

MOUND CITY IS THE FIFTH IN A SERIES OF THEMATIC GROUP SHOWS LAUMEIER HAS ORGANIZED UNDER THE RUBRIC OF "ARCHAEOLOGY OF PLACE" INTENDED TO CELEBRATE, AND CRITIQUE, THE UNIQUE ROLE ST. LOUIS PLAYS IN THE HISTORY AND MYTHS OF AMERICA.

I first came across St. Louis' nickname and the mounds that are scattered about the region—when I was preparing to move to St. Louis. The many trips I took to Cahokia Mounds allowed me to create a link between my new home and the research I had been conducting in Phoenix into "desert aesthetics" and global contemporary indigenous artistic practice. As such, this show is truly the culmination of research I have been interested in for over five years, and I am glad to see it come to fruition.

Mound City coincides with the 250th anniversary of the modern founding of St. Louis. Just as STL250 provides an umbrella for community-wide birthday celebrations of the white settler presence in the region, *Mound City* celebrates the community-wide presence of the ancient Native culture scattered across our landscape. The coincidence allows our ongoing use of St. Louis as a research platform for the creation of truly inspiring art.

Laumeier is able to celebrate our community's cultural memories and memorials thanks to partners in various organizations, and the diligent and insightful work of Laumeier's Curator of Exhibitions, Dana Turkovic, who has led this project into rich and fruitful areas of research. First and foremost we are grateful to colleagues Bill Iseminger and Mark Esarey, of the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site and Museum, who have graciously allowed us to site materials from our show inside their Museum. This connection is key in facilitating the connection between contemporary and ancient art and society. Our In Residence experts this year are archaeologists Joe Harl and Robin Machiran, who have built a Mississippian mud hut with students from South Tech High School as well as leading other educational programs throughout 2014. We continue Kim Yasuda's Hunt + Gather garden project (part of our 2012 project Camp Out: Finding Home in an Unstable World) by working with

Joe, Robin and colleagues Yvette Luedde and Mary Jo Anderson, Master Gardeners, for helping us plant species that would have been eaten by our local residents 1,000 years ago. We would also like to thank the following for their time and expertise in building Geoffrey Krawzyck's work *Recess*: Cement Masons Local 527, Ironworkers local 396, Bricklayer's Local #1, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 513 and Carpenters District Council of Greater St. Louis & Vicinity.

Thanks to the following colleagues for making available cultural material for our Loans That Don't Move program: Amy Clark at the St. Louis Art Museum for allowing us to "borrow" works in their Mississippian culture collection, including their chunkeythe game piece so key in understanding that the Mississippian culture was, indeed, of our place and not simply an import from the south. Staff Amie Bossi and Nancy Ylvisaker at Bellefontaine Cemetery have allowed us to "borrow" their mounds-unexplored constructions appropriately situated at the site where modern St. Louisans have buried their own notables. We also thank Brooke Mahar, of the Mastadon State Historic site, and Amanda Claunch, from the Missouri History Museum, for making available works and expertise for this project.

Finally we thank Eric Thoelke of TOKY Branding + Design, for his conversation on this topic of mutual interest and for the beautiful, experimental design they have created to express the complex ideas in the show. Also, to James Harrison, director of Webster University's Film Series for his curatorial collaboration in curating the *Mound City* film series. Thanks go to Laumeier's staff that make our programs possible: Dana Turkovic, Curator of Exhibitions, Nick Lang, Chief Preparator, Liz Murphy, Registrar and Eric Nauman, Assistant Preparator; Jackie Chambers, Development Officer, Marie Oberkirsch, Special Events Manager and Jennie Swanson, Membership and Museum Services Manager; and Don Gerling, Operations Supervisor, and his staff Mike Clermont, Wes Nance and Yvette Luedde, all of St. Louis County Parks.

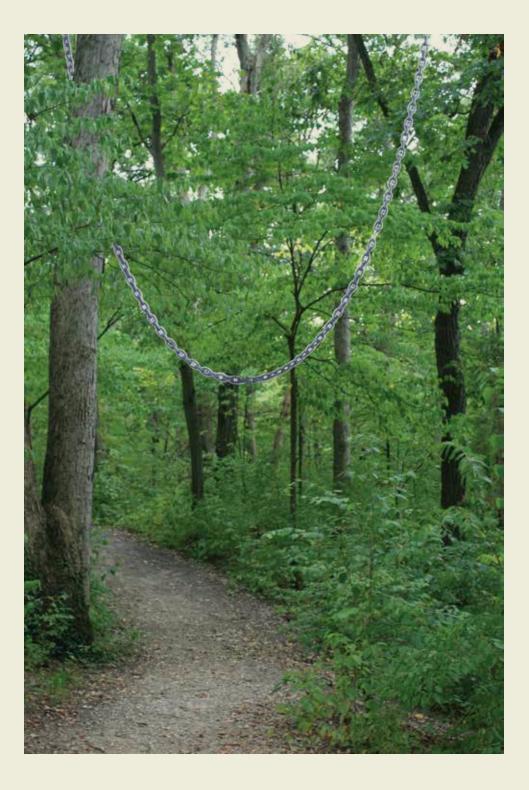
My thanks also go to Julia Norton, Administrative and Volunteer Coordinator; Suzanne Sierra, Interim Public Relations Officer; Joy Wright, Librarian; Karen Mullen, Curator of Education, and Clara Collins Coleman, Curator of Interpretation, for the roles they take in creating the unique environment at Laumeier.

As always, I am grateful to our Board and volunteers, St. Louis County Parks, the Regional Arts Commission, the Missouri Arts Council, the Arts and Education Council of St. Louis, the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the Mark Twain Laumeier Endowment Fund for ongoing support of our mission. Board member Mary Ann Srenco and Andy Srenco have generously underwritten our publication.

MARILU KNODE

Executive Director / Chief Curator







← SAM DURANT

Free Hanging Chain, 2014 chain link dimensions variable Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

JOE HARL AND ROBIN MACHIRAN 个

Mississippian Dwelling, 2014 mud, wood dimensions variable Courtesy the artists, St. Louis





← GEOFFREY KRAWCZYK

Recess, 2014 red brick, dirt dimensions variable Courtesy the artist, New York

BEVERLY PEPPER 🛧

Cromlech Glen, 1985-90 earth, sod, sandstone, trees 252 x 1320 x 2288 inches (2/5 of an acre) Laumeier Sculpture Park Commission with funds from Anonymous Donors



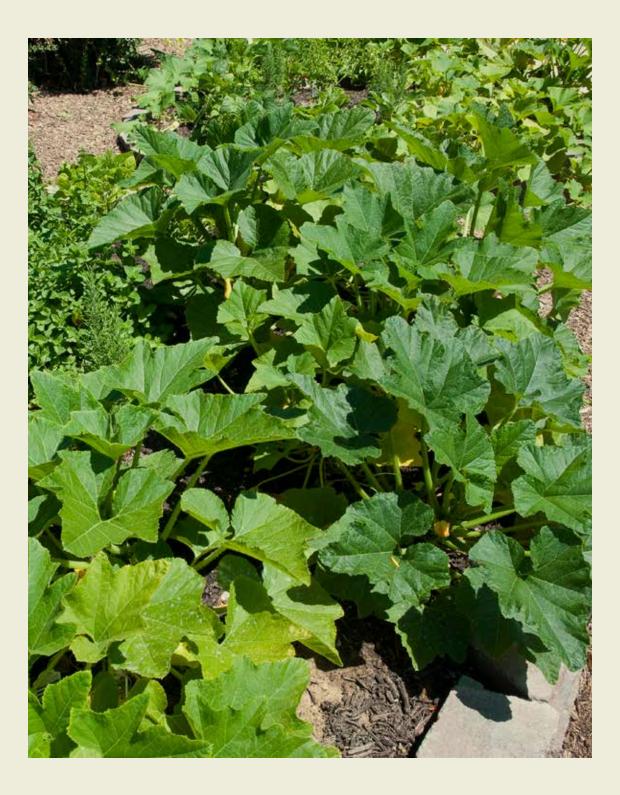


+ ALISON SAAR

Leelinau, 1997 painted wood, copper, steel wire 67 x 15 1/2 x 20 inches Laumeier Sculpture Park Commission with funds from the Mark Twain Laumeier Endowment Fund

MARIE WATT 🛧

Study for Earthmover, 2014 11 x 10.5 inches Reclaimed wool and embroidery floss Courtesy the artist, Portland



← KIM YASUDA

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Hunt + Gather, 2012-2014 plants, vegetables dimensions variable Laumeier Sculpture Park Commission with funds from The Mark Twain Laumeier Endowment Fund

A TRIBE CALLED RED \rightarrow





ARTIST UNKNOWN 🛧

Discoidal (Mississippian), (c. 1000-1400) stone 5 3/8 inches diameter Collection of Saint Louis Art Museum



ARTIST UNKNOWN 🛧

Clovis Type Projectile Points, (c.11,500 B.C.E.) RCYBP, radio carbon years before presentstone dimensions variable Courtesy of Mastodon State Historic Site, Kimmswick, Missouri

ARTIST UNKNOWN →

Monk's Mound, (c. 1000-1400) earth 11,456.4 x 9,291.6 inches Courtesy of Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, Collinsville, Illinois





ARTIST UNKNOWN 🛧

Piasa Bird, date unknown paint on bluff rocks dimensions variable Alton, Illinois

ARTIST UNKNOWN →

Protest of the Sioux, 1904 5 x 7 inches digital print Collection of the Missouri History Museum, St. Louis



∠ ARTIST UNKNOWN

Chunkey Player Figurine, date unknown clay 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches Collection of the Cahokia Mounds Site Interpretative Center, Collinsville, Illinois

CHARLES BRENNAN →

Chief Pontiac Plaque, (c. 1769) bronze 11 x 17 inches St. Louis, Missouri



Con- the day in the in the set the state of offine Canava people and leade encest all three of Native some fea 0 white expansion in the D Sourseine County Award a - Avans Doran suround 1.7.20 and became chiefordire@mawas in-1 Housing organized a could for of these the standard monophic (heat the standard the Gall of Messico in 1765 the dibes struck simultaneously at http://www.posics.Fontiac personally led the five-month attack on-Fort Detroits which ended in deleat when Britain forged peace with France, its other adversary for expansion in the New Worlds Pottane realized the hopelessness wanter and negotiated operations (y

In 1769 comember of territal strike in another Illing is mundered Fontiers. His mains were found increasion througe of the village of Strikes.

