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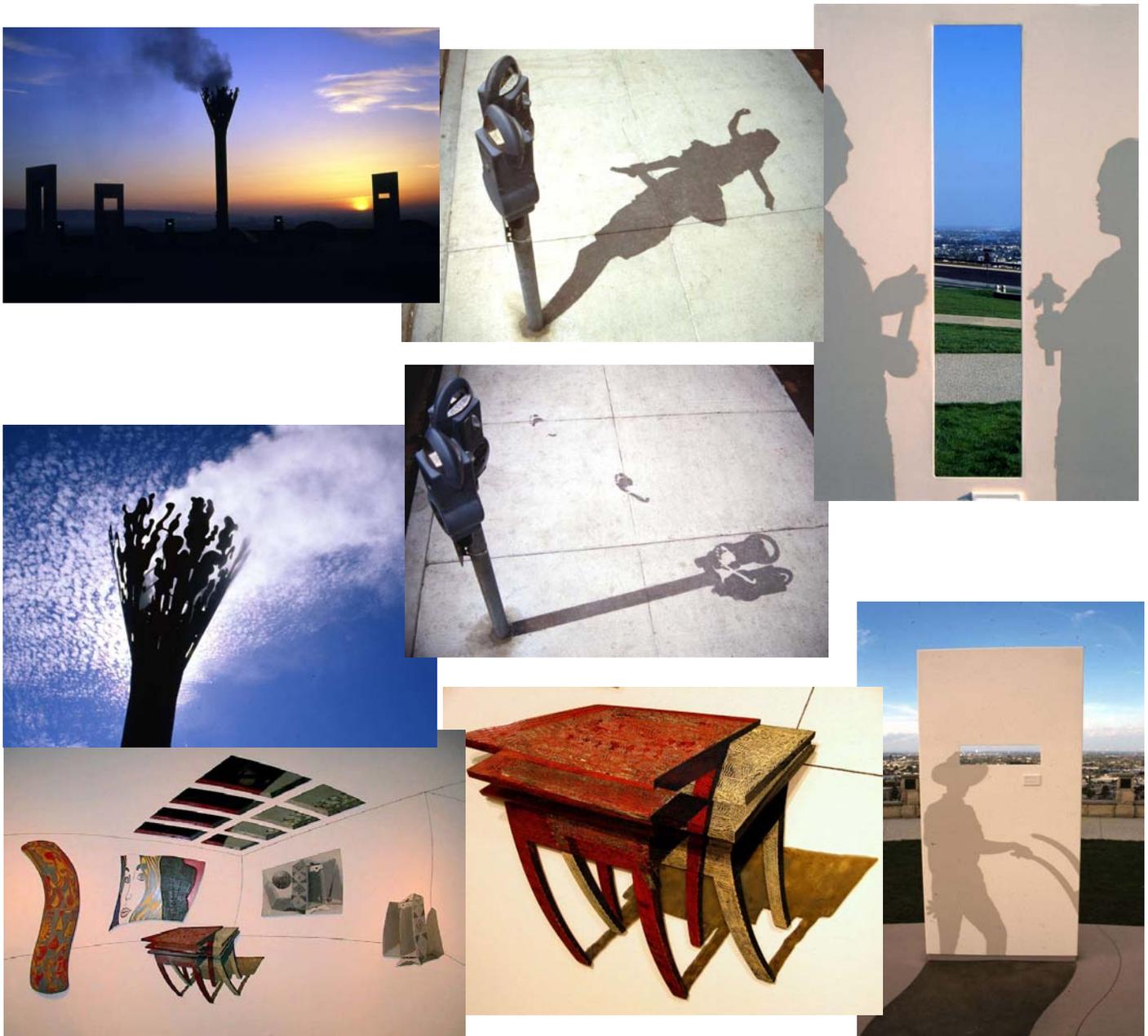
Image Emergence: Promenade of Clouds

--- CRAIG CREE STONE

A multi-level approach to public art

My approach is to captivate the viewer with a surprising and enchanting experience that includes elements of illusion and surrealism. As the viewer is drawn in to the site, many other levels of meaning and imagery are revealed, and ways to interact with both the art and fellow viewers are created. As Jack Mackie said: "Public Art is the Art of Making Places Public." In making this presentation I will try to show the overall experience, but I will only have time to suggest the rich possibilities of the concepts which I am exploring, and which I hope will bring viewers to explore the work many times and find new experiences, surprises, meaning and connections each time. One of the most rewarding things about my work has been the comments of people who return to Belmont Shore or Signal Hill over and over and still see new things, even thinking new elements have recently been added.

