Communication of Place Identity Through Designed Objects:
Can Public Artwork Foster a Sense of Community?

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Randy Mickel Olson

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Jerry and Margaret Olson and my brother Allen R. Olson. My parents taught me the meaning of community through involvement. Their work on the White Rock, SD school board, election board and village council had a great influence on my perception of community. Allen sought community through those engaged in the fine arts. As both an artist, and arts writer, Allen taught me the discipline to preserver in a world of engagement. Thank you for providing the groundwork that has lead up to this Dissertation.

Abstract

Public artwork has been used as architectural embellishment or served as visual narrative to venerate a particular point of view. Over the past fifty years the purpose of public artifact has shifted to relevant site amenity. Utilizing a phenomenological method of inquiry this study seeks to determine to what extent a resident's experience of community is shaped by public sculptures placed in neighborhood parks. These artifacts were commissioned through the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood Gateway Project. Between 1992 and 2004, eighteen Neighborhood Gateways were established. This study examines twelve residents' experience of these artifacts in three different communities to determine to what extent these resident's experience of community was shaped by the Gateway project.

The results of this study provide commissioning agencies and artists with methods to address this shift and create artifacts with imbedded intrinsic value. Five pertinent themes were discovered by this study: Binding Metaphor, Multimodal Sensory Engagement, Sense of Pride, Creation of an Axis Mundi, and Opportunities for Dialogue These themes provide a framework whereby artists, funders and curators can more successfully integrate their artwork into community.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Public artwork has been a part of western culture from the ancient city-state to today's international metropolis. These objects can take on many physical forms such as mural, relief and freestanding artifact. Such artifacts were often implemented as architectural embellishment or served as visual narrative to venerate a particular point of view.

Over the past fifty years the use of public artifact has changed. Once decorative or political, the public artifact has come into a new existence as relevant site amenity. City plazas that once sprouted monumental works by international artists may now find local relevance through artifacts intended as amenities or wayfinding devices.

Commissioning agencies and artists engaged in the task of seeking to instill artifact with a cultural focus must struggle to give those artifacts local relevance. To be successful, these commissioning agencies and artists need to seek public acceptance. This study examines selected artifacts from one multi-year project who's intent was to foster community spirit through public art.

Statement of the Problem

The topic of this research was to examine the role that public artwork, specifically artifacts created through the City of Minneapolis' (MN) Neighborhood Gateway Project, play in the *lifeworld* of community residents. To state it bluntly, did anyone notice the considerable effort that was put into this multi-year project which created eighteen designed public spaces in an attempt to "create community". Through a Phenomenological analysis of residents' perception of the Neighborhood Gateway

Project artifacts, this study seeks to determine to what extent residents every day activity, or lifeworld, is influenced by these designed spaces.

Purpose of the Study

Humans are social creatures that seek community. Interaction with mediated technology and patterns of employment have disrupted many community structures. This loss of physical community in contemporary society is marked by an increasing value on electronically mediated space and specialized forms of employment. Alternatively, humans create their prime spatial reference form a bodily relationship to the Earth. Up, down, front, back, are all in relationship to the plane of the Earth. The importance of this study is to determine if designed public spaces, such as the artifacts of the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood Gateway Project, can enforce a psychological / physical connection to geographic place in a world that has become increasing disconnected from place.

The designed public spaces that constitute the focus of this study have been commissioned through the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood Gateway Project. This project was administered through City of Minneapolis Arts Commission from 1992 through 2004. During that period 18 pieces of public art were commissioned (Figure 1). All these public artworks are sited in identifiable residential communities throughout the City of Minneapolis. The intent of the Neighborhood Gateway Project was to cerate artifacts that "hold special meaning for the community and help generate community spirit" (City of Minneapolis).

This study uses a phenomenological method of inquiry to discern the public's

experience of community as mediated through the local Gateway projects. The use of the phenomenological method enables the researcher to obtain the subject's pre-judgmental description. These descriptions were reviewed in the aggregate to distill the essential themes common for all participants. Themes that make up the resident's lifeworld description will form the final product of this study – a genuine reflection of how community perception is influenced by the Gateway artifacts.

Minneapolis Arts Commission

The Minneapolis Arts Commission (MAC) was established by City ordinance in December of 1974 (city of Minneapolis). Mirroring a nation-wide effort by the National Endowment for the Arts (Kwon, 2002, p.64), the MAC took up the challenge of civic development through the arts. Such local action was sparked earlier in that year by the National Endowment for the Arts through their rededication to support artworks which exhibit "appropriateness to immediate site" (as cited in Kwon, 2002, p. 65).

Starting in 1992, and running through 2004, the MAC operated the Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Program. Over these 12 years the Gateway Program facilitated the installation of 18 public artworks. The Gateways were largely funded from the City's capital budget, although most received additional financial support from their local neighborhood. Commissioning of these artworks was initiated as grassroots action from citizens of recognized geographic neighborhoods. These neighborhood proposals were then brought up for MAC review by either community development organizations or the City of Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (city of Minneapolis).

MAC's intent of tying artifact to community was "to help generate community spirit". The Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Program funneled requests through the 17-member, city appointed, Minneapolis Arts Commission. This appointed body was made up of representatives from the arts community, art non-profit administrators, and laypersons (Haugh). Once selected to participate in the Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Program, a neighborhood was represented by the MAC as they issued the RFP (request for proposals), facilitated artist selection, and conducted project oversight.

This study examines the role that three of the Neighborhood Gateway artifacts play in the formation of a sense of community. These artifacts are: Cottontail on the Trail; the 2002 Hale-Page Gateway – the Seward Neighborhood Gateway titled Merwyn, completed in 2003 – P. S. Wish You Were Here, the 2005 Longfellow Gateway.

The Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Program takes its name from the area that once acted as the ceremonial entrance, or *gateway*, to the city of Minneapolis. During the late 1800's and early 1900's Hennepin and Nicollet Avenue diverged into separate, parallel streets at the foot of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Since the business district was accessed via this bridge, the triangular area where these streets diverged was dedicated as Gateway Park.

In the early years of the twentieth century Gateway Park was a place of splendor. Bedecked with colonnaded walkways the core feature was the "Pavilion". The Pavilion's function as a bathhouse may seem an odd amenity by today's standards. Consideration must be made that city apartment dwellers of this period commonly had shared bathrooms, many times with only a cold-water sink and toilet. To these people the

opportunity for a warm bath was a luxury (Hirschoff & Hart, pp. 36-37). The

Neighborhood Gateway Program was a modern extension of these efforts to provide the

City of Minneapolis with civic amenities.

Definitions

This study uses certain terms in a prescribed manner. In many cases the meanings

are discernable through their use in context. For the purpose of clarity, terms that have a

definable relationship relevant to the topic of this study are defined as follows:

Artifact – a human constructed object that may be either a free standing sculpture or

an intergraded landscape feature such as benches or railing. In the context of this study

artifact will always refer to an object of aesthetic value intended to enhance the

surrounding area.

Commissioning / sponsoring agency – a public, private, or governmental

organization that acts as physical agent for the commissioning of public art.

Community – a subset of place, community acts as a psychological construct that

creates intrinsic personal value for a specific place. This value system may include

nostalgia for a venerated past, pride in a contemporary context, and optimism for a

positive future.

Designed public space – a geographically definable area that may include both

artifact and sculptural element. The purpose of this space is to enhance resident's

connection to place and form an enhanced sense of community.

Neighborhood Gateway Project – A multi-year project undertaken by the City of

Minneapolis' MN Art Commission intended to "create community" through the

placement artifacts in public spaces. Between 1992 and 2004, this program placed artifacts in 18 indefinable neighborhoods. The project takes its name form a public space that formerly occupied the split of Hennepin and Nicollet Avenues, at the foot of the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Since this was the ceremonial entry into the city the space was referred to as the Minneapolis Gateway.

Place – a psychological construct that creates intrinsic value for a physically definable geographic area. Often *place* is used as a reference point for the physical locus of psychological community.

Public art – an artifact in a place that is freely accessible to the general public. For the purpose of this study the artifacts will all be free standing objects.

Request for Proposal (RFP) – for the scope of this study this term will refer to a document prepared by a commissioning organization that solicits proposals for public art at a specific site. The RFP spells out the conditions, specifications, site description, and other considerations that are to be addressed by applicants who propose an artifact for review.

Sculptural element – usually a three dimensional element, often free standing, that is the primary focus of a designed public space. The sculptural element is generally the artifact that is commissioned by the sponsoring organization.

Site – A physically definable geographic area usually used by the commissioning agency as they prepare a request for proposal (RFP).

Site modifications / enhancements – The commissioned artist, or team of artists, may incorporate other artifacts, such as seating or landscaping, which completes their proposal

for a designed public space.

Space – a physically definable three-dimensional area. For the purpose of this study, *space* will define the immediate surroundings of the sculptural element. *Space* differentiates itself from place as being the physical envelope that contains *designed public space*.

Significance of the Study

This study is intended for a primary audience of public art administrators, such as not-for-profit directors, their staff members, members of philanthropic foundations or state arts agencies. This audience must bear the responsibility for successfully blending community intent, an artist's vision, and donated or public monies in order to create an artifact of significant cultural value. A secondary audience would comprise educators in the field of art, art history, and landscape architecture.

By taking on the responsibility of facilitating the installation of an artifact that is incorporated into the everyday life of a community such organizations assume the role of cultural change agent. To take on this task successfully, the organization must gain community support. This study will analyze how one community-centered effort, the Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Project, has impacted resident's perception of community.

This research was performed as a case study that reflects the resident's point of view towards the installed artifact. In so doing, this study provides value by garnering public opinion on the artifacts. Subsequent planning authorities can refer to these comments as a "best practices" model that provides a reflective viewpoint from multiple residents.

Problem and Significance in Related Literature

Forecast Public Artworks, a St. Paul, MN based not-for-profit organization,

publishes the definitive journal in the field of public art. Their bi-annual *Public Art*

Review is a topically oriented compilation of contemporary public art practice and theory.

With an international distribution list, *Public Art Review* has covered this field since the

debut issue of spring1989.

Numerous articles have appeared in *Public Art Review* that are pertinent to the field

of designed public space. *Public Art Review* articles have included a discussion of John

Chandler's view on how art and transportation can enliven public places (Public Art

Review, summer/fall 1989), Elyn Zimmerman's analysis of how public art functions in

regard to environmental problems (spring/summer 1990), Jeffrey Kastner's definition of

public art (spring/summer 1991), Twin-Cities independent writer Mason Riddle, reveals

the conditions under which garden artists create (fall/winter 1991), the comprehensive

article by Claire Wickersham, John Wetenhall and Mary Kilroy as they examine the

scope of local, state, and regional percent-for-art programs (fall/winter 1993), plus the

landmark Fall/Winter 2008 issue devoted to urban and suburban art (fall winter 2008).

The tenth anniversary edition of *Public Art Review* (fall winter 1999) segues into the

realm of book publishing when English author Malcolm Miles discusses public art in

Europe as depicted in his 1997 book; *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban*

Futures. In part, Miles examines how public art in the form of "monument" can become

entangled in a power structure that either enforces a current regime or commemorates a

venerable past. The author also notes the relevancy that public art can hold.

Setting the stage for the social construct known as city, Miles (1997) points to the street as the place for engagement. However, this engagement has been eroded through a cultural shift toward transitory and anonymous lifestyles. With specialization of work, and compartmentalizing of activities, the urban dweller resides in a world where a sense of community is not tied to their immediate neighbors (Miles, p. 36). These neighbors, as viewed by Miles, have such varied interests that a "general public" no longer exists; supplanted by a community of heterogeneous thought. Here, publicly designed space can provide a commonality of interest from which to engage this fractured geographic community in an effort to create psychological community (Miles, p. 97).

Ronald Fleming's (2007) approach to public space and art is less didactic, although he shares Mile's dictate for community engagement. In his book *The Art of Placemaking*, Fleming identifies six genre of public art. From these case studies, Fleming builds an argument for a participatory form of public art. Culminating this large volume, Fleming provides a narrative for public engagement through the "Environmental Profile" (Fleming, pp. 317-320). This Profile takes into account many of the attributes identified in Fleming's case studies and addresses Mile's concern for the lack of one, identifiable, general public.

Leslie Umberger's (2007) book *Sublime Spaces & Visionary Worlds* depicts public art resulting from individual inspiration. Completed for the October 2007 Kohler Art Center's exhibit and conference of the same name, Umberger explores the public artist and their private muse. Through monumental scale, privately inspired public works such as Fred Smith's Wisconsin Concrete Park, The Nohl Lake Cottage Environment, and

Tom Ever's Forevertron, Umberger strives to define "the heart of the genuine" as inspiration for public art (Umberger, pp. 47-55).

Research Questions

This research project has two objectives. These objectives examine the lifeworld of community residents to determine under what conditions, and to what degree, does the Neighborhood Gateway Project produce desirable community attributes.

- Objective one of this study will be to determine what affect the designed spaces of the Minneapolis Gateway Project have on residents' experience of community.
- Objective two will be to use the findings of objective one to construct a list of desirable community-building attributes for designed spaces.

These objectives relate to research questions that will expand upon the objective's theme and ultimately direct multiple interview questions. Since phenomenological research is interested in knowing how people live with a particular experience the research questions will form the functional framework that guides the process of inquiry. These questions will provide a "how" and "what" thematic framework from which to pursue the research – such as, "How do residents experience community" and "what influences this experience"?

Relationship of objective to question is best explained through the following matrix:

Relationship of Objective to Question – Table 1

Research Objective	Research Question
Identify criteria that makes a designed community space relevant to residents' lives (the phenomenological "life world")	How do artifacts define community: what specific *physical* attributes of designed community space produce the experience of community?
	How do residents experience community: what *psychological* attributes of designed community space produce the experience of community?
Construct a list of desirable community building attributes [that foster a sense of community]	What *levels* of community involvement produce resident buy-in?
	What *forms* of community involvement produce resident buy-in?

Implementation Methods for Objectives

A phenomenological research method was utilized for this research. Therefore, actual questioning was phrased to assist the subject in the recollection of details surrounding their experience of a designed public space. These questions were phrased such as; a) Please give me a personal example of an experience you had where a designed public space was relevant to you, b) recalling that time, what was that experience like for you? These directed questions are intended to prompt the subject's pre-reflective experience.

The overall syntax of these interview questions ties back to the formal research questions. These questions seek both physical and psychological components of the designed community space that provides intrinsic value for the subject. When viewed

collectively, responses from all subjects will provide a list of catalysts that create intrinsic value in regard to the designed public space and foster the concept of community.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study will limit the geographic area to the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The only public artifacts examined will be those that were commissioned and installed through the City of Minneapolis' Art Commission as a part of the Neighborhood Gateway Project.

This study seeks to understand a broad topic through a relatively small sample size. To accomplish this certain overall assumptions and generalizations must be made.

The primary assumption is that the proposed sample size of twelve respondents will provide a random cross section of the community. The accompanying generalization is that the comments of these respondents will reflect the values of the entire community.

There is also an assumption that respondents will be familiar enough with the subject matter to converse in an informed manner. A parallel generalization is that respondents can provide a level of discourse that reflects community awareness.

