



Art: *Effigy Tumuli*

Site: Reclamation of strip-mined site

Place: Buffalo Rock Park

Location: Ottawa, IL

Artist: Michael Heizer



dnr.state.il.us

This project isn't as satisfying as it is righthanded. Blinding us with science more than enlightening us with art, this reclamation work took a really crappy site and set the machinery into motion for regeneration and restoration. In that sense, this is the most perfect blending of art and site, since they are already barely visible and the two will be indistinguishable in another ten or so years. Right now it is difficult to find the art part, and nature is reigning supreme – so the merger is taking place. It's hard to say whether this is the best scenario or the worst in terms of art and site. Of course, it is best for the health of the land, but when art and site become one in a physical way, there is no more differentiation and, ergo, no more relationship. Enjoy it now, since there is a time limit. The concept of the forms (snake, turtle, water strider, catfish and frog) being native species and connecting them to the mound-building native peoples who once inhabited the bluffs above the Illinois River is a considerate one, even a sensitive one. And the letting go of ego enough to create a disappearing act of art is commendable. At the moment, though, the bizarre nature of the landscape is probably the best part – a combination of destroyed, depleted site and a rebuilt, designed one – in the process of the gradual formation of something real where, at some point, no one will be the wiser and nature will prevail.

Impact:

- Environmental
 - Scale
- Interactive
- Referential
 - Process
- Integrated in setting

Art-to-Site Rating: High

View Date: August 2007



Sculpturehead

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