

Sebastopol Spire

Proposal for Public Art Project
Ned Kahn, October 2016

The site I am drawn to is the east side of the Highway 12 Bridge that is currently being rebuilt by Caltrans. This site is the most dramatic portal into Sebastopol. The Laguna Wetland, which the new bridge crosses, has been a place of great inspiration for me for many years. Almost every rainy season, going back 20 years, I have gone for a kayak journey on the Laguna. As I began to contemplate ideas for a public artwork in Sebastopol I wanted to somehow celebrate the Laguna and the element of water. A moment of inspiration came to me as I watched sunlight glisten through a stream of water falling from a faucet and I had the thought of creating a tall spire at the entrance to Sebastopol that would look like it was made of water.

After this moment of inspiration, I set about building prototypes in my workshop in Santa Rosa to try to make a tower that really looks like water. The result of this experimentation is a 20-foot tall prototype that is currently installed on top of 2 shipping containers at my workshop adjacent to the Dutton Avenue exit off of Hwy 12. You can see this prototype from the freeway as well as from the bike path that runs parallel to Hwy 12. I have been observing this mock-up for the last few weeks under a variety of wind and light conditions. The color and transparency of the kinetic layers change constantly with the wind and sky. It is especially vibrant during sunsets and sunrises. Along with this proposal I have included a video that shows the artwork in action.

The current prototype is 20-feet tall. The final artwork that I am proposing for Sebastopol would be 60' tall. Like the prototype, the final artwork would consist of 2 concentric cylinders. The inner cylinder will be fabricated out of 10-foot long sections of 1-foot diameter galvanized steel pipe. The entire exposed surface of this 1-foot diameter pipe will be covered with a dense mosaic of thin, 1-inch diameter stainless disks that move in the gentlest wind. The tiles that hold these disks will attach to the central tube using an extremely permanent double stick tape made by 3M that is used to hold car parts together. At the top and bottom of this central column we will weld a 3-foot diameter by 3/8-inch thick steel disk with holes drilled to accept the tensioning hardware for 1/8-inch stainless steel cables. There will be a total of 18 cables that will run the full height, spaced on 6" centers. Individual, hinged, wind-activated panels, 4-inches wide by 5-inches tall, will clamp to adjacent cables in a staggered pattern to create an outer "skin" that will be porous to wind and light. The entire structure will be bolted to a 3-foot diameter by 10-foot tall concrete base that will keep people from touching the moving elements and keep them above the level of the maximum flood of the Laguna. This concrete base will extend down another 20-feet into the ground as a footing for the sculpture. This base will be similar in construction to the new footings for the bridge.

My hope is that the exact location of the sculpture will evolve from discussions with the City of Sebastopol and Caltrans. I have collaborated with Caltrans on a number of projects over the years. We recently completed 2 bridges over the 101 Freeway in downtown Los Angeles where Caltrans was an active collaborator. I am currently