There was also one psychological limitation that may bias respondents. The study assumes that respondents care enough about their community to take the time to conduct an interview. Such a mindset will screen out apathetic residents. Therefore, it may be generalized that study respondents exhibit a positive bias.

Overall, there are four primary limitations for this study; all can be addressed by expanding the study to encompass a broader scope. These limitations are:

1) Study is limited to a metropolitan area – designed public space is not the sole domain of urban neighborhoods. To be more comprehensive, the study would need to expand to encompass suburban, x-urban, and rural areas that have incorporated designed public space.

2) Study limited to one geographic area – the study is being conducted in one Midwestern city. To be valid across the US this study would have to contain a cross section of major cities.

3) Pre-selected sample – by using the City of Minneapolis' Art Commission as a cultural broker to obtain introductions to research participants the sample is not truly random. In defense of this method, this study is being conducted under budget constraints of self-funding. Furthermore, since there is no auxiliary research staff, the primary field researcher is also the study originator.

4) Interview subjects are voluntary – the field interviews will rely on persons who voluntarily come forward to participate. This situation creates the possibility for involvement by persons with polarized opinions that statistically may be considered "outliers".   However, the phenomenological method relies on identifying common themes. So to a certain extend the research method filters out highly polarized opinions.

Future refinements of such a study include methods that randomly engage the public. These methods may include selecting a statistically random sample from a community database. Such a sample could then be pre-screened by phone to access their willingness to participate and ability to comment on the subject manner. Likewise, randomness could be assumed from solicitation of participants in attendance of a community event. These

attendees could be approached and given the chance to respond or refuse an interview. A similar method would involve setting up an interview station at a community meeting spot, such as coffee shop, and waiting for patrons to volunteer to be interview subjects.

<p align="center">**Researcher Bias**</p>

As a practicing sculptor who creates work for public space my potential for bias in this project is an immediate target. I fully acknowledge this as an area for plausible criticism and offer the following personal perspective.

Before conceiving this project I became aware of efforts to establish doctorate level research in the field of art at UK and Australian universities. Researching this aspect I began to question why the artist should be limited to aesthetic considerations. If that limitation truly exists, where is the research that will expand practice? This research embodies the answer to that self-imposed question.

Furthermore, I remain distant from the Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway project. I never participated in any of the competitions for commission. Likewise, my acquaintance with any of the commissioned artists is limited to interviews conducted as part of previous research.

Phenomenology also has a method to diminish researcher bias. Through bracketing the researcher temporarily suspending their prejudices and beliefs so as to understand the essential structure of the research participant's lifeworld. In so doing the researcher reframes from a judgmental point of view to better understand the participant's unique experience (van Manen, p. 175). Additional issues regarding researcher biases are also addressed in chapter three's section on Verification and Validity.

Summary

Using the phenomenological method of inquiry this research project examined the significance that public artwork, in the form of the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood Gateway Project, influenced the lifeworld of residents, thereby helping to create a sense of community. Existing research on the connection of public art to the formation of a sense of community will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

Chapter two provides a theoretical overview on research that investigates how humans create a sense of community. Using this research a case will be built for the role that artifacts take as catalyst that turns random space into identifiable place.

Historical Context

Place identity; superficially identified as rural, urban, and suburban connote a familiar hierarchical structure. However this delineation is a socially constructed pattern that has not always been the norm. The incipient stages of human culture functioned best under a widely dispersed tribal pattern. Tribal, in the boarder term, can be taken to mean family or any egalitarian structured human enclave. Membership into a tribe is a birthright; that birthright includes self-identity as a tribal member. Tribal norms concern ways of thinking and living that are best for the group. Had humankind remained structured in such a social manner any discussion of identity through place and artifact would be irrelevant (Hartman, 1998, pp. 196-7).

Although the tribal member gained personal identity from the collective culture, this culture required a physical grounding. Eliade (1957) states that such grounding is a primordial human experience that underpins all reflection of the world (pp. 20-21). Furthermore, grounding divides the world into two human constructs of space, the sacred and the profane. Grounding therefore provides a tool for the identification of sacred space.

A dichotomy exists between these two organizational structures. Both offer identity, but structure that identity through quite different means. The tribe, as a product of organic inevitability stands in stark contrast to the socially produced city. As blatant as this divide now appears, the split came about quite subversively as city began to supplant tribal significance.

However different in function, sites once sacred, now profane, share a common language of highly visible symbols. Using visual drama and display once relevant only to scared religious rites, the city was now free to create a visual spectacle that would overwhelm the secular sphere. Transcending the temporary bounds of intermittent religious ceremony, the city became a permanent symbol of place for its citizens.

Place created out of ceremony is reliant on ceremony to remain significant. The development of the city transformed place to become reliant upon artifact. But artifacts must attain, and then retain a cultural significance. Heritage can create a framework of significance to place artifacts into a referential frame that memorializes a venerable past. Leaders seated on faithful steeds, and epic fallen warriors, replaced mythical idols as items of public venerability. Through relevance to secular norm, artifacts such as monuments, create heritage and work as glue, forming a cultural pattern of tradition that bind citizen to place (Tuan, 1997, p. 174).

However, monuments are transient, their closed version of history affirms dominant structures of power at one point in time. The problem with monuments is that "place" is static and time is "dynamic" and open to political change. Monuments proclaiming

statements of the past may not always impress the future. So was the case as the

ceremonial significance of place ceded to secular interests (Miles, 1997, pp. 66-75).

Visible symbols in the form of physical artifact provide a strong reference for place;

often providing stronger relevance than drama or display. In Greek mythology a

Palladium was an artifact so sacred as to control the very fate of the city. Such artifacts

became so significant to the ancient world that according to Homer's *Iliad* even though

siege had been successful, the Palladium had to be removed before the city of Troy could

be taken (Tuan, 1997, p. 173).

The supplanting of scared ceremonial site to center of commerce facilitated the

conceptual transformation of space to place. Although a cultural construct, place exerts a

powerful influence; first as mythical [ceremonial site], then pragmatic [city], and finally

to become abstract / theoretical [concept of freedom and autonomy] (Tuan, 1997, p. 17).

The ability to transform inanimate space to place through public artwork is tied to

more recent developments that pushed society from pragmatic to abstract and theoretical

constructs. The greatest rate of change in human history occurred at the start of the

Industrial Revolution. But technological innovation alone would not lead to societal

reforms. A new form of reasoning would be required to transform a society of

disconnected feudal city-states into empires of autonomous individuals seeking a unique

experience of place.

Aristotelian based thought dominated western European development. Throughout

the centuries that spanned Platonic reasoning to Descartes' rationalism these idioms

provided little advancement for the individual. Without the concept of individual – place was merely where a person lived out a life of servitude.

The Enlightenment ushered in a new form of thought. Seventeenth century English philosopher John Locke became the watershed that split the individual out from the person. Locke's Empiricism broke from strict logical deduction and proposed that humankind could create understanding through experience and sensory perception. Whereas formerly the person was born lock step into a rigid hierarchal society, now the individual had the natural right of autonomy (Herrick, 2001, pp. 170-1).

Autonomy comes with a price; and that price is definition of self. No longer shackled to a "chain of being" where society defined a caste existence, the individual was now autonomous to seek their position. Part of the price for this liberating philosophy was that individuals could form new allegiances to place; a drama that is still unfolding as communities vie for the allegiance of an autonomous public. Contemporary public artifact is often a tool for such locus as communities vie for individual's allegiance.

Public art in the nineteenth century remained decorative and commemorative. Terra cotta murals and bronze embodiments of fallen heroes were the norm. To be truly representative of place, and able to define space, art would need to break free of the literal and visual narrative to embrace the abstract and metaphoric.

Ancient city-state dictates for artifact would resurface as national policy beginning in the 1960's as the United States Federal Government enacted three successive models for the sponsorship of public art. Once again artifact would gain focus for the creation of

place through the *Art in Public Places, Art as Public Space*, and *Art in the Public Interest* models of public investiture (Kwon, 2002, p.57).

The genesis for this series of policies was the 1963 creation of the General Services Administration's (GSA) Art in Architecture Program. Largely the domain of international renowned sculptors, the '60s saw the placement of larger than gallery versions of Alexander Calder's stay-biles (a term to differentiate these from the movable mobiles), Pablo Picasso's anthropomorphic abstractions, and Henry Moore's sleek monoliths (Kwon, 2002, p.60).

Aesthetic as these artworks may be in themselves, each proclaims an indifference to place. So strong was this spatial disconnect that Moore asserted that only relationship to the sky could reveal "the sculptor's inner scale…rather than to trees, a house, or people" (Kwon, 2002, p.63).

Grandiose in execution, these public installations had no regard for place, except that place served as showcase for artifact. Standing as a contradiction to architecture these installations were, at best, an extraneous element to their environment.

In application however, the Art in Public Places Program, administered through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), proclaimed a noble sentiment; the "aesthetic edification" of the American public. The NEA perceived these artworks as an antidote to an otherwise monotonous, functionalist architectural landscape of the contemporary city. Thus, NEA sought to altruistically inject a humanizing factor into the urban world (Kwon, 2002, p.64).

To the general public these installations remained "plop art". Alien to their surroundings, incomprehensible to the public, these works became more of the artist's signature than a signifier of place.

By 1974 the lack of public response to these major installations began to sway the NEA's attitude. Restating their purpose in sponsorship of public art, the NEA modified their guidelines to include a stipulation for "appropriateness to immediate site" (as cited in Kwon, 2002, p. 65). Turning away from artwork of international acclaim, the NEA now sought significance of place.

Somewhere in this milieu of policy lurked a presupposition to a causal relationship between aesthetics of the built environment and an innate betterment of the quality of life. By the end of the '70s federal policy had redirected public art to the function of site-oriented public amenity. Plazas once replete with monumental artwork now yielded to the human scale of walkway, benches, and railings (Kwon, 2002, p.67).

Art in the public interest would be the third incarnation of federal funding policy. This adjustment came about as an attempt to integrate the functionality of amenity into the civic life of community. An ambiguous term, the definition of community can be quite fluid. Brought about by public resentment of site-oriented work that failed to meet the social and psychological needs of place – community here refers to a discourse; the type of discourse that would irrefutably link artifact to place (Kwon, 2002, p.95).

However, the meteoric growth of urban centers in the last half of the twentieth century generally valued expediency and price over design. Public artwork as articulation of place identity would languish. Mobility afforded by an excellent network

of roads put the necessities of life and recreational facilities within minutes reach by car –
thus negating the need for replication in each community.

Post-millennial suburbia is now home to over 50% of the American population.
Parallel to this demographic change a maturing factor has set in. Maturity in age – the
prosperous generation that enabled suburban sprawl is now nearing retirement. Maturity
in aspirations – when suburb becomes synonymous with bedroom, and commute
becomes a major part of waking hours, where does one find the rootedness of
community?

Conceptual Framework

Redefining natural space into civic space is not a new concept. Once mythical, then
pragmatic; space must now must rely on a conceptual basis for a contemporary
incarnation of place.

Eliade's (1957) description of "a shattered universe … consisting of an infinite
number of neutral places in which man moves" gives context to the dilemma. Modern
society exists in homogenized space with little regard for place. Many times the only
regard to define sacred from the profane lays in the creation of "privileged places" that
have personal relevance such as birthplace, hometown, or country of origin (p. 24). Such
places provide a personal "threshold" separating space by providing an individually
rooted place (p. 25).

Tuan notes that rootedness for the individual is only part of the answer – providing a
secular point of view.   Concepts of place must be drawn from the individual as they open
themselves to new life experiences (Tuan, 2004, p.4). Situational in manner; new

experiences of place to a child can be as close as the back yard. As modern humans we are constantly besieged with a bi-polar tug to create place from the familiar, and the new spaces, we inhabit (Tuan, 2004, pp.7-8).

A contemporary critique of society's attempt to create new place is offered by the Director of Public Art at England's Chelsea College of Art and Design. Malcolm Miles (1997) asserts that current western concepts of civic place are dependent on an artificial viewpoint. While the actual city is dynamic, the plan from which the city is devised is static. Convention states that a city plan adopts the schema of a map, looking down from above. Miles contends that this point of view creates a grandiose vision "as seen through God's eyes" (p. 41).

According to Miles, a clearer perspective for city planning would be to encounter the street at eyelevel of the pedestrian. At this level the street "offers casual encounters, possibilities for engagement, and adoption or relinquishment of [the street's inherent] personality" (p. 21). Such a genuine form of civic engagement is in stark contrast to the typical map, which provides a disassociated view similar to that from an office tower window (Miles, 1997, p. 21).

Public artifacts must exist in two places, the physical and psychological. The physical by sheer inclusion consists of the art space and surrounding architecture. Physicality is complicated by the contradiction of public access to an esthetic object and the public's requirement for a level of cultural sophistication from which to appreciate that object. Psychological place concerns personal values and associations within the public realm that form a context for the individual's lived everyday experience of a space

containing the public artifact. In Miles opinion, combining these two concerns is paramount in the creation of perceived public value (Miles, p. 58).

Part of that public value could be an inferred set of roles and relationships between self and the built environment. Tuan detects a lack of "consensus genitum" (agreement of the people) in regards to personal artifacts of the modern culture (Tuan, 1997, p. 117). Perhaps it is this vacuum that places value on public art, and the ability of such artifacts to make space feel familiar and become place (Tuan, 1997, p. 73).

Rip Rapson (2005), President of Minneapolis' McKnight Foundation offers the perspective that community art can best be understood as an ecosystem. Such an intercommoned systems model links arts organizations; urban, suburban and rural arts activity, and individual artists, to their respective communities. Rapson's hope is that such an organic viewpoint can open a broader civic conversation about the cultural capital needs that can be answered through art (Suburban arts, 2005).

Taking a purely pragmatic approach, Ronald Fleming (2007) defines *placemaking art* as the new genre for public installations. Beginning with the short lived 1973-77 Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA), Fleming has sought to bridge community and artist. This work extended into the planning of main street projects during the '70s and '80s.   Fleming now focuses on integrating artist created public work into the web of a cityscape.

This integration comes from a two-step process starting with dialogue. Through dialogue residents define their surroundings and create a narrative that recognizes their visual, environment and community heritage. Once defined, this criterion is integrated

into a set of urban-design objectives that help the community establish uniqueness of place (Fleming, p. 288).

Key to Fleming's process is working community residents through an analysis process of cultural, behavioral and physical space. Fleming acknowledges that each community is different in respect to its contextual setting, but cites one consistently common element, the defining of "genius loci" (spirit of place). It is this spirit that will convert a public art project from an add-on to an integrated element that defines placemaking needs of the community (Fleming, p. 288).

The process at this point begins to resemble Max van Manens's (1997) definition for phenomenological inquiry. According to van Manen "humans express their experience of the world through art, science, law, architecture [van Manen's order] and especially through language". By creating a dialogue that explores "the lived human experience" of place, phenomenology provides an analytical tool that can deduce universal meanings (van Manen, p. 14).

Van Manen's description of universal meaning parallels Miles (1997) psychological place, where context provides the individual's lived everyday experience. Similarly, universal meaning may answer Tuan's (1997) noted lack of "consensus genitum" (Tunan, p. 117). Furthermore, universal meaning fits nicely into what Fleming's terms "genius loci" (Fleming, p. 288).

