

Letter of Interest

Dear Selection Committee:

It is an honor to submit my qualifications and proposal for the Bruce's Beach tribute artwork project. I am interested in this project because of my passion for designing commemorative spaces. I believe that honoring the past is crucial to understanding our society, to moving forward, and in some instances, aids in the healing process.

Based in the Los Angeles area, I founded the design practice Studiofolia in 2010 with the simple mission of using public art to connect people to place and memory. Because the context and requirements of each project are different, Studiofolia's design emphasis is on an approach rather than a "signature" style. I believe that every project, big or small, is a special opportunity to create a meaningful and memorable space that fosters community and engagement. Artworks which tell stories help to form connections between people to people and people to place.

I have worked on several commemorative and memorial projects, and the experience I have acquired will be applicable to the Bruce's Beach project. In 2017, I completed a public art project in Little Saigon, Orange County, the heart of the largest Vietnamese community in the U.S. As my family had come to this country as refugees in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, this project was close to my heart. The artwork uses a traditional Vietnamese origins legend to tell the story of the building of a new community from the traumas of war. At night the sculpture is illuminated from within like a lantern, symbolizing the hopes of the community. Surrounding the central sculpture are benches that showcase 100 portraits of everyday Vietnamese Americans, a collaborative project with the University of California at Irvine.

In May of 2020, I completed a project in Helena, Montana titled "Equity Fountain". The sculptural fountain replaced a Confederate monument that was taken down by the city at the request of citizens. Sitting atop a large granite millstone, a stainless steel sculpture has words in English and a Native American language "woven" into a sphere. The words are intended to remind people that they must be steadfast in ensuring that society is guided by the ideals of equality, diversity, tolerance, etc.

In 2018, I was one of five finalists for the National Native American Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. The design envisioned a sacred space where Americans can honor and reflect on the great sacrifices of all Native veterans. Currently, I am working on a COVID-19 memorial in Baltimore, Maryland, which will be dedicated this summer.

Every project that I've worked on has involved collaborating with stakeholders in the design process. For the Bruce's Beach project, I would look forward to working with the City and the community to evolve and refine the design.

From what I've gathered from research, a recurring theme is that Bruce's Beach was a vibrant community created by and for the Black community during the Jim Crow era of racial segregation, when there were few public leisure opportunities for African Americans. The proposed design aims to honor the history of Bruce's Beach by conveying the dynamic life of the community through images and texts. The design will create an inclusive public space where people will feel comfortable and welcomed to be alone or gather in small groups to learn about this important story.

Résumé

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EDUCATION

- 2002 Master of Landscape Architecture
University of California, Berkeley
- 1997 Master of Public Health, with a concentration in epidemiology
University of California, Los Angeles
- 1991 Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences
University of California, Irvine

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2010 – Principal
current Studiofolia, Cerritos, CA
- 2019 – Design Consultant
current SALT Landscape Architecture, Los Angeles, CA
- 2006 – Design Consultant
current Orange Street Studio, Landscape Architecture, Los Angeles, CA
- 2002 – Designer
2005 R|H|A|A, Landscape Architecture, Mill Valley & San Francisco, CA

AWARDS

- 2019 Orange County Arts Awards Honoree: Achievement Award for Arts Leader
- 2017 American for the Arts Convention Scholarship
- 2006 Post-Katrina New Orleans East Design Residency, New Orleans, LA

PUBLIC ART COMMISSIONS

- 2022 St. Thomas University student memorial, St. Paul, MN – completed
University of Nebraska public art, Lincoln, NE – completed
Westminster Crossing affordable housing art, Westminster, CA – completed
Baltimore County COVID-19 Memorial, Baltimore, MD – currently in fabrication
Vista Canyon Multi-Modal Center public art, Santa Clarita, CA – in fabrication
Woman’s College tribute, Uni. of N. Carolina, Greensboro – in fabrication
- 2021 Evergreen Cemetery Veterans Memorial, Gainesville, FL – completed
Law Enforcement Memorial, Dayton, OH – in design development
- 2020 Equity Fountain public art, Helena, MT – completed with Michael Stutz
P. K. Yonge Developmental Research School public art, Gainesville, FL – finalist
Veterans Memorial Park, Pendleton, OR – finalist
Inspiration Plaza public art, Fremont, CA – finalist
- 2019 Higuera Adobe public art, Milpitas, CA – currently in fabrication
Veterans Village Supportive Housing public art, Santa Ana, CA – finalist
- 2018 Art in Transit Program, bus shelter public art, San Antonio, TX – completed
Depot Park public art, Santa Rosa, CA – currently in design development
Native American Veterans Memorial, Smithsonian, Washington D.C. – finalist
- 2017 Of Two Lineages public art, Westminster, CA – completed
Monument to the Braceros, Los Angeles, CA – finalist
- 2016 David & Margaret Youth and Family Services Public Art, La Verne, CA
- 2015 LA County Sheriff’s Memorial, LA County Arts Commission – commissioned
- 2014 Circles of a Ripple public art, Hacienda Heights Community Center – completed

