

Artist Statement: Ann Klefstad

I'm a sculptor who has worked in the public realm for many years, designing and executing work in bronze, stone, wood, and steel. I find motifs in the natural world that address the meanings of sites and the people who live and work and play at those sites. An image repertoire that, like fairy tales, uses the forms of an older world can provide a resonant environment. Trees and dogs, water and deer, human hands, plants and sky communicate well. Constants such as flow, shelter, vitality, creativity, freedom, and beauty can be found in the inflections of this imagery.

In recent years alerting people to the nonhuman ecosystem around them, and that ecosystem's right to exist, has become an increasingly important part of my work. For kids this translates into giving them images and forms to love. I like doing work that kids relate to—my recent work for the Lake Superior Zoo and the St Louis County Government Center plaza is of this nature. I've always been involved with community arts initiatives, such as doing art for community gardens, for example. I enjoy collaboration. Many talks, workshops, and other public interactions have been part of my work.

For May Park I visual a long, low cast concrete bench form set into a grassy berm, planted with a ground cover like white clover to minimize mowing, and embellished with either tile reliefs of animals or perhaps a small bronze animal perched on the bench, or both. The bench form itself should be of sculptural interest—it could terminate in an interesting rock, or it could take the form of an animal itself. One example could be, say, a pond-shaped cast concrete bench, set with a broken-tile mosaic of pond lilies, an a cast-bronze turtle at one end. The bench could be set into a grassy berm along one side.

I am available to work with stakeholders in the design process, and with community members on the development of designs. My home in Duluth is only two hours' drive from St. Paul, and I would be available for meetings and community events. I attended many community meetings for the two projects I have built in St. Paul: the Harriet Island Plaza project (for which artifacts were solicited from people in the neighborhood) and the Philippine Community's artwork for the State Capitol Rotunda. Input from community members generally makes work better, in my experience. When I need to think and re-think how a concept will become form, both concept and form often are bettered. There is a delicate line to be walked between being true to the artwork and being true to those who will live with the artwork. I think I walk it well.

I have many years of experience working with design teams, architects, and engineers, such as TKDA of St. Paul when we developed the Harriet Island Plaza project together. This project was given an American Institute of Landscape Architects Merit Award. (See <http://www.tkda.com/project-gallery/category/architecture-landscape/>) I've been responsible for installation of all my sculpture projects. I often work with subcontractors in fabrication and installation of work. I carry \$1 million liability insurance for my projects.