Fleming cautions that placemaking should not be mistaken as a process that directs what the artist will ultimately create. Never indented as a literal narrative, the placemaking analysis is distilled into a metaphor representing the community. This

metaphor becomes the vehicle of expression where artist and community can meet to explore expectations on a common ground (Fleming, p. 288).

Place is ill served if an artwork is simply installed with no community input. Likewise, great artwork is ineffective without an amenable venue for display. Process leverages these two concerns to create a result often larger than its aggregate parts. Process here refers to Fleming's (1997) work that takes a community's dialogue from public forum to civic arena. Establishing the community's urban-design objectives therefore leads into a process that engages the political sphere of local jurisdictions as these design objectives are integrated into a municipal master plan for development (Fleming, p. 289).

The final step that integrates art into place requires clear vision. According to Fleming, this vision can only be established through a systematic approach to commissioning artwork. Such an approach identifies the best potential projects, artists, and establishes criteria such as timetable and budget. Adherence to this structure can avoid a situation where supportive neighborhoods get "feel-good" projects; but the city at large does not benefit from an integrated arts program that identifies the uniqueness of place (Fleming, 1997, p. 291).

Theory

Theory relevant to the domain of public art includes the works of authors who address Western culture's reliance upon the metaphor as a tool to create understanding. Much of our culture's ability to communicate both in verbal and written forms is based upon creating new meaning predicated upon the context of prior understanding. The

metaphor becomes a useful tool when we understand a new object by a relationship to something familiar – such as appreciating a piece of abstract public art because that art is understood through a metaphor such as representing the community's dynamic growth.

Plato made great use of metaphor in his dialogues. In *Republic* Plato builds an ideal community. To demonstrate the abstract concept of "truth" Plato relies upon the metaphor of the cave. In Plato's cave, the dwellers are only aware of the happenings of the outside world (truth) through shadows cast upon the wall (Plato, p. 108).

This powerful visual metaphor is in contrast with Plato's distain for the "artist". Where Plato sees value in "artisan" as one who creates useful things, the "artist" only imitates things. Throughout *Republic* Plato considers where to place the artist and their work. Unfortunately, many visual creative endeavors have fallen victim to Plato's distain for the creative arts. Over the intervening two-millennium, public artwork has often been regarded as a superficial monument to uphold the status quo or venerate past events.

Guttenberg's adaptation of wine press, Chinese movable type, and creation of specialized ink, enabled mass printing on a practical scale. The world of circa 1440 was just rediscovering Plato's writings. The printing press enabled the widespread dissemination of Platonic reasoning. Such sequential logic fit well into a world ruled through dogmatic religious thought (Fang pp. 38-40).

The Enlightenment would provide theoretical platforms enabling greater understanding of the physical world. Descartes' writings paved the way for scientific objectivity. However, Descartes simultaneously provided a seventeenth century codification of staid Platonic reason.

John Locke would provide the first Western relief from Platonic logic when he proposed a definition of "self". To Locke, humanity was endowed with individual inalienable rights. Abstract as Locke's concept of the individual may have been, Locke insisted on writing that was precise. Locke regarded the metaphor as providing only linguistic ornamentation and confusion.

Freud's delve into the subconscious mind, and Jung's quest for the archetype provided the first fractures that would release metaphor from regard as decorative. However, linguists such as Edward Sapier, with his Linguistic Determinism, and Benjamin Whorf, with his lexical limitation to thought, retrenched Platonic reason.

Metaphor is finally emancipated through the writings of (Ivor Armstrong) I. A. Richards. Publishing his works in the mid 1930s, Richards identifies metaphor as a basis of understanding when his Interaction Theory regards "thought as metaphoric" (Richards, p.127).

Providing an analytical model, Richards proposes "Tenor" as the subject and "Vehicle" as providing modification for the subject (Richards, p.132). From this model, we can dissect a metaphor to understand the implications. Context is provided to understand unfamiliar concepts when attributes of the vehicle are reflected back onto the tenor.

An example of Tenor and Vehicle is provided through a phrase such as "the economy is shaky". An extended dialogue could be used to provide a basis as to why economic instability has occurred, or the familiar disturbing attributes of "shaky" can be reflected back onto economy to provide a similar comprehension.

In 1949 anthropologist Joseph Campbell's *Hero With a Thousand Faces* was published. Campbell's watershed work traces the pan-cultural similarities in myth. Through his studies, Campbell identifies a common syntax imbedded in western through.

Campbell's writings equate metaphor with myth when he sates that "the prime function of mythology … [is] to supply symbols that carry the human spirit forward" (Campbell, p.11). These symbols are entrusted to the hero who must "communicate to people who insist on the exclusive evidence of their senses" (p.218). Through the hero's action a link is created in "the unconscious fields of practical action … [permitting] comprehension within the fact world" (p.257). The task of the hero is therefore to implement their newly gained knowledge through a metaphor that enables the hero to impart their wisdom to a public mired in pragmatic thought.

As a generation of scholars embraced the writings of Richards and Campbell, a groundswell of metaphor theoreticians began their research in the 1960's. This was manifest through an increased recognition of metaphor in book topics beginning in the early 1980's.

Michael Osborn referred back to Jungian terms when he proposed archetypical metaphors. Although subject to peer criticism, Osborn sided with the work of Campbell and maintained that there exist metaphors so imbedded in the human experience that they transcend cultural boundaries. Osborn used his archetypical metaphor in the rhetorical examination of political speech to identify themes related to fire, water, and blood (as cited by Pierce, pp. 132-133).

Max Black (1962) updated the work of Richards when he proposed that the joining of terms from unrelated fields creates a framework of metaphorical understanding. Advancing an analytical tool quite similar to Richards, Black renames them *Target* and *Source* – a set of terms that would be carried on by most contemporary metaphor researchers (Black, pp. 25-47).

Jillian Jaynes' work from the late 1960's through early '80s proposed a radical and un-provable thesis that is worth mention. Jayne's thesis purports that metaphoric thought actually affected the course of western civilization. In Jaynes' research he discovered reoccurring shifts in human cognition. Jaynes attributed this shift as an adaptation to phonetic language that forced the comprehension of metaphoric thought. With objects no longer represented by pictograms, the human mind had to relate to markings that represented sounds. These sounds then had to be reconstructed into concepts or metaphors (Jaynes pp. 59-66).

From this point of view Jaynes proposes that language is now "an organ of perception". Once confronted with the task of converting marks to sounds, and sounds to thoughts, the next jump in cognition is the human ability to link unrelated words so as to form metaphoric understanding (Jaynes p. 50).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) are considered the preeminent authorities in contemporary definition of metaphor. Lakeoff contends that metaphor is not merely a linguistic tool. The metaphor, to Lakoff, becomes a tool of conceptual understanding.

Through an empirical study of syntax, Lakoff and Johnson dissect the English language. By relying on the Target and Source model, Lakoff and Johnson unravel common phrases of speech to identify categories of metaphor.

Through their analysis, Lakoff and Johnson reveal the depth to which metaphor penetrates everyday thought. Metaphoric relationships are formed whenever one term is described through concepts of another. Phrases such as "the market is up" derive their meaning through the spatial metaphor of "up" in regards to raising from the horizontal plane (pp. 14-19).

Through this progression of concepts, metaphor has been identified as a conceptual basis for human understanding. Let us now turn to application of metaphor in a context relevant to the artist and designer.

Integration of Theory

Metaphor will be examined as a tool whereby the artist / designer can bridge the gap between the artists / designer's discourse community and the public's realm of general knowledge. By engaging the public in discourse the artist / designer obtains relevant feedback enabling the artist / designer to create a work that embodies intrinsic value for all parties.

In application, this study examines how effective the City of Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Project was at creating a meaningful metaphor of community for residents. This was accessed through phenomenological research methods to identify how the Gateway Project impacted community residents "lifeworld" of everyday experiences.

Residents were interviewed and the transcripts of these interviews were examined for meaning units. These meaning units reveal if relevant metaphors of community were created by the installation of the Gateway Project artifacts.

Summary

An argument has been presented on how humans create a sense of place, and the role that artifacts take as catalyst that turns random space into identifiable place. Furthermore, this chapter has examined how humans communicate place through the linguistic tool of metaphor. Chapter three will describe the phenomenological mode of inquiry this study employs to determine what forms of metaphoric language are used to imbed intrinsic value into designed public space.

Chapter 3 – Research Method

Introduction

Chapter three describes the phenomenological mode of inquiry used to conduct this study. By utilizing a mode of inquiry that gains the perspective of residents' everyday activities this study gauges how effectively designed public space, in the form of the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood Gateway Project, has influenced the lifeworld of community residents.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Research Design

The Type of Design Used

This study relies upon a qualitative research method conducted with a phenomenological mode of inquiry. Creation of a concept such as place is reliant on many preferential factors. These factors may vary from person to person; but when viewed in the aggregate yield a commonality. The mode of inquiry known as phenomenology is well suited to the task of ferreting out these common meanings. Through phenomenology the researcher can examine the "lifeworld" of research participants and "reduce" their individual meanings into themes that represent their collective experience (van Manen, p. 185). In this study that experience is the role of public art in the formation of a sense of community.

Reinforcing phenomenology as the method of inquiry for this study, Schleiemacher (1964) states that praxis, in this case the practice of commissioning and creating public artwork, "does not depend on theory". Theory comes later as a result of reflection.

Ultimately, "praxis becomes more aware of itself by means of [this] theory" (cited in van Manen, p. 40).

The Role of the Researcher

Phenomenological research methods draw upon human awareness. The role of the researcher is to determine how human awareness forms an experience (Polkinghorn, p. 41). In the case of this research that human awareness is manifest as a sense of community.

Two tenets that guide the work of a phenomenological researcher are "bracketing" and "reduction." Max van Manen describes bracketing as the process of suspending personal bias and beliefs; then relying on the text [of the interview transcript] to supply contextual answers. Likewise, van Manen describes reduction as condensing the interviews into their essential meaning (van Manen, p. 175-6).

Bracketing begins prior to the interview process. Bracketing is the process of temporarily suspending the researcher's prejudices and beliefs so as to understand the essential structure of the research participant's lifeworld. In so doing the researcher reframes from a judgmental point of view to better understand the participant's unique experience (van Manen, p. 175).

Reduction is conducted by reading the transcripts, then reading again in a quick holistic manner. Similar to Kenneth Burke's rhetorical Cluster Analysis where the "god words" are identified; reduction's purpose is to identify a universal meaning throughout the collective body of transcripts. By reviewing the transcripts as a unified whole, the researcher will begin to see common themes. In his book the *Phenomenology of*

Perception Merleau-Ponty (1978) likens the process of reduction to a form of transcendence where the answers "fly like sparks from a fire" (p. xii).

As described by van Manen, bracketing provides a useful mental tool that helps the researcher avoid the interjection of personal understandings, beliefs, and prejudice. However, Dr. John Davis of Naropa University admits that no matter how well prepared, the researcher will bring a certain amount of personal belief into the process. Davis notes that the interviewer must at times follow intuition or best judgment. At these junctures Davis advocates keeping a "decision trail". These handwritten notes allow the researcher to recall and reference any point where they may have interjected their own choice into the process. Such notes allow the researcher to "audit" their final conclusions and account for such personal influence (http://clem.mscd.edu/~davisj/prm2/qual3.html).

Likewise, the researcher must take care so the inquiry method does not drift towards ethnography. This method of inquiry deals with human constructs of culture. To keep the research in the realm of experience, phenomenological inquiry requires active listening to participant responses. Ethnographic responses are stated in terms of "I think", whereas phenomenological responses are voiced as "I feel" (van Manen, pp. 66-67).

Bracketing can place the researcher into an active listening mode where "I think" responses can be easily detected. Should responses turn towards such a reflective nature the researcher can redirect participants so they return to the "I feel" pre-reflective state inherent to phenomenology.

On a personal note, my ability to bracket myself sufficiently could be questioned. As a practicing sculptor I do carry my own set of intrinsic values; however, those values pertain to decisions made in the studio. This research is within the public sphere. Respondents are not fellow artists – but are members of the general public. Since the opportunities to "talk shop" with cohorts is eliminated, the ability to distance myself through bracketing will be an assumable task.

Data Collection Procedures

The method of gathering the information for this research relied upon in-person interviews. Since phenomenological interviews can elicit deep feelings from the subconscious of interview participants, a statement of informed consent was read to each participant before the interview began. This informed consent was necessary to make the participants aware they may stop the interview at any time they feel uneasy answering questions.

The focus of each interview was on the lifeworld experience of that participant. As described by Polkinghorn, the interview questions sought "Descriptions of the experience itself without the subject's interpretation or theoretical explanation". Such a pre-reflective state returns the participant back to the essence of the experience (Polkinghorn, p. 45).

The phenomenological interviews began with a general question such as, "What is your experience…" pertaining to the particular research question. This question provides a generalized answer that leads to a more specific line of inquiry. This type of question is general in the effect that no specific event or public interaction has been predetermined

by the interviewer. The interviewer lets the participant set the general schema that leads to the specific phenomena.

A follow-up to this generalized question would be a volley of sub-questions that lead up to one particular instance. Such a question might be phrased as, "You described the particular instance of visiting the park yesterday. In particular, describe your experience with the Gateway artifact?" The intent is to obtain a richer answer that derives content from the participants' lifeworld experience.

Another reason for beginning the line of inquiry with the generalized question is that a generalized response may reveal specific language of the participant. The interviewer must understand this jargon before a meaningful dialogue can occur. Through understanding the appropriate language, such as references to locations or events common only to community residents, the interviewer establishes rapport.

Phenomenological research is interested in having the subject return to a recollection of the experience in a non-judgmental manner. This requires the interviewer to lead the participant through questioning that allows the participant to recall the essence of the experience. Such inquiry is done at length and some time after the event since phenomenology relies on the experience, not live interaction (van Manen, p. 10). These recollections will become the research body for this project.

Sub-questions spring spontaneous from interaction of the interviewer and participant. To aid this process the interviewer digitally recorded the entire interview and simultaneously kept a handwritten reflective log. This log indexed the time on the recorder to external factors such as body language and gestures.

During the interview this reflective log was used to denote any idiosyncratic terms or phrases. These notations allowed the interviewer to redirect the participant for clarification. This redirection was done at a natural pause in the dialogue that did not interrupt the participant's recollection of the experience. Therefore, as suggested by Davis, the use of a reflective log aided the researcher's effort to gain clarification so that the sub-questions could be refocused into specific or related areas. The intent was to get to the individual participant's essential meaning of the experience that creates a sense of community.

To direct the interview back towards the initial question the interviewer may have asked an experiential question. Such a question might be phrased such as "Have you ever had an interesting experience in connection with the Gateway?" Previous context gained from defining particular words and phrases, plus creating rapport with the subject, enable the interviewer to form specific experiential questions that are relevant to the participant's frame of reference.

As suggested by Davis, interview sessions concluded with debriefing. During this informal discussion the researcher reinforced rapport with the participant by sharing similar personal experiences or discussing the overall nature of the project. The researcher also explained how the outcome of this study is presented as a formal written report. Furthermore, at this point the researcher had time to verify his understanding of the participant's experience is correct, and no misperceptions of the experience had taken place.