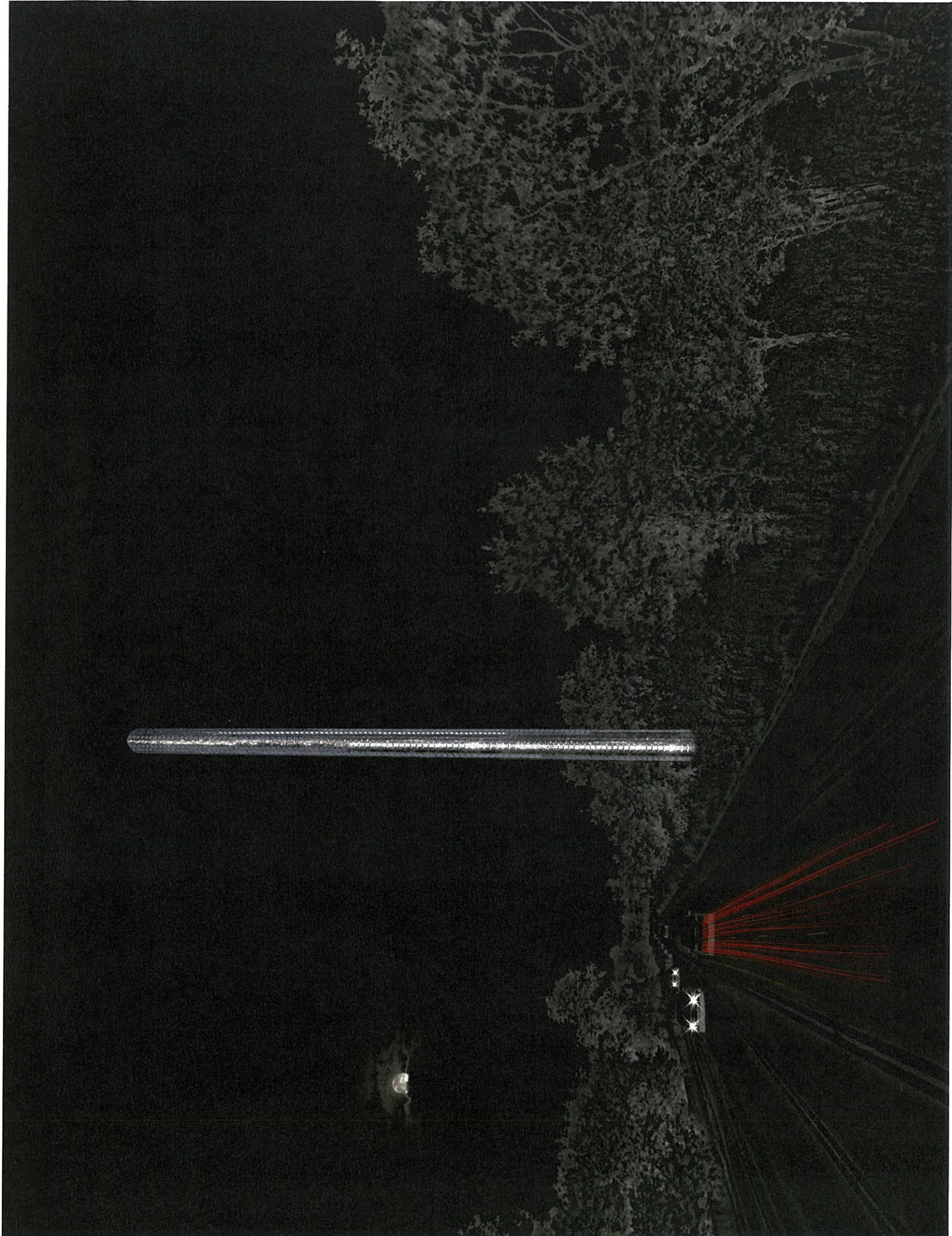
designing a pedestrian bridge over the 101 Freeway at Union Station in L.A. This project has also involved extensive collaboration with Caltrans so they are very familiar with my kinetic works. The land just to the north of the Hwy 12 Bridge is owned by the City of Sebastopol and there is an existing walking trail that runs parallel to the road. My thought is that this trail would give pedestrians an opportunity to get close to the proposed artwork. A simple bench along this path would encourage people to relax and watch the wind play on the surface of the artwork.

In my 30 years of creating large-scale public works of kinetic art there are a number of questions that people commonly ask when I am proposing a new work: Will this artwork distract or blind drivers? Will it be harmful to birds? What about maintenance? Here is what 30 years of realizing kinetic works has taught me: The highly fragmented, animated surfaces of my wind-animated artworks function to diffuse direct sunlight reflections instead of concentrating them. Compared to the amount of sunlight that bounces off the windshields of cars or the glass facades of many modern buildings, the amount of light that can reflect off the small metal “leaves” of my kinetic facades and sculptures is very small. I have completed over a hundred large-scale public works of kinetic art dating back to 1987 and there have been zero issues or incidents involving drivers being distracted or blinded by these artworks and most of these projects are installed next to freeways or busy urban roadways. The same is true for birds. I know of no incidents where birds were disturbed in any way by my artworks. As to the question about maintenance, I have developed very simple and robust technology that has stood the test of time with no required maintenance. None of the kinetic artworks that I have created, and many have been in continuous movement in the wind for decades, have ever needed to be lubricated or cleaned. I have also never had an artwork vandalized. In the unlikely event that this does happen, the modular construction of my artworks makes them very easy to repair or replace components.

In addition to suggesting a spire of water, another conceptual thread behind this proposal is that the 2 wind-animated layers are also symbolic of the vascular systems of plants which use 2 layers, the xylem and the phloem to transport water and nutrients respectively. Much of the history of the town of Sebastopol has revolved around plants. Redwood trees, apples, grapes and Luther Burbank’s botanical experiments are examples of how the town’s history has been entwined with plants. I asked myself what all these plants have in common and that landed me on the realization that they all have highly evolved xylem and phloem. The proposed double layer kinetic spire will suggest the flow of energy, water and nutrients through plants as a metaphor of passage and the entwinement of plants with the evolution of Sebastopol.

