

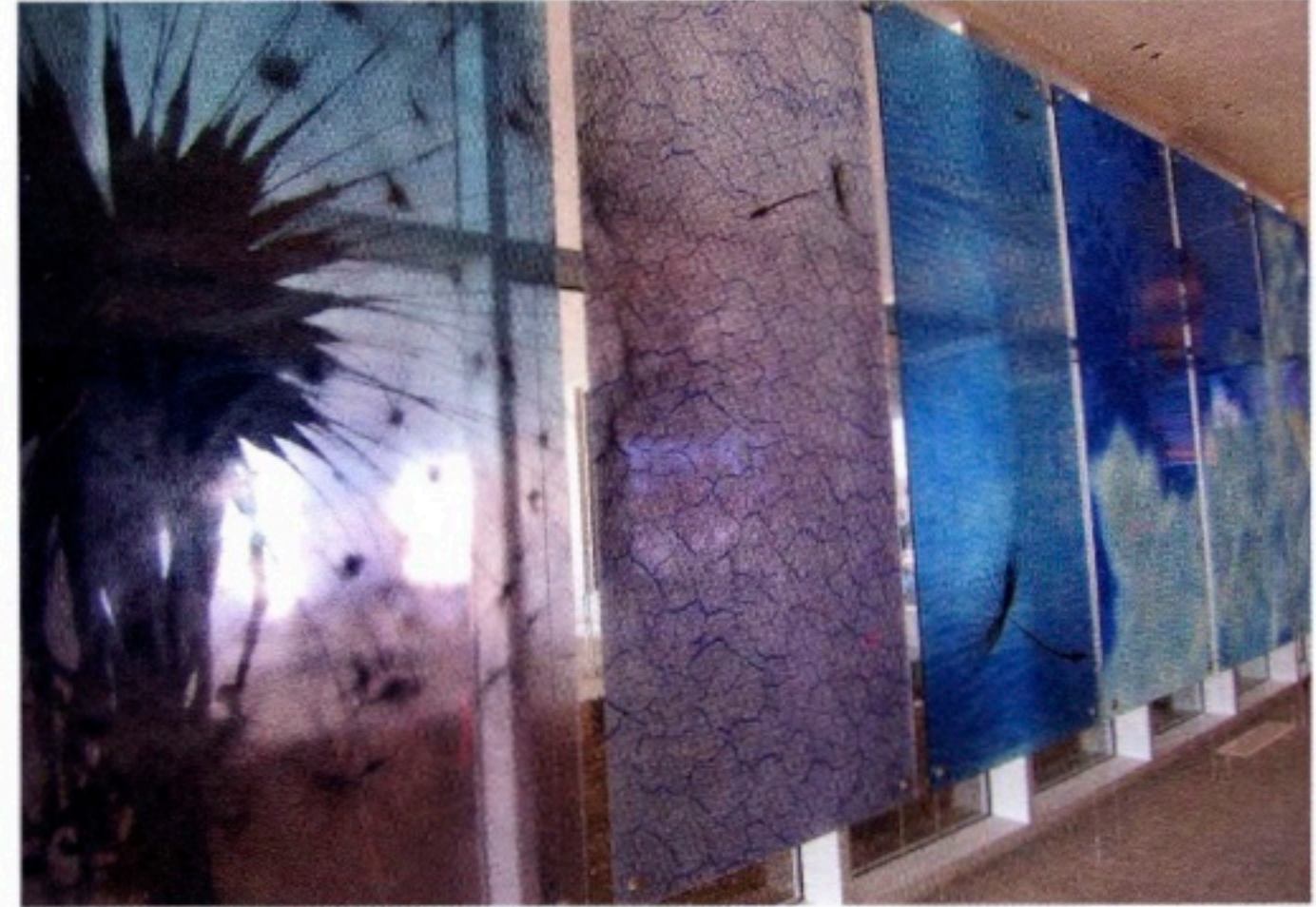
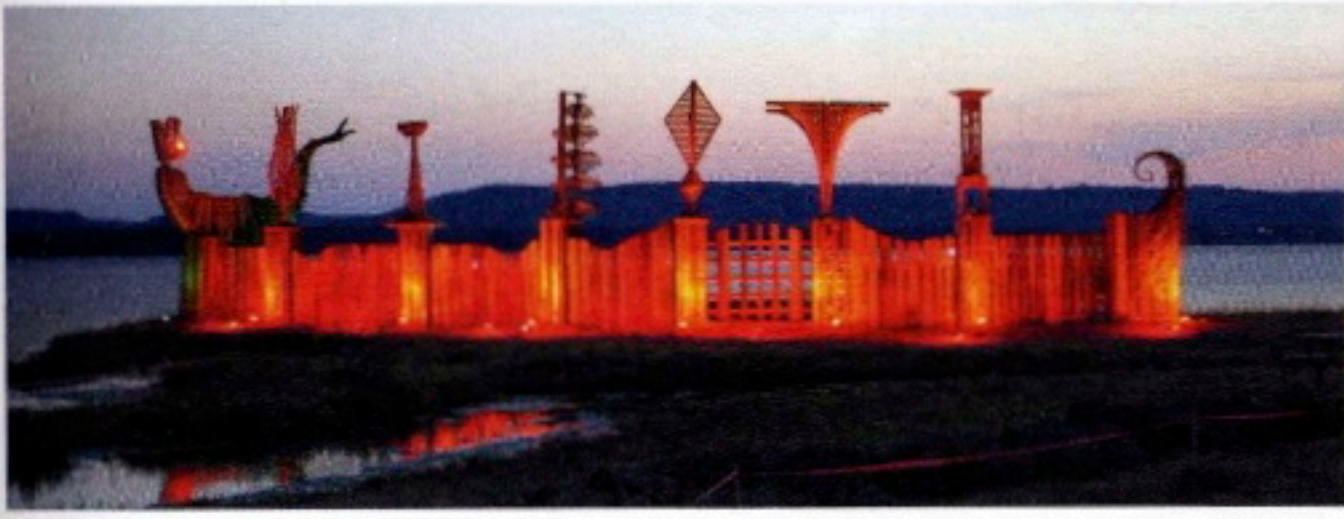
PublicArtReview

