ARTIST CONCEPT STATEMENT

For the Churchill Park Public Art Project, I am proposing the creation of a sculpture titled Tribute. From a distance Tribute will appear to be a traditional, figurative monument; however, the work is designed in such a way that as the viewer approaches the sculpture, its shape and dimension will become harder to define. Using a fabrication process that segments the figure into layers and allows the empty space to become a crucial element of the form, the sculpture will manipulate the viewer’s perception so that the figure appears to become less tangible the closer one gets. This optical illusion will encourage the viewer to physically move around the work in an attempt to resolve the phenomenon and fully view the figure. Fabricated from nearly 100 layers of ½-inch thick Corten steel, Tribute will stand 15-feet tall (180 inches) by 4-feet wide and 4-feet deep.

In reviewing the RFQ for the Churchill Park Public Art Project it become clear that the challenge of this project is to translate the expansive notion of human rights into a personal experience for visitors to the park. In exploring the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg, we are presented with an individual who was able to take direct action to protect and uphold the notion of universal human rights at a deep personal cost. The goal of Tribute is not to illustrate Raoul’s triumph, or even to define the notion of human rights; instead the goal of the work is to present a visual phenomenon that leads the viewer to question their responsibility in defining our common humanity and the dignity of our fellow citizens.

The figure used in the final monument will be one of the thousands of Jewish people that made their home in Canada after Wallenberg managed to save them from Nazi Germany, or their descendants (daughter, son, grandchild, etc.). No monument can adequately capture the impact that Wallenberg had on the lives of so many. The greatest legacy of his action is those he rescued and their descendants. My intent is to recruit one of these survivors to serve as the model for the proposed sculpture. The choice to use a survivor as the model acknowledges that the greatest monument to Wallenberg’s commitment to human rights are those that are alive in our community because of his actions.

In many ways the proposed sculpture is an anti-monument, as it does not seek to enshrine or celebrate an ideal but seeks to draw the viewer into a dialogue and open-ended exploration about how humanity is defined. The artwork places the responsibility for defining the sculptural figure on the viewer, as they cannot passively stand in one location and fully realize the form. Through this aesthetic device, the sculpture reminds the viewer that to recognize and value the humanity in others demands engagement.
CHURCHILL PARK PUBLIC ART PROJECT

Tribute by Brandon Vickerd

Proposed Location of Artwork

X

SITE PLAN
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