Proposal Narrative

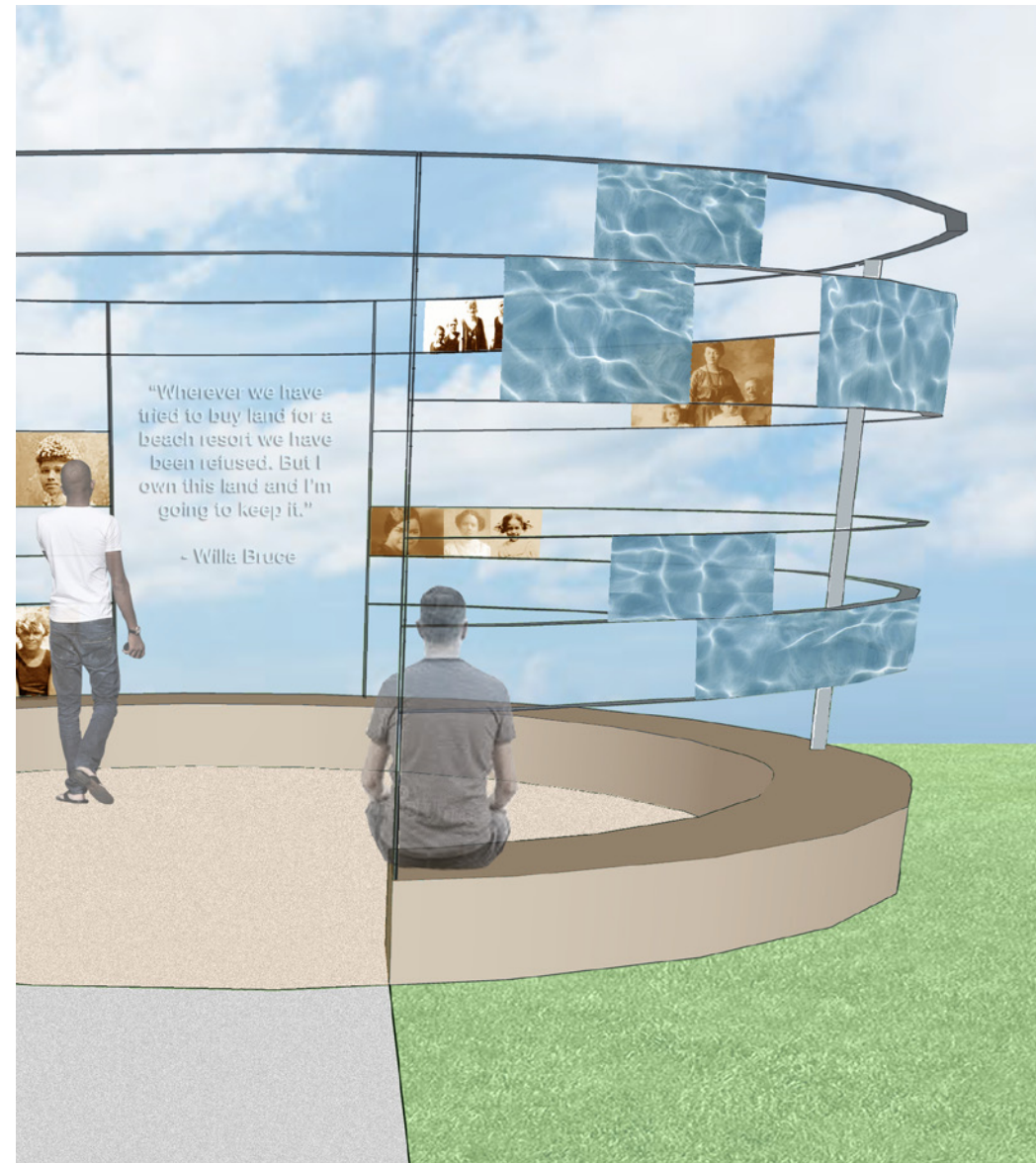
Bruce's Beach was a vibrant community created by and for the Black community. It was a rare and special place, for during the Jim Crow era of racial segregation, public leisure opportunities for African Americans were few and far between.