A TRIBE CALLED RED

DJ crew A Tribe Called Red [ATCR] produces a truly unique sound that's impacting the global electronic scene and urban club culture. Since 2010 the group-made up of two-time Canadian DMC Champion Ian "DJ NDN" Campeau, Dan "DJ Shub" General and DJ Bear Witness-has been mixing traditional pow wow vocals and drumming with cutting-edge electronic music. Their self-titled album was long-listed for Canada's prestigious Polaris Music Prize and included in the Washington Post's top 10 albums of the year. ATCR's music is the soundtrack to a contemporary evolution of the pow wow: their Electric Pow Wow events in Ottawa showcase Native talent and aboriginal culture, alongside an open, wild party. They've become the face of an urban Native youth renaissance, championing their heritage and speaking out on aboriginal issues, while being on top of popular music, fashion and art. DJ Bear Witness doubles as the crew's visual artist and creates political and sometimes humorous videos that incorporate film and pop culture references to Native people and reclaim the aboriginal image.

SAM DURANT

Sam Durant's work engages a variety

of social, political and cultural issues,

explore fraught relationships between

culture, politics and official memory.

Durant was born in Seattle in 1961

and lives and works in Los Angeles.

He received his B.F.A. and M.A. from

Massachusetts College of Art, Boston

and his M.F.A. from the California

Institute of the Arts. He has had

solo exhibitions at the Museum

often using American history to

of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf; S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium; and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand. Durant's work is represented in the public collections of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Berkeley Museum of Art, Berkeley; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Tate Modern, London; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Los Angeles. He has received awards and grants from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington; the Solomon R.Guggenheim Foundation, New York; and the USA Foundation. New York.

JOE HARL

Joe Harl is Vice President of the Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis and has served as principal investigator of master plans for the management of archaeological resources within St. Louis City and County as well as St. Charles County, Missouri. He obtained an M.A. in Anthropology from Washington University in St. Louis and a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Harl has been actively excavating local and regional histories in the Southwest Ceremonial Complex for over thirty years. His work investigates relationships between contemporary living conditions and important historical figures and events. Through collaborative site surveys and educational programs, Harl endeavors to promote a community's place within local, state and national historical landscapes and to increase awareness of shared histories. His archaeological research centers on the developments of Late Woodland and Mississippian lifestyles and cultural practices in present-day Missouri, Illinois, Kansas and Tennessee.

GEOFFREY KRAWCZYK

Geoffrey Krawczyk's performances, drawings and paintings explore the mythology of spirituality, the politics of aesthetics and connections between the sacred and the profane. Krawczyk uses ritual as both metaphor and material, at times incorporating the acts of cooking and eating to promote dialog between disparate groups, methods and events. His practice centers on reinterpreting notions of collective experience. Born in Oklahoma City in 1978, he received his B.F.A. in Painting and Printmaking from the University of Oklahoma in 2006 and his M.F.A. in Visual Studies from SUNY-Buffalo in 2010. He currently lives and works in New York. He has exhibited nationally and internationally with past exhibitions and performances at Vault Gallery, Buffalo; AKA Gallery, Oklahoma City; The Box, New York City; and Hardesty Art Center. Tulsa and at Scotiabank Nuit Blanche, Toronto. His work is represented in private collections in Fonsesca, Mexico: Berlin: London: Atlanta and Missoula. MT.

ROBIN MACHIRAN

Robin Machiran is a St. Louisbased anthropologist, art historian and educator who specializes in Mississippian cultures and indigenous artifacts of what is known as the American Bottom region of North America. Machiran holds a B.A. in Anthropology and an M.A. in History with a Museum Studies from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. As a founding member of the Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis, Machiran conducts field investigations, prehistoric and historic archival research, artifact analyses and architectural surveys of past and present landscapes to help communities better understand the natural and built environments which they shape and with which they interact. In 2003 Machiran was awarded an Illinois Association for the Advancement of Archaeology grant to conduct field work with volunteers and community groups in East St. Louis and Cahokia. Projects include Cahokia Mound 34, Cahokia West Palisade, Sugarloaf Mound, East St. Louis Mound Group and the Shilo Park Project.

BEVERLY PEPPER

Born in Brooklyn in 1922, Beverly Pepper began her career as an artist in an ad agency. She studied art and industrial design at Pratt Institute. Pepper is known for her welded steel sculptures in hollow, geometric shapes in which she utilizes box-like forms, and paints inner surfaces in a single, bright color. Pepper has built an international reputation with monumental sculptural constructions of welded steel, informed by both Constructivism and Minimalism. Her work has been exhibited and collected by major museums and galleries throughout the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York: the White House Sculpture Garden, Washington; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona.

ALISON SAAR

Alison Saar was born in Los Angeles in 1956. She earned her B.A. from Scripps College, Claremont California in 1978 and her M.F.A. from Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles in 1981. She has received grants and awards from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in 1989 and the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work has been exhibited at: the University of California Los Angeles' Fowler Museum of Cultural History; Los Angeles Louver Gallery; Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York City; and the Pasadena Museum of Art, California. Saar's work is represented in collections including: the Baltimore Art Museum; the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

MARIE WATT

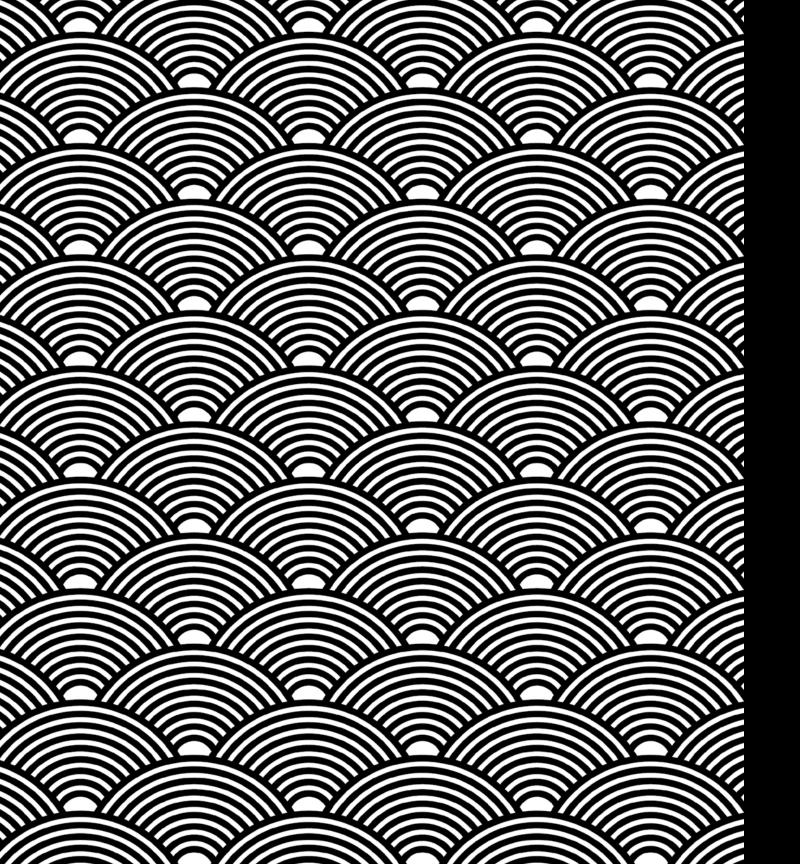
Multidisciplinary artist Marie Watt, born in 1967, is of Seneca, German and Scottish ancestry. Watt received her B.S. in Speech/Communications and Art at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon and her M.F.A. in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University in 1996. Formally, her work draws from indigenous design principles, oral tradition, personal experience and Western art history. Her approach to artmaking is shaped by the proto-feminism of Iroquois matrilineal custom, political work by Native artists in the 60s, a discourse on multiculturalism as well as Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. She has exhibited at the Denver Art Museum, Denver; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Museum of Art and Design, New York; and Hallie Ford Museum, Salem, OR. Watt's work has earned numerous awards including the 2009 Bonnie Bronson Fellowship Award, the 2007 Anonymous Was A Woman Award, and the 2006 Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship. Her work has been collected by the Hallie Ford Museum, the Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian; and the Seattle Art Museum.

KIM YASUDA

Kim Yasuda was raised in California and earned her B.F.A. in 1983 from San Jose State University, California and her M.F.A. in 1988 from the University of Southern California-Los Angeles. She is currently a professor of spatial studies in the Art Department at the University of California—Santa Barbara and the codirector of the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts. Yasuda has exhibited at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; the Smithsonian, Washington: the Oakland Museum of Art, California; the Ansel Adams Center for Photography, San Francisco; the Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta; and Camerawork Gallery, London. Yasuda has received awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Joan Mitchell Foundation.



"IF A PIECE OF HISTORY OF A PEOPLE DOESN'T GET **RESOLVED... THEN IT IS** THE PRESENT, **IT'S ALWAYS PRESENT.**¹



ESSAY ONE

LANDSCAPE IS THE VICTIM OF HISTORY²

MOUND CITY EXPLORES THE REMNANTS OF THE "SUCCESSION CULTURES" THAT EXIST IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION, AND THE STUBBORN STAIN THAT HUMAN COLONY COLLAPSE HAS LEFT ON OUR LANDSCAPE.³ THE VISIBLE TRACES OF CULTURAL "SPATIAL OVERWRITING" ARE EVERYWHERE.⁴

Beginning with the ancient Native American mounds scattered across the Midwest to elegant French colonial homes reminiscent of our feeder culture in New Orleans, from the brick piles in the 18th and 19th century German and Italian neighborhoods to the dismantled, red-lined African American neighborhoods on the North side, St. Louis is a virtual diorama of the successive waves of colonizers and immigrants who sought to shape our natures cultural landscape. These jumbled-together structures, and their distinct formal shapes and complex uses, make St. Louis one of the richest depositories of man-made sculptural places in the United States. From our ancient past to our immanent future, monuments to social collapse and resurrection lay scattered across the St. Louis region.

Mound City foregrounds the far-reaching sculptural work of contemporary artists that comment on the "public bound identity" of our region's past as we continue to sort out how to recapture a vibrant, sustainable future.⁵ Sculpture of all forms—art work, mounds, monuments, architecture—are the remnants of our collective ambitions, and as such are part of the visual vocabulary that captures the conflicts in our history. Through this exhibition,

contemporary artists will create new connections between past and present, between the built and natural environment and between past and current man-made follies of our world.