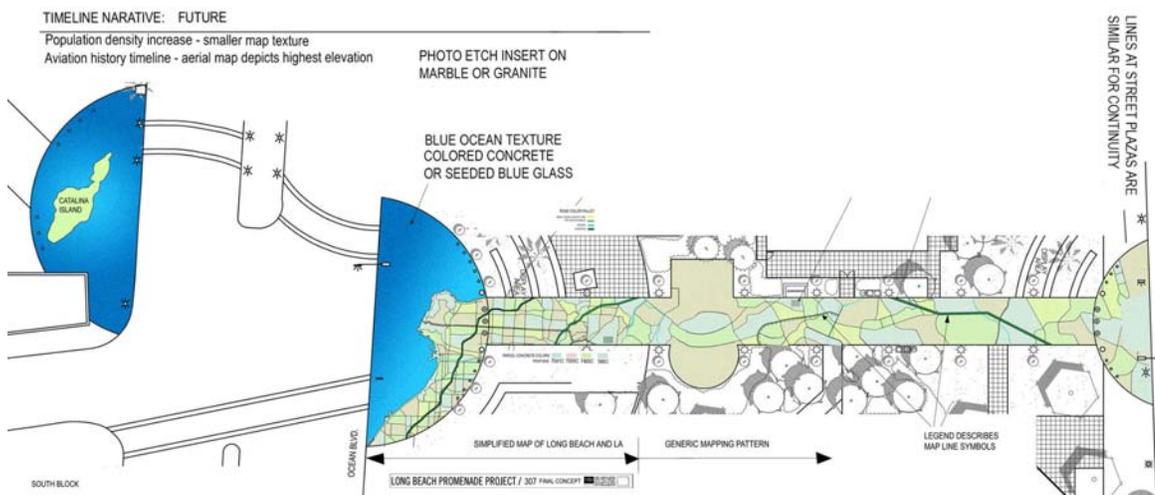
the surprise of Illusion: images from gallery work and Public Art in Belmont Shore and Signal Hill



Concepts

The imagery of the piece flows from the theme of flight in the other public art works on the Promenade, and expands on the concept of connecting cities with air travel, to the many ways in which people connect and interact with one another.

Plan overview



The sequence starts with the classic WPA mosaic at the far end of the promenade, which depicts people together relaxing in a natural environment, the next block features a traditional sculpture of birds in flight, and the next block features a contemporary display of the history of flight.

WPA Mosaic at the North end of the Promenade

Site location as it is today



So my project will logically extend into the essence of flight, leaving the bounds of normal existence, the future of flight technology, and more expansive concepts of the way people connect, from an intimate dance, to all forms of media that bring people together through common experience, to the way images and structures are formed, and to the new science of emergence which deals with how patterns and images are formed on a grand scale.

Recognizing patterns to see an image is a skill that the human brain can still do better than any supercomputer, it is an integral part of human consciousness. "Cloud reading" is an ancient practice of looking at clouds and seeing shapes in them that come from the viewers' own subconscious references and memories. The piece will play with the many ways images are recognized, composed or "emerge" on their own. Observing patterns created by flocks of birds and cloud formations are also ancient practices associated with foretelling the future.

Reading patterns, emergent images formed by bird flocks and clouds



The experience

Cloud Sculptures rising from the Promenade

From a distance the viewer first sees sculptural forms of clouds floating up from the Promenade. From the entrance to the Promenade on Ocean, the clouds will be arranged so that they become smaller as they get farther away, this is a use of illusionary forced perspective that I often use in my work.



