Furniture from the landscape

Gerard J. Alonzo

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

FURNITURE FROM THE LANDSCAPE

By

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June 1, 1990
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To Kate and Mike
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Daily, for the past two years, I drove 23 miles through the Genesee Valley from my Geneseo home to R.I.T. The drive served as a transition, a cushion of sorts between different aspects of my life. The Genesee River, its valley, the farms, fields, houses and oaks were wonderful to take in as daily nourishment.

The great oaks of the Genesee Valley played an important role in the history of the area. The Indian chiefs held their council on the bank of the river under the great oak hundreds of years old. The Wadsworths, early settlers to the region, and for centuries major landowners, encouraged the farmers who rented land from them to spare or plant oaks in the fields. It is a joy to behold a field of grain under the vigilant protection of centuries old oaks. (Figure 5)

On one such drive I thought about attempting to suggest this landscape in furniture. Strength, beauty, variety, water weaving through cliffs and farms, and the ever present oak. These are the words I wrote down that day "Thesis: Genesee Valley Furniture?" Many other thesis ideas came and went during those drives but the notion of landscape persisted. Questions arose: How to give meaning to a piece of furniture beyond its function? Should I attempt to do so? As my technical skills advanced some possible answers to the first question emerged. Steam bending, laminating, surface texturing were new tools which to me presented new opportunities. The second question (Should I?) was
much more complex. In the fall of 1989, question two became "Will I attempt to do so?", to which I answered, yes.

For my thesis, I proposed to use Genesee Valley landscapes as sources for furniture design. The pieces were to be mainly functional. It was my intention/hope that the pieces would evoke in the user or viewer a sense of the place. Of particular interest to me were Genesee Valley landscapes where the manmade and natural environment were strongly integrated. As the generalities of the proposal yielded to the specifics of the task at hand, bridges were the manmade structure reflected in each of the pieces.

Photography played a major role in this thesis process. Deciding that the Genesee Valley landscape would be my subject, I picked up the camera and wandered around familiar and new paths, photographing places, things, scenes, and textures that caught my attention. This ranged from the falls of the Genesee River to the Geneseo junk yard. Several hundred photographs later, I chose those that I found most appealing. It was then that I realized that the stonework of the 1930's Civilian Conservation Corps projects in Letchworth State Park and the textures of the natural landscape with which it integrated were the areas ripe for my exploration. Then with a slightly more focused eye, I again picked up the camera. Bridges, both stone and metal, the Genesee River gorge (Figure 10), and the texture of the crops in the fields were shot both from the ground and by air. (Figure 6)

One of my goals in this project was to convey a "sense of place" to the user or viewer. At the outset I had not given much
or perhaps any thought to just what place I wanted the viewer to see. Was it to be the specific falls or bridge in Letchworth Park or a site from the viewer's own experience unrelated to the Genesee Valley site? Did it really matter?

I found this phrase "sense of place" somewhat illusive and it called to mind an analogy from my prior life as a lawyer. United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, in writing an opinion in a ponography case said that although he couldn't define pornography, "I'd know it when I saw it". Well, that's about my feeling with "sense of place", but I'll attempt a definition just the same. For my purposes, sense of place is a more or less vague perception or impression of the Genesee Valley, (i.e. the place).

It is just this sense that I sought to instill in the viewer/user. Was I limiting my audience to those familiar with the Genesee Valley landscape? If so, I would consider myself unsuccessful. Rather, success could be attained by the knowing nod or smile on the face of one who is unfamiliar with the area but in whom the piece or pieces evokes a sense of the place as it relates to their experience and travels, to their visual memory.

To share my experience of place through my work, I must first discern just what information to abstract from the place to convey its sense. What are the essences? How do I identify them? How do I communicate them?

While in law school, I had the privilege of being taught real property law by Thompson Marsh, a professor of the old school who would challenge a student to defend their case
analysis and demand a precision I had not seen before nor since. We were required to distill from lengthy (30-40 page) property law cases those few words that contained all that really mattered in the case. Green markers for the essential facts, black for the applicable law and red for the result. Anything more than a few precious words being colored was considered the result of sloppy thinking. This training and the years of law practice utilizing this training comprise a large part of my experience. Can that same sort of critical analysis be used to identify the essence of the place?