Two-thousand-fourteen is the 250th anniversary of our city's modern founding, and Laumeier Sculpture Park is marking this anniversary with Mound City, which takes its title from the nickname that nods to the important ancient Native culture upon which this city is built. Mound City will seek traces of Native culture in the contemporary world, and uses the two monuments that most exemplify the irresolution of our past—the Missisippean mound culture, centered in the St. Louis region, and the Gateway Arch, a virtual grave monument to the eradication of the Native Nations that lived off the bounty of this land—as primary points of exploration for new ways to understand our present history through our past. Through artist commissions, works in Laumeier's Collection and the next iteration of Laumeier's Loans That Don't Move program, we continue our focus on an "archaeology of place" that uses the rich resources of our community to think anew about art's role in considering our visual landscape.

The nickname "Mound City" refers to the ancient man-made mounds that were part of the complex culture created by the Mississippian peoples at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers 1,000 years ago, and whose epicenter is celebrated at the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site and Museum in Collinsville, IL, just across the Mississippi River from downtown St. Louis. While late 19th century Americans declared Native Americans the disappeared race, neither they, nor their contributions to our contemporary world, are invisible. The continued presence of Native culture is found not just through archaeological digs, but through the works of contemporary artists who seek to reconcile the conflicts of our past as they manifest themselves in our present.

Marie Watt, who is of Native American ancestry, has created works that acknowledge a collective heritage through community sewing activities that result in new forms of totems or memorials. Her blanket totems recall both the cooperation it takes to create an enveloping community as well as the blankets brought by white settlers that inadvertently spread diseases for which the Native peoples had no protection. For Mound City, Watt creates work that uses modern methods and materials to mirror the building processes of the mound peoples. She looks particularly at the contrast between how the Mound Builders' handdug mounds re-shaped the landscape one basketful at a time, while in our contemporary world we use heavy machinery to re-form the contours created by nature in a heart-beat. Watt uses non-traditional forms of art making-sewing circles and over-sized sculptures in non-traditional materials—to stitch together new forms of community.

Geoffrey Krawczyk stages performative events that explore the on-going interpretation of Native and non-Native cultures in America. For *Mound*

City, Krawczyk combines formal elements of two of the "succession cultures" in our region—the Mississippian peoples and the robust African American communities that continue to be pulled apart in North St. Louis-to suggest how our past is now present. Krawczyk has created his own hybrid home that uses the red clay bricks that typify the 19th century emigrant enclaves of North and South St. Louis to create a modern mound that has collapsed on Laumeier's grounds. Krawczyk suggests, through this work, that neither the history of our relationship to Native American culture, nor our relationship to African American history, has been resolved, and we continue to create edifices of decay as a result. Krawcyzk seeks to confound the archaeological record of suburban St. Louis, whose mere existence is predicated upon an abandoned city core at the heart of our current social malaise.

Sam Durant has taken as his touchstone the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, a.k.a. the Gateway Arch, to trigger his work at Laumeier. The Arch has come to embody certain myths about the founding of America. Some historians tell us that North America was an empty continent which gave de facto "permission" to waves of colonizers to seize the lands. In fact, the continent was covered with complex societies with the same political goals, social conflicts and hierarchies as the incoming immigrants.⁶ The Arch celebrates St. Louis' historical role as the western-most outpost in conquering the land and peoples west of the Mississippi, yet not all pioneers were the successful entrepreneurs we imagine. In her book The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West, historian Patty Limerick belies the myths of pioneer individualism and self-made man. She articulates how the East's wealthy few enticed Europe's many poor to do the dirty work of taking the country, dirt clod by dirt clod, one Indian massacre at a time.⁷

| LANDSCAPE IS THE VICTIM OF HISTORY |

St. Louis may indeed have been the primary portal for moving west, but the consequences of that migration are mixed, for both sides.

Durant has long been interested in America's originary myths of self-sufficient Pilgrims fighting heathens. Over the past decade he has particularly explored the mutually negative impact of American conquest on the victors as on Native Americans. For his project exploring the myths embalmed in the Plymouth Colony Museum, near where Durant grew up, the artist writes:

The Plymoth [sic] Plantation, "a living museum" dedicated to "historical accuracy" is an example of how powerful the myths of the Pilgrim Story are....their pictorial guide, shows an awareness of the ideological basis through which they present history. It reveals an understanding of the catastrophic consequences of this history for Native Americans... Unfortunately they do not acknowledge that this situation harms not only history's victims but its victors as well They understand, and rightly so, that both the myths and the realities (of genocide) are at the very center of American (U.S.) identity."8

Durant's original idea for *Mound City* was to continue his research on the memorials to the dead of the Indian wars scattered across the East and Midwest, but there are few in this area.9 Instead he turned to the mother of all monuments to the myths of America's founding-the Gateway Arch—to reflect on the impact built monuments have on our understanding of history. Durant strung five colored metal catenary arches (like those used by architect Eero Saarinen in the Arch), upside down on the Whitaker Woods Trail. These works are flexible, not fixed, embedded inside the disturbed landscape of Laumeier.¹⁰

While the Arch seeks to proclaim St. Louis' important role in the conquest of the continent, we must consider that, by 1962 when the Arch was built, St. Louis had seen a significant decline. St. Louis was the fourth largest city in the nation in 1904, the year of the World's Fair in St. Louis and the 100th anniversary of the return of Lewis & Clark. Today, St. Louis is the 24th largest city in the country, a fact bemoaned by residents who wish for the glory days of our city. The Arch is as much an inadvertent memorial to the loss of the region's financial, social, political and economic primacy in the American body politic as it is a mourning for the lost cultures that were swept away in our rush to gobble up land. Durant's public work uses the same minimalist vocabulary and materials as Saarinen but with dramatically opposite implications. His mock memorials celebrate the many colorful stories that are left out of the singular narrative about the founding of our place.

...public space is inseparable from the conflictual and uneven social relations that structure specific societies at specific historical moments..."

ROSALYN DEUTSCHE



JACKIE FERRARA Laumeier Project, 1981 red cedar. zinc coated carriage bolts 187 x 228 x 261 inches Laumeier Sculpture Park Commission with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, Dr. and Mrs, Bernard Adler and an anonymous donor

As part of our on-going recontextualization of works in Laumeier's Permanent Collection, we find a thread linking six legacy and recent works to the themes and concerns of Mound City.

St. Louis Project, 1989

trees. shrubs. mortar.

limestone, grass, clover

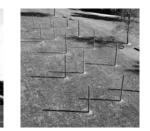
112 x 399 x 5100 inches

Loan courtesy Citicorp

The work that suggests the most personal connection between an artist's practice and Mound City's goal to find traces of Native culture in our contemporary society is Alison Saar's work Leelinau, 1997. Saar's work refers to a Native American myth about a maiden who runs into the woods with the tree fairies, to dwell in the contemplative solitude of the woods rather than be sold into an arranged marriage.¹² With her own mixed heritage (Native American, African American and European American), Saar borrows an ancient tale of escape and self-determination to create a figurative sculpture that will, with time, melt back into the nature that created it. Saar's practice acknowledges the temporary life of her work, a trait unique to the generation of artists working since the 1960s.



RICHARD FLEISCHNER ALEXANDER LIBERMAN The Way, 1972-1980 18 salvaged steel oil tanks 780 x 1,224 x 1,200 inches Laumeier Sculpture Park Collection, gift of Alvin J. Siteman with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts



JUAN WILLIAM CHÁVEZ Untitled (Sacred Real Estate), 2012 lampposts dimensions variable Laumeier Sculpture Park Commission with funds from Nancy and Ken Kranzberg, gift of the artist

Equally important, in *Mound City*, to finding traces of Native cultures has been a frank recognition of how societies override each other-through language, through laws and through monuments. In his book Collapse: Why Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, Jared Diamond explores the roots and reasons for the collapse of civilizations; ancient Cahokia would have fit well into this book.¹³ There are several works in Laumeier's Collection that point to this sense of "succession culture" left to form new landscapes.

Beverly Pepper's Cromlech Glen, 1985-87, is nestled along Laumeier's Art Hike Trail where visitors can stumble upon her densely planted green amphitheater as if it is a recently discovered ruin. Pepper created this earthwork, one of Laumeier's earliest site specific commissions, to evoke "myths and archaeological associations" that conjoin humans together across time and space.¹⁴ Cromlech Glen draws sculptural (and social) parallels between our own World Heritage site at Cahokia and the ruins of ancient civilizations elsewhere, allowing

| LANDSCAPE IS THE VICTIM OF HISTORY |

for the rise and fall of her work to mirror that of any human culture.¹⁵

In her work Laumeier Project, 1981, Jackie Ferrara draws from ancient building forms, such as Mayan temples, to create her first open step temple. Ferrara's use of wood, a natural material, also recognizes that all human constructions can, and will, disappear back into the ground from whence they came. Richard Fleischner's five-part work St. Louis Project, 1989, uses stone, another natural ancient building material, and looks like ancient building fragments left in the landscape. Fleischner scattered his work so that it "jumps" Laumeier's Northern Grove to a site across Rott Road, allowing for the ancient associations of his work to be interrupted, and animated, by our modern car culture. Alexander Liberman's work The Way, 1980, made of battered, used oil drums to create a "ruined" Greek temple slumping from its abandonment. Although Liberman likely did not know the phrase "peak oil" while creating this work, by comparing the collapse of the Greek empire (after which many of America's own temples of government and culture are fashioned) with the possible future of our own post-industrial society, Liberman's work predicts the social upheaval that attends our global reliance on oil, creating a new ruin to mark our time.

For his 2012 show at Laumeier, St. Louis-based artist Juan William Chávez grappled with the evidence of a contemporary "colony collapse" in our midst. Chávez created a modern Woodhenge using old telephone poles to outline not an observatory, as is true of the recreated Woodhenge at Cahokia, but a block from the notorious Pruitt-Igoe. Pruitt-Igoe, one of the first planned housing developments in the United States, modeled a new form of racialized urban development sweeping American cities in the 1950s, on the cusp of the Civil Rights movement to come.¹⁶ Today, the former PruittIgoe site sits abandoned, a fenced off "succession landscape" of opportunistic flora, a scar gashed across a formerly robust, if under-resourced, African American community. Not even modern developers have rushed to the site for redevelopment, cursed, perhaps, as it is by the ghost of failed mid-century social engineering. When installed, Chávez's own Woodhenge looked like trees stripped bare of their foliage and left abandoned in the landscape. At the end of the show, the henge was sheared off where it lives, like a ghost, in Laumeier's grounds, in honor of how the landscape continues to hold history's conflicts for future discovery.