The scaling of the clouds also forms a transition to the clouds depicted in the mosaic at the end of the Promenade.

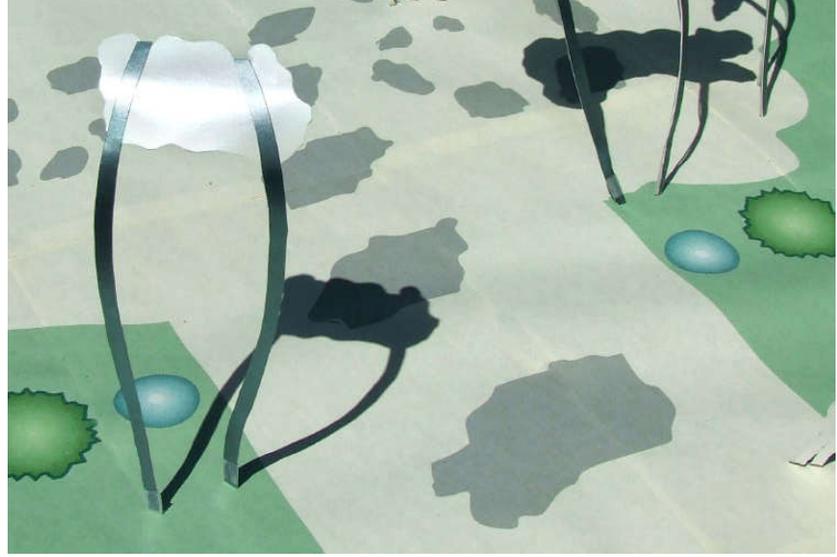
As the viewer is drawn into the work the feeling will be the joyful essence of flight, of weightlessness, of objects floating upward.



Supports tethering clouds to the earth
The paradoxical illusion here is that although the supports are designed to look like they are holding the clouds down, they are actually holding them up.

As viewers enter the site, next they will see images of clouds on the walkway that mimic and interact with the actual shadows which will be cast from the sculptural clouds. Some of these shadows will show clouds that have broken their tethers, and others floating completely free.

Stained shadows of clouds on the walkway, interacting with real shadows cast from sculptural clouds



Typically shapes that are stained into concrete have a hard edge created by a saw cut or by sandblasting the edges. The edges of our stained images are soft, diffused, and blend into the concrete in the same way that a shadow is blurred at its edge. So there is a correlation between the image and the process used to create that image that is unique to how we create our images of shadows. The fact that we developed and do not license this process retains the uniqueness of this approach.

Unique staining process to create organic forms and imagery



Imagery possibilities for stained clouds

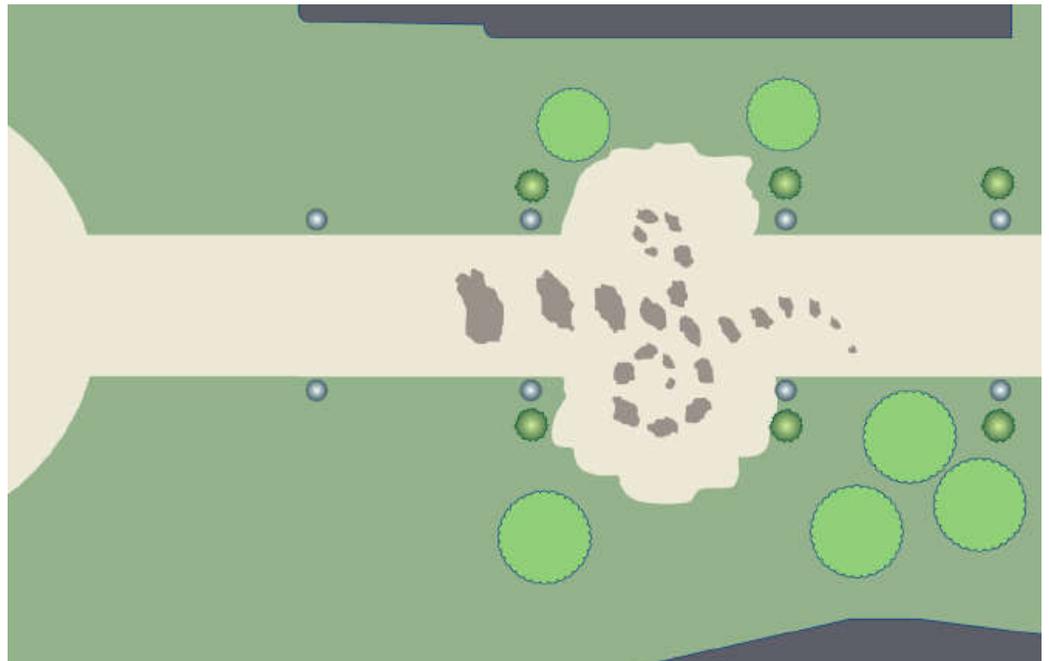
Within the clouds, images will be formed in various ways, the imagery will often deal with how the world is viewed from the sky and from space, and earthly objects that relate to other concepts of the piece. I created this proprietary method for staining permanent shadows into concrete for "Casting Shadows on the Shore", and I am excited that the budget for this piece will allow me to push this process to new levels of complexity that are completely unique.