As I approached this thesis, I did so with the conviction that this Thompson Marsh style of critical analysis would serve me as well in my woodworking as it did in law. Can it? Should it? As the studio work proceeded and as I read the works of the following two authors, those sharp tipped colored markers gave way to a broad style watercolor brush.

Jonathan Fairbanks of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts wrote of the major difference between knowing and understanding. To know is to recognize and to be able to identify; to understand is to know thoroughly. He wrote of the importance of visual memory in the development of understanding.

"Visual memory is not photographic memory, the camera lens merely records with no understanding of the object; in contrast the mind integrates experiences. As a young curator, I was often sent out by the senior curator to look at objects and report on them. If I had come back with merely a Polaroid snapshot it would not have been possible to explain what he wanted to know. The feel of a joint or the structure of an object was important to see and experience in order to describe the whole".

Visual memory is an idea with which I was unfamiliar
during the studio stage of the thesis. However, it appears that as the work neared the end, I did abandon photographic memory in favor of visual memory.

Soetsu Yanagi, in *The Unknown Craftsman* discusses the separation existing in most of us between seeing and knowing.

"To see is to go directly to the core; to know the facts about an object of beauty is to go around the periphery. Intellectual documentation is less essential to an understanding of beauty than the power of intuition that precedes it. ... The eye of knowledge cannot, thereby see beauty. What is the beauty that a man of erudition sees as he holds a fine pot in his hands? If he picks a wild flower to pieces, petal by petal, and counts them, and tries to put them together again, can he regain the beauty that was there? All the assembly of dead parts cannot bring life back again. It is the same with knowing. One cannot replace the function of seeing with the function of knowing. One may be able to turn intuition into knowledge, but one cannot produce intuition out of knowledge."

As I reflect generally about the pieces I made for this thesis it becomes obvious to me that producing intuition out of knowledge was precisely what I attempted on one, perhaps two, of the pieces. The photographs were studied with the diligence of a scientist reviewing and cataloging collected data. The data was processed to create individual elements which became parts of individual works. For example, I studied close up photos of the large nuts and bolts of the Portage High Bridge and then decided upon aluminum nut and bolt connectors for the dictionary stand. (Each piece will be discussed later in this paper.)

Yanagi's concept of pattern contains for me a key to communicating that illusive sense of place.

"There are many ways of seeing, but the truest and best is with the intuition for it takes in the whole, whereas the intellect only takes in a part. Pattern
is born when one reproduces the intuitively perceived essence.

Pattern is not realistic depiction. It is a "vision" of what is reflected by the intuition. It is a product of the imagination, in the sense in which Blake used the word. Pattern is non-realistic. It may be called irrational. In a sense, it is an exaggeration. ... A pattern is a picture of the essence of an object's very life; its beauty is of that life. ... A good pattern is pregnant with beauty. The maker of a pattern draws the essence of the thing seen with his own heartbeat, life to life."

"Pattern is nature seen in the best light. Pattern is a summing up view of nature. Via pattern we see nature at its most wondrous. ...

Why should pattern be so beautiful? It provides unlimited scope for the imagination. Pattern does not explain; it leaves things to the viewer; its beauty is determined by freedom it gives to the viewer's imagination." 8

"Intuitively perceived essences". These are the words I hadn't heard or considered at any time during the planning or studio portions of this thesis. A field of grain, a herd of cattle, the oaks, the river, the texture of the land, the gorge, the hills, bridges, stones, silos, the black muck lands. These are all essences of the Genesee Valley landscape. However, the idea or ability to see these essences and express them as pattern was not a goal set for myself at the beginning. Identifying and depicting the essences realistically seemed more than adequate. Had I been aware of and considered Yanagi's idea of pattern the dictionary stand/lectern would not have come about and the Ashantee bench would have been approached quite differently. But would the idea of pattern have been so compelling to me if those pieces had not been made?
CHAPTER 2

THE WORK

The thesis work consisted of four pieces of furniture; a table, a dictionary stand/lectern, a bench and a screen. What did I hope to accomplish with each piece, how did I attempt it, and was it successful? I will write about the work in the same sequence as it was built. Since the thesis process to me was one where ideas, experiences, and techniques were cumulative, this is the logical sequence.

