point maybe there is access to information that would not have been possible otherwise.



"Pillow Talk"

Visiting the history surrounding this area and in particular this site, it occurred to me to somehow tie all of **"what had been" with all of "what is" together in a work that speaks universally rather than specifically**. Rather than typify elements of the past in some contemporary framework, I found myself

returning conceptually to a simple yet convincingly powerful idea that was a common thread through all. It was the object of a pillow. "The Pillow" emerged as an extremely potent image that crossed time and spoke universally.



"Virere"

Whilst continually pursuing concepts for this site I found that I had to alter the predominant **urban concrete envelope**, and add organic shape and color. Grass, a simple yet beautiful form offers the lushness of a rich carpet alongside the urban/suburban landscape.

The scale of these in relation to the viewers creates a dialogue that imbues **whimsy and suggests a plethora of dialogue in relation to the urban jungle**.

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

“Confluence”

As the plaza's new design has sections that are divided into the grid patterns that reflect the historic street plans, I sought to subtly interrupt this field. My approach was to do this by engaging the visitor with undulations and articulations that reflect a discourse that what is above is somehow connected to below – the emphasis being on the fluidity of possibility.”
Growth and the accessibility to water , fluidity of growth

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

“Ghost Trolley”

Town of Fletcher, Trolley system 1900. Link to the past
Within this humorous play on perspective and assumption, there lies perhaps an essence that connects the viewer to the past and the light of the future.

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Vail project

Accidents – events of unintended occurrence - where in the studio more than one force has collided without apparent cause.

Process of Public Art

Application with the request for qualifications

- Letter with visual materials, resume

Make short list – variation on number of finalists

If successful – come up with proposal (idea/concept) which includes detailed budget, model of the work and or renderings which gets presented to the selection committee. This is usually done in a relatively short time frame.

If successful then work begins on the **contract**. This can be a long process. And a lot of paperwork And there can be many stages to this. Inclusive of this document is payment schedules, copyright ownership and filing, relocation requirements and maintenance requirements. In the meantime I working out the logistics of actually having this idea manifested into a reality, meeting with the architects, designers and really getting a hold of all that is pertinent to the siting of the work and finalizing some costing aspects.

After the contract is signed, I can then move forward and begin the process of working with the fabricators/engineers on the design according to the detailed specifics. I can then move forward and begin the process of signing my own contractual documents with the chosen fabricators/contractors. As the work progresses, just like any construction project, there are known and unknown variables that surface that continually need to be attended. Depending on the scope of the project these can last years.

Why and how does one even consider doing this?

Address why I attempted to start making public art. – Australia – school

- Failure
- Concentration of studio work

Humorous parody with the familiar and the sublime

- Then I kept on seeing public art and noticing variables that I found were not always attended to – like siting, some of it could be placed anywhere, it became architectural ornamentation, whilst sometimes interesting, the work alienated itself from possibilities of incorporation into the site. hence
- I began to formulate my own analysis and opinions about public art. And its Process I realized is intertwined in gaining knowledge of - site conditions, social and political realities , history, existing phenomena, and ecology.
- Then came many attempts at trying to be successful in the selection process

What attracts me to particular projects?

- Conditions of site and location
- What can I offer initially with an idea, is there one.
- Challenge of doing something different, collaboration, altering environment