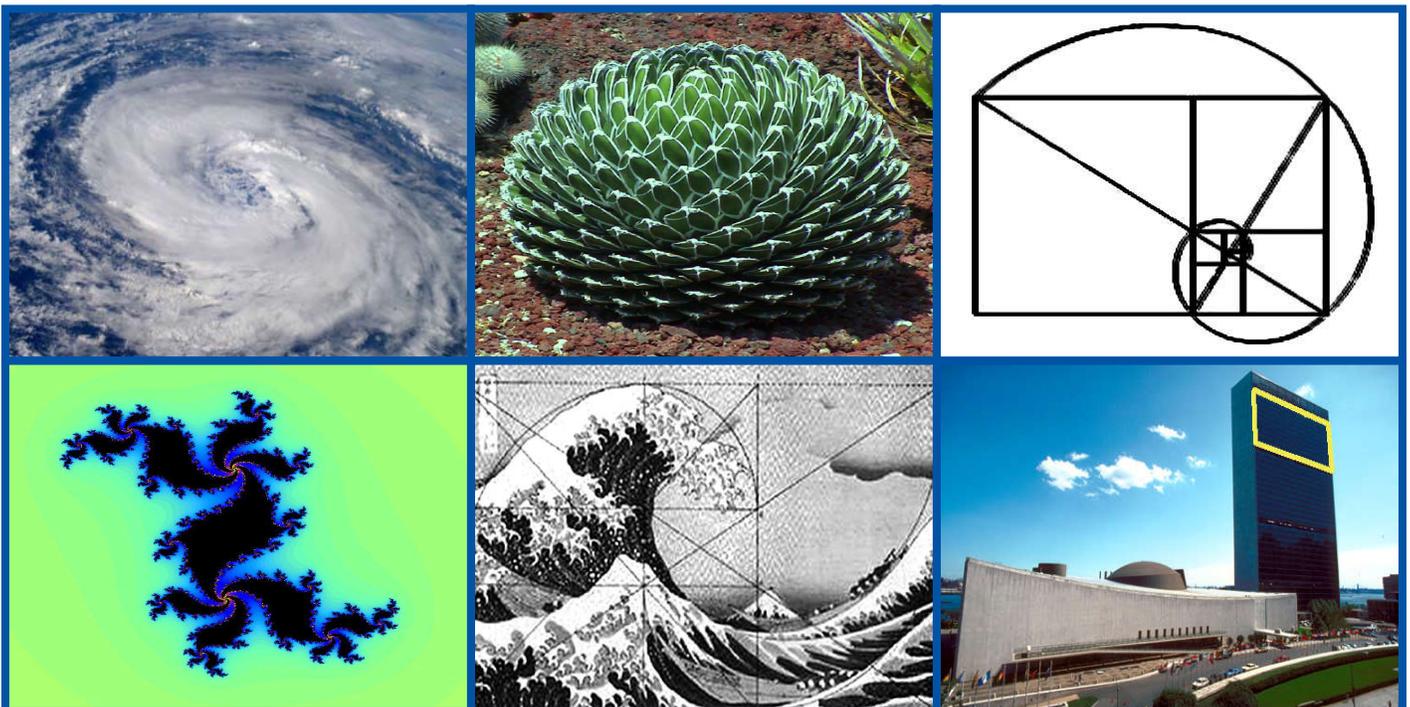
These stained clouds will be arranged on the site in a pattern that can be seen from above by people in the buildings along the Promenade, and also from Google Earth. This is a "future" element, producing a work that can be viewed with new technology, satellite photography and the Internet.