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public art and
sustainability

HERE TO STAY





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Stanton Sears and Andrea Myklebust, *Art+Fire Project*, 2008, Stockholm, WI; Stuart Keeler, *Sky Pencil*, 2009, St. Cloud Public Library, St. Cloud, MN; Andrea Stanislav, *Garden of Iron Mirrors*, 2008, University of MN Education Sciences building; Amy Toscani, *Molecule*, 2008, University of MN Molecular and Cellular Biology building.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: (first three) Photos courtesy the artists; photo by Julie Prairie.

once the measure takes effect next year. Passage of the Amendment in and of itself makes Minnesota the only state in the union to even mention “art” in its Constitution.

The University of Minnesota’s Twin Cities campus, already chockablock with distinguished public artworks, added two new ones in the fall, one fanciful, the other meditative. Minneapolis artist Amy Toscani’s *Molecule* is a colorful and gigantic (30-foot, 10,000-pound) model of a cluster of atoms, sitting, as if dropped from some gigantic physics professor’s desk, over the walkway into the Molecular and Cellular Biology Building. Toscani initially planned to represent a real molecule—and boned up by reading *Molecular and Cellular Biology for Dummies*—but ultimately decided to let her fancy, and her design sense, dictate the shape of the sculpture. U of M art professor Andrea Stanislav, on the other hand, began with natural objects—seven boulders—in creating *Garden of Iron Mirrors* for a site next to the university’s Education Sciences building. Stanislav embedded polished steel in some of the big rocks, mirror surfaces that make them practically dematerialize in favor of the surrounding earth and sky.

Another active Twin Cities-based artist, Randy Walker, created a very Twin Cities-themed work for Minneapolis’s Mill City Museum. The museum, which commemorates the grain-milling industry that used to dominate the economy of our towns, is a renovation of, and an addition to, a defunct flour mill and grain elevator. A dark and narrow grain chute rises above its entry vestibule. Into this oft-unnoticed empty

well, Walker introduced a golden cascade of nylon fiber, more than eight miles of it, dropping sixty feet, and illuminated from above. *Grain Fall* is intended to evoke both the cascades of wheat that once poured into the mill and the powerful prairie sunlight that helped to grow it.

The prairie sunlight of Saint Cloud, Minnesota, now shines through *Sky Pencil*, a glass curtain over the floor-to-ceiling windows at the entrance of the city’s public library. The work, by Atlanta-based artist Stuart Keeler, depicts a land-, water-, and skyscape with snowflakes falling and dandelions gone to seed—an evocation of a journey through the imagination, according to Keeler. (The blown dandelions, he told a local reporter, suggest new ideas loosed into the world.) The \$70,000 work was installed in January as the capstone of an ambitious public art commissioning process at the library, initiated in January 2007, that has also borne fruit in Lucy Slivinski’s intricate and playful outdoor screen, *Natural Rhythm* [see *PAR* issue 39, page 69]; Barbara Benson Keith’s mosaic windows for the children’s room; and Ries Niemi’s alphabet-themed bike racks and outdoor and indoor furniture.

Keeler’s dandelions, adding a touch of spring to our coldest month, were just one more proof of our belief, in these latitudes, that although life is short, art is long, and the snow does melt, eventually.

JON SPAYDE is a contributing editor to Public Art Review.