The Bridge Table (Figure 1) is a hall table 34" high, 48" long, 20" wide. Being the first piece in this thesis series, some groundwork and experimentation took place before design decisions could be made. Much time was spent reviewing photos prior to choosing which landscape I wanted to work with. The texture of the gorge walls was to me a strong element that I wanted to use in the first piece. The lower falls bridge (Figure 7) provided me with a landscape where the flow of the manmade (stone bridge) into the naturally textured walls of the river gorge was visually seamless.

For this first piece I chose oak, for its importance in the past and present Genesee Valley landscape. Oak proved to be a suitable material although its use resulted in a rather weighty table. Before proceeding too far with the design of this piece I wanted to explore the texturing possibilities. I tried sandblasting the oak but found available blasting equipment not up to the job. I sent oak sample blocks to a local monument engraver who was equipped to do the job but it would mean subbing
BRIDGE TABLE

FIGURE 1
it out, and loss of control over the texture in the piece. As I did not have a clearly defined goal for the textured surface, I decided to experiment with other methods. The electric chain saw cutting with the grain on the sample blocks gave good results and when followed by sandblasting the frayed wood fibers were removed.

The sides or legs were stack laminated and shaped with the router. The four trusses spanning and connecting the sides are oak laminations bent over a form while the table top with its slight one inch bend was steam bent.

In designing the table, I approached it as if it were a slice of the landscape cutting right across the river and through the canyon walls, almost as if a rectangular landscape core were removed, thus the smooth polished "cut" surfaces on the side and outer surfaces of the "legs". The trusses penetrate the sides. The table top extends beyond the sides to suggest its continuity beyond the span of the bridge. While I found the slight curvature of the top to be visually pleasing and in harmony with the other shapes contained both in the piece and in the landscape, I had serious reservations about making a table top that was not flat. I did include the curve and it didn't significantly impair its function as a hall table.

The dictionary stand/lectern (Figure 2), made of ash, copper and aluminum, was by far the most complicated of the pieces. In my opinion it is also the least successful. This is the piece in which I intended to tell the whole story of everything I know and feel about the Genesee River gorge and
wound up with a piece lacking in clarity and focus. A little discussion of the approach I used to design this piece gives some clues as to why the lack of focus. The idea began simply enough. The Portage High Bridge (Figure 9) is certainly a dominant structure in the park. It is 255' in height and 800' long. Its predecessor, a timber trestle of the same approximate dimensions was the highest timber bridge in the world at the time it was destroyed by fire in 1875.

From the distance this iron and steel bridge appears as a fine mesh of girders and towers. While it lacks that invisible transition of stone to stone as appears in the lower falls bridge, it is so delicate and transparent that it threads over the gorge without disturbing it. Instead of cut stone mortered almost seamlessly to the gorge walls, the trestle is iron and steel bolted to the rock. The oversized rusted nuts and bolts fascinated me. At close observation, I imagined mustachioed ironworkers of the past century armed with huge wrenches and oversized arms cranking down each and every one of what seemed like millions of nuts.

In this piece, as in the first I used four trusses but here each truss was joined first to the sides of the gorge before being joined each to the other. It was almost as if that same landscape core from the bridge table was done at the Portage site and then that core sliced apart into what could be thought of as 4 slices of bread from a loaf. These pieces were then angled one away from the next. Large nuts and bolts were fabricated out of aluminum and used to reconnect the four slices, with aluminum
DICTIONARY STAND/LECTERN

FIGURE 2
sleeves between each slice for constant spacing. The interior surface of each slice was textured with a ball mill in a manner similar to the chain saw. Since this texture was across the grain of the ash, tear out became a problem and limited the possible depth of the cut.

The piece was all right to this point but it was my need to tell the whole story that resulted in the confusion evidenced in the piece. The large bent copper element in the bottom center attempts to tell the tale of the upper, middle and lower falls of the park and appears about to flow out upon the feet of the user. The coopered desktop surface of the piece mimics the metallic flow and rolls towards the user. If all this weren't enough a 2" copper rowboat floats down the copper river (not visible in the photo). The result is an incohesive piece in which separate and distinct elements compete for the viewer's attention while lacking effective connection or relationship to each other.

