



**Art:** *Flying Saucer*

**Site:** Prairie swales

**Place:** Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park

**Location:** University Park, IL

**Artist:** Jene Highstein



[www.govst.edu](http://www.govst.edu)

Many sculptures have the scale to help them hold their own within a large landscape; not as many have the mass to do so. This one does: a minimally shaped lump with a kind of living presence; something like a huge charcoal briquette, it sits both menacingly and invitingly on its slightly elevated land form, totally out of place and dumbly accepting of its spot. It helps that the site, covered with prairie grasses, was mown in a circle around the sculpture, creating the illusion that it cleared the land as it spun down to its resting place and formed itself like a diamond from the atmospheric pressures placed upon it as it landed – making the art and its site have a kind of cause-and-effect relationship. The placement in the round clearing of grass makes it appear as a crop circle with something large sitting in it. It also builds dramatically on that illusion, as you walk through the mown path up a small rise to reach it, sitting nestled and partially hidden in the tall grass and then mysteriously appearing in the bare open field – an alien in the midst. Often, it helps for a work to be nonspecific and abstract, and to have a strange texture and color, in order to create all sorts of interpretations. But the bottom line is that the object and its site work in unison, creating something richer than either one alone.

**Impact:**

- Context/contrast
  - Scale
- Alien invader
  - Mass
  - Color
  - Minimal

**Art-to-Site Rating:** High

**View Date:** August 2007



*Sculpturehead*

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