Just as Bruce's Beach was a welcoming and safe space for many people, the proposed design aims to capture the dynamic life of the Bruce's Beach community by creating an inclusive public space where people will feel comfortable to be alone or gather in small groups to learn about this important story.

Located on the Highland Avenue side of the park, the artwork is envisioned as a pavilion or "the Nest" that will overlook the plot of land once owned by Charles and Willa Bruce. The artwork space will be connected to the sidewalk and to the plaque plaza via pedestrian pathways.

As the didactic element, the existing plaque will provide an historical overview of Bruce's Beach. As a complementary piece, "the Nest" will offer an experiential space where people can feel and see the vibrant African American community that once existed in this area, as captured by images and texts, like one would find in a family scrap book.

The following pages will describe in more detail the preliminary ideas for the proposed artwork.



Plan View

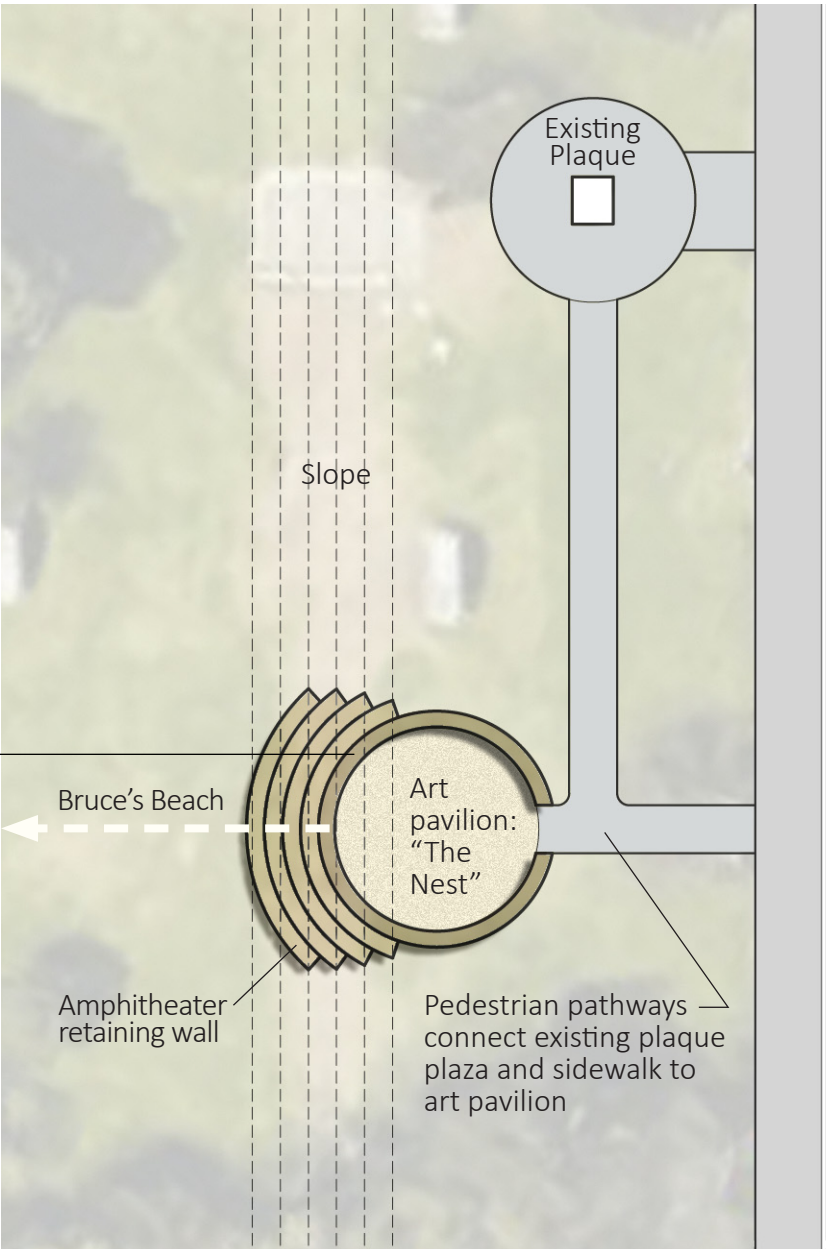


Artwork location on axis with former location of Bruce's Beach resort will provide a strong symbolic association.

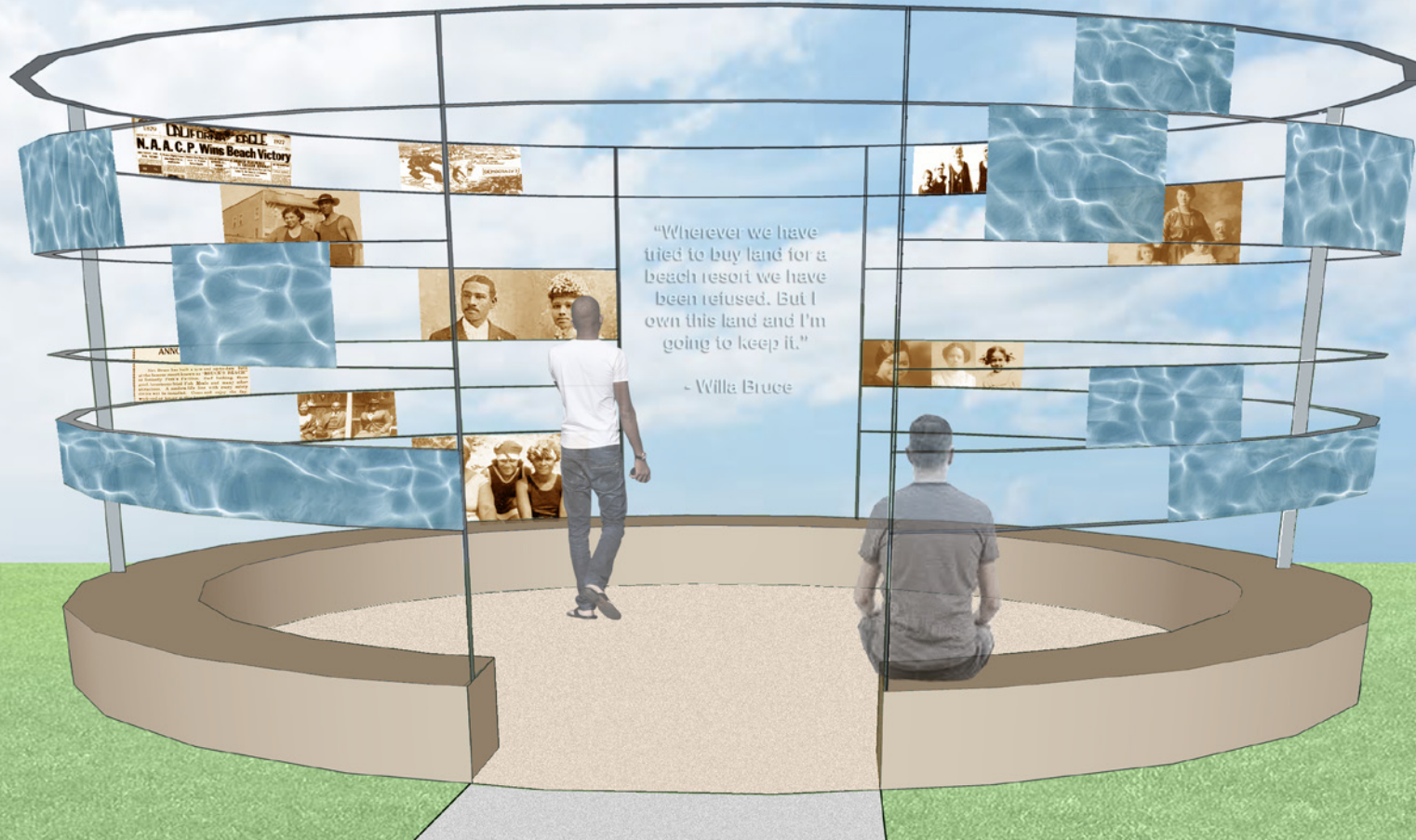
The art pavilion, "the Nest", will offer an outlook over the park, with views towards Bruce's Beach. Amphitheater seating will mitigate the slope.

SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 16'
 0 16 ft



View Looking Towards Bruce's Beach



"The Nest" is envisioned as a welcoming, inclusive space defined by a circular concrete bench. A lattice steel structure will create a pavilion-like structure that offers a sense of shelter and privacy while preserving views through the space.

Like a family scrap book, the inward-facing "walls" of the nest will be hung with historic photos, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia, which are intended to evoke layered experiences and

feelings, such as nostalgia, joy, sadness, anger, and a host of other emotions that people should be allowed to feel.

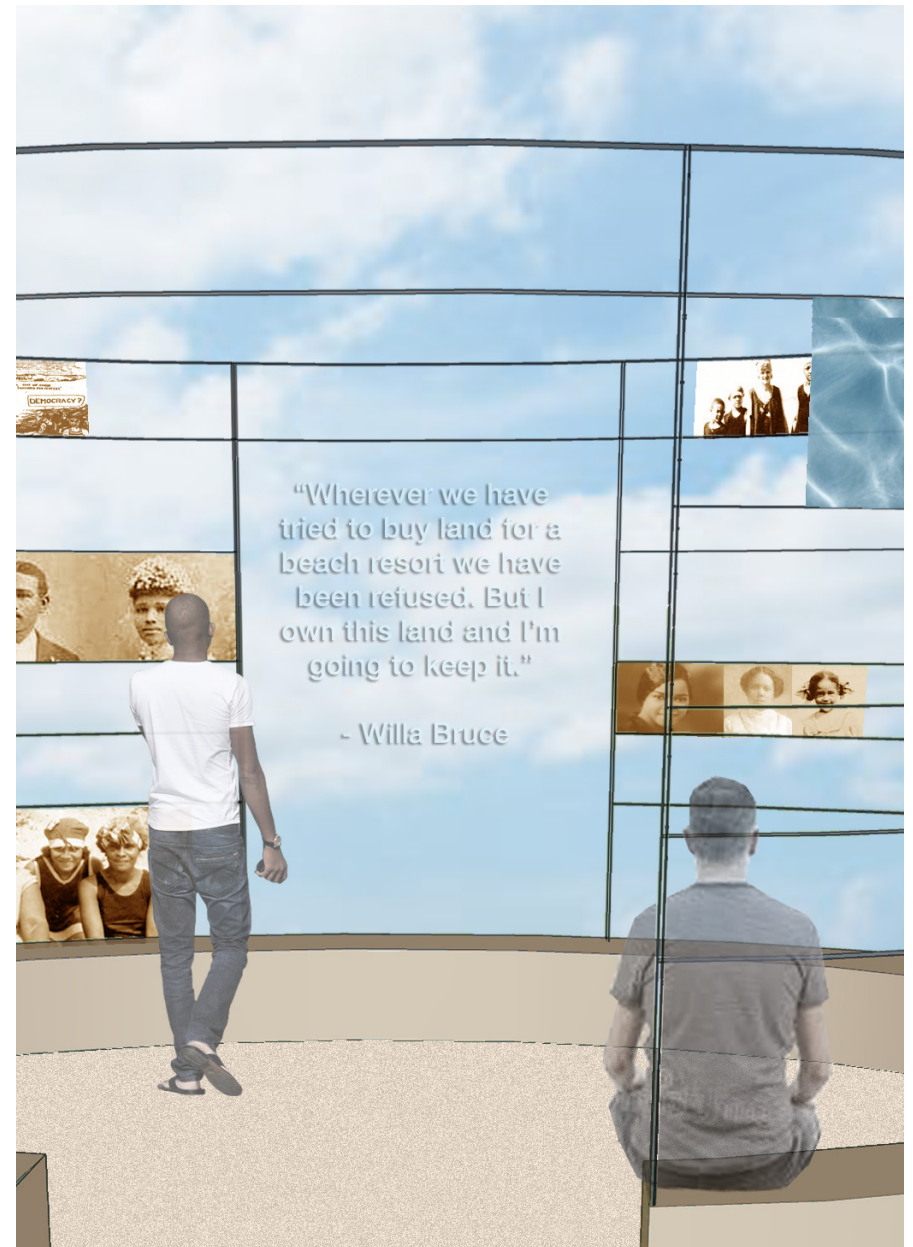
The back or outward facing side of the image panels will have a pattern evocative of the water. The ocean symbolizes boundless freedom, joy, and happy memories. I believe the Bruce's Beach resort carried similar feelings for many African American families who spent time there.