While I may have some disappointment with the dictionary stand/lectern, it afforded me the opportunity to get acquainted with the work of Jerry Uelsman, a photographer. Uelsman is considered this century's master of the expressive potential of combination printing. This process, which Uelsman refers to as postvisualization, involves the use of any number of individual negatives combined to produce a final composite image. He makes impossible spaces, unlikely juxtapositions and bizarre mergings seem absolutely believable. The worlds of fantasy he creates are more believable than the laws of physics they defy.10

It was this idea of combining elements in unlikely ways
that I attempted in this piece. I began with a collection of distinct objects, i.e. chainsawn boards, large nuts and bolts, copper falls and river, coopered top, and of course a boat. I believe I ended with a collection of distinct objects combined in an unlikely but confusing manner.

The Ashantee (an area of the town of Avon, New York) stone railroad bridge (Figure 8) more commonly known as the five-arch bridge spans the Conesus Lake outlet. It's about 7 miles from my home and on my daily commuting route to R.I.T. The five arches are all that remain; the railroad having ceased service long ago.

I knew early on in the thesis that something about that bridge suggested to me a bench. While it wasn't the first piece designed and made, it was the first piece that I decided to make.

A bench is a very meaningful piece of furniture. It calls to my mind the idea of serving a shared public function. Parks, children, reading, talking, sharing, meeting, resting, and protecting are words that I associate with bench. Benches are made to be shared. The curvature of the seat of the Ashantee bench encourages sitting close to your seatmate.

To say that this bridge straddled the stream would be an incorrect description; stood in and over is more apt. Here the connection to the natural landscape is via the stone arches touching the stream bed and banks. Even though on a well traveled road, this is a quiet strong bridge that encourages the passerby to slow down a notch, enjoy it and its surroundings.

The Ashantee Bench (Figure 3) is constructed from ash,
beech, and Baltic Birch plywood, and stones. The seat frame is steambent ash with beech cross members. The arches are ash laminates bent over a form. The piers are beech and the "island" is plywood. An early design concept had the arch beginning and ending in similarly sized piers. This symetrically shaped piece was pleasing but I found it lacking because it did not convey a sense of that place. The engagement of the stone bridge and streambed was the essence of the site and needed to be conveyed in the piece.

Since the bridge was on my daily route, I stopped there often, not simply in furtherance of this project but also to just relax. The water flow varied greatly with the seasons. I would watch how the stream action would leave concentric patterns on the small islands or pads on which the pier sat. These patterns were simply the way the gravel and small stones were arranged by the stream's flow. During the warm weather the concentric pattern would be enlarged as more and more of the island revealed itself. After a rain, the flow was up, the island covered, and the process would repeat. It was this island that became the point of transition between the manmade bridge and the natural landscape. The ever changing nature of that transition point fascinated me.

I attempted to express this feeling by my choice of materials and method of constructing these elements. A large block of Baltic Birch plywood was first bandsawn and then carved and sanded into the shape of an island. While the finished surface is smooth, the concentric pattern of the exposed plys
presents a visual texture that is deceiving in its smooth tactile quality. The point of connection of the pier and the island is a large sliding dovetail joint in which the beech pier slides into a slot in the plywood. Aside from adding the only color to the piece, the stones also were intended to add to that sense of integration and connection. They are not attached so as to encourage interaction by the user. The stones (from the site) include bits of brick and other manmade material worn smooth by time and movement.

The final thesis piece was the screen (Figure 4). It stands about 64" tall by 48" wide open. The piece is made of cherry and Baltic Birch plywood.

I'm pleased by this piece. It was an enjoyable, albeit dirty piece to build that involved some experimentation. It also, in my mind, expresses most effectively that sense of the place that I have sought throughout the thesis work. Time also played a very important part in the final appearance of the piece.

In the screen, I sought to convey the strength, weight, and verticality of the Genesee Valley gorge. I knew that to accomplish this I wanted the screen, essentially a two dimensional piece, to convey this sense of weight. Four inch cherry was used to frame the piece. The frame members taper 3 1/2" to 1 1/2" bottom to top and from 3 1/2" to 2" outside to center. The bridge is of cherry with mahogany detailing.