These six works have all considered the impact of human resource extraction and social conflict in shaping the monuments that litter our landscape. In many ways, it is sculpture's ability to physically engage the world that allows these artists to critically comment on the world around them.

Mound City is, ultimately, about the "succession cultures" embedded in the "succession landscapes" of our place. Our town's French colonial name, Saint Louis, supplants, but does not erase, the Native city that gives our region the nickname "Mound City."¹⁷ In fact, the Americans who settled the area have mispronounced the French so profoundly that they, too, have virtually erased our multi-cultural heritage.

We can divine the conflicts in our rich geographical area through the monuments we have created and abandoned. The conflicts that continue to haunt American cultural life—the destruction of lives and cultures at the founding of our democracy, and the subsequent slave labor used to firmly re-shape the landscape—are marked by the mounds and the soaring metal brace of the Gateway Arch. The art works created for *Mound City*, as well as those from Laumeier's Collection and the objects borrowed for our *Loans That Don't Move* program, expose and explore the conflicts embedded in our landscape. Although St. Louisans will spend much of 2014 looking back to the varied heritage that makes our city unique, it is the urgent need to look forward, and stave off the next form of colony collapse, that lays as a warning in the artistic works at Laumeier.

MARILU KNODE Executive Director / Chief Curator

- Jimmie Durham in an interview with Mark Gisbourne, Art Monthly, London, No. 173, February 1994, quoted in Mark Alice Durant "The Caliban Codex or A Thing Most British" in Jimmie Durham (Phaidon: London, 1995), p. 85.
- Rebecca Solnit, <u>Savage Dreams</u> (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), p. 47.
- 3. In his book 1401: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus, Charles C. Mann talks about "succession landscapes," the plants that succeed on another when a landscape is disturbed. I am borrowing this notion and applying it to the St. Louis region, which evidences "succession cultures," from an ancient Native empire abandoned and adapted by successive waves of Spanish, French and British / American colonizers. For more specific discussion about the Cahokia site, see 1401: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House / Second Vintage Editions, 2011), pp. 295-304.
- Patrica E. Rubertone, "Engaging Monuments, Memories, and Archaeology" in <u>Archaeology of Placemaking: Monuments,</u> <u>Memories, and Engagement in Native North America</u>, ed. Patricia E. Rubertone (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2008), p.15.
- Erika Doss, <u>Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America</u> (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 31.
- 6. Mann, <u>1491</u>.
- Patricia Nelson Limerick, <u>The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken</u> <u>Past of the American West</u> (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987).
- Sam Durant, <u>Sam Durant Scenes From the Pilgrim Story: Myths</u>, <u>Massacres and Monuments</u> (Boston: Massachusetts College of Art, 2006), p. 67.

- Sam Durant, <u>Sam Durant: Proposal for White and Indian Dead</u> <u>Monument Transpositions</u> Washington, D.C. (New York: Paula Cooper Gallery, 2005).
- 10. Laumeier Sculpture Park's landscape is emblematic of the multiple land uses of our region, evolving from wild Missouri woodlands to agricultural land to private residence to public park. Laumeier's 2013 In Residence environmental historian Jenny Price observed that the grounds were logged within the past fifty years which means that Mrs. Matilda Laumeier extracted funds from the grounds before her original parcel of 72 acres was donated to St. Louis County Parks.
- Rosalyn Deutsch quoted in Erika Doss's <u>Memorial Mania: Public</u> <u>Feeling in America</u> (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 34.
- Karen Mullen and Marilu Knode, <u>Discover Laumeier</u> (St. Louis: Laumeier Sculpture Park, 2013), p. 7.
- Jared Diamond, <u>Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed</u> (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005).
- 14. Beverly Pepper quoted in <u>Ten Sites: Works, Artists, Years</u> (St. Louis: Laumeier Sculpture Park, 1992), p. 112
- 15. Mullen and Knode, Discover Laumeier, p. 24.
- 16. For information on the reconsideration of Pruitt-Igoe see http:// archrecord.construction.com/news/2012/01/Pruitt-Igoe-publichousing-development.asp, accessed December 14, 2013. For more information on Chávez's project drawing parallels between bee colony collapse and human colony collapse in St. Louis, see Dana Turkovic Juan William Chávez Living Proposal: Pruitt-Igoe Bee Sanctuary 2010-2012 (St. Louis: Laumeier Sculpture Park, 2012).
- Saint Louis was named by modern founders Pierre Laclede Liguest and his 13-year-old scout August Chouteau in 1764 after French King Louis IX, from https://stlouis-mo.gov/visit-play/stlouishistory.cfm, accessed November 18, 2013.



| ESSAY TWO |

MOUNDS OF ST. LOUIS AND THE MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURE

A.C.E. 900 – 1400

WHEN FRENCH COLONIAL SETTLERS FIRST ARRIVED, THEY FOUND A NUMBER OF EARTHEN MOUNDS SCATTERED ACROSS THE REGION, WITH A CLUSTER OF 25 MOUNDS LOCATED JUST NORTH OF THEIR NEWLY ESTABLISHED VILLAGE OF ST. LOUIS.

Over the years, these magnificent earthworks fascinated American settlers, predominately of European heritage, since they were obviously constructed by people with knowledge of mathematics and engineering. Many refused to accept that the ancestors of the Native Americans were capable of constructing these wonders. Believing, instead, the mounds were built by an ancient race of people identified as the "Mound Builders" who most assumed were of Old World origins. The most likely candidates consisted of the Lost Tribe of Israel, Hindus, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, the Welsh or even refugees from the mythical land of Atlantis. It was thought that the "savage" Native Americans had destroyed this once magnificent race and their civilization. These ideas were based on the fears and prejudice of European American settlers who simply ignored the fact that Spanish and French explorers recorded Native Americans constructing and utilizing mounds. It also served as a way to justify the subjugation and murder of Native peoples. By the 1890s, with Native Americans no longer perceived as a threat, their way of life was looked upon with nostalgia and the works of these people were finally accepted. In recent years, with the rush towards revisionist histories, it again has been suggested that the mounds were constructed by people of Old World origins or even

by extraterrestrials. Archaeologists have shown that earthworks were constructed by the Native Americans reflecting their technology, culture and beliefs. We only are just beginning to appreciate the rich and remarkable cultures developed by these people.

Native people have constructed earthen mounds for nearly 4000 years. These were used to mark important places and as burials of important leaders. The 25 mounds that once existed just north of the Gateway Arch were built around 1000 years ago by a group of people referred to by archaeologists as the "Mississippians." Their actual name and which tribes these groups became have been lost over time. Archaeologists use the present name for this group due to their major settlements being placed along the Mississippi River or its tributaries.

Mississippians in the St. Louis area developed a diversity of settlements. Large, multi-mound centers, like the ones that existed in St. Louis and Cahokia Mounds, served as civic/ceremonial centers. These centers had various mounds, with conical mounds used for the remains of the elite, ridge shaped mounds used for burials as well as to mark important places and platform mounds used to hold homes of the elite, temples, charnel houses and other important buildings. The centers amassed great wealth and had large markets where goods from across the country were exchanged. Among the precious items were copper from the Great Lakes, mica from the Appalachian Mountains of South Carolina, marine shells and whelk shells from the Gulf of Mexico and obsidian from Yellowstone National Park. Smaller communities also served to redistribute these goods. These communities had at least one platform mound and one burial mound, as well as a smaller market place. Most people of the time, however, resided within small farming hamlets with widely spaced homes or within isolated farmsteads. A burial ground was usually associated with these places, with their bodies placed into graves lined with large limestone slabs.

Similar to the economic system of America during the 1700s and 1800s, most Mississippians were farmers who raised crops to support the growing number of craft people, artisans, priests and ruling elite. Corn was one of the crops raised. Corn and tobacco was first introduced into this region from Central America about 2000 years ago. Despite common belief, corn was not immediately accepted. It only was widely raised about 1100 years ago. There were other crops that were more important. These consist of plants considered weeds today: lambsquarter (or goosefoot), knotweed, maygrass and little barley. This group of plants produces a starchy seed similar to corn but is native to the area. They are the first plants to grow in any disturbed field. Native Americans altered the seeds so that they were larger and had a thinner seed coat for higher yields and easier processing. These plants are actually healthier than corn. People are beginning to recognize this fact today; for example, goosefoot is now sold in health food stores or commercially marketed as Quinoa. Other popular cultigens consisted of marshelder and sunflowers, which produce an oily seed, and a variety of squashes and gourds. Tobacco was raised since it was first

introduced and may have been mixed with nightshade to increase its narcotic affect. A number of other plants were used for foods and medicines that we only now are beginning to appreciate.

Deer was an important source of meat, hides and tools, but a larger quantity of fish and waterfowl were consumed. Fish were collected by using bone fish hooks, but more commonly captured by using nets and traps. The fish was then smoked to preserve the meat. Other animals were hunted using small (less than ½ inch long) projectiles. The bow and arrow replaced spears in this area about 1300 years ago. Points commonly called "arrowheads" are actually older spears and ones called "bird points" are actually arrowheads.

Missouri has a wealth of natural resources that once fueled the Mississippian economy. Resources exploited include Burlington and other cherts for making sharp tools, hematite (softest form of iron) used to produce a red pigment, galena (lead ore) for decoration, igneous stones used to produce celts, salt used to preserve foods and fire clays used to produce figurines. Mississippian communities were established nearby to exploit and trade these resources.

Mississippian culture, especially in Missouri, is still poorly understood. Hopefully more of these sites will be studied in the future, allowing future generations to appreciate these people, making these places a source of community pride, and perhaps, use foods, medicines or ideas developed by these remarkable people to improve our lives today.

JOE HARL AND ROBIN MACHIRAN

Senior Cultural Resource Specialists, Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis; Laumeier Sculpture Park In Residence Archaeologists, 2014



| ESSAY THREE |

OUR GIZA

CAHOKIA REMAINS "A RIDDLE WRAPPED IN A MYSTERY INSIDE AN ENIGMA," SO MUCH SO, THAT IT ALSO REMAINS A BEST-KEPT SECRET.