Methods for Verification in Phenomenology

The Phenomenological method prescribes a sequence of discovery. Field recordings were transcribed. These transcription texts were then examined by:

1. Detail and holistic reading of individual text – seek meaning from text

2. Divide individual text into meaning units – identify themes from text

3. Group themes and textual excerpts – seek an overall meaning from interviews

4. Reflection and imaginative variation – vary the researcher's implied understanding to see if that understanding holds up, or changes, within various context.

5. Part to the whole – refine themes so that they fit equally well into all (or most cases) of the subject's description of the phenomena (van Manen, pp. 183-193).

Phenomenology has a built in method of verification. By obtaining multiple interviews a composite lifeworld emerges. As interviews are read, and reread, the researcher was able to discover common themes.

Merleau-Ponty's description is apt, in the holistic reading process the answers do eventually spring to the surface and "fly like sparks from a fire". Multiple readings of multiple transcripts is the factor that provides a self verification for the phenomenological process.

Reduction is the process of identifying common theme statements, then reducing them to relevant themes. Repetitive readings brought these themes to the research's attention – then imaginative variation is employed to construction a valid shared theme. This becomes intensely a writing process; where variants on the shared theme are written

and re-written until the shared theme can replace the theme statement in the original

narrative without alerting the context (Polkinghorn, p. 55).

In practical application, interview statements such as, "I feel like my friends are

here, I sense a need to return to this spot, I feel in touch with this community," may

reveal the designed public space acting as a psychological locus for community. To

verify this implied understanding the statement such as "acts as locus for community"

would be inserted into the original participant's description to see if the context remained

basically unaltered.

The outcome of the research becomes a series of themes that represent the universal

lifeworld experiences and apply with equal validity to all respondents. In essence this

research is seeking what Carl Jung would call the *archetype response*. In effect this

becomes a response whose theme is so universal that it reverberates throughout the

collective human experience.

Phenomenology contains such reoccurring themes. Relevant to the Jungian

archetype, van Manen identifies four common themes, or existentials, of the lifeworld.

Dividing these domains into cognitive territory van Manen identifies the lived space

(spatiality), lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), and lived other

(relationality). These existentials are manifest in experience where they form the

"ground by way of which all human beings experience the world" (van Manen, p. 102).

Connoting an experience of spatiality in a purely visceral attitude van Manen

contends, "Lived space is felt space…. It is largely pre-verbal; we do not ordinarily

reflect on it. And yet we know that the space in which we find ourselves affects the way

we feel" (p. 102).

As the vessel that contains consciousness, and therefore the corporeal experience, van Manen notes "We are always bodily in the world". Through this van Manen gives credit to the work of Merleau-Ponty's insight where the physical, human body becomes the ontological underpinning of experience (p. 103).

Viewed through the existentials, lived time is subjective, as opposed to clock or sidereal time. Temporal in nature, lived time can appear to speed up when we enjoy an experience, or slow down when we feel bored or anxious. Lived time is the temporal way of being in the world where past, present and future construct the individual's temporal landscape. (p. 104)

Concluding the existentials, relationality is manifest when "Lived other is the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them" (pp. 104-105). This is experienced as the connections we make with others.

Research Design

Overall Strategy, Rationale and Pilot Study

The underlying strategy of qualitative research, and the phenomenological method in particular, is to describe the participants' experiences in a manner that will allow them to "tell their story" through this research. Identification of common themes allows the researcher to weave these participant stories into a description of their life world experience. The goal is to produce an aggregated account of all experiences that is faithful to what each individual has reported. When done well this aggregated story of the

experience will prompt the participant to remark, "Yes, that says what the experience is like better than I could".

As in all research projects, questions do not spring forth in a finalized form from the researcher's initial effort. A pilot study was necessary to explore a range of open-ended questions pertaining the experience of community. These initial questions were modified to illicit more detailed answers. Following Davis' recommendations, a decision trail documented any variation from this final draft of interview questions (Figure 2).

Another function of the pilot study was to identify if the line of inquiry causes research participants to describe a single, or multiple, phenomena. Should multiple themes of a dissimilar nature emerge from the reduction process there was a flaw in the interviews. This flaw allowed participants to describe two similar, but unrelated, phenomena. By maintaining the focus of this study to the single phenomena of designed public space influencing the perception of community this study acts as an accurate barometer of that phenomenon.

Focusing on the Specific Setting, Population, and Phenomenon

These interview settings were limited to individuals who live in the City of Minneapolis communities that have received Neighborhood Gateways. This study obtained initial introductions to organizations and individuals of these communities through the City of Minneapolis' Art Commission.

The potential research population was anyone who lived in one of the geographically identified City of Minneapolis communities. However, the actual population was pre-selected through a vetting process that identified community residents who may be

predisposed to participate in the research. Therefore increasing the likelihood of that

population being familiar with the Neighborhood Gateway Project and having the insight

to respond intelligibly.

The phenomenon that leads to the creation of a sense of community was the center of

this research. The goal of the research was to identify what level, and role, do the

artifacts created through the Neighborhood Gateway Project have on residents'

perception of community.

Sampling People, Behaviors, Events, and / or Processes

The research sample consisted of participants who were chosen by a referral system.

Initially the City of Minneapolis' Art Commission provided contact information for

several community organizations. The Longfellow Community Council, Hail-

Page Community Organization, and Seward Neighborhood Group, all provided either

direct referrals, or forwarded the researcher's contact information to potential participants

Study Participants were taken from a pool that included Longfellow, Hail-Page and

Seward community residents that have provided prior community input, and are therefore

somewhat familiar with the community Gateway artifact. The final participant base

included twelve residents selected from these three communities. The gender mix was 5

female and 7 male; age was not asked, but assumed to be between late 20's and mid 60's.

This method of participant selection may seem in contrast to the voluntary

community involvement model described in chapter one. However that model describes

a community condition that exists before the artifact has been crated. This study

examined the community condition after the artifact had been created and installed,

thereby seeking a reflective point of view. The use of a pre-selected population was necessary to gain enough participants who could respond intelligibly with that reflective point of view.

University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was attained in early December 2008, before any fieldwork was conducted. All IRB concerns involving the interview process were addressed prior to that point. Fieldwork comprising this project covered the period between December 20008 and February 2009 (Figure 3).

Fieldwork consisted of a phenomenological mode of inquiry that was employed to interview selected residents. Interviews took from 45 to 60 minutes each. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were then subject to a process of phenomenological reduction where the essential meaning units were identified. These meaning units provide a thematic description of the artifact's role in the creation of the experience of community.

Technology that aided in the study consisted of a miniature digital field voice recorder and computer word processor. The hand-held digital field voice recorder proved small enough to minimize intimidation of respondents. Also, this technology allows in excess of 60-minutes uninterrupted recoding.

Keeping with the theme of phenomenology, the researcher transcribed all the recordings so he could become more familiar with the content. All raw electronic transcription was kept in its base electronic format. No derivative audio CD or other portable media was created. Only the word-processed transcript of the original recording has been retained as research record.

Field notes, consisting of the digital recordings and a hand-written reflective log, were destroyed at the conclusion of this study. In all forms of recorded media research subjects were not referred to by name. A non-referential number, and coded descriptor for the community in which they live, was the only identifier for research subjects.

Issues of Entry, Reciprocity, Personal Biography, and Ethics

Entry into the discourse community that comprises specific geographic communities was through a cultural broker. At the primary level this cultural broker was the City of Minneapolis' Art Commission. Using the Art Commission as initial contact, individual community organizations were reached through a referral system. Community organizations serving as localized cultural brokers introduced the researcher to individual research participants. Several of these participants then acted as an expanded version of cultural broker as they referred the researcher to more participants. By using this system of referrals the researcher was able to effectively gain entry into the community structure.

The researcher admits this method did not supply a statistically random sample. However, in a qualitative study conducted through a phenomenological manner every respondent will have a unique set of experiences. This study is interested in those experiences and they make up the respondent's lifeworld.

The primary ethical issue in phenomenological research is that of informed consent. This was addressed through beginning each interview session with an explanation of informed consent, and providing the option for the subject to end the interview at any time.

Data Collection Methods

Participation in the Setting

This study relied highly on community leaders to gain access to personal interviews. Utilizing this system of contacts minimized the affect whereby the researcher would be seen as an *outsider*. Study participants were therefore more at ease in the interview process since the interviewer had received the endorsement of a respected community organization or member. Over the course of six weeks individual interviews were conducted in three separate neighborhoods yielding four interviews each, for a total of twelve interviews.

As previously noted this study utilized a phenomenological method of inquiry to seek participants' *lived experience* of encountering the public designed space. In these interviews the researcher asks a series of open-ended questions meant to illicit the pre-judgmental experience, or "naïve description", of how the designed public space influences resident's perception of community. The selection of individuals familiar with the Neighborhood Gateway project provides a "rich description" of those phenomena (Polkinghorn, P. 47). Through this structured questioning the interviewer obtained a narrative from the respondent that was descriptive of that experience.

The typical respondent was resident of a community that has participated in the City of Minneapolis Gateway Project. Further criterion was that this participant was a fluent English language speaker, and not a member of a protected class.

The sample size was twelve interviews. From that number of interviews common themes developed that lead to formation of universal meanings or themes.

Phenomenological Reduction was utilized as transcripts of the interviews were read in detail – then the entire body of transcripts was read from start to finish as one cohesive work. Using the reduction method described by van Manen, and similar to Kenneth Burke's Cluster Analysis, the goal of the "holistic" reading identified common themes. These themes could be rhetorical devises, such as a certain phrases or a reoccurring element (van Manen, pp. 170-173).

These common themes were written out in a grid format. The resultant format was then examined in a similar method in order to reduce several similar meanings into one universal thematic meaning of experience. The value of these distilled themes are that they relate directly to the human experience, thus provide descriptions for desirable attributes of successful designed artifacts.

Verification and Validity

Verification and Validity of this research was accomplished both in the field and as an inherent part of the written process. The five steps utilized were:

1. The researcher followed the sequence of phenomenological verification outlined on page 37.

2. During the interviews the researcher verified his understanding of what the participant described by asking follow up questions.

3. Data was collected from multiple sites – three different communities and twelve respondents.

4. Advisor review – throughout the process all details of this research were checked by the advisor. Themes were also verified through an examination of research material.

5. Disclosure of potential research bias as discussed in the introductory chapter.

Summary

Research methods of phenomenology have been described as they were implemented for this research. Chapter four will examine data collected as pat of this research.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

Chapter four presents and discusses the field research findings of this study. Data collected through phenomenological interviews will be analyzed. Each interview focused on the lifeworld experience of the participant in relationship to a particular piece of public artwork created through the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood Gateway Project. Through the processes of reduction, shared themes were identified that reflect a consciousness of the experience held in common by all participants of this study.

Scope of Data Collected

This study consists of twelve in-person phenomenological interviews. These interviews were conducted with residents from three communities that received public artwork through the City of Minneapolis' Neighborhood Gateway Project. Specific communities were targeted whose Gateway Project reflected a variety of artistic styles. The public artifacts discussed in these communities ranged from naturalistic to abstract.

After initial phone screening to determine that interview subjects met the basic criteria of residence within one of the selected Minneapolis communities and were fluent in English, an in-person interview was set up at a mutually agreeable location. Interviews began with the researcher reading the informed consent document to the subject. Once the consent form was discussed, a digital audio recorder was started and the subject gave verbal consent. The resultant interviews followed a list of questions that advanced from general terms which helped identify the subject's definition of community; then advanced to specific themes focusing on experience of community for the participant. The twelve

interviews conducted for this study yielded approximately five and a half hours of digital audio recordings. These recordings were manually transcribed by the researcher using a computer word processing system.

The resultant data was output to a printer to create a written narrative. These printouts acted as initial mark up documents. This narrative was subject to the phenomenological practice of reduction. Reduction's purpose is to identify universal meanings throughout the collective body of transcripts. All documents were read individually and thoroughly; then read repeatedly in their entirety in a holistic manner. After the third reading thematic elements were identified. Assumed themes were verified through reflective and imaginative variation (Polkinghorn, p. 55) that consisted of placing the assumed theme back into the original narrative to see if the context remained unchanged. The data ultimately revealed four major themes and disclosed a fifth, minor, but relevant, theme (Figure 4).

Interviews were conducted during the months of January and February of 2009. As of the date of these interviews all Neighborhood Gateway projects have been installed for a minimum of four years. This time lapse allowed for a maturing process to take place thus mitigating any responses that may have been influenced by the shock or novelty of the new. To protect the anonymity of the participants a coding system was used to refer to specific people. Quotations include an indication of place via an abbreviation of the specific community, and then an identification number. For example, L (Longfellow) 2 (the second participant.) = L#2.

Artifacts were selected that represent a wide variation of artistic styles. Three community artworks in three different communities were ultimately selected that contained either naturalistic, mythical or abstract Gateway artifacts. Naturalistic representation was used in the Hale-Page community for the "bunny". A mythical theme was prevalent for the Seward Community's land locked dragon, *Merwyn*. Longfellow community's PS Wish You Were Here is an abstracted metal torch. Providing a sense of continuity, all of these artifacts are freestanding objects that exist within a three-dimensional context – thus fulfilling the artistic definition of sculpture. Although murals, benches, and railings make up other Gateway artifacts, these items were not considered for part of this study. All the selected artifacts are freely accessible to the general public.

The Seward neighborhood *Merwyn* resides in Triangle Park at the intersection of Franklin Avenue and 26th Avenue South. Created by artist Marjorie Pitz between 1999 and 2003 this groundwork consists of a dragon like head, claw, and tail rising out of the park's landscape (Figure 5).

Hal-Page community's *Cottonwood on the Trail* is a larger-than-life bronze bunny. The work of artist Jeff Barber, this 2002 artifact resides just east of the intersection of Portland Avenue and Minnehaha Creek Parkway, adjacent to the jogging path (Figure 6).

The Longfellow neighborhood is represented through *P. S. Wish You Were Here*. This Gateway project consists of an abstracted torch surrounded by seating and planters. Created by artist Andrea Myklebust between 2002 and 2005, the sculpture and associated seating share the triangular juncture of East Lake Street and West River Road at the foot of the Lake-Marshall bridge (Figure 7).

Research Questions

The scope of this research covers two objectives explored through four research questions. These objectives examine the lifeworld behavior of community residents to determine under what conditions, and to what degree, the Neighborhood Gateway Project produces desirable community attributes and to identify these attributes. The analysis seeks to identify themes congruent throughout the body of interviews.

Objective 1 - *Determine what affect the designed spaces of the Minneapolis Gateway Project have on residents' experience of community.*

This objective is derived from the notion expressed in chapter two of this study relevant to the dichotomy that exists when public artifacts must exist in two places; the physical and psychological. The physical is expressed by sheer inclusion of the artifact into the space, including relationships with surrounding architecture. Physicality is complicated by the contradiction of the public's understanding of an esthetic object, and the public's requirement of a level of cultural sophistication from which to appreciate that object (Miles, p.58).

Psychological place is then expressed through personal values and associations within the public realm that form a context for the individual's lived everyday experience of a space containing the public artifact. As noted by Miles, combining these two concerns is paramount in the creation of perceived public value (p. 58).

