



Unity : a site specific public sculpture  
by Greg L Mueller

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
Montana State University  
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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Bozeman, Montana

April 2001

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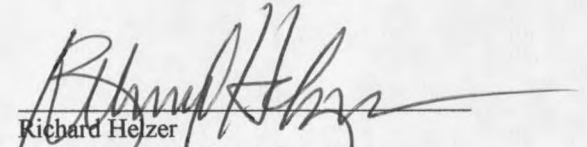
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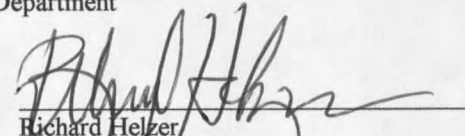
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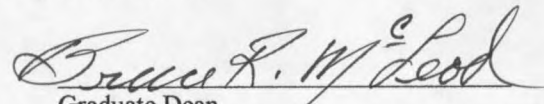
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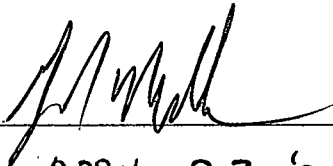
  
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. M. M.', written over a horizontal line.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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My thesis proposes that sculpture can provide a focus for community gathering and individual contemplation. I embrace the Benedictine philosophy that values time for contemplation and encourages the individual to contribute to his community. This personal vision is made manifest in *Unity*, a site-specific public sculpture. My thematically unified complex consists of a series of forms which define a path, a portal and a resting place. I use archetypal forms to represent the search for spiritual discovery. I chose to install *Unity* on the front lawn of Haynes Hall to bring vitality to a dispirited site, and to address the social need for a School of Art gathering space. My forms are based on two primary influences: my fascination with the principles of sacred geometry and metal's ability to celebrate the inherent beauty of structure.

The principles of sacred geometry suggest that the circle, square and triangle create *physical*, harmonic order within a contemplative structure, thus fostering a *spiritual* order within the soul. The circle's infinite whole symbolizes man moving from a single point and continuously returning. The four equal sides of the square refer to the physical world: earth, air, fire and water. The triangle refers to man's three fold consciousness: the knower, the known and the act of knowing. I have adopted these geometric principles to my metal forms to achieve harmonic order. The arc in my forms alludes to the circle: the timeless search for the divine. The convergence of the two axes of the ground plan of *Unity* composes a triangle. The pattern in the expanded metal screen also alludes to man's three fold consciousness. Squares at the bases of the pieces reference the earth.

My forms are a balance among analytical research, the malleability of metal and the aesthetic quality of structure. The arc forms feature hammered shells out of which emerge their structural core. My work celebrates the symmetry of structural patterns. Support columns, roof trusses, bridge girders, and agrarian architecture, such as silos and barns, reveal pure structural truth. I treated the surface of the steel with a bronze coating to achieve warmth aesthetically and to glorify structure as pure form. The symmetry of structural pattern is also a by-product of building a physical support system. Because my sculpture is intended for public participation, physical qualities of structural pattern are imperative.

Contemplation grants the time to examine one's own *inner core* or soul structure; dialogue allows one to reveal his *inner core* to another. The resting place in *Unity* is an intimate human scale cavity which lends itself to both contemplation and gathering. The Lotus-like, tapering verticals refer to the lotus seat in Eastern philosophy, a place for individual introspection. The metal screen both defines the resting place and, through its transparency, encourages a skyward, contemplative gaze.

Two axes lead the public to the resting place. These paths rhythmically unfold, alluding to progressive revelations of a spiritual search. The twin portal forms suggest both transition and culmination. The asymmetrical portals refer to the public's transition from the order and balance of the resting place to the external surroundings. Their gestural quality heightens the public's experience of transition.

The three major elements of *Unity* constitute a whole. The path, portal and resting place, while incomplete as separate entities, become significant in their totality. This totality transforms an otherwise unengaging site. This transformation is enhanced through public activity. *Unity* offers the opportunity for seeking a personal harmony and can be a place where truths are revealed to one another through listening and dialogue. *Unity* synthesizes my passions for creating contemplative space and building community.

## SLIDE LIST

“Unity”

a site specific public sculpture

bronze coated steel, patina

18' x 150' x 140'

2001

1. Composition Overview Detail
2. Path detail
3. Path detail
4. Path detail
5. Portal detail
6. Portal detail
7. Portal detail
8. Resting Place detail
9. Resting Place detail
10. Resting Place detail
11. Montana Ballet Collaboration
12. Montana Ballet Collaboration

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GREG MUELLER  
"Unity" 150' x 140' x 18'  
bronze coated steel 2001

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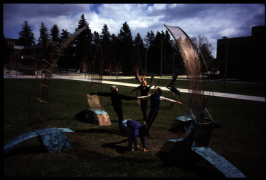














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