I have lived and worked in Sebastopol for 20 years. During this time, I have completed over a 100 public art commissions throughout the world. All of these projects have involved creating artworks that actively respond to or reveal the changing natural forces and conditions in their sites. I am fascinated by artworks that blur the boundaries between art, science, architecture and nature. I can barely contain my excitement that I might get a chance to realize a project in my hometown.





50' TALL

TOP PLATE - 3' ϕ STEEL DISK

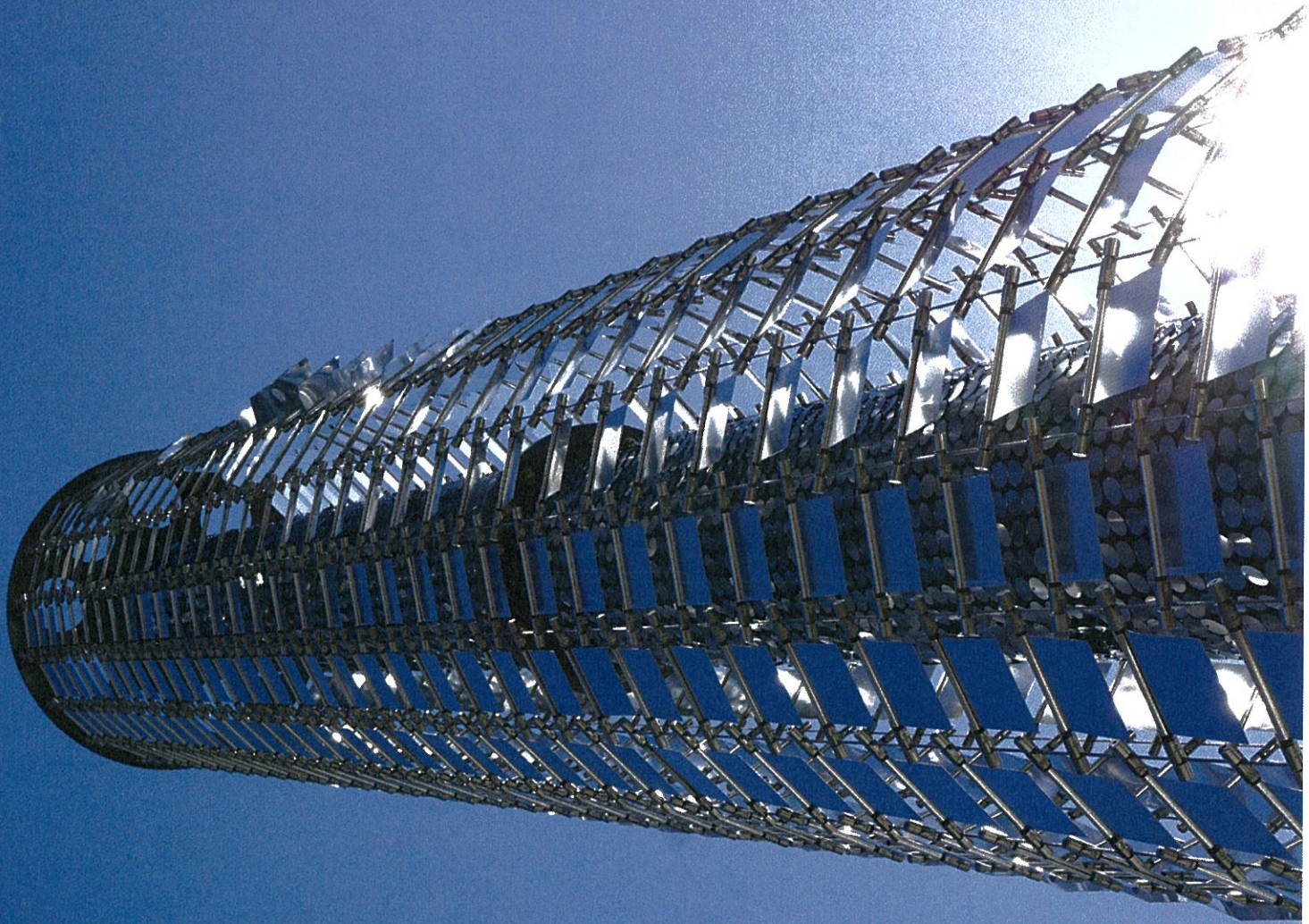
OUTER LAYER IS A RING OF $\frac{1}{2}$ " ϕ CABLES
SPACED 6" APART, WITH A GRID OF
WIND-ANIMATED PANELS

INNER LAYER IS A
12" ϕ CENTRAL STEEL COLUMN
WRAP WITH WIND DISK TILES

CONCRETE BASE







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Proposed Budget for Sebastopol Spire