The panel construction took me by surprise. The material is Baltic Birch plywood, a high quality plywood with more layers
SCREEN

FIGURE 4
of uniformly thick plys than its domestic counterpart. There are also many fewer voids than in domestic plywood. The original plan was to make the panels out of solid plywood. As I unloaded the truck and truly experienced the weight of the material needed to produce a 2 1/2" thick panel, the search was on for a better way. After some experimentation, hollow core construction similar to that used in interior doors was chosen. One-half inch plywood sheets were first textured on their interior surfaces and glued to tapered plywood spacers to create the tapered hollow panel.

The texturing, an extremely dirty process because of the dust created, consuming great amounts of time but was directly accomplished with a disk grinder. The chain saw, used on earlier pieces, left an unacceptably coarse and torn texture while the die grinder with ballmill was too slow and delicate. Multiple passes were made over each of the four panel surfaces engraving the texture deeper each time. The fact that the interior of the panel was also textured resulted in random depth penetration through the panel skin. I was satisfied with the texture when enough penetrations were present to permit the occasional passage of light through the panel. The textured surfaces were then sandblasted to both soften the sharp edges and add a new level of texture to the surface.

The bridge construction was simply 3/8" cherry sandwiched together and pinned in a manner reminiscent of nineteenth century timber bridges.

Two significant things happened in the design and making
of the screen: 1) I gave up my reliance on photographs or other recreations of exact locations in the valley, and 2) I ran out of time. In each of the three previous pieces, I relied on specific references to each site in an attempt to replicate a feature from that site into the piece. For example, the hardware from the Portage High Bridge found a home in the lectern, and the rocks and piers of the five arch bridge became important elements in the Ashantee Bench. In the screen, I abandoned this specific site reliance and instead relied upon my visual memory of the greater area. I might have been concerned that the gorge texture is mostly verticle and would be located on the inside edge rather than the large panel surfaces but I decided not to be. Rather than build a model of a specific bridge I wanted to make a nice bridge, one that felt right and contained those positive attributes of strength, age, beauty and connectiveness that characterizes a good bridge.

With only two weeks to design and build the screen, I must confess that the clock may have played a major factor in the result. Shouldn't that bridge truss be carrying some element? What about the trees and brush growing on the gorge walls? Should I light the interior of the panels? What about the river? Where is it? I'd like to say that all these things that didn't happen in the piece were considered and rejected by me because they didn't belong in this piece. That may, in fact, be the case but time pressure was very much a part of the screen. Regardless
of the basis for the decisions not to include, I'm satisfied that I either had or have acquired an awareness that less can be more.
CHAPTER 3

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It would seem appropriate at this point to ask whether the thesis was successful. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, success has several meanings: (1) result, outcome, (2a) a favorable or satisfactory outcome or result, b) something having such an outcome, (3) the gaining of wealth, fame, rank, etc., (4) a successful person. Since definitions (3) and (4) deal with the success of the person, I will leave that to others to evaluate, however, I might note that while I haven't acquired under (3) wealth (I still own the thesis work) or fame, but hopefully rank if the earning of degree fits into that category. Under (1) the original definition of success as a result or outcome, no doubt I achieved it. There was a result, four pieces were made. It's with definition (2) that I will spend some time, energy and thought.

Upon completing the studio portion of this thesis work, i.e. the four pieces, I was able to turn my full attention to the writing of this report. Up to that point, because of time involved in the studio work, I limited my writing to notes to the thesis file, as well as occasional research. When I finally sat down to do the outline it seemed very logical to me to approach this report in much the same way that I would have approached the writing of a legal memorandum or brief. State the issue, set out the particulars of my proposal (the facts), set out the applicable rules, apply those to the facts and state the result. The only problem is that it didn't work even though I tried to
make it work. I was well into the beginning portions of this report before I realized I was putting the cart before the horse. My goal was to set out my thesis proposal, its origins, etc., then set forth the rules (so called) through which I was to accomplish these goals, and evaluate each of the four pieces created by those rules. See the problem here? My "rules" didn't even begin to become evident to me until the studio work was completed and I had the opportunity to think a bit about it. The upshot of all this is that when I arrived at this point in the report, I decided it was necessary to go back to the beginning to revise it to reflect the reality that I had many more questions than answers.

This thesis is not about the four pieces pictured here and showed in the gallery for which I received a pat on the back. It's about a process with a beginning, middle and end: idea, execution, distillation and report. For me its also about a process, that while coming to an end, points the way to the next process; it's about beginnings.

