

Dreiseitl Sign Text 07/23/12

Sculpture with Water Features by Herbert Dreiseitl, 2011

Dreiseitl, with his studio *Atelier Dreiseitl*, has completed water sculptures that enliven cityscapes in Germany, China, Norway, Switzerland, Austria, Australia, Singapore, and the U.S., winning dozens of awards since the 1980s. All of his installations integrate water features into urban landscapes.

Ann Arbor's water sculpture demonstrates the flow of water through local rainfall cycles, using rainwater that is captured and stored in tanks under the structure. When the storage tanks are low during dry weather, the pumps stop circulating water over the surface of the sculpture until the next rainfall. The water pumps do not operate late at night or during the winter months, however the energy-efficient LED lights continue their cascading display year-round. Management of rain water—illustrated by the closed-loop of rainwater—reduces run-off entering the Huron River, a source of drinking water.

Dreiseitl worked with Michigan artisans to cast and install the bronze sculpture and the concrete simulated riverbed base. Local businesses also developed the water pumping and lighting systems and adjacent rain gardens. The fabrication of the blue glass spheres as integrated with the lights and water flow were produced in cooperation with the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. The technology for routing the mold used to cast the sculpture was engineered with graduate students during Dreiseitl's fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Funding for this installation came from the City of Ann Arbor's water, wastewater and stormwater percent for art program, as derived from water-related capital improvement projects.

The promise of water is all about the future. Like rain, it is comforting, providing renewal and refreshment for a dry and thirsty landscape in a cityscape coming out of drought conditions. It is not only a symbol, water gives hope for the potential for life.

The sculpture consists of two layers of melted metal. Slightly leaning and finding its balance, the sculpture is subtly dynamic in every way. Resembling the surface of a standing wave, the top is concave and the bottom is convex. The concave surface is associated with reception, openness, taking in what is from above, and the convex surface is associated with giving away what it has received to the earth below, thus showing the transition from the sky to the earth—what rainwater always does.

The glass spheres bring floating light into the darkness of a physical form while water flows from above to quench the thirst of the earth. Emulating the motion of water drops, light moves down the sculpture at different speeds intensely illuminating the blue glass spheres in the day and softly illuminating them at night. The glass drops, which stick out at the top, slowly recede into the sculpture then reappear on the lower region of the other side, as if they are raindrops flowing down, penetrating into the sculpture and come out again. —Herbert Dreiseitl