October 4, 2016

Budget for Design, Engineering, Fabrication and Installation of Artwork:

Materials and fabrication for structural steel column components	\$22,500
Materials and Fabrication of wind-animated elements (donated by artist)	(\$38,000)
Engineering (Endrestudio, Emeryville)	\$4,500
Installation of concrete footing (3' diameter x 20' deep)	\$12,500
Equipment rental for installation (crane, JLG lift)	\$3,500
Onsite assembly and installation labor (donated by the artist)	(\$8,500)
Insurance	\$2,000
Artist fee for design, coordination (donated by the artist)	(0)
Materials and fabrication for 1/3 scale prototype (donated by artist)	(\$9,000)
Total Budget	\$45,000

Ned Kahn

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Resume:

Completed Public Art Commissions:

- 2016 Wind Roundabout, Fort Worth, Texas
- 2015 Luwan, Shanghai, China (with Moshe Safdie Architect)
- 2015 Brookfield Place, Perth, Australia (with UAP)
- 2015 Robotic Parking Structure, West Hollywood, CA (with Rick D'Amato Architect)
- 2015 Denver International Airport (with Gensler Architects)
- 2015 Crossroads School, Santa Monica, CA (with Fred Fisher Architect)
- 2015 21-C Museum Hotel, Durham, North Carolina
- 2015 Playa Vista, CA (with Johnson/Fain Architects)
- 2015 University of Chicago Medical Center
- 2014 Debenhams Building, London, U.K. (with Archial Architects)
- 2014 Sonoma County Museum, Santa Rosa, CA
- 2014 The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 2013 Federal Courthouse, Long Beach, CA
- 2013 Martin Building, Seattle, Washington
- 2013 NOAA Headquarters, Silver Springs, Maryland
- 2013 Zebrastraat, Ghent, Belgium
- 2013 University Health Center, San Antonio, Texas
- 2012 Brisbane Airport, Australia (with UAP)
- 2012 Centene Headquarters, Clayton, Missouri
- 2012 Public Utility Commission Headquarters, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 Neiman Marcus Store, Walnut Creek, CA
- 2012 Buhl Community Park, Pittsburgh, PA (with Andrea Cochran)
- 2012 Nashville Airport, Nashville, Tennessee
- 2011 Questacon, Canberra, Australia
- 2011 Davis Court, San Francisco, CA (with RHAA landscape architects)
- 2011 University of Calgary, Canada
- 2011 Ningbo, China (with UAP)
- 2010 Minnesota Twins Ballpark, Minneapolis, MN (with Tom Oslund)
- 2010 Sacramento Docks, Sacramento, CA (with Walker/Macy)
- 2010 Marina Bay Sands, Singapore (with Moshe Safdie)
- 2010 City Hall, Chandler, AZ (with Smith Group Architects)
- 2010 H2 Hotel, Healdsburg, CA (with Andrea Cochran, landscape architect)
- 2010 Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, IL
- 2009 ResMed, San Diego, CA (with Davis & Davis Architects)
- 2009 Santa Rosa Junior College Student Center, Santa Rosa, CA
- 2009 Niswonger Children's Hospital, Johnson City, TN
- 2008 Rijkswaterstaat, Dutch Water Department Headquarters, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 2008 Tempe Center for the Arts, Tempe, AZ (with Barton Myers and Architekton)