While I do have my favorites (the Bridge Table and the screen) and even if by my evaluation I call these pieces "successful", the success of the thesis is not to be evaluated by adding up the score of good versus not so good pieces, but rather by looking at the idea, the attempts to communicate that idea, the quality and clarity of the message, and the understanding of what took place, i.e. the process.

My primary objective was to convey a sense of the Genesee Valley to those who see or use those four furniture pieces.
During the process this objective was interpreted by me to include the calling to the mind of the viewer from their experience those places that are their equivalent of my home. The Salmon River in Idaho or Prospect Park in Brooklyn, it's the viewer's experience that matters.

The pieces I was happiest with were the simplest and most direct. In both the Bridge Table and the screen I limited my vocabulary to the textured versus the polished surfaces and the ever present bridge, simply expressed. Why I showed such restraint on the Bridge Table and avoided complicating it as I did with later pieces was at first a mystery to me, but now a bit clearer. Just figuring out how to accomplish the textural quality of the inside pedestal surfaces was daunting enough without my needing to complicate the piece further. A table with curved top and surfaces that need to be dusted with an air compressor was risky enough for me. By the time I got to the last piece, the screen, experience with a small dose of understanding played larger roles. I began to understand the import of the textured surfaces to the idea I wanted to communicate. I also felt no need to depict a particular bridge, just a nice timber bridge would do. By the time the process arrived at this piece, I was no longer concerned with trying to replicate the texture of the river gorge but rather relied on my visual memory to depict, as Yanagi calls it, the pattern of the place.12

I have discovered a beauty in the irregularity of a piece but such irregularity mustn't be of the self conscious variety. In the Ashantee bench, aside from the irregularity of the base,
the seat slats are inset from the end of the rails on the left and protrude past the end of the rails on the right. This was to suggest the continuity of that surface beyond the portion needed to for seating. Its irregularity is, however, the effortful, self conscious variety. With the screen the texture is simply a result of the construction process, effortless and less self conscious. This piece comes the closest to communicating those essences of the Genesee River Gorge, the verticality and texture of the walls, the water, the framing of the gorge within a park setting and perhaps most importantly the smallness of man and things manmade in such a landscape.

Back to the question posed several pages back: Was the thesis successful? Was the result satisfactory or favorable? To those questions, I answer, yes. The success lies not in the individual pieces, but in the body of work taken collectively and considered as part of a process. For me, the work was about seeing and communicating and only secondarily about making. It was about my realizing that Thompson Marsh's colored markers are not to be discarded, but rather appreciated for the critical looking they represent, while recognizing that looking critically isn't an end but a step toward seeing.

If I were to evaluate each piece by the standard of whether it demonstrated my ability to see, understand, and communicate a sense of the Genesee Valley, some would come up to the mark, other wouldn't. But the pieces taken collectively exhibit a progression from concern with technique to literal depiction of interesting elements to a more intuitive and relaxed
expression of the place.

If I had to reduce the foregoing to a few rules (once a lawyer, always a lawyer) to be carried with me at all times, they might be:

- See, don't just look
- Understand, don't just know
- Intuition works, rely on it
- Make useful things
- Quiet simplicity is beautiful
- Set the timer just in case I don't remember any of the above and need to know when to stop.
OAK TREES, GENESEO

FIGURE 5

GENESEE VALLEY FARMS

FIGURE 6
LOWER FALLS BRIDGE

FIGURE 7

ASHANTEE FIVE ARCH BRIDGE

FIGURE 8
NOTES


2. Master of Fine Arts Thesis Proposal:

I propose to use landscapes of and around the Genesee Valley as sources for furniture designs. The pieces to be designed and built will be principally functional. It is my intention with these pieces to evoke in the viewer or user a sense of the place used as source. Of particular interest are landscapes where the manmade and natural environment are strongly integrated.

Research will include a selected study of the work of other object makers and sculptors in wood and other media who have integrated landscape into their work. I will experiment with various materials, surface textures, etc. as needed to resolve how to most effectively express the natural and manmade materials of the landscape.

3. Letchworth State Park is a 14,350 acre New York State park along the Genesee River 35 miles south of Rochester. Within the park, the river roars over three major waterfalls. The cliffs approach 600 feet in height.


5. Jonathan Fairbanks is the Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.


8. Ibid., 114, 155.


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