What is so special about Cahokia and associated mounds in the St. Louis region? To answer this question we need to look at Cahokia in an historical context. A city grew up around 1000 AD but was abandoned by 1350 AD, when the people who built the city left behind a series of giant earthworks. Archaeologists have tantalizing clues about the people, but there's no written record to fill in the missing links between the physical digs. The Cahokia site, first built up around the time William the Conqueror invaded England, then occupied continuously as Crusaders, like Saint Louis, battled for Jerusalem and Genghis Khan conquered much of Eurasia, was itself then mysteriously abandoned by its inhabitants just as the Bubonic Plague ravaged the Old World.¹ Unlike the disaster of the Aztec and Incan encounter with the Conquistadors, "America's First City" is a civilization that rose and fell independently of events half a world away leaving no written record of who did what and to whom.

The Cahokians' cultural reach in the region appears to have been founded on ritual games that provided diplomatic and economic unity that stretched as far away as the Dakota Mountains. Cahokia came to influence the material culture of the entire equivalent of the modern midwest and Mississippi Valley; it even invented a sport called Chunkey played by related Native American tribes well into the 19th century.² Cahokia remains "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma," so much so, that it also remains a best-kept secret.

Contemporary artists who encounter Cahokia for the first time are often surprised by the existence of such a feature near the otherwise stereotypical and conventionally American, metropolitan St. Louis. Seeing Monk's Mound is like stumbling across Stonehenge or Giza without the expectant fanfare generated by tourism and the exotic locale. This understated UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization) World Heritage Site has therefore become a rich vein of source material for contemporary art. Mound City invites vou to look at the art of A Tribe Called Red. Sam Durant. Geoffrey Krawzyck. Marie Watt and our own In Residence archaeologists Joe Harl and Robin Machiran and untangle some of the mystery and to look for those traces of native culture in our contemporary world.

Block rocking beats blend traditional pow wow vocals and drumming with cutting-edge electronic bass when Ottowa-based DJ trio A Tribe Called Red kickoff the exhibition with an opening reception performance in the Park. The crew is made up of Dan "DJ Shub" General, Ian "DJ NDN" Campeau and Bear Witness. Their music, described as "powwow step" incorporates both sound and imagery from their First Nation identity (Upper/Lower Cayuga and Nipissing Anishnabe) into their music and performances. The drums are distinctive but their creative force also appeals to contemporary mainstream listeners. Their name, A Tribe Called

Red, was made-up to appeal to both Natives on the Reservation and to urban Aboriginals where "A Tribe Called..." has been used by different drum groups and Nations on letterman jackets. In addition, the A Tribe Called Quest reference is recognizable to the First Nations living in urban areas.³ Now faithfully recognized as part of the Native urban youth renaissance, A Tribe Called Red champions their heritage through music and video art that is both political and humorous, with clever layering from film and pop culture from their Native people to reclaim the aboriginal image. Their interactive performance marks our continued interest in representing a range of art forms in the Park that create a tangible, real environment that challenges traditional definitions of sculpture cast in bronze or welded in steel.

Sam Durant's Free Hanging Chain, 2014, continues his culture of critique by inverting the shape of the St. Louis Gateway Arch. The arch design uses a catenary curve which is based on the arc made by a free hanging chain when held at both ends by a pair of hands. By deconstructing the three words used to title the work, Durant not only picks apart the definition of a geometric shape but also an entire set of assumptions about manifest destiny and the terrible legacy of slavery often launched from St. Louis westward into the Rocky Mountains. A group of nickel-plated chains hang between tree branches along the trail near the northeast entry into the Whitaker Woods Trail. The work functions in several interconnected ways; it embodies the "official" description of the Arch as a "free hanging chain," and when inverted, develops rich historical associations. The words "free," "hanging" and "chain" might seem to hold meanings that contrast with the message of the Arch itself; indeed they would appear to contradict each other. Each word smashes the meaning of the previous word in the definition. Who or what is "free"? Who or

what things are clasped in "chains"? (Dred Scott's diorama is ironically enough on display under the Arch in the Museum of Westward Expansion.)⁴ The notion of "hanging" introduces a sense of physical attachment a tethering, but it also has the association with capital punishment and lynching. The sound of rattling "chains" reinforces an idea of unbreakable links accumulated either through love or via cruel bondage. Like Jacob Marley in Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol* or the slave gangs in Quentin Tarantino's 2013 film *Django Unchained*, the "chain" itself becomes a return of something repressed or hidden and accumulation of shame and sin, surely a close antonym of the word "free."

It may be that the Arch holds these contradictory meanings in a latent form and Durant brings them forward in a reading that borrows from Euclid and Saarinen as much as Marx and Garvey. Since it is fairly well understood that the Arch and Museum of Westward Expansion celebrate the United States of America's hegemony in North America, the edifice itself functions implicitly as a triumphal arch, similar to Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe in Paris (which lists the military victories of the French Revolutionary and Imperial Army), or the Arch of Constantine in Rome (which depicts Roman troops sacking Jerusalem carrying off the Menorah). The Arch is an architectural expression for the winners of history, but what of the losers or the bit part players or those obliterated by history? A local statue that recognized the victims of westward expansion, Protest of the Sioux, 1904, by Cyrus Dallin, made for the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis as part of an exhibit for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, is an equine statue of a Native on horseback raising his hand as if to say "enough!" The statue, made from Plaster of Paris, crumbled into dust within a year, proving as fragile as Durant's chain is unbreakable.

St. Louis is a city that is defined by tumbledown and broken housing stock. Geoffrey Krawzyck's site-specific installation Recess, 2014, is an interactive space that refers to the decline of the Cahokian culture and the contemporary decay of urban areas of St. Louis. Recess is nestled into a natural dirt dropoff that supports a room-sized chamber made from a mixture of new and donated reclaimed red brick from architectural ruins in St. Louis' North Side and built with donated labor from the St. Louis Bricklayers Union. The "new ruin", sited in the woods adjacent to the Children's Sculpture Garden, suggests neglect, economic collapse, soil erosion, ghettoization and gentrification. In the year leading up to Mound *City*, solicitations were made to organizations and individuals in the community about their idea of the challenges facing St. Louis via a web interface designed by Krawzyck. These reflections have been engraved into a number of the bricks holding up Recess.

The remnants of modern economic and social policy echo the decay of Cahokia 750 years ago.⁵ Cahokia was abandoned and the best guesses as to why echo contemporary ecological catastrophe theories such as depletion of resources and climate change. (Perhaps it was just a failure to progress to a literate stage, as Cahokia has no comparable Glyph language to that of the Aztecs who then had the misfortune to encounter the Conquistadors).⁶ These parallels are drawn through the construction of a deteriorated building and its presence is meant to foster a discussion about adaptation, governance and progress. By combining symbols of the two historical situations with the voice of the contemporary community, Krawzyck hopes to create a "meta-site" that encompasses not only the physical but also the psychological marks left behind by societal change. Krawzyck explores the limits of written language and how the lack of

written artifacts has led to the mystery surrounding Cahokia. In *Recess*, language at least provides a continuous conversation about ways to revitalize areas wounded and bloodied by decline.

The aches and pains of construction site labor are highlighted by Marie Watt's contribution to the exhibition. It is believed that the Cahokians hauled a backbreaking 50-60 pounds of earth at a time from borrow pits and carried them to mound sites. The sculpture *Earthmover*, 2014, commemorates the tools they used to create the great mounds at Cahokia. A partially buried, recycled 12-foot megamining vehicle tire weighing 5,000 pounds creates a monumental rubber archway which contrasts with a stool, an inverted bronze cast of a burden basket, used by the laborers at Cahokia, designed as a resting spot. Historically, burden baskets were made of split oak or cane and were shaped to conform to the back of the bearer and a strap was attached that looped from the bottom of the basket around the person's forehead to help support the heavy load. The two sculptural elements that make up *Earthmover*, do double duty as commentary on the stark contrast between ancient building techniques and the modern convenience of our technologically advanced earthmovers. Each object is inspired by the human agency for displacement of earth as ritual. One used to move earth on the backs of the mound builders the other designed to move the builder and the mound. Contemplating the sheer physical force harnessed, multiplied by the hard work that was obviously poured into the mounds creates a profound sense of empathy for the burden carrier as no horsepower was available to the laborer.

Another sort of work, this time from multiple academic sources. In Residence exposes Laumeier's audience to a variety of specialists found outside a narrowly defined 'artworld' and will form an organic extension of our future curatorial programming. Our 2014 In Residence artists are archaeologists Joe Harl and Robin Machiran of the Archaeological Research Center of St. Louis, who add a cross discipline expertise to Laumeier's sculptural specialization. In addition to their research of the numerous theories regarding the origin of the Mississippian peoples, Harl and Machiran will explore the Park through their professional practice by way of a community artwork based on historical research of the domestic spaces of the Native tribes in our area. Harl's research centers on the developments of Late Woodland (1000 BCE to 1000 CE) and Mississippian (A.D. 800 to 1600) lifestyles and cultural practices in present-day Missouri, Illinois, Kansas and Tennessee. Machiran's research focuses on Mississippian cultures and indigenous artifacts of the American Bottom region of North America (the flood plain of the Mississippi River, which stretches into the Metro East region of Southern Illinois, a mostly industrial area protected from flooding by a levee and drainage canal with the southern portion of the bottom being primarily agricultural land).⁷ Harl and Machiran worked with South Tech High School students and sculpture students from St. Louis Community College-Meramec to build an authentic structure titled Wattle and Daub. Wattle and daub is an important construction method in which a woven lattice of wooden strips called "wattle" is "daubed" with a tacky material made of wet soil, clay, sand, animal dung and straw. Placed near Laumeier's 1917 Estate House, Wattle and Daub has become a hub of information related to the exhibition and will host educational programs, such as a lecture and an artifact identification day, presented by Harl and

Machiran, to introduce visitors to their practice and to increase awareness of our history.

This year we have planted beds of herbs and vegetables based on research of what the Cahokians would have cultivated to be shared with neighbors during the growing season.⁸ Previously, Kim Yasuda's Hunt + Gather, installed as part of our 2012 exhibition *Camp Out: Finding Home in an* Unstable World, was designed to make visible the ways in which Laumeier provides a green heart at the center of our community and to use the cultivation of a garden to modify and amplify a new set of relationships that creates a new sense of "home." Neighbors, staff and volunteers maintain this living work and share the bounty of this native garden planted with flowering tobacco, sunflower, Wild Dagga, amaranth, wild trailing bean & Lambs Quarter. Many of these plants are common to us creating a bridge from our past that may have been lost over time or through conventional modern industrial farming.