Research question one and two seek to discover participant's experience of community through physical aspects of the artifact. Resultant themes surfaced in regards to, a.) multimodal sensory engagement, and the formation of a, b.) binding metaphor.

Research Question One

- How do artifacts define community: what specific *physical* attributes of designed community space produce the experience of community?

- Shared Theme: Multimodal Sensory Engagement

Participant responses centered on the ability to experience the artifact both visually and in a tactile manner. This response reflects the redefinition that swept through public art in the United States during the 1970's. This redefinition served to redirect public artifacts from the monumental to the functional; transforming monument to site-oriented public amenity. Since this time plazas that typically contained monumental artwork, such as Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, yielded to the human scale of walkway, benches, and railings (Kwon, 2002, p.67). Themes discovered in this research tend to validate the continuance of the public's desire to experience public artifact in a more intimate manner.

All the artifacts discussed in this study can be engaged through the sense of sight. Touch is a sensory experience common to many Gateway artifacts. Two of the three artifacts discussed in this study can be experienced through touch.

The experience of touch was referred to in general by many study participants and expressed in specific terms by six. A desire for *multimodal sensory engagement* was manifest through experiences that allowed a direct physical interaction with the artifact. Therefore, adding the ability to interact with the artifact in a tactile manner imbeds that experience with an emotional power that is apparent throughout fifty percent of the interviews.

An accidental encounter between a family and the Merwyn in Seward's Triangle Park resulted in the following experience:

S#1 - The park is a great place for us to hang out. The first time we went there and our kids started running on top of *Merwyn* – I wondered if they were supposed to climb on it like that. Then another mom came over and said it's OK, of course! Then I realized they put a playground near us that's a piece of artwork. Now we go there every couple of weeks when the weather is nice.

From this chance physical encounter a long-term psychological relationship has been established between resident and artifact. Tactile senses tend to be downplayed in Midwest US culture, relegated to a handshake or brief hug between close family members. In this example a family freely experiences the artifact through touch.

In the following discourse, runners, who have tacit tactile encounter with the tails, encounter a Gateway artifact in a novel approach:

HP#1 - runners from the east will come, they will run around the bunny and touch the bunny's nose. It's a destination.   A number of running groups use this destination, they put their water there. Everybody comments, we'll meet at the bunny.

Touching the bunny is also an observed phenomenon for HP#5 as they relate to:

HP#5 - have[ing] witnessed people using it as a talisman, needing to touch its nose before heading back home.

As expressed by these descriptions of an observed experience, the Hale-Page "Bunny", officially known as "Cottontail on the Trail", becomes another way that the runner can engage the environment. From this resident's description, the "Bunny" plays a tactile role as physical place where items, such as water, can be stored and retrieved.

The concept of hard, cold, inanimate metal sculpture is transcended through the following experience where the "Bunny" is equated with the warmth normally only relegated to living creatures:

> HP#3 - We go to the Bunny and the kids want to play on it - the sun is shining and it's warm - so the sun is heating up on the Bunny - its kind of warm - and the kids are climbing on it and I grab them and kind of scoot them off - and they like that - and its lots and lots of fun, everyone is enjoying that.

An anthropomorphic sense is imbedded into this experience. "Bunny", trough a tactile encounter, becomes surrogate to the warmth of family relationships. This experience would be hard to imagine if the ability for tactile encounter were absent.

On the contrary side, warmth can lead to an alienating experience. When environmental considerations surrounding the artifact change, resultant consequences can alter resident's perception of an otherwise pleasant experience:

> HP#2 – …on the parkway, we've lost sixteen elm trees. Two of those used to shade the Bunny. In the summer it makes the Bunny too hot for the kids to climb on. We contacted the park board; then we got these two little trees planted that will take too long to do any good, fifteen years to mature, and [now] they don't provide any shade.

Experiences are situational. Similar circumstances for the family encounter of HP#3 can be contradicted by the observed experiences of HP#2. A balance must be struck when considering tactile sense. Human experience of pleasurable touch is limited to a

narrow band. Here that band is relevant to a few degrees above or below body

temperature. Too far either way and the experience becomes unpleasant.

Tactile experiences can also be anticipated. Two subjects expressed a strong feeling

of exclusion when prevented from touching *P.S. Wish You Were Here*.

> L#3 - This also has a barrier around the art piece - so you could sit *around* it, but
>
> there is no actual way to *get to* it, if for some reason you wanted to touch it. I
>
> think that that's kind of important.

Seating and landscaping around this artifact crate site amenities, but preclude the

public from being able to easily touch the artifact. An important differentiation is

expressed in this subject's experience. The subject acknowledges that the *P.S. Wish You*

Were Here embraces the ability to sit *around* – but appears frustrated that the artifact

cannot be approached close enough to *get to* it. This is accentuated through the follow up

statement, "if for some reason you wanted to touch it".

Granted, not all public artifacts are intended to be encountered through tactile means;

however this theme is picked up by another research participant. In this example the

experience of touch is relegated to a function of placement; place becoming a limiting

factor for the desired experience of touch.

> L#3 - One of the issues would be that spot. You would want to be able to touch
>
> it. Whatever is there you'd want to touch it.

Sensory Engagement Through Touch was a theme resonant for six this study's

participants. Touch, whether through a design for active engagement, such as the case of

"Bunny" and *Merwyn*, or just the ability to reach out and touch the artifact, such as the case with *PS Wish You Were Here*, provided a strong experience of place for participants.

Research Question Two

- How do residents experience community: what *psychological* attributes of designed community space produce the experience of community?

- Shared Theme: Binding Metaphor

Participant responses centered on the creation of a binding metaphor that helped explain resident's feelings of attachment to the artifact. All research subjects in this study expressed a desire to either understand the artifact through an existing metaphor, or in the lack of one, to create their own.

In chapter two of this study Fleming is cited in reference to metaphorical *placemaking*. The purely subjective manner of this metaphor is noted in a cautionary sense where such created stories are not to be interpreted as a literal narrative, but are representational of the distilled community narrative that creates a metaphor representing community. This metaphor then becomes the vehicle of expression where a successful artist and community meet to explore experiences on a common ground (Fleming, p. 288).

The experience of creation of a binding metaphor was a theme discussed by all respondents in this study. Eight respondents recalled strong experience with an artifact that resulted in a deepened personal understanding of community. Four respondents noted they either did not understand the perceived story; or had no story – which in itself is a strong experience.

The Longfellow neighborhood's enigmatic *P.S. Wish you Were Here* received both positive and negative responses in regards to the experience of community. This may be explained in terms of the particular artifact being the most abstract of all three in this study, therefore providing a less tangible relationship to human experience. The artifact consists of curved vertical members supporting an abstracted flame some twelve feet above the pedestrian plaza (Figure 7). Setting the tone for analysis of themes congruent with a binding metaphor, respondent L#2 encapsulated the experience with the statement:

> L#2 - Things like this kind of grow on the psyche of the community - so even if it
> didn't have an initial relationship it rapidly develops one

As noted in chapter two, Lakeoff contends that metaphor is more than a linguistic tool. The metaphor, to Lakoff, becomes a tool of conceptual understanding (Lakoff, pp. 14-19). So much so, that this tool was employed by all study respondents. Where the respondent was unaware of a commonly accepted metaphor, that respondent spontaneously offered their interpretation of how they came to understand the artifact, thus enforcing Lakoff's idiom of conceptual understanding. Such a personal metaphor is evident in the statement of L#4:

> L#4 - I don't know a lot about what the artists attempted to represent. I don't
> necessarily think of it as a fire on top – but I looked at it as a flame.

Archetypical imagery such as fire provides a reference point where individuals can interpret an abstract artifact into a familiar experience. Furthermore, references provided by this respondent relevant to fire and flame are presented in a non-menacing context.

Much like HP#3's reference to warmth, the metaphor fire transcends the austere physical properties normally associated with a metal artifact.

The theme of fire is expanded by L#2 as they relate an experiential story confirming their personal metaphor for fire:

> L#2 - I love the outdoors and I love to sit around a campfire. This gave me that kind of a feeling. This was like a little flame of a bonfire - drawing the moths to the flame. You felt like you wanted to hang out around it. I didn't know what this final piece was going to look like - I saw the early construction - then quite a while after they started and I saw it again – it gave me a warm feeling. Then I tried to analyze why I felt that way, and I came up with "oh, it reminds me of a bonfire".

Defining the binding metaphor in a personalized way gives respondent L#2 a vehicle to approach abstraction. Likewise, the free association of childhood is represented through an experience retold by S#2 where their children have created a nickname for the artifact that draws on a mythical theme:

> S#2 - …that's where we like to go with the kids, they have nicknames for the park - they all call him "Franklinstein"

By naming the artifact, S#2's children create a point of familiar reference – or a personalized metaphor built upon an established metaphor. The artifact represents a Merwyn, which is a landlocked dragon, thus fulfilling the monster metaphor, and is located on Franklin Avenue – combining these creates the metaphoric name

Franklinstein. Chaining of this metaphor extends to parent as they extrapolate the theme into one that embraces the entire neighborhood.

> S#2 - I really wonder if there is something living in the earth in Seward? The monster - he's not really scary, when we call him Franklinstein it makes him sound scary, but he doesn't look like he is a scary evil thing. It's like there's something in the earth here; something watching under us; versus watching over us.

Benevolence is imparted to the Frankenstein image through embedding a nurturing attribute into this mythical theme. The experience of community is then manifest through a lens of caring – where the neighborhood is "watching *under* us [or supporting in nature]; versus watching *over* us" [as imposing in nature].

The basis of metaphoric representation is seeking to understand an unknown artifact through a known artifact. This level of comprehension was described though the experience of S#3. Again, referring to a child's experience, this respondent relates how a drawing is used to understand the mythical Merwyn of Seward:

> S#3 - The little girl next door - when it (the monster) was installed, drew a picture of it. That's another important thing - we should have art that kids wont be afraid of. I was terribly afraid of a big frog (sculpture) when I was little. It was in the wading pool. I love frogs - but I would just scream at this thing, so part of the psychological thing would have to involve children's perception - the impact that is different than an adult's perception.

Experiencing the world through a child's eyes can provide new insight on creation of community. To this respondent a childhood memory, however irrationally based, has tainted the respondent's recollection of a certain place. The binding metaphor, therefore; must be inclusive of all ages in the community. As seen in this research, there can be a razor-thin differentiation between a friendly and a menacing metaphor. Denoting that the artifact is a "monster" and naming that monster *Franklinstein* lends familiarity; where the inclusion of a concrete frog into a wading pool strikes terror.

Providing a strictly pragmatic perspective a Hale-Page resident relates their experience of community based upon practical concerns that are anchored by the community artifact:

> HP#1 - To me it's living in the heart of the city, but having all of this nature with the trees, Diamond Lake and the creek. To be able to live in the city and have the trails so I can bike from downtown. To me it's amazing that anyone in Minneapolis can live within six blocks of a park. I live in the bunny neighborhood – there's trees and there's grass, but I live in the heart of the city. I call it *Bunny* not rabbit, or like its name *cottontail*.

Again, renaming the artifact lends familiarity. Relating the "Bunny" artifact to the practicality of amenities like trees, lakes and trails adds a personal value statement as to the importance of experiencing the neighborhood through the lens of "Bunny".

Binding metaphors can be shared or individual – both add intrinsic value to artifact. A universal metaphor such as "Bunny" has the power to unite an entire neighborhood. Hale-Page annually sponsors an Easter "bunny hunt" similar to the St Paul Winter

Carnival medallion hunt. Both contests provide clues leading to the location of a hidden medallion and reward the finder with prizes – in the case of Hale-Page all the prizes are redeemable only through community merchants.

The individual metaphor operates on the periphery of community acceptance. Such private understandings do not have the power to bind large numbers of people to a fantasy theme. Perhaps highly relevant to the individual, these private metaphors lack the cohesiveness needed to anchor artifact to community. This turning point in perception is noted through the experience related by H#3 when they relate that…

> L#3 - to me this was more of the same thing - you don't really know what it
>
> means. But that gives everybody the opportunity to put their own meaning to it -
>
> at the same time it doesn't make you think about anything in particular - which
>
> can also be a drawback.

Ambiguity of experience can develop into apathy or degenerate into disregard. Noting that the artifact may not "make you think about anything in particular" denotes a turning point in perception. The remaining four respondents initially replied that no binding metaphor tied them to the community artifact. In some circumstances this disparaging viewpoint was noted with as much vigor as those who experienced a positive relationship with the artifact.

Respondent L#3 has a personal metaphor that may extend into the community.   It is interesting to note, however; that the statement of metaphor is predicated with an admonishing statement.

> L#3 - I don't have a particular story tied into the sculpture - but that's kind of a
> story in itself. I know there was some controversy about this thing; it was kind of
> representing the light in the community - being hopeful. In retrospect I don't
> think it is ugly - but *other people wonder what the heck it means* - because it is
> really abstract.

Although there is a hint at personal metaphor, this respondent's experience is listed
in the section of variants on the theme since the respondent notes with equal conviction
that "other people may wonder what the heck it means". This admission of duplicity is
reliant on an ambiguous metaphor, or lack of individual conviction in the metaphor. If
such sentiments were found to be the dominant theme this could indicate a disintegration
of community consensus underpinning the binding metaphor.

Respondent L#4 offered a pragmatic analysis concerning the lack of defining
metaphor. Noting there was little differentiation in the public's perception between the
construction of a major urban redevelopment project and the installation of this particular
community artifact, there is plausible cause to accept this assumption.

> L#4 - As far as I know it doesn't tend to be talked about a lot because it came
> about in the context of this big building – so this tends to overshadow it. I am not
> sure if it has an identity apart from this. This is probably an issue with most
> public art in this city since it is funded by a percentage of the development.

Experience of the artifact therefore is difficult to separate from experience of the
new construction. When timelines of building construction and artifact installation

coincide; the public perception may be that the artifact was merely an attribute of the construction project and not the intended icon representing the community at large.

Reverberating Miles (1997) concern for the public's understanding of an esthetic object, abstract artifacts carry a heavy requirement for a higher level of cultural sophistication from which to appreciate that object (p. 85). Abstract metaphoric representations may just confound the general public's ability to form a personal metaphor of intrinsic value.

> S#1 - I just don't know what it is. I don't know what it's supposed to be. I don't dislike it, but it isn't something that I just go wow! When we saw the thing, both me and my husband just said, what does that mean?

Stymied at first impression, this couple may never embrace a metaphor unless there is a strong community support for such a story. Far from apathetic, this couple has an appreciation that the artifact exists; but this artifact is just too far removed from their lifeworld experiences, to create intrinsic value.

The most extreme example of variant in this research does not pose opposition to the artifact – only indifference.

> L#1 - Frankly most [people] here don't know much about it, there isn't a lot of information about it for us. I don't think there's a story behind it, at least from our point. I had to Google it before we spoke. More questions [arise] from people outside the area; I don't think people come out of their way to look at it.

Accepting the solitary, practical use of this artifact as a wayfinding device, this respondent experiences the artifact only as the aforementioned periphery attribute to

community. Any metaphor has completely escaped from this purview. Overall, individuals who fail to define a meaningful metaphor may do so because the experience operates too far outside of their phenomenological lifeworld.