The Window

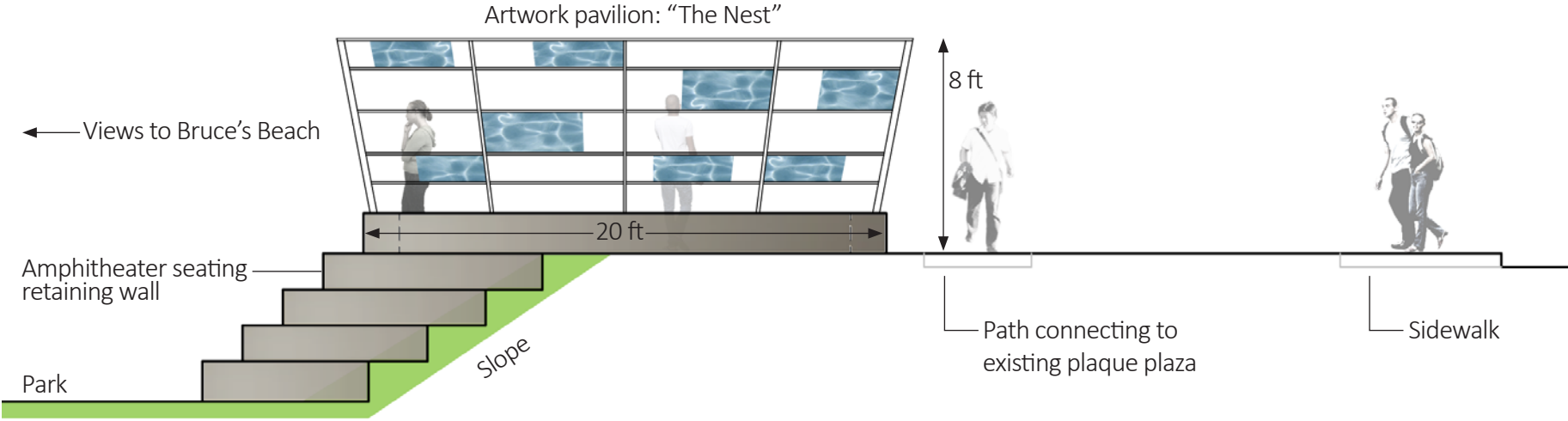
Visible from the street and sidewalk, a main component of the nest is a window that will overlook the former Bruce's Beach site. The window's glass will be etched with a quote by Willa Bruce printed in 1912 by the *Los Angeles Times*:

"Wherever we have tried to buy land for a beach resort we have been refused. But I own this land and I'm going to keep it."

This poignant quote encapsulates so many powerful concepts: the hostility and exclusion faced by African Americans at that time, Willa Bruce's determination to realize a dream, and the eventual loss of that dream due to racist institutional machinations.



Elevation



SCALE: NOT TO SCALE

Maintenance Plan

The four primary materials proposed for the artwork are commonly used for exterior applications because they are durable and require little maintenance.

STAINLESS STEEL

- “The Nest” structure
- marine-grade stainless steel
- highly durable and requires little maintenance other than periodic washing with tap water

TEMPERED GLASS

- “Window”
- structural and five times as strong compared to normal glass
- highly durable and requires little maintenance other than cleaning
- can be etched with text and comes in different colors

POWDER-COATED ALUMINUM OR PORCELAIN ENAMEL IMAGE PANELS

- “Scrap book” image panels
- commonly used for exterior way-finding and information signage
- fade resistant and highly durable

CONCRETE

- paving, circular bench, and amphitheater retaining wall
- will have integral color and a light sand finish



