



The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden

Sydney and Walda Besthoff

Landscape Design : Sawyer/Berson Architecture & Landscape Architecture, LLP - J. Brian Sawyer, Tim J. Orlando | Location : Louisiana, USA | Landscape Area : 19,263m² | Completion Date : 2003 | Photographer: Richard Sexton

The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden at the New Orleans Museum of Art occupies approximately five acres in city park adjacent to the museum. Atypical of most sculpture gardens, this garden is located within a mature existing landscape of Pines, Magnolias and Live Oaks. The garden design creates outdoor viewing spaces within this picturesque landscape. A re-configured lagoon bisects the site and creates two distinct halves: a mature Pine and Magnolia grove adjacent to the museum, and a more open area of two-hundred year old Live Oaks across the lagoon near the New Orleans Botanical Garden. The Sculpture Garden is designed for approximately sixty sculptures, most of them donated to the New Orleans Museum of Art by Sydney and Walda Besthoff. A pair of cast stone and bronze pavilions with clerestory windows marks the entry to the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden at the New Orleans Museum of Art. The pavilions, which face a large meadow adjacent to the Museum's entry drive, flank a large plaza containing Henry Moore's 'Reclining Mother and Child'. The pavilions and entry plaza also establish a centerline through the depth of the garden that becomes an organizing element of the design.