Transitional Theme: Sense of Pride

As part of this phenomenological research a theme surfaced that encompasses both the physical and psychological experience of community. This experience manifests both a sense of involvement and perception. Community experienced as a *sense of pride* [in community] was strongly represented in the statements of five respondents.

This transitional theme was expressed as an experience of pride, ownership, or indirectly as an experience that has overall positively influenced the community.

> HP#4 - Ownership is also something to be looked at in an artistic perspective –
> because people tend to own their neighborhoods. When something is just put
> there they feel violated. It's a quandary for an artist to decide. Like from what
> you are doing now [this interview, studying] the placement from an artist's
> perception and reception from the resident's perspective. That is something that
> even if it is not looked it will surface.

Respondent HP#4 sets the theme for pride in community ownership when they identify ownership and link that concept to reception of the artifact by the community. Furthermore this respondent identified the flip side of ownership as violation.

Taking a purely pragmatic stance L#1 primarily identifies the artifact's value as wayfinding devise, but admits that this utilitarian effort can afford a sense of pride.

L#1 - Overall it's a landmark; it's a physical descriptor, a locator. It is a sense of pride, [indicating that] the neighborhood is changing. This area of our building is safe since there are not cars around. This parkway is special; the houses have held their value. [Lake street is now] hopeful – positive energy, once people start investing people take a little more pride – this sort of sparks that we can do it too!

Pride, in this instance, becomes a pragmatic sanction within the community. Building upon the practical sense of a wayfinding devise the artifact is extrapolated into the experience of pride and hopefulness.

Respondent HP#3 makes the direct link between physical structure and psychological construct. For this respondent the experience of pride is manifest through a physical symbol; the Neighborhood Gateway artifact.

HP#3 - One thing that happens is that people have pride in this neighborhood. It's meaningful to people to have a physical structure that expresses their sense of pride.

Where respondent HP#3 offers perhaps the most straightforward expression of the experience of pride being sparked through artifact, respondent HP#4 takes a more indirect approach.

HP#4 - I like finding the depth of the meaning in the abstraction. My philosophy as a healer is based on "nothing"- that's about as abstract as you can get. It's based on any number of variations on relativity. I do deeply appreciate the abstract – but there's something about this piece that has definitely moved many people of all ages.

Coming from a Zen like directive, HP#4 relinquishes that approach through an admission that the physical artifact has a profound affect in their experience of community.

Taking a global perspective S3# builds an experience of pride working from the city back to the community.

> S#3 - Like the Walker sculpture garden. They paid a lot for those and they are [by] artists of international reputation. In your own little neighborhood you might know someone. But like if its downtown Chicago and they got a Picasso, still that can be really special. If you did know someone that had created that in your own community that could be an extra piece of pride. Everywhere people make art and it should be encouraged and supported - shared. Like the Minneapolis Gateways; we haven't commissioned people to come in from Italy with marble for those things and that adds a lot to the sense of place. Just having homegrown art that people appreciate adds a real richness.

Paying particular attention to the relevance of community in the creative process, S#3 builds their experience of pride through a sense of rootedness. This construct of place will be explored in the next section where respondents to research question three strongly express the experience of community through a conceptual tie.

Objective 2 - *Construct a list of desirable community building attributes*

Objective one embraced research question one and two which sought to discover participant's experience of community through physical attributes of the artifact.

Objective two turns inward to ask research questions three and four which seek to discover participant's experience of community through psychological aspects of the artifact.

This objective is derived form the notion expressed in chapter two of this research where residents seek to understand a community where suburb [and in this case even urban variants of suburb] becomes synonymous with bedroom; [then] where does one find the rootedness of community? As further defined by Tuan an experience of rootedness for the individual is only part of the answer – providing a secular point of view. Concepts of place must also be drawn from the individual as they open themselves to life experiences (Tuan, 2004, p.4).

Research questions three and four seek the experience of community through psychological aspects of the artifact. Resultant themes surfaced in regards to, a.) creation of an axis mundi and the creation of, b.) opportunities for dialogue.

Research Question Three

- What *levels* of community involvement produce resident buy-in?
- Shared Theme: Creation of Axis Mundi

These experiences were referred to in general by many study participants and described in specific detail by six. Themes of rootedness were described in the terms of the *creation of an axis mundi*, or center of the resident's perceptual universe. This centeredness is an archetypical experience that enables the individual to place themselves within the grater context of the community.

The theme rootedness was identified through descriptors of wellbeing, attachment, familiarity and comfort. Cited in the researcher's decision trail notes was a calming demeanor as respondents described their experience of community through terms that create a personal tranquility. Each respondent described a personalized manifestation of *axis mundi*, but taken collectively they describe the one finding placement in the whole.

Differentiating local from franchised establishments, L#2 notes that personal wellbeing exists through the very structure of community based businesses.

> L#2 - I have a sense of wellbeing in this community. The businesses have a nice feel to them. You can go into most any of the businesses and feel comfortable.

Part of the experience expressed as rootedness in this study may lie in resident's proximity to services. Building on the previous statement where commerce builds their binding element for community; the theme began by L#2 is complimented by L#4.

> L#4 - We are certainly connected to our blocks and our neighborhoods, even though we may work somewhere else. I think we are very attached to the place where we live – like going to the local hardware store – attached in that sort of way.

Comfortable commercial settings blend into personal familiarity as S#1 experiences rootedness through creation of a sphere of reassuring neighbors.

> S#1 - It doesn't matter if your background or language – you just fit in. I have this feeling of being surrounded by people I know.

There is an often-used adage that familiarity breeds contempt. Respondents to this study did not manifest such a sentiment. Close proximity to many individuals could stifle

the ability to bond to physical location, however; that sentiment did not surface in this study. Quite to the contrary, respondent L#3 notes the experience of a safe boundary separating familiarity from intrusion.

> L#3 - The interesting thing about this neighborhood is that people are friendly - but they kind of stay to themselves. When you come up Hiawatha and you go past the grain elevators, it's like there's a whole community here that people don't know about. When I talk to people they either lived here one time themselves, or know somebody who lived here.   It's really interesting because it's really well known - yet its quiet and friendly without being overbearing.

Personal relationships can foster this experience of rootedness.   What at first appears to be a description of a nostalgic past is redirected by respondent S#3 as they expand the theme of rootedness to archetypical elements. Here, the inanimate artifact fosters an experience of rootedness similar to the previously described personal interaction.

> S#3 - There are certain things like when you are a child and you are playing in the park, and you are kind of intimate with the space. In small towns it used to be like a cannon - it isn't exactly what I would like to have as my example, but you do in time generate such familiarity that it becomes affection for that stupid cannon. Perhaps it was something that you initially didn't care about, but its what you got, it just becomes part of the identity of that place. And – if it was something that had values that match and had physical appeal it would be even a better experience. Its aesthetics and familiarity that gives me a sense of place.

The sense of place, or *axis mundi*, is directly noted through this experience. As S#3 describes the interaction of artifact and rootedness they offer a penchant toward their bonding to a place. This construct of place is woven around artifact. Should that artifact become congruent with a personal value structure, such as a binding metaphor, artifact and place become inseparable.

Metaphor and place merge for HP#1 when common values become a link to place and familiarity.

> HP#1 - Knowing my neighbors, common thoughts, goals, taking care of each other, going to the park together, the National Night Out event. Neighbors especially, yaw – neighbors. Our kids grew up here. It's the trails and the creek. In the summer I'd say we are at the creek every day – in wither we're walking out there several times a week. We see our neighbors doing the same thing. At our age we should be thinking about downsizing, but I don't want to leave my community because it is comfortable – we feel at home here. I have support here – it's home! I like that my grandkids know the neighbors.

A description of neighborhood is offered by HP#5 that could have been categorized as a response to the final research question had it not been for one thing – completely non-verbal encounters with neighbors. These silent encounters lend to a personal formation a sense of place.

> HP#5 - It's quiet here but there are people out all of the time. We have sidewalks and people use them. It is very common to have people wave as they pass and lots of us sit on our stoops and porches to enjoy the creek before the mosquitoes

come out.

Lamented as lacking in suburbia and the x-burbs, the experience of creating a perceptive center of their personal earth, or *axis mundi*, runs throughout these respondent's experiences. Although every respondent did not directly mention an artifact, a salient theme of community is experienced as connection to artifact. Should that artifact have a strong binding metaphor, the artifact can function as a catalyst for connection to physical community.

The final research question explores experiences that arise through involvement in community. Differing from question three's interest in obtaining an overall description of the experience of community evolvement, question four seeks description of the particular forms of involvement that create community.

Research Question Four

- What *forms* of community involvement produce resident buy-in?
- Shared Theme: Providing Opportunities for Dialogue

Participant responses centered on events that create safe opportunities for dialogue. As noted by Fleming, dialogue provides the opportunity for residents to define their surroundings and create a narrative that recognizes their visual environment and community heritage. Once defined, [either verbally or tacitly] this criterion helps the community establish uniqueness of place (Fleming, p. 288).

These experiences were referred to in general by many study participants and described in specific circumstances by five. Themes revolving around the providing of

opportunities for dialogue were expressed though descriptions of experiences where residents encounter each other in non-formal circumstances.

Verbal communication is the act that differentiates mankind from all other creatures. Through discourse we can transmit accumulated knowledge, exchange ideas and express emotions. The first two respondents articulate their experience of community through discourse in quite similar manners.

> L#2 - This community is pretty good at looking out for one another. People tend to be helpful and kind. They will talk to you when you meet them on the street.
>
> S#1 - we searched and searched for a neighborhood, and we realize this was the most unique neighborhood. People are very – well they just talk to each other on the street.

The opportunity to talk creates a strong community bonding experience for these respondents. Respondent S#2 brings specifics of conversation to their description.

> S#2 - People are willing to talk with you about different things. We have a lot of impromptu neighborhood meetings in the alley - because people are out and see each other. I've been invited into many of my neighbor's homes. Had a cup of coffee and chatted - exchanged books - and like that - loaned things; people kind of watch out for one another.

Diversity of conversation brings depth to S#2's experience of community. Noting a sense of spontaneity, the informality of these conversations suggests a level of mutual trust that is also noted through the loaning of items.

From birthplace to world traveler, HP#3 brings a wide focus to their personal experience of community; that focus however, concludes with personal interaction.

> HP#3 - I have a depth with this because I grew up here. It's a deeper attachment than other places I've lived. The structures, the buildings, some of the businesses, the amenities - its all building that any community I'm in - it all builds a sense that I'm in this community … I think community is just something you can't help but have happen. It's less geographic than its people connecting with each other.

The important factor for HP#3 is that people connect with each other through dialogue. Recalling that artifact creates the physicality of the community; HP#3 notes that psychological community is a human inevitability. The dialectic element becomes a strong tool at creating the understanding where persons of differing viewpoints can negotiate to form the successful experience of community.

Using dialogue from a Platonic perspective, HP#4 sees discourse as an instructive tool that inevitably creates a community of learners.

> HP#4 - I build community around spiritual and philosophical phenomena. So I build a community around the classes I teach [in this house], and this particular philosophy…

Building community from the esoteric, HP#4 constructs their experience of community through bridging the metaphysical to the communal sense of discourse.

Summary

These research participants indicate that five themes make up their shared lifeworld of community as experienced through public artifact. Two themes relate to the

physicality of the artifact, two themes relate to the psychological nature of community, and one theme transcends both constructs.

A strong experiential imprint is created when the physical artifact can be embraced through tactile means.   The ability to interact with the artifact through touch is important. Artifacts that allowed the respondents to freely touch them create an experience that builds intrinsic value.

All research subjects in this study expressed a desire to either understand the artifact through an existing metaphor, or in their lack of one, to create their own. The ability to reconcile artifact through metaphor, whether positive or disparaging, was the dominant theme discovered by this research.

Community and artifact also enters into the psychological lifeworld of respondents. Humans relate to physical space through the creation of a personalized center of the earth, or *axis mundi*. Artifacts in the form of public artwork can benefit from this inherent phenomenon if the binding metaphor is strong enough to bond artifact to the individual's lifeworld.

Dialogue may be the primary underpinning of community. Dialogue creates the binding metaphor, can bring artifact into relevance in the formation of *axis mundi*, and lends to the transcendent theme of pride in ownership.

Ownership in the sense of this study is negotiated. Respondents described a collective ownership that creates community pride. Not the degenerative, jealous, personalized sense of ownership, but a collectively conceived sense that builds upon the experience of optimism.

Chapter five will reflect upon these five themes and offer suggestions for their use in the creation of successful community artifacts.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions, Implications and Limitations

Introduction

Chapter five examines experiential themes identified through this study. Five themes were identified that lead to the formation of a sense of community through experience with designed objects in the form of public artwork. Implications for each of these findings will be explored. Also the limitations of this study will be discussed.

Research Questions

This study relied on four research questions that cover two objectives. All four questions seek resident's experience of how designed objects foster a sense of community. The first two questions delve into physical attributes; the second two inquire as to the psychological construct necessary to formulate a sense of community. Answers provided to these questions enabled the researcher to identify congruent themes.

Identified Themes

This study used phenomenological interviews as a research method and the process of phenomenological reduction to identify five themes. These themes represent a model for exploration of how public artwork can foster a sense of community through:

1. creation of a binding metaphor

2. use of multimodal sensory engagement

3. fostering a sense of pride

4. creation of an axis mundi

5. providing opportunities for dialogue

In the process of phenomenological reduction theme number three surfaced as a unique experience. Whereas the first two themes relate directly to research questions one and two, and the last two themes relate directly to research questions three and four, theme three relates indirectly to all four research questions, thus offering a bridge between the physical and psychological construct of community.

When viewed collectively, there are strong parallels between four of these themes and van Manen's existentials. The existentials were discussed in chapter three. These existentials exist as universal themes which revolve around the *lived space* (spatiality), *lived body* (corporeality), *lived time* (temporality), and *lived other* (relationality). (van Manen, p. 102).

Explored in van Manen's order, spatiality springs from a pre-verbal experience that we do not ordinarily reflect upon (p. 103). However, verbalized statements such as " I feel attached to the place where we live" and "familiarity that gives me a sense of place" provide grounding for theme number four, the creation of an axis mundi

Corporeality addresses the use of sensory engagement (p.103). Theme statements such as, "if for some reason you wanted to touch it", "whatever is there you'd want to touch it" and "the kids want to play on it" all relate to the tactile sense. This reoccurring experience comprises theme number two and produced the shared theme respondents expressed through a need for multimodal sensory engagement.

Temporality describes the experience of lived time (p. 104). Referring to experiences that compound over time, statements such as, "even if it didn't have an initial relationship it rapidly develops one", "when we first saw the thing" and the transitory

statement "you don't really know what it means – but that gives everybody the opportunity to put their own meaning to it" all provide descriptions of an experience that embraces a personalized time frame. Manifest as theme number one, this temporality lends to the creation of a binding metaphor.

Relationality descries the experience of the lived other, or interpersonal relationships (p. 104-105). Theme statements like, "[people] will talk to you when you meet them on the street", "people are willing to talk with you about different things" and "it's less geographic than it's people connecting with each other" all describe experiences where people form relationships. All these theme statements are embraced through theme number five as they provide opportunities for dialogue.