Budget

Item	Cost
Artist fee (not to exceed 25% of budget)	53,000
Materials	60,000
Fabrication	60,000
Installation	50,000
Transportation/delivery	3,000
Engineering cost/study	6,000
Permits/fees	3,000
Geological/site survey	5,000
Foundation/concrete work	75,000
Contingency (not to exceed 10% of budget)	35,000
Total budget for artwork:	350,000

Note: Be sure to include any additional fees not listed in this chart



Title ***Of Two Lineages***
Year 2017
Location City of Westminster, CA
Dimensions Sculpture 18' high x 3' wide, plaza 35' x 35'
Medium Steel, aluminum panels, concrete, landscape
Budget \$200,000
Client Vietnamese American Cultural Alliance

Located in the heart of the largest Vietnamese community in the U.S., the artwork is a contemporary re-telling of a traditional Vietnamese founding legend. It celebrates the immigrant story about a people taking roots in a new land, yet connected to the ancestral land through myth, traditions, and family. At night the sculpture is illuminated from within like a lantern, symbolizing the resiliency and hopes of the community. Surrounding the central sculpture are benches that showcase 100 portraits of everyday Vietnamese Americans, a collaborative project with the Vietnamese American Oral History Project of the University of California, Irvine.

Portfolio



Title	<i>Equity Fountain</i>
Year	2020
Location	Helena, MT
Medium	Granite millstone and stainless steel sculpture
Dimensions	7' high x 6' wide x 6' long
Budget	\$80,000
Client	Equity Fountain Committee

In 2017, the City of Helena removed a fountain that was dedicated in 1916, the only monument to the Confederacy located in the Northwestern United States. In its place, a new fountain has been commissioned that expresses the City's aspirations for ideals such as diversity, inclusiveness, and equity. These ideals, expressed in English and a Native American language, are woven together into a spherical sculpture that expresses our shared commonalities as opposed to differences.



Title	<i>Memorial to Deceased Students</i>
Year	2022
Location	University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN
Dimensions	Sculpture 8' high x 5' wide
Medium	Stone and glass
Budget	\$60,000
Client	University of St. Thomas

The design the Student Memorial seeks to evoke a combination of strength and vulnerability, spirituality and earthliness, loss and renewal. Four stone panels intersect to form a cruciform. Expressing solidity and strength, the stone is intended to symbolize the earth and the corporeal body. In contradistinction, glass discs inset into the stone panels evoke an ephemeral lightness with their translucency. Their circular form symbolizes both the heart and the eternal soul. Both loss and renewal are made visible with this void that captures light. The glass discs, however, will capture light differently depending on the time of day and angle of the sun.

Portfolio



Title	T.I.E.
Year	2022
Location	College of Education, Un. of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE
Dimensions	20' high x 14' diameter
Medium	Steel
Budget	\$100,000
Client	University of Nebraska

Currently being installed, the pavilion-like sculpture expresses the transformative and illuminating quality learning, befitting of the new College of Education. People will be able to sit on a circular bench within the space created the sculpture. Uplighting will create a lantern light effect at night.

Portfolio



Title	<i>Circles of a Ripple</i>
Year	2014
Location	Hacienda Heights, CA
Dimensions	80' diameter, each bench 3' high x 3' wide x 28' long
Medium	Concrete, earth, porcelain enamel panels, and landscape
Budget	\$120,000
Client	Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Located within the open-space of a new community center, the artwork is composed of a crescent-shaped landform that was constructed from stockpiled earth (excavated for the building foundation) and planted with native grasses. Within this circular space are three Calif. native Sycamore trees and three 28-foot-long concrete benches with photographic images that interpret the natural and man-made history of the region. The three colors of the porcelain enamel panels correlate to the three crops that were grown in the area--avocado, citrus, and walnut.



Title	<i>Wellspring of Valor</i> (finalist proposal)
Year	2018
Location	National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.
Dimensions	30' x 30' x 30'
Medium	Glass, stone, bronze, water, landscape
Budget	NA
Client	University of St. Thomas

The proposal was one of five finalist designs chosen in an international competition. The memorial envisions a sacred space where Americans can honor and reflect on the great sacrifices of all Native veterans. By weaving together and juxtaposing powerful symbols, culturally rooted forms, and enduring materials such as stone, glass, water, bronze, and landscape, the memorial conveys a combination of strength and vulnerability, spirituality and earthliness, loss and renewal.

References

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