In the second iteration of our Loans That Don't Move program is a group of "borrowed" artworks, objects and sites chosen to build on the narrative for Mound City. These cultural documents supplement the theme of the exhibition and endeavor to move the topics beyond Laumeier's 105 acres. Our partner institutions house special collections and each is a rich resource for a more thorough look at our local history using objects along with anecdotal reference to the historical site at Cahokia and the Mississippian people who settled in this area. Sited with didactic object labels, the Loans that Don't Move program encourages further discovery and education through public art, earthen mounds, bronze plaques, photographs and other artifacts to present a taste of the cultural and social resources on both sides of the Mississippi River.

Public art and artifacts found around St. Louis stretch back much further than Cahokia. For the Loans That Don't Move however we focus on the geographic distribution of important sites and personalities. A figurine of a chunkey player on view at the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center and a Chunkey stone in the collection of the St. Louis Art Museum points to the importance of games in Cahokian culture, both as a competitive sport and as a diplomatic ritual to smooth things over with hostile communities. To deepen the narrative of prehistoric settlement, a stone projectile point in the museum at Mastodon State Historic Site pulls the timeline of habitation in this area back to the Paleo-Indian culture of the Clovis people which existed around Kimmswick, Missouri, just south of St. Louis, between 10,000 and 14,000 years ago. In addition, a bronze plaque serves as a tombstone, mounted onto the side of a parking garage in downtown St. Louis, created by artist Charles Brennan, to mark Pontiac's burial site. Chief of the Ottowa Nation, Pontiac organized tribes from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico in a resistance against the Anglo-American colonists that ended in a peace treaty and a resentment with local tribes. Other public works include a cliff painting of the legendary Piasa Bird located along the river in Alton, Illinois and a suspected mound at Bellefontaine Cemetery. These works provide geographical and historical context, to help grow our appreciation and relationship to the Native people who lived here by tying it back into a previous identity for St. Louis, nicknamed "Mound City" by early explorers.

An additional element to the Loans that Don't Move is The Mounds - America's First Cities, a project organized by the Heartlands Conservancy. The project is both an effort to elevate the national status of Cahokia Mounds as well as connect other mound sites remaining in the Southwestern Illinois and St. Louis region through thematic interpretation and The Mounds Heritage Trail tour. Suzanne Kutterer, a research consultant working on the project explains: "The project is working to identify and develop an appropriate national designation and process by which to protect, connect, interpret, promote, and preserve the prehistoric Mississippian Mounds civilization that once thrived in the region. This is the first time in over 100 years that an effort has taken place to try to document the locations of the all the mounds and to amass the information about Cahokia Mounds and all the surrounding Mounds Complexes for interpretation and touring."9 To be experienced as an additional tour, The Mounds Heritage Trail tour is mapped along a 15 mile route and combines the opportunity to walk, bike or drive while visiting historical and cultural sites along the way.

Another collaboration established specially for *Mound City* is a series of films curated with Webster University Film Series' director James Harrison. Jimmy P: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian is a 2013 Franco-American drama directed by French film director Arnaud Desplechin starring Benicio Del Toro as a Blackfoot Native called Jimmy P. and Mathieu Amalric as Georges Devereau, who plays a local anthropologist and psychoanalyst asked to assess Jimmy's condition. Having lived among the Mohave Indians and learned their language and history, Georges Devereau helps Jimmy P. to heal by digging into past psychic traumas. Winter in the Blood, 2012, is based on the novel by James Welch.¹⁰ Directed by Alex and Andrew Smith, the film begins with Virgil First Raise waking up in a ditch on the

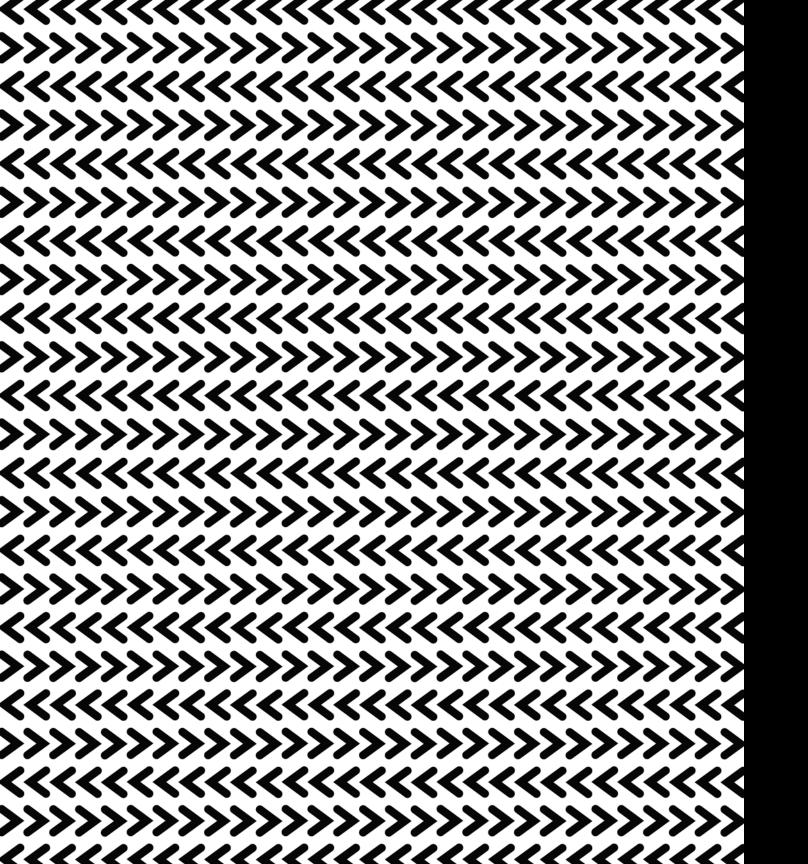
plains of Montana with his father, ten years dead, lying frozen beside him. Traumatized, Virgil returns home to his Reservation to find that his wife has left him. Virgil's quest to find her brings him face-to-face with childhood memories and visions. He seeks out Yellow Calf, who helps him understand the truth of his origins. *Winter in the Blood* was the first of five novels written by James Welch, a Native American poet, documentary scriptwriter and historical essayist and a founding author of the Native American Renaissance. My Louisiana Love, 2012, directed by Sharon Linezo Hong and produced by Monique Verdin (Houma tribe), is a profound story of love, loss and life in the Louisiana wetlands. It begins with a Houma woman's journey to her family's ancestral home but becomes much more when she discovers her beloved state is being destroyed and altered by the oil and gas industry. Film as a medium is an important platform to demonstrate the creative energy of Native filmmakers that engage their cultural traditions and explores indigenous contemporary issues from within.

The act of curating an exhibition based on the Native American mounds found around St. Louis is akin to voluntarily picking up and lugging hundreds of tons of cultural baggage. These landscapes, loaded with sacred meaning and historical import engender multiple interpretations about land use and history. Sugar Loaf Mound, for example, found on the St. Louis side of the river was the focus of recent disputes between private property owners, academics and tribes that spilled out into the courts. Across the river in Cahokia the mounds have become a UNESCO site with a growing international profile. Thomas Easterly's ghostly daguerreotype Big Mound During Destruction, 1869, documents the mounds removed and carted away for railway ballast by city developers in the 1850s. reveals an ugly streak of vandalism and brutal

arrogance by our not so distant ancestors. It is hard to look at these images of half-removed mounds, a torn up pyramid, deeply scarred, abject and conquered without contemplating the thoughtlessness of demolishing what could have been a remarkable source of pride for the city. Hopefully, *Mound City* launches a conversation focused on cultural objects both large and small, and starts to atone for past mistakes and sins.

DANA TURKOVIC Curator of Exhibitions

- Louis IV was King of France from 1226 until his death in 1270. Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the canonization of Louis in 1297; he is the only canonized king of France.
- Timothy Pauketat, "America's First Pastime", <u>Archaeology</u> <u>Magazine</u>, Volume 62 Number 5, September/October 2009, http://archive.archaeology.org/0909/abstracts/pastime.html, accessed 12/2/2013.
- 3. A Tribe Called Quest was an American hip hop group that was formed in 1985. Along with De La Soul and The Jungle Brothers, the group was a central part of the Native Tongues Posse, a collective of late 1980s and early 1990s hip-hop artists known for their positive Afrocentric lyrics and for pioneering the use of eclectic jazz sampling.
- 4. Dred Scott was a man of color living in St. Louis (as defined then) who challenged laws allowing slavery—both before and after the Civil War which gives him an important place in the annals of American history.
- Bill Iseminger, <u>Cahokia Mounds: America's First City</u> (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010) pp 156.
- 6. In an email conversation with archaeologist Joe Harl he notes: "no written language has been identified as yet. It's a real mystery because most societies of this type did have some sort of written language. It's possible that writing was placed on wood or hides, which just has not survived over the years."
- Like the Mississippians, Americans made massive changes in the floodplain; the destruction of wetlands along the major rivers has increased the severity of flooding over the decades.
- Bill Iseminger, <u>Cahokia Mounds: America's First City</u> (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010) p. 23.
- Join the Mounds Project Team through facebook at The Mounds America's First Cities to follow and support the project and for more information.
- 10. The Native American Renaissance is a group of writers focused on the reclamation of heritage through literary expression; the discovery and reevaluation of early texts by Native American authors; and a renewed interest in mythology, ceremonialism, ritual, and the oral tradition.



| ESSAY FOUR |

AN EXHIBITION HISTORY OF NATIVE IMAGININGS

FROM INDIGENA TO MOUND CITY

MOUND CITY ADDRESSES HOW POLITICS OF IDENTITY IMPACTS EXHIBITION-MAKING, HOW CULTURAL IDENTITY CIRCULATES AS A COMMODITY IN BOTH POPULAR CULTURE AND THE ART WORLD AND HOW WE UNDERSTAND PLACE AND BELONGING IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD, A WORLD WROUGHT WITH THE EFFECTS OF COLONIAL CONQUEST.

With its focus on indigenous art practice and St. Louis' Native past, *Mound City* participates in an exhibition history that is national and international in scope. This exhibition history, a portion of which is included in the second half of this essay, originates in the early 1990s concurrent with a simultaneous turn toward a troubling of identity as a political, aesthetic and institutional exhibition framework.