This discussion will now turn to an examination of individual themes. These themes will be examined in context of chapter two's literature review, respondents' comments and the researcher's personal insight as to their significance.

Theme 1. Binding Metaphor

The binding metaphor can be succinctly stated by posing the question; *how does this artifact tell a story relevant to the community*? As identified by Lakoff, metaphor is not merely a linguistic tool; to Lakoff metaphor becomes a tool of conceptual understanding. Such a strong tool, that metaphoric relationships are formed whenever one term is described through concepts of another (Lakoff and Johnson, pp. 14-19).

In essence, the City of Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Project was about creating a meaningful metaphor of community for residents. Utilizing the vehicle of public art, the Gateway Project sought opportunities where metaphoric relationships

could form that enable residents to heighten their concept of community through a visible symbolic means.

All respondents to this study willingly offered their version of a binding metaphor. Eight of those respondents recalled a metaphor that positively impacted their experience of community. The four respondents who initially stated they did not have a story went on to relate the details of their "non-story" in metaphoric terms as vivid as those who offered an embracing version.

From the findings of this study the binding metaphor surfaces as powerful tool in fostering a sense of community through public art. These metaphors become the meme of the community. In so doing they are the steadfast underpinning experience that builds a cultural construct for residents. Without this experiential base, the sense of community will lack vividness and thereby not sustain the power necessary to chain into themes that prove relevance to residents.

When photographing the artifacts for this study I encountered three Somali people sitting on the bench in front of *Merwyn*. Since I had a camera and appeared to be familiar with the artifact, one of them asked me if I knew the meaning of *Merwyn*. At that point I had to admit that I knew the artifact's name, and the origin of the artifact, but not the artist's intent. Without hesitating, this elderly woman replied, "I like him. You know he is a lot like us. We Somali like to dress up when we go out into public. This creature has on all his finery on too". She then lifted her sleeve to reveal an arm festooned with brass bangles. "We are both wearing the same jewelry"! In effect, this artifact had just crossed

cultural boundaries to create a binding metaphor of place relevant to someone who had no longstanding relationship to that place.

Implications – Theme 1

In this phenomenological research I encountered a pervasive, underlying theme where the experience of community is manifest through metaphor. Metaphoric story, therefore, becomes the tool that binds artifact to community. To be successful in the creation and placement of public art, the artist and commissioning agency need to solicit the residents' input and reflect that input back through a metaphor relevant to the community.

Chapter two discussed metaphor in generic terms. I will use two examples from previous research to illustrate how metaphor can either bond, or alienate, artifact to community. In that research I talked with commissioning agencies and artist who's work includes public space.

Bonnie Dyer-Featherstone was the driving force behind forming the Burnsville (MN) Fine Art Commission. Dyer-Featherstone spearheaded the commission's effort to establish a citywide art initiative that eventually lead to the commissioning and installation of a public sculpture representative of the community.

One of the first things the Fine Arts Commission did was to create a process for public involvement. Most importantly Dyer-Featherstone notes the Commission was not just a "few, suburban, moneyed, matrons – we were genuine people; not only genuine interest, but also genuine experience" (interview November 9, 2007).

Dyer-Featherstone relates that the fledgling Fine Arts Commission's number one priority in choosing an artist was, "can they do what they say they'll do? Do they have history, work ethic, connections, credibility, and stability to make them qualified". Also, beyond these physical constraints, could that artist embody artifact with metaphor?

To assure that qualified artists would be chosen for the final round of proposals the Fine Arts Commission was very careful to have their criteria listed in the request for proposals (RFP). The Fine Arts Commissions identified that any sculpture must project "sophistication". Dyer-Featherstone recalls that the subject matter was not identified; only that the Commission wanted the artifact to metaphorically represent the community.

Minneapolis (MN) artist Foster Willey was successfully awarded the task of creating the artifact for the Burnsville Fine Art Commission. Recalling how he addressed metaphor, it was a process where:

> … what's important from the start of any community installation project is
>
> the introduction of the language of art into the public's discourse. This
>
> will vary form community to community since each has its own particular
>
> set of values and not all are at the same level of development for the arts
>
> (interview October 22, 2007).

For the Burnsville artifact that language revolved around "dynamic growth". In the initial community research process The Fine Arts Commissions had indicated the artifact must project "sophistication". However "sophistication" is too abstract to successfully form metaphor. Wiley worked with the community at a deeper level and discovered the

experience of "dynamic growth" as a reoccurring theme. This language infused Willey's artifact with a relevant community theme.

Failure to include a community's self-defined metaphor can result in disaster for commissioning agency and artist. In 1982 the National Endowment for the Arts funded a large-scale installation in downtown St Louis. Richard Serra's *Twain* consists of seven slabs of core-ten steel set into the ground so the space between them widens towards the west. Serra's intention was to provide the experience of "westward expansion" for anyone walking through the installation (City of St Louis).

As related to me during a 2007 interview with Roseann Weiss, Director of Community Art Programs & Public Art Initiatives for the St Louis (MO) Regional Arts Commission, this metaphor never caught hold of public consciousness. Evidenced by a photograph taken just after that interview; residents of St Louis have still not embraced Serra's metaphor.   Clearly visible is the ill-fated attempt by city workers to remove the sole bit of graffiti, "Get rid of this" (Figure 8).

The aforementioned cases illustrate how metaphor surrounding public artifact can become the means by which that artifact enters into the fabric of the community. This metaphor becomes a rationalization whereby community connects to artifact; sensory engagement with that artifact heightens the attachment.

Theme 2. Multimodal Sensory Engagement

The theme of multimodal sensory engagement broaches the visual, tactile and auditory senses. If offered as a question examining the artifact this could be posed as; *how does this artifact engage the visual, tactile and auditory senses*? As noted in seven

of the twelve respondent's interviews, touch, or lack thereof, creates a strong experience of place.

Since the auditory sense is evoked through only one Gateway project, and that artifact is not part of this study; the discussion of sensory engagement shall therefore be limited to visual and tactile modalities. All three artifacts of this study engage the viewer through sight; two of the artifacts can readily be touched.

From the findings of this study the phenomena of touch permeates themes related by many participants. As participants recalled experiences where they encountered the artifact through tactile sense they loosened their cadence of speech and relaxed. The ability to physically interact with, or at least touch, the artifact creates a strong bonding experience.

Tactile interactions pervade the sometimes stark field of public sculptures. Urban legends abound of nefarious encounters with the Walker Sculpture Garden's Spoon Bridge. Mark di Suvero remarks that his monumental scale constructions are not complete until someone has made love on them (Garden-Castro, 2005). Whether true or concocted, these stories relate the public's desire to experience artifact through touch.

At one time the genuine and handmade artifact was commonplace. With the advent of mass manufacturing, uniformity began to be recognized as an aesthetic. Aloofness developed in post war artifacts; so much so that early abstract expressionists such as Henry Moore proclaimed no relationship between artifact and place (Kwon, 2002, p.63). The shift from monumental "plop art" back to functional site amenity began as a backlash in the 1970's. This study confirms such a sentiment still resonates today.

Implications – Theme 2

Although the tactile sense may not always provide an aesthetically desirable design attribute; artist and commissioning agency must be aware of this salient theme. For artifacts such as *Merwyn* and *Cottontail on the Trail*, touch was an inherent design consideration. In these instances the intimate element of touch works to imbed artifact to community. As for *P. S. Wish You Were Here*, the surrounding landscaping provides a physical barrier preventing touch and was duly noted by respondents from that community.

Recalling two differing experiences relating to touch, respondents from the Seward neighborhood describe how sensory engagement with artifact altered their experience.

> S#1 - The tactile thing is very important. Just the other day I took my kids out to a museum and we had people following us – I felt just uneasy to keep the kids from touching stuff. Then I wondered why do I even come back here? Kids want to touch everything. We need to go places where thing are very touchable.

The experience of this family has implications on where and how they will interact with artifact in the future. Offering an answer to the angst of S#1, respondent S#2 recalls an experience where their children freely interact with artifact in a tactile manner.

> S2 - They play on the monster when we go there. Did you see the tail? The way the tail [parts] comes out of the ground. All the kids love to walk the spine.

In the case of S#2 their children fill-in the missing parts of *Merwyn's* body. By imagining where portions of the tail exist underground these children trace out a line

between visual elements. Offering a variant on multimodal sensory engagement these children rely on visual cues, then tactically trace out imaginary paths between them.

Implications for such a level of activity must be considered at the planning stage. Returning to the Burnsville Fine Art Commission interview, Dyer-Featherstone recalls how the community wanted a piece that was "inclusive", something that children can walk up to, play around and touch. In her opinion the project was carried through at a human scale where the public would not be intimidated by the artifact (interview November 9, 2007).

Singling out the sense of touch may be a generalization. Since this study was limited to three artifacts, implications are based on respondent's experience to a rather small range of engagement.   If the researcher is allowed to speculate and expand upon those experiences, the actual desire may be to encounter public sculpture through a multimodal range of experiences. Viewed from that perspective the artist and commissioning agency should explore artifacts that exploit the desire for such a multi-sensory experience.

 Sight is a given – the function of public art is primarily a visual presentation. However, such a limiting point of view can easily place artifact into the realm of staid monument. Touch may not always be practical, but there is no denying that tourists want to pose for photos when touching a venerated artifact. Where possible, landscaping should allow this basic level of interaction between public and artifact.

Merwyn used sight to broach the gap between visual and tactile experience. To children walking the entire length of *Merwyn's* imaginary tail, sight was extended into

another sensory experiences. Sight, in the form of cast shadows, could also be extrapolated into the sense of touch where viewer walks through a cast light environment.

Sound is a sensory tool of engagement often neglected. Only one of the 18 Gateway artifacts utilizes sound. That artifact was not part of this study. However, beyond sight, the sense of sound is the only other commonly relied upon distant sense. Sound may be encountered through mechanical means such as bells (carillon), organ pipes (the Gateway artifact not studied) and electronics.

Commissioning agencies and artists must be aware that a multimodal experience can increase the likelihood of success when trying to embed artifact within community. Implications of this study support an approach that appeals to multiple senses of encounter with artifact.

Themes one and two rely on physical attributes to increased the intrinsic value of artifact. Theme three bridges the physical and psychological underpinnings of artifact as representative of community.

Theme 3. Sense of Pride

The theme of community pride transcends the physical and psychological spheres. This theme was discovered during the process of phenomenological reduction. If offered as a question examining the artifact this could be posed as; *how has this artwork evoked residents to the point where they have a heightened sense of pride*? As noted by five of the twelve respondents', community artwork can function as catalyst that instills a sense of community pride.

An easy assumption could be made in community research by presuming that only individuals with a strong sense of pride in their community would offer up the time necessary for an in-dept interview. This may be true – but in effect the researcher is then working with the community change agents. These individuals tend to be more perceptive of community spirit and did offer a strong experiential based point of view. Overall, the use of such a population was necessary to gain enough participants who could respond intelligibly on the subject and recall their experience of community with sufficient clarity.

From the findings of this study the phenomena of pride in community was manifest through both physical attributes and psychological constructs. In that manner this theme bridges the physical and psychological based questions. Statements such as "Its meaningful to people to have a physical structure that expresses their sense of pride" directly relate to the psychical sphere. Likewise, respondents offered up statements such as "Ownership is also something to be looked at in an artistic perspective – because people tend to own their neighborhoods", which is firmly based on a psychological construct.

Implications – Theme 3

As an experience that broaches the psychical and psychological sphere, a sense of community pride is perhaps the most difficult experience to evoke for commissioning agency or artist. Based heavily on a personal value structure, pride [in community] appears to be the outcome of a successful interaction of artifact between the physical and psychological sphere.

This researcher makes a presumption that pride may be heavily aligned with van Manen's existential of lived time. Pride therefore becomes an experience that is only manifest through temporality. This presumption is based upon the observation that pride occurs after the respondent has experienced the artifact through lived time.

Furthermore, as noted in chapter one of this study, I began with an assumption that persons who volunteer to take time to conduct an interview care about their community. Therefore the initial generalization is upheld whereby respondents exhibit a positive bias.

In the course of this research relationships between pride and artifact are tangential but pervasive. While no direct antidotes were recalled that specifically bind pride to artifact; respondents' built their rely on a temporality that invests pride.

Therefore, the strongest catalyst for pride may be the binding metaphor. Both commissioning agency and artist must work diligently to integrate the community's story into the artifact – or in some cases the artifact into the community's story.

Theme 4. Creation of Axis Mundi

Creating a personal center of perception is a function common throughout humanity. This study found special significance in this centeredness when respondents were asked to describe their experience of community manifest though a psychological lens.

Hartman (1998) observed that throughout the seven thousand year experiment we call western civilization artifact has been utilized as visual spectacle to overwhelm the secular sphere. Utilizing a common language of highly visible symbols, secular space yielded to pragmatic place, providing a permanent symbol of place for its citizens (pp. 199-200).

In *Geography of Nowhere* Kunstler (1994) suggests that European cultures are much more concerned with the spirit of civic space. In American culture it's the economic space that comes first. This provides a challenge for the artist working in American public space; you have to push your work much further to make that public space memorable.

From the findings of this study the phenomena of placement, or creation of axis mundi, is the most visceral of experiences. Although touch can be intimate, placement within a physical and societal structure provides a base level of identity for the individual. Manifest through deeply felt experiences described as wellbeing, friendliness, attachment, familiarity and comfort, the axis mundi provides context for the private individual to embrace the external community.

Implications – Theme 4

Understanding this personal grounding within community can provide both commissioning agency and artist with a leverage point from which to wedge artifact into community relevance. If the artifact is to act as axis mundi of the community, that artifact must perform as an individual surrogate axis mundi. Attempts at universality would only water down the design process. Instead, commissioning agency and artist must ascertain where the center of collective community begins, and work out from that point.

While metaphor is constructed at a community level, *axis mundi* is a personal process. Individualistic in nature, and biased by personal perspective, the axis mundi forms resident's bond to place. If allowed to extrapolate from this study's findings I offer

that offending the axis mundi will cause resentment of the artifact. An example would be the transformation of a previously open public space by some sort of enclosure. The intrinsic value of openness has now been violated. The new enclosure does not conform to the previous spatial construct that created a sense of place. This may offer an explanation for the resentment of Richard Serra's *Twain*.

From the respondent's point-of-view in this study temporality appears to play an insignificant role in formation of a personal sense of placement. Axis mundi through artifact was just as significant for refuge as lifetime resident. The elderly Somali woman who remarked on her jewelry matching that of *Merwyn* most certainly did not grow up in a Minneapolis community. Likewise, a lifetime resident of the Hale-Page neighborhood was equally adamant that artifact assisted their personal centeredness.

This quest for rootedness becomes a dialogue-based search. Casual conversations and in-depth interviews can unlock clues as to where the community bases their unique experience of grounding. This dialectic based inquiry leads to theme number five.

Theme 5. Opportunity for Dialogue

Humans connect through language. This study found that respondent's perception of community grows through the provision of opportunities for informal dialogue. The words "people" and "talk" occurred frequently in the same sentence as respondents spoke of their experience with community manifest through dialogue.