- 2008 Bayfront Plaza, San Diego Hilton, CA (with John Portman Architect)
- 2008 ATF Headquarters, Washington DC (with Moshe Safdie)
- 2008 Skirball Museum and Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA (with Moshe Safdie)
- 2006 Dubai Festival City, United Arab Emirates
- 2006 Milwaukee Waterfront, Milwaukee, WI
- 2006 Issaquah Highlands, Washington (with MBT Architecture - Seattle)
- 2006 21-C Hotel and Museum, Louisville, KY
- 2006 Union Point Park, Oakland Estuary (with Mario Schjetnan Garduno and PGA design)
- 2006 ICON, San Diego, CA
- 2006 Marvell Headquarters, Sunnyvale, CA
- 2005 International Trade Center, Charlotte, NC
- 2005 Mesa Arts and Entertainment Center, Mesa, AZ (with BOORA & DWL Architects)
- 2005 Phaeno Museum, Wolfsburg, Germany (with architect, Zaha Hadid)
- 2004 Huntington Botanical Gardens, Pasadena, CA
- 2004 Pittsburgh Children's Museum (with Koening Eizenberg Architects)
- 2004 ATT Building, Santa Rosa, CA
- 2004 Emerald Glen Park, Dublin, CA (with Carducci Landscape Architects)
- 2003 BART Station, San Francisco International Airport, (with MBT Architecture)
- 2003 University of Oregon, Eugene (with CMGS landscape architects)
- 2003 DiRosa Art and Nature Preserve, Napa, CA
- 2003 Chevron/Texaco Headquarters, San Ramon, CA (with Tsao Design Group)
- 2002 Technorama, Winterthur, Switzerland (with Durig & Rami Architekt)
- 2002 1801 North Lynn Street, Arlington, VA (with RTKL architects)
- 2001 Yahoo Headquarters, Sunnyvale, CA
- 2001 School of Oceanography, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
- 2000 Gateway Village, Charlotte, North Carolina
- 2000 Expo 2000, Hannover, Germany (with Atelier Bruckner Architects)
- 1999 Rose Center for Earth & Space, American Museum of Natural History, New York
- 1999 Baypointe Light Rail Station, San Jose, CA (with SBA Architects)
- 1998 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Boulder, CO
- 1996 School of Engineering (ITL), University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
- 1995 Founders Court, Seattle Center, Seattle, WA, (with Atelier Landscape)
- 1994 National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), Boulder, CO
- 1993 Ventura Pier, Ventura, CA (with Moffat/Nichols engineers)

Selected Exhibitions:

- 2015 IceHouse Gallery, Petaluma
- 2013 Bolinas Museum
- 2012 Paradise Ridge Sculpture Garden, Santa Rosa, CA
- 2009 Pasadena Museum of California Art
- 2009 Cooper Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York, NY
- 2009 National Building Museum, Washington, DC
- 2009 Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA
- 2008 Sebastopol Center for the Arts, Sebastopol, CA
- 2007 AIA Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2004 Museum of Natural History, New York, NY

- 2002 Museum of Natural History, London, England
- 2001 Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA
- 2001 New Langton Arts, San Francisco, CA

Awards / Grants:

- 2009 Public Art Award, Americans for the Arts, 40 Best Public Artworks
- 2006 AIA Honor Award with Koning/Eizenberg for the Pittsburgh Children's Museum
- 2006 Design Distinction - Environments, I.D. Magazine's Annual Design Review
- 2006 Year in Review Award, Public Art Network, Americans for the Arts
- 2005 National Design Award, Landscape Design, from the Cooper-Hewitt Museum
- 2005 Year in Review Award, Public Art Network, Americans for the Arts
- 2003 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship
- 1999 Creative Work Fund (with TODCO, San Francisco)
- 1999 National Science Foundation, Planetary Landscapes Exhibition, Chabot Observatory
- 1996 National Science Foundation, Turbulent Landscapes Exhibition, Exploratorium
- 1994 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Sculpture Fellowship
- 1994 California Arts Council Fellowship
- 1992 Bernard Osher Cultural Award
- 1991 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), Sculpture Fellowship

Education:

- 1982 B.A., Environmental Studies, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT

Reviews / Articles:

- 2009 New York Times, "Into Another Dimension" , by Julia Klein
- 2009 San Francisco Chronicle, "Memory of Water", by John King
- 2008 Sculpture Magazine, "Sculpting Consciousness", by Lisa Streitfeld
- 2008 Professional Lighting Design, "Nature Meets Art - Art Meets Nature"
- 2006 Landscape Architecture, "Design with Science", by Susan Hines
- 2004 Sunset Magazine, "The Nature of Art", by Peter Fish
- 2004 Los Angeles Times, "Please Trample the Grass", by Mary McNamara
- 2004 Artweek, "Ned Kahn at Off the Preserve", by Colin Berry
- 2003 San Francisco Magazine, "Mother Nature's Sons", by Jonathon Keats
- 2003 San Francisco Chronicle, "Urban Landscapes" by John King
- 2001 Marin Independent Journal, "Putting Art in Motion", by Rick Polito
- 1999 New Scientist, Interview with Ned Kahn and Jeff Greenwald
- 1996 New York Times, "Persuading Nature...", by Tessa DeCarlo
- 1996 Los Angeles Times Magazine, "Mad About Sci-Art", by K.C. Cole
- 1996 Complexity, Turbulent Landscapes, by Ned Kahn and Dr. James Crutchfield
- 1993 Wall Street Journal, "Where Art Meets Science", by Tessa DeCarlo
- 1989 New York Times Magazine, "Works in Progress", by Bruce Weber
- 1988 New Yorker Magazine, "Talk of the Town", by Adam Gopnick