Site diagram with sketch for stained cloud pattern

The basic forms are spirals, an example of a universal emergent pattern that shows up in nature, art, mathematics and science.

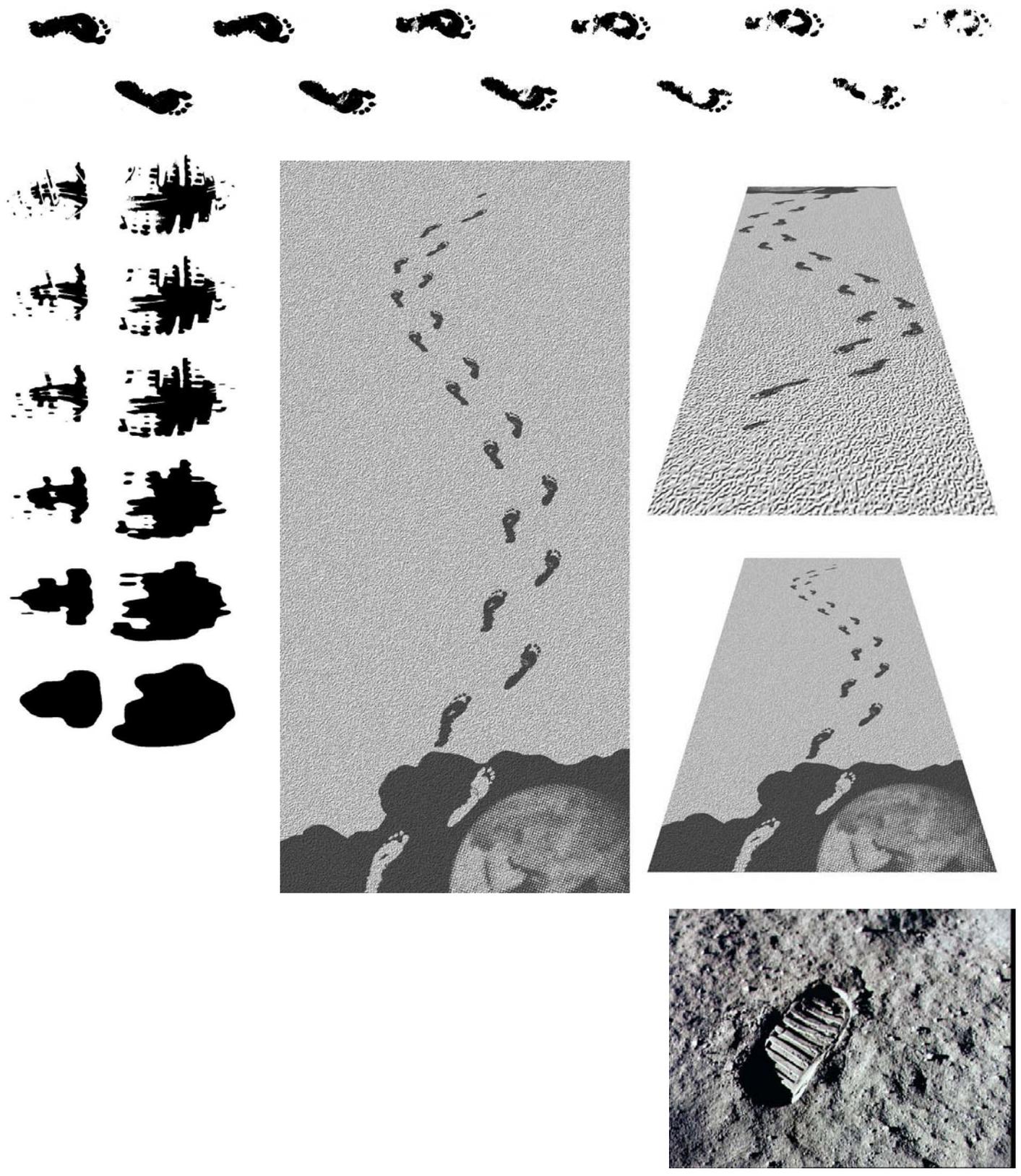


Spirals and the golden section in art and nature



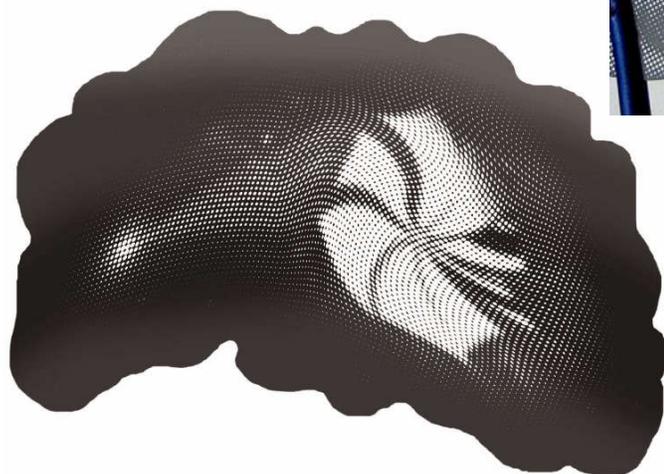
Stained footprints and pathways of interaction

The next element of the project the viewer sees will be footprints that create the illusion that someone has picked up the shadow color from the clouds and tracked them onto the concrete, creating paths for the viewer to follow and interact with; people in my projects often position themselves to interact with the work for photographs, such as standing so that it looks like the footprints are theirs. The footprints will play with illusion in many surprising ways, such as surrealistic changes in scale, morphing into bird footprints, the tread of the famous footprint image on the moon, or evaporating into cloud shapes.