Forums, arenas and courts constitute the levels of public discourse. This study indicates a high level of significance for the informal conversational setting of forums. Utilizing forums, the individual is able to try out ideas at an exploratory level. Modifying

ideas in the forum through discourse, the individual is able to construct an argument. If such an argument can influence public opinion that argument may be elevated to the arena for action.

The preceding technical description supports the empirical findings of this study where the phenomenon of dialogue fosters a sense of community. These forums occur as informal settings – the alleyway encounter of neighbors – the coffeehouse meetings of friends. All these forums provide proving grounds for new ideas – incubators for the very underpinning of the experience of community.

As testament to this preference for informal dialogue, all respondents were given the choice of where they wished to meet for the interview. Overwhelmingly, respondents chose the informal context of a coffee shop.

Implications – Theme 5

The strength in this system of dialogue is that ultimately, linking forums, arenas and courts can bring policy change. Policy changes brought up from this base level can serve to strengthen a community. If artifact can tie into such a policy, the chance of community acceptance is nearly assured.

However all this formal dialogue begins when neighbors encounter each other through casual circumstances. In the following two situations respondents from two communities describe how the artifact acts as catalyst for these conversations.

HP3 - Then somebody else comes by with a little family and then they are playing with my kids and I'm talking to the parents - getting to know them; other people -

we are sharing thoughts and neighborhood news. I'm not thinking specific - but

I'm just letting memories drift in here. It just kind of goes on and on like that.

Local encounters with familiar friends in Hale-Page is amplified by respondent S#2

as they experience a cross-cultural conversation at *Merwyn*:

> S#2 - There's a lot of cross-cultural meeting that happen there. We almost always
>
> bring our dogs - and there will be a lot of Somali kids that want to pet the dog, but
>
> their parents are terrified of the dogs. There are beliefs that you need to wash if
>
> you get dog saliva on you. I talked to an Eritrian who was scared of the dogs. I
>
> said, "Oh you are a Muslim", he said, "No, where I come from dogs are either
>
> wild dogs of they are guard dogs - we don't have dogs as pets". And I think that's
>
> kind of fun for the kids to hear that stuff. They can meet people of different
>
> cultures - but all those kids are playing on the Seward Monster. Then we all learn
>
> why even the grown-ups sometimes don't like dogs - it's not that they don't like
>
> 'um - it's just not culturally Ok to be near dogs.

Community dialogue creates metaphor – this circular relationship brings us from

theme five back to theme one. If we have successfully engaged in that dialogue we

return to theme one with an increased understanding. HP#4 best described this when

they pointed out that everything is not liner – not circular – but spiral. When you

complete a revolution of the spiral you are at a higher point of understanding.

My strongest recommendation to a commissioning agency or artist is to listen –

listen to community residents as they talk. They will tell you what you need to know.

They will tell you what the forums are interested in. These are the issues that artifact

must embrace. The phenomenological method of inquiry was chosen for this study because of its inherent structure for intense listening. Recommendations from the findings of this study are that all efforts to create artifacts of community significance must start with dialogue. Talk to the community – listen openly to the response – design from that point.

Conclusions

Offering findings of this research to an audience of public art administrators such as not-for-profit directors, their staff, members of philanthropic foundations or state arts agencies, the five themes of this study provide a framework of best practices in the solicitation, commissioning, and community integration of public artwork. Since this audience must bear the responsibility for successfully blending community intent, an artist's vision, and donated or public monies in order to create an artifact of significant cultural value, this study provides a bullet-list of success factors:

1. creation of a binding metaphor

   - work from a theme that originates within the community – utilize dialogue to interpret that theme into a visual metaphor.

2. use of multimodal sensory engagement

   - engage the public through more than just a visual display, consider opportunities for tactile and auditory senses.

3. fostering a sense of pride

- successful interaction of metaphor and artifact within the
  physical and psychological spheres of community will foster a
  sense of pride

4. creation of an axis mundi

- individuals create a personalized placement within a physical
  and societal structure to provide a base level of identity

5. providing opportunities for dialogue

- listen to community residents as they talk – they will tell you
  what you need to know

Areas for Further Research

Although this study discovered five themes, I would like to concentrate further research on numbers one and two. These themes are of personal interest because of my work as a practicing artist in the public sphere, and as an educator whose research interest is in the formation of sense of community through public artwork. Furthermore these themes offer pertinent value for the audience of this report.

Theme number one is the creation of a binding metaphor. I have found this to be a salient theme in this, and previous, research. Commissioning agencies, artists and research respondents all describe an interrelated system linking metaphor to artifact and place. In a previous project I concluded, "History is a mosaic of fact and legend. We tend to believe legend as fact if we can relate it to the realm of our understanding" (Olson, 1985). Those words I penned 24 years ago still ring true for metaphor.

I would like to expand upon the scope of this study and seek a deeper understanding of how public artwork can incorporate metaphor. This research could explore both literal and artistic representations of binding metaphor. Questions could evolve from an examination of how existing metaphor can be incorporated into new public artwork – how new public artwork can foster a new metaphor – and examine how permanent metaphor is over time.

Theme number two, use of multimodal sensory engagement, adds depth to the experience of public art. Even though physically three dimensional, the experience of public art is often flat. That one dimension is sight. Total reliance on the visual aspect can place even contemporary, non-representational art into the genre of staid monument.

I would like to expand upon the scope of this study and explore how multimodal sensory engagement affects residents' sense of community through artifact. What forms of physical interaction create intrinsic value? Is the ability to lean against artifact for a photo as endearing as the ability to become tactically involved? What aspects of sound bond artifact to community? Do archetypes of sound such as bells and chimes differed in effect from shamanistic tones?

I have taken the route of real-world interaction with artifact; others may want to use my lead as a springboard to explore virtual-worlds. It is my contention that human nature will always crave the richness of face-to-face contact and tactile interaction. This is especially true in interpersonal communications modes; but will that sentiment also extend to virtual environments? With recent developments in virtual technology will cyber community become as relevant as physical community? If so, how will

individuals, communities of all sorts, and public artists, meet to form new metaphors that reinforce place?

Figure 1

Map of Minneapolis Neighborhood Gateway Project:

City of Minneapolis, MN
numbered dots represent
Gateway project locations

Merwyn

P. S. Wish You
Were Here

Cottontail
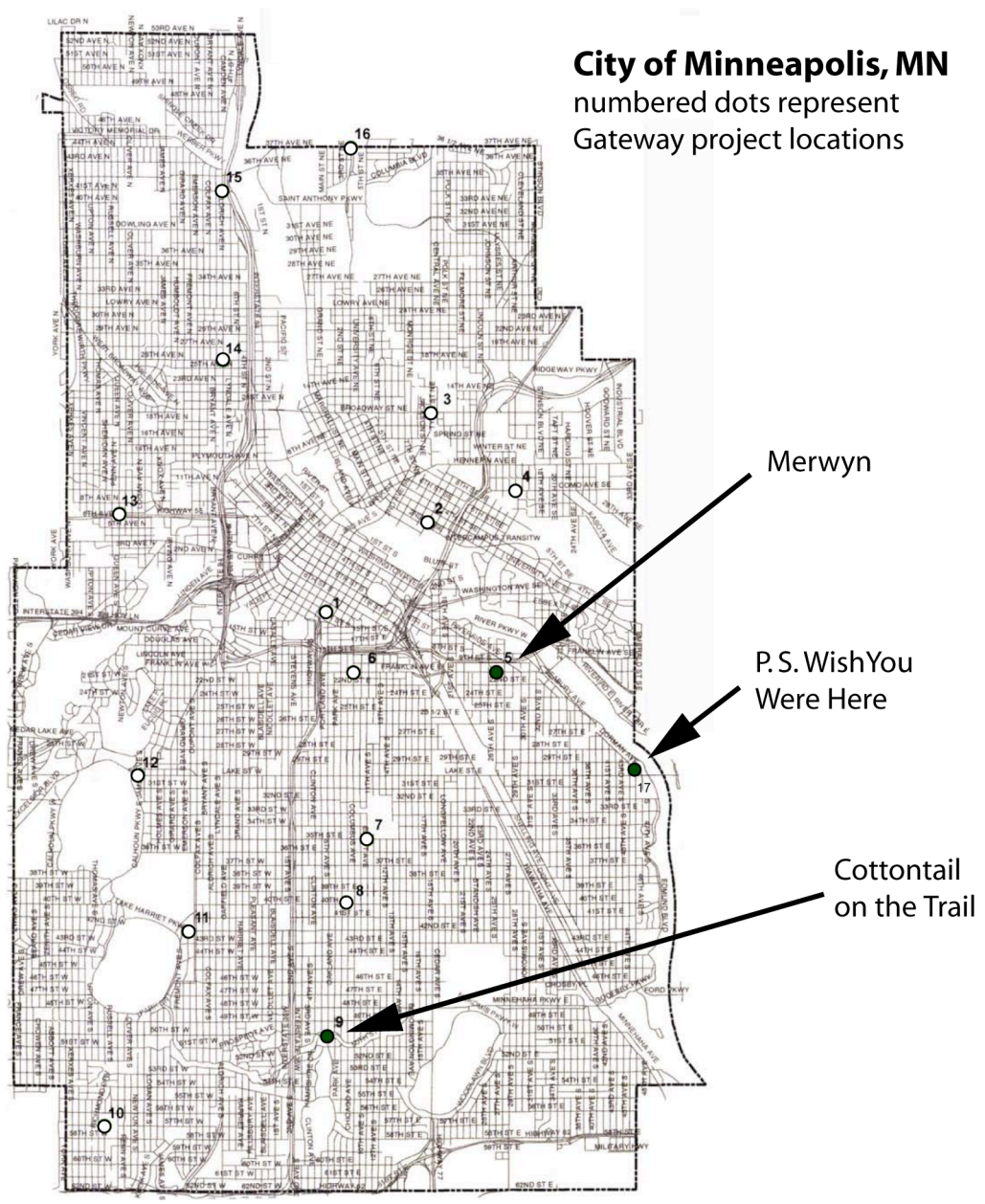on the Trail

Figure 2

Interview Questions:

Neighborhood ID ____   Interview # ____   Date _____   TRT [tape run time]

1. Can you please describe the experience of living in your community?
        How do you define community?
        What defines this experience for you?
        Tell me in detail how this feels for you.

2. Describe your community to a stranger - physical attributes
        What do you experience through its physical form?
                such as trails, parks, the gateway artwork . . .
        How would you incorporate the community gateway as a physical feature?
                what is important to you as you experience that feature . . .

3. Describe your community to a stranger - psychological attributes
        What do you experience as a psychological attribute?
                such as relaxation, recreation, aesthetics . . .
        How would you incorporate gateway as a psychological attribute?
                what is important to you as you experience that attribute . .

4. Please tell me about a specific experience that you had with the neighborhood gateway
        Why was that experience important to you?
        Describe how that experience was related to the neighborhood gateway.
        What defined that experience for you?
        Tell me in detail how this feels for you.

Figure 3

Project Time Line:

   The field research component of this project was conducted December 2008 through February 2009. Formation of research objectives and questions, plus review of pertinent literature began nearly one-year prior.

August 21, 2008 – e-mail sent to Mary Altman, Public Arts Administrator for the City of Minneapolis explaining scope of proposed study
December 3, 2008 – clearance granted by University of Minnesota IRB
December 6, 2008 – posters placed in Seward, Longfellow, and Hale-Page neighborhoods soliciting interview subjects (no response from this solicitation manner)
December 13 – On referral form Altman, e-mails sent to Seward, Longfellow, and Hale-Page community organizations requesting assistance in locating interview subjects
December 15 through February 7 – Schedule field interviews
January 12 through February 22 – Conduct field research
February 1 through 28 – Transcription of field interviews
February 28 through March 7 – Assessment of interview data
March 16 through 20 – External audit of identified themes
March 7 through April 15 – Revision and writing final draft of study

Figure 4

Theme Chart:

Describe the experience of living in your community

Theme Statement:	Shared Theme:	Variations:
L#2 - I have a sense of wellbeing in this community	Creation of axis mundi	HP#3 - Its less geographic than its people connecting with each other
L#3 - quiet and friendly without being overbearing		
L#4 - I feel very attached to the place where we live		
S#1 - I have this feeling of being surrounded by people I know		
S#3 - Its aesthetics and familiarity that gives me a sense of place		
HP#1 - I don't want to leave my community because it is comfortable		

L#2 - [people] will talk to you when you meet them on the street	Opportunity for dialogue	L#3 - [people] kind of stay to themselves
S#1 - [people] just talk to each other on the street		
S#2 - People are willing to talk with you about different things		
HP#3 - Its less geographic than its people connecting with each other		
HP#4 - I build a community around the classes I teach... [in this house]		

Figure 4 – Continued

Describe a specific experience that you have had with the neighborhood gateway

Theme Statement:	Shared Theme:	Variations:
L#2 - Its inviting, like the feeling you get when you are sitting around a campfire	Binding metaphor	L#1 - I don't think there's a story behind it
L#2 - Things like this kind of grow on the psyche of the community - so even if it didn't have an initial relationship it rapidly develops one		L#3 - people wonder what the heck it means
L#3 - you don't really know what it means. But that gives everybody the opportunity to put their own meaning to it		L#4 - As far as I know it doesn't tend to be talked about a lot because it came about in the context of this big building
L#4 - I don't necessarily think of it as a fire on top – but I looked at it as a flame. That's interesting because of this place near the water		S#1 - When we first saw the thing, both me and my husband just said, "what does that mean"?
S#2 - the kids have nicknames for the park - we all call him "Franklinstein".		
S#2 - I really wonder if there is something living in the earth in Seward? The monster - he's not really scary, when we call him Franklinstein it makes him sound scary, but he doesn't look like he is a scary evil thing		
S#3 - The little girl next door - when it (the sculpture) was installed, drew a picture of it.		
HP#1 - "I live in the bunny neighborhood" … I call it "bunny" not rabbit, or like its name "cottontail".		

Figure 4 – Continued

L#3 - there is no actual way to get to it, if for some reason you wanted to touch it. I think that that's kind of important	Multimodial sensory engagement	L#1 - Just the other day I took my kids out to a museum and we had people following us – I felt just uneasy to keep the kids from touching stuff
L#3 - One of the issues would be that spot. You would want to be able to touch it. Whatever is there you'd want to touch it.		
S#1 - The first time we went there and our kids started running on top of Merwyn – I wondered if they were supposed to climb on it like that.		
HP#2 - runners from the east will come, they will run around the bunny and touch the bunny's nose		
HP#3 - We go to the bunny and the kids want to play on it - the sun is shining in it's warm		

HP#4 - Ownership is also something to be looked at in an artistic perspective – because people then to own their neighborhoods	Sense of pride	
L#1 - It is a sense of pride, the neighborhood is changing		
S#3 - If you did know someone that had created that in your own community that could be an extra piece of pride		
HP#3 - One thing that happens is that people have pride in this neighborhood. Its meaningful to people to have a physical structure that expresses their sense of pride		
HP#4 - there's something about this piece that has definitely moved many people of all ages.		

Figure 5

Seward Community's *Merwyn*:

Figure 6

Hale-Page Community's *Cottontail on the Trail*:

Figure 7

Longfellow Community's *P. S. Wish You Were Here*:

Figure 8

Graffiti on Richard Serra's *Twain*:

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