Several sociopolitical events coincide with this shift in identity discourse in the art world. In 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison and laws promoting racial desegregation in South Africa were instituted along with other decolonial efforts across the continent. Australia experienced historic steps forward in Aboriginal land rights, while the Oka Crisis, an indigenous land dispute that included a 78-day standoff between Mohawk protesters, Canadian police and armed forces, erupted. At the heart of the crisis, which developed into the first well-publicized violent conflict between First Nations and the Canadian government in the late 20th century, was the proposed expansion of a golf course and development of condominiums on disputed land that included a Mohawk burial ground. Later that year, the U.S. passed the Indian Arts and Crafts Act. The Act simultaneously prohibits the display and sale of goods falsely marketed as "Indian produced" and problematically excludes those who may be of Indian heritage but are not members of a federally recognized tribe. All of these political struggles were further punctuated by the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' infamous arrival in North America that occurred in 1992, sparking both celebratory and critical responses.

Decolonizing efforts of the time spurred by the political events detailed above came to bear in museum spaces, most notably in presentations such as *The Decades Show* (1990) and the Whitney Museum of Art's 1993 Biennial Exhibition. These and other landmark exhibitions of the past two decades generated new interest in an age-old relation between art and politics. As a result, the last twenty years has seen a number of largescale group exhibitions focused on first nationsettler histories, meanings of identity for Native, indigenous and aboriginal peoples and the stakes of memory and memorialization within this terrain. These exhibitions, most of which were organized by indigenous curators and featured emerging and established indigenous artists, tackled a number of issues—colonization, landscape and land rights; humor and the politics of "playing Indian;" connection and detachment; cultural memory, tradition and contemporary indigenous experience. The shows listed below are a sampling of the curatorial and exhibition strategies that emerged out of this fraught sociopolitical climate, and they exemplify the artistic responses and interventions at the center of *Mound City*.

Each of the following exhibitions proffers a range of conceptual concerns from dismantling stereotypes to recognizing the past in the present and from decentralizing identity to celebrating contemporary indigenous culture. Some of the exhibitions respond directly to each other while others offer new, expansive ways for seeing and understanding work made by Native and non-Native artists. Though this list includes a number of exhibitions first organized in the U.S., many of the shows traveled to multiple venues, are international in scope and reflect the varied conversations from which Mound City emerges. Mound City extends the history of exhibitionmaking represented above and provokes new considerations of indigenous art and politics by challenging conventions of contemporary sculpture, identity, place, landscape as well as curatorial and exhibition models.

TIFFANY BARBER

Curatorial Assistant and 2013 ArtTable Intern, Laumeier Sculpture Park

1992

INDIGENA: CONTEMPORARY NATIVE PERSPECTIVES IN CANADIAN ART

Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Canada

19 artists address 500-year history of settler colonialism from indigenous perspective

LAND, SPIRIT, POWER: FIRST NATIONS AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Response to sustained lobbying of Aboriginal artists for inclusion in the Gallery's permanent collection and exhibition spaces

1995

INDIAN HUMOR

American Indian Contemporary Arts, San Francisco

87 works by 38 Native American artists that explore irony and the trickster figure to counter institutionalized historical and cultural misrepresentations of Indian life

1999

RESERVATION X: THE POWER OF PLACE IN ABORIGINAL CONTEMPORARY ART

Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Ontario

Seven Native artists working in Canada and the U.S. negotiate notions of home, place, land, dwelling and identity

| MOUND CITY |

2002

CHANGING HANDS: ART WITHOUT RESERVATION, 1

American Craft Museum (now Museum of Arts and Design), New York

First in landmark series of three exhibitions that advocates for a radical repositioning of Native art within mainstream global contemporary arts; features 150 emerging and established contemporary Native American, First Nations, Métís and Inuit artists working in craft, art and design from the western prairie, plains, plateau and pacific regions of the U.S. including Hawaii, the Pacific Northwest and Alaska

2005

CHANGING HANDS, 2

Museum of Arts and Design, New York

The second in a landmark series of three exhibitions that highlights an array of contemporary craft, art and design works produced by Native artists of the United States and Canada

2006

MIGRATIONS: NEW DIRECTIONS IN NATIVE AMERICAN ART

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

Traveling survey show of graphic work by six emerging contemporary Native American artists

2007

NO RESERVATIONS: NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE IN CONTEMPORARY ART

Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut

Features 10 Native artists of a generation born during the initial Native Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s whose works and practices acknowledge the past and integrate contemporary global culture

REMIX: NEW MODERNITIES IN A POST-INDIAN WORLD

National Museum of the American Indian, Washington and The Heard Museum of Native Cultures and Art, Phoenix

15 artists of mixed Native/non-Native backgrounds from the U.S., Canada and Mexico explore new cultural politics of identity and belonging

OFF THE MAP: LANDSCAPE IN THE NATIVE IMAGINATION

National Museum of the American Indian, Washington

Five artists explore how landscape acts as an imaginary construct, as both muse and subject, as anti-colonial sentiment and as abstraction

UNLIMITED BOUNDARIES: DICHOTOMY OF PLACE IN CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN ART

The Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, New Mexico

Features work by Native American artists that challenge prescribed notions of indigenous art, address questions of identity and examine the displacement, survival and coexistence of values for contemporary Native peoples

2009

CURRENTS: NATIVE AMERICAN FORCES IN CONTEMPORARY ART

Center for Visual Art, Metropolitan State College, Denver

Six contemporary artists engage in cross-cultural, cross-generational dialogue between Native American legacies and contemporary art

2010

VANTAGE POINT: WORKS FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

National Museum of the American Indian, Washington

25 established and emerging indigenous multi-media artists from across the U.S., Canada and Colombia address identity, history, culture and landscape

HIDE: SKIN AS MATERIAL AND METAPHOR

National Museum of the American Indian, Washington

Eight artists explore layered meanings of skin and how its symbolism emerges in contemporary Native art

THE BEAUTY OF DISTANCE: SONGS OF SURVIVAL IN A PRECARIOUS AGE

17th Biennale of Sydney, Australia

Unprecedented inclusion of Native artists in international biennale system without explicit identity framework, though one organizing thematic of the Biennale was First Peoples and Fourth Worlds. This concept references traditional frameworks, new aesthetic languages and work made by both first and diasporic peoples who have survived suppression and marginalization

2011

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: THE NEXT 500 YEARS

Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, Winnipeg, Canada

Multi-sited exhibition with over 30 Indigenous artists from across Canada, the U.S., South America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand that collectively invent provocative futures in light of indigenous struggles for sovereignty and self-determination

2012

SHAPESHIFTING: TRANSFORMATIONS IN NATIVE AMERICAN ART

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts

More than 75 historic and contemporary Native works that destabilize misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Native American art and culture; special focus on objects as art rather than as cultural or anthropological artifacts

CHANGING HANDS, 3: CONTEMPORARY NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN ART FROM THE NORTHEAST AND SOUTHEAST

Museum of Arts and Design, New York

Traveling group exhibition of contemporary Native art from the Northeast and Southeast; concludes a cycle of exhibitions organized over the past decade by the Museum of Arts and Design that has sought to affect a re-evaluation of present-day Native art in an international arena

NATIVE AMERICAN MODERNISM

Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin

Eight years after the National Museum of the American Indian's inaugural exhibition Native Modernism in 2004, this exhibition represents a framing of Native modern art from an international perspective and the largest collection of modern Native American Art in Europe

BEAT NATION: ART, HIP HOP AND ABORIGINAL CULTURE

Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada

The 2012 iteration of this traveling exhibition coincides with the growth of Idle No More, an indigenous political movement in Canada; features paintings, sculptures, installation, performance and video works by more than 25 Native artists who incorporate elements of hip hop-mixing, sampling, and beat-making for instance-to address indigenous presence in the contemporary moment

2013

ALL OUR RELATIONS

18th Biennale of Sydney, Australia

This exhibition moved farther away from explicit identity frameworks as modes of exhibition making and focused on collaboration; organized by a curatorial duo rather than a single director for the first time in the Biennale's 39year history; showcased more than 220 works by over 100 artists from Australia, the Americas, the Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, New Zealand and South Africa

SAKAHÀN: INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS ART

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

First in series of quinquennial survey exhibitions focused on new trends in indigenous art production; features over 150 works by more than 80 artists from 16 countries

DECOLONIZE ME

The Ottawa Art Gallery, Canada

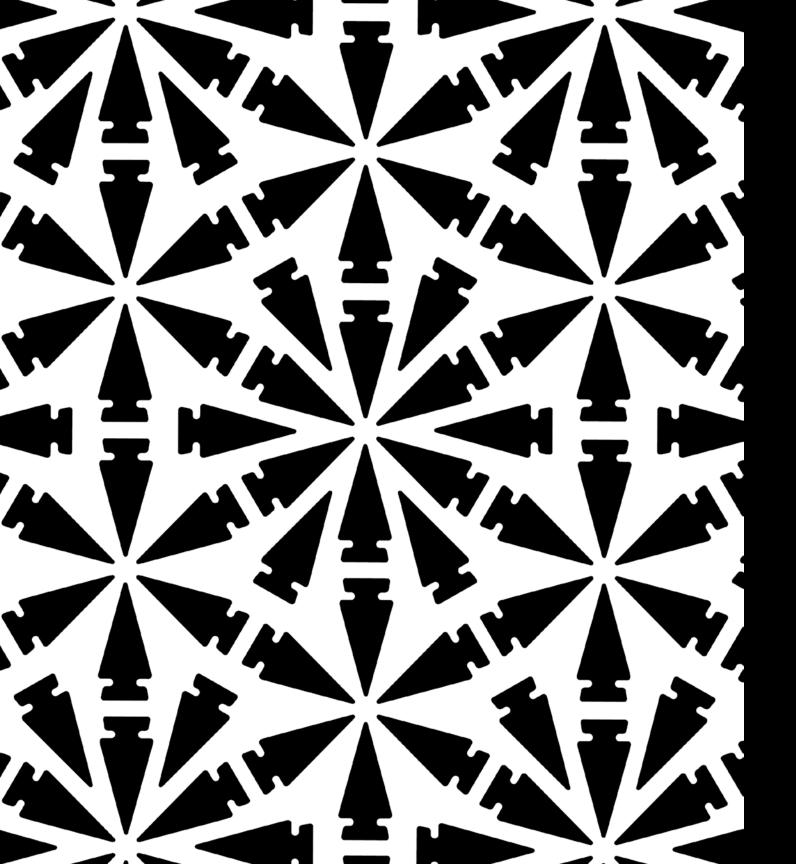
Six contemporary Aboriginal artists explore issues and outcomes of colonization and decolonization related to individual and collective Aboriginal and settler Canadian identities

CROSSING CULTURES: THE OWEN AND WAGNER COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN ART

The Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, New Hampshire

Showcases the Museum's more than 100 works of contemporary Indigenous art from Australia across five decades; focuses on generations of artists since 1970 who are breathing new life into Aboriginal traditions and stories and broadening the possibilities of Indigenous art Just across Interstate 270 from the Laumeier site, there are also extensive traces of Native-American settlements. Everytime a box store is built in Sunset Hills, Fenton and Gravois Bluffs, Home Depot, Wal-mart or Lowe's, archaeologists are often called in to catalog archaeological deposits from tribes that occupied the area as recently as 150 years ago.