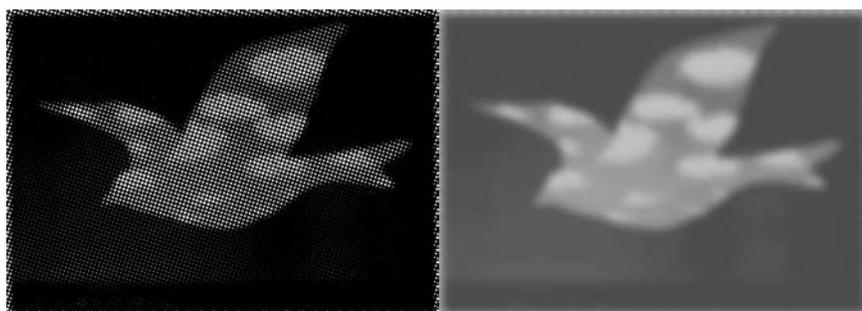


Images emerging from clouds

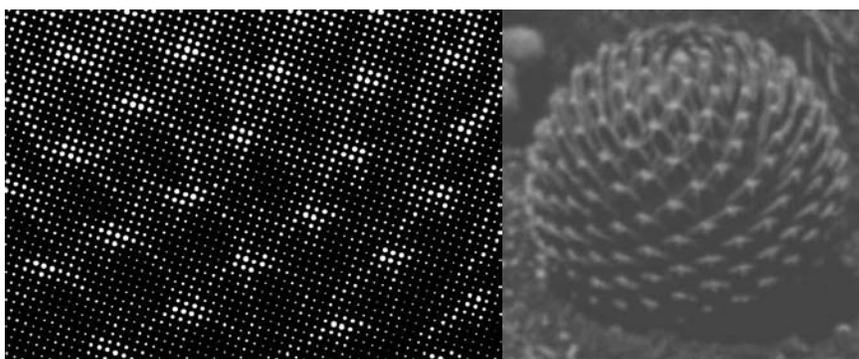
Finally the most innovative technique will be using the sculptural clouds to project images onto the walkway. Holes will be cut into the metal, creating images using a process similar to the halftones used in printing. The unique flexibility of the process will also allow for the distortion of not only the images, but the holes creating the images, so as to reinforce the feeling of the clouds straining against their tethers. Another way of distorting the images will be to play with the perspective of the projected images on the ground.



The metal sculptures are also unique in that the images created by these forms are most visible when looking at the shadow of the sculpture on the concrete paving. Because of the natural diffusion that happens when light shines through holes in the metal sculpture, the dots of light will blend together when the shadow is cast onto the ground, creating a more photographic image, a less pixilated image than appears on the sculpture itself. Usually when halftones are used, they are meant to be so fine that the individual dots are not visible, but here attention will be drawn to the way the eye creates images out of halftone dots, mosaics or pixels.

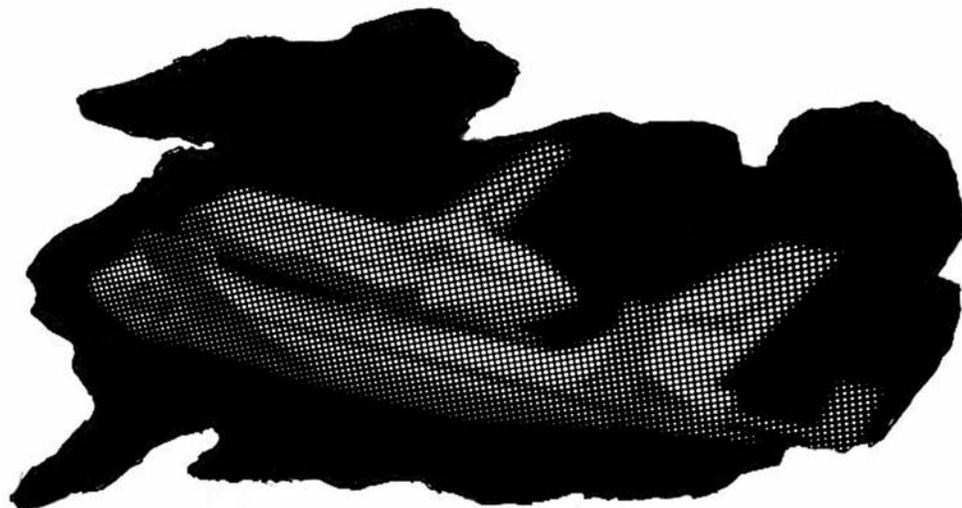


Cloud Images emerging from halftone patterns



Cloud Images emerging over time

Another unique aspect of these sculptures is that the projected images will emerge only at certain times of day, and will change with the seasons. Sculptures will be positioned so that images appear during lunchtime when the majority of people will be on the Promenade, as well as at night when shadows are cast from streetlights. Unlike the use of halftones in other public art where it is merely a mechanical way to reproduce images visible at all times, here they become a sculptural element of their own which interacts with the environment, and relate to the overall concepts of the piece, how individual elements combine to form images and structures on a larger scale, from different perspectives and at different times.



Cloud construction technique

The sculptural clouds will be made of plasma cut sheets of stainless steel, which will be supported with tubular poles. These metal forms will be rolled and bent to create the floating/stretching forms. The images within the clouds will be plasma cut into the forms following vector art files.

Additional elements

In addition to the many images and refinements I will make for the project, there will be a website that will be used in the project development, communicating with the community about the project, possibly soliciting suggestions for imagery. The website will also function as a guide to viewers to help them find meaning and connection among the network of images in this public art work.

Other elements of the overall landscaping could also be developed to mesh with the artwork, such as benches or educational guides.

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