



Art: *Bodark Arc*

Site: Prairie meadow, swamp,
tree border

Place: Nathan Manilow
Sculpture Park

Location: University Park, IL

Artist: Martin Puryear



www.govst.edu/sculpture/

To be fair, this work is land art, so it was created for its chosen location. And the purpose of this art form is to link the work with its site.

Often this type of artwork is large-scale and visible in toto only from an aerial perspective.

Think of the famous Nazca Lines, the geoglyphs carved into the high desert plains in Peru. Bodark Arc was, unfortunately, in the process of restoration when we visited, so parts of it were dismantled. There was enough intact to be able to experience it, though. The title is a literal reference to a hunting bow, but our interest is in the connection of art in situ. It is a sweepingly large piece in a large meadow, the huge arc transecting land with a path and water with a wooden bridge. As the path curves, it disappears in the ground and emerges above ground, weaving its way through the landscape like stitching.

You immediately grasp the arc-ness at ground level, walking around its path. The arc is bisected by a straight-path arrow “aimed” from a line of trees (acting as its string), with a bronze throne as the arrow’s quill. Aside from the literal meanings of it all, the use of the whole stage is interesting, a kind of drawing on the land but incorporating the existing tree border and water feature, not denying their presence. These natural forms become essential elements in the work, as does the flat, lowland landscape as a drafting table. The arrowhead points through a gateway and out over the water, framing a view of the greater landscape. This work employs the land, using it as a canvas and including its better assets. The interactivity is foisted on the environment but it accepts it willingly and complicitly.

Impact:

- Inclusion/accommodation
 - Scale
- Draftsmanlike
- Site-specific
- Minimal

Art-to-Site Rating: Medium

View Date: August 2007



Sculpturehead

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