So, as you walk around the park or fill up your gas tank and shop for the latest bargain remember that the past isn't history, it isn't even over. Because this story hits close to home we wanted to share an essay by Sue Sturgis that addresses this very issue...



| ESSAY FIVE |

WAL-MART'S HISTORY OF DESTROYING SACRED SITES

UNFORTUNATELY, UNTIL PROTECTIONS ARE STRENGTHENED, AMERICA'S ANCIENT SACRED PLACES WILL CONTINUE TO FALL TO THE BULLDOZER.

A re-consecration ceremony was held this past weekend at a damaged Indian mound in Oxford, AL.¹ As we reported last month, the 1,500-year-old sacred and archaeologically significant site was partially demolished during a taxpayer-funded economic development project, with the excavated dirt to be used as fill for construction of a Sam's Club, a retail warehouse store owned by Wal-Mart.

Following protests, the city appears to be backing away from the destruction, with a local landowner reporting that his property would be the source for the fill instead.

But it turns out the incident in Oxford is not the first time Arkansas-based Wal-Mart has been involved in the controversial destruction of sacred and/or archaeologically significant Native American sites.

Reader Marlin Mackley brought to our attention a similar incident in Fenton, MO, a picturesque historic town along the Meramec River in the eastern part of the state. Inhabited for over 1,000 years, the area was home to the Fenton Mounds, two earthen burial structures dated between 600 and 1400 A.D. But in 2001, the Fenton Mounds were leveled for a Wal-Mart Supercenter.

Mackley wrote on the website he created to document what happened:

As a 15-year resident of Old Town Fenton I watched in tears as the Former Fenton Indian Burial Mounds Mesa as I call it was excavated. Over and above the crimes against human history perpetrated by these predatory developers we in my city have to look at the back of a plain block building set on top of a pile of rocks.

The St. Louis <u>Riverfront Times</u> newspaper reported how workers with SCI, the engineering firm hired to determine whether there were remains at the site, grew short on time so began digging less carefully—and soon struck human bone. Recalled Debra Magruder, a member of the crew who later filed a complaint with the state:

• The story I heard was that the guy working in that area thought it was a tree root and used some root clippers and snapped it in half. Then, when they figured out it was a femur, they just covered it and left it, half sticking out, and a looter came and ripped it out of the mound. The femur was indeed protruding from within a stone box chamber. On Feb. 17, a survey crew lifted the tarp and found that someone had dug horizontally into the vault and stolen the bone. Doing a little digging of our own, <u>Facing South</u> discovered that what happened in Oxford and Fenton were not isolated instances. There have been numerous cases involving destruction of Native American burial grounds and other culturally significant sites by Wal-Mart:

- An Indian burial site in Nashville, Tenn., was demolished to build a Wal-Mart Supercenter on Charlotte Pike in the late 1990s. The company behind the project was JDN Realty of Atlanta, a developer for Wal-Mart stores since purchased by Developers Diversified Realty Corp. of Ohio. By the time excavations were completed in August 1998, the remains of 154 people including children had been taken from their graves, according to the Alliance for Native American Rights.
- In the mid-'90s, Wal-Mart developer JDN was involved in the relocation of numerous native graves while building a store in Canton, GA, Wal-Mart Watch reports. The store set up a permanent display of unearthed Indian artifacts next to its layaway counter.

• When an Indian burial ground was discovered during construction of a Wal-Mart Supercenter in the northern California community of Anderson, the company proceeded with the project anyway, opening the store in 2007. In June of this year, to make up for the site's desecration, the store erected a bronze statue of a Native Wintu feather dancer that was vandalized before the dedication ceremony.

- In 2004, Wal-Mart opened a store in Mexico within view of the 2,000-year-old pyramids of Teotihuacan despite months of protests by local residents as well as prominent Mexican artists and intellectuals. In an interview with the Associated Press, novelist and poet Homero Aridjis compared the store's opening to "nailing globalization's stake in the heart of old Mexico."
- About five years ago, while building a Sam's Club and Wal-Mart Supercenter in Hawaii, workers unearthed 64 Native Hawaiian graves, reports Wal-Mart Watch. For at least three years afterward, the bones remained locked in a trailer, awaiting reburial.
- What if they built a Wal-Mart at Arlington? How would people feel?" Hawaiian activist William Aila told the AP at the time. "Those individuals were buried there with the thought that they would be undisturbed for the rest of the eternity."

There were other cases where Wal-Mart would have disturbed sacred sites but was dissuaded by protest:

• In 2001, Wal-Mart relocated a planned store in Morgantown, WV, because it would have destroyed a Native American burial site, according to the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. The decision came after company shareholders and indigenous leaders wrote letters to Wal-Mart and West Virginia state leaders protesting the chosen location.

• Five years before that, Wal-Mart scrapped a plan to build a store in the Hudson Valley community of Leeds Flat, NY, after Mohican remains were found, according to a website about the Stockbridge Munsee Tribe of Mohican Indians. For more on the case, read the account by Mohican historian and educator Debra Winchell.

• In the early 1990s, Wal-Mart canceled plans to bulldoze a large Indian mound in Paso Robles, California after leaders of the Chumash and Salinan Indian Nations protested, Wal-Mart Watch reports [pdf]. The company complained the mound was blocking motorists' view of the store.

And it's not only Wal-Mart who's destroying Native cultural sites. Others who've been involved in damaging or threatening sacred lands:

• An Indian burial site along the Cumberland River in Nashville, TN, was disturbed in the late 1990s by construction of a stadium for the Tennessee Titans, the National Football League team that was formerly the Houston Oilers. Though the project drew protests from local Indian rights advocates, then-Mayor, now Gov. Phil Bredesen defended it on the grounds that part of the site had already been disturbed by previous construction.

• When Whole Foods broke ground for its first store in the state of Hawaii, it discovered the remains of more than 20 indigenous people, according to the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. But the Texas-based company continued with the construction anyway, storing the bones in a trailer to rebury at the site later.

• WMAC radio reports that Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue is using federal economic stimulus funds to build a four-lane highway near the Ocmulgee National Monument, a site of great significance to the Muscogee (Creek) people where human occupation has been recorded for 12,000 years. The road would divide the monument from surrounding traditional cultural property, leading the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association to place the monument among America's most endangered national parks. Why would the U.S. allow so much of its cultural heritage to be destroyed by development? After all, there's no shortage of federal laws designed to protect sacred and archaeologically significant sites. They include the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, President Clinton's Executive Order on Indian Sacred Sites, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

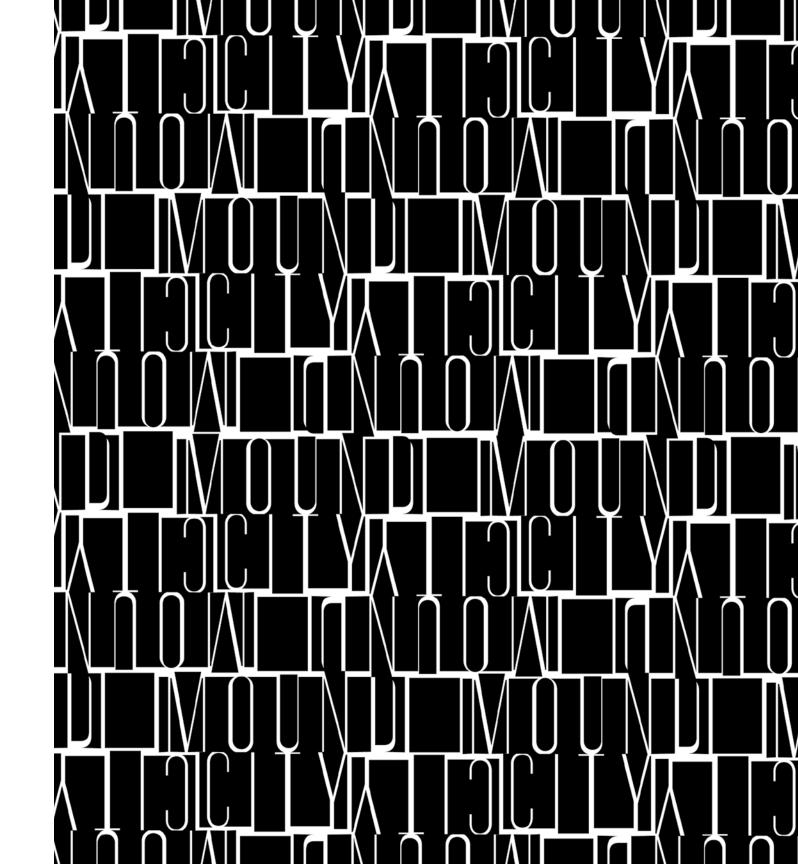
But a fact sheet on sacred sites prepared by the Morning Star Institute for the Coalition to Protect Native American Sacred Places during 2002 hearings by the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs points out there are no existing legal protections for certain sacred places—and "none that provide a specific cause of action to defend sacred places against desecration or destruction."

Unfortunately, until those protections are strengthened, America's ancient sacred places will continue to fall to the bulldozer.

SUE STURGIS

Editorial director of <u>Facing South</u>, the online magazine of the nonprofit Institute for Southern Studies in Durham, NC

 Sue Sturgis, "Wal-Mart's History of Destroying Sacred Sites", http://grist.org/article/2009-09-03-wal-marts-history-ofdestroying-sacred-sites/, accessed 4/22/2013.



SCULPTURE CITY SAINT LOUIS 2014