

Moving Fragmentation

a landscape study

An investigation of the Arroyo Seco's landscape led the Artist, Benjamin Page, to the transformation of its shape from organic (rolling hills, deeply carved river valleys) to geometrical forms, representing the landscape with sculptural qualities. The reduction of organic form and simplifying process allows viewers to see the totality of the landscape and leaves the major elements exposed (the relationship between hills and the river).

The artist's intention is not to make a scale model of the existing conditions of any particular section of the Arroyo Seco, but to represent the general characteristic of the entire Arroyo's ecological environment. The final result is to allow the art itself to be part of the puzzle of the natural landscape.

Each box (2'-3" by 3'-0" with various heights between 6 to 12 inches) contains a light layer of dirt, planted with live grass. It also contains some on-site elements such as fallen leaves. A different path is designed for each box and paved with small river pebbles. There are 12 boxes, bringing the total combined dimensions to 9 feet by 9 feet of display space, additionally requiring 4 feet of clearance around all edges for movement of the pieces.

The pieces may be viewed individually or as a whole, but either way, are just fragments of the landscape. The perspective differs according to the viewer's elevation, just as the natural topography would. The grass symbolizes the vegetation on the rolling terrain, and the river pebbles, which are borrowed from the Arroyo, depict the river itself. Edges where an elevated box suddenly drops down to a neighboring lower unit represent the deeply cut valley.

This undulating surface is also a mobile landscape, which not only depicts the current conditions, but also possibilities of how the landscape might change over time. The art itself provides opportunity for participants to interact with the landscape and use the element of puzzle pieces in the art to create their own perfect environments from what they see, or what they want to see.

The purpose and goal of this art is to intrigue participants' imagination and understand the balance, versatility and beauty of our Arroyo Seco environment. Through the representation of nature and its relationship with geometry and architecture, the idea of material reality and immaterial experience is strong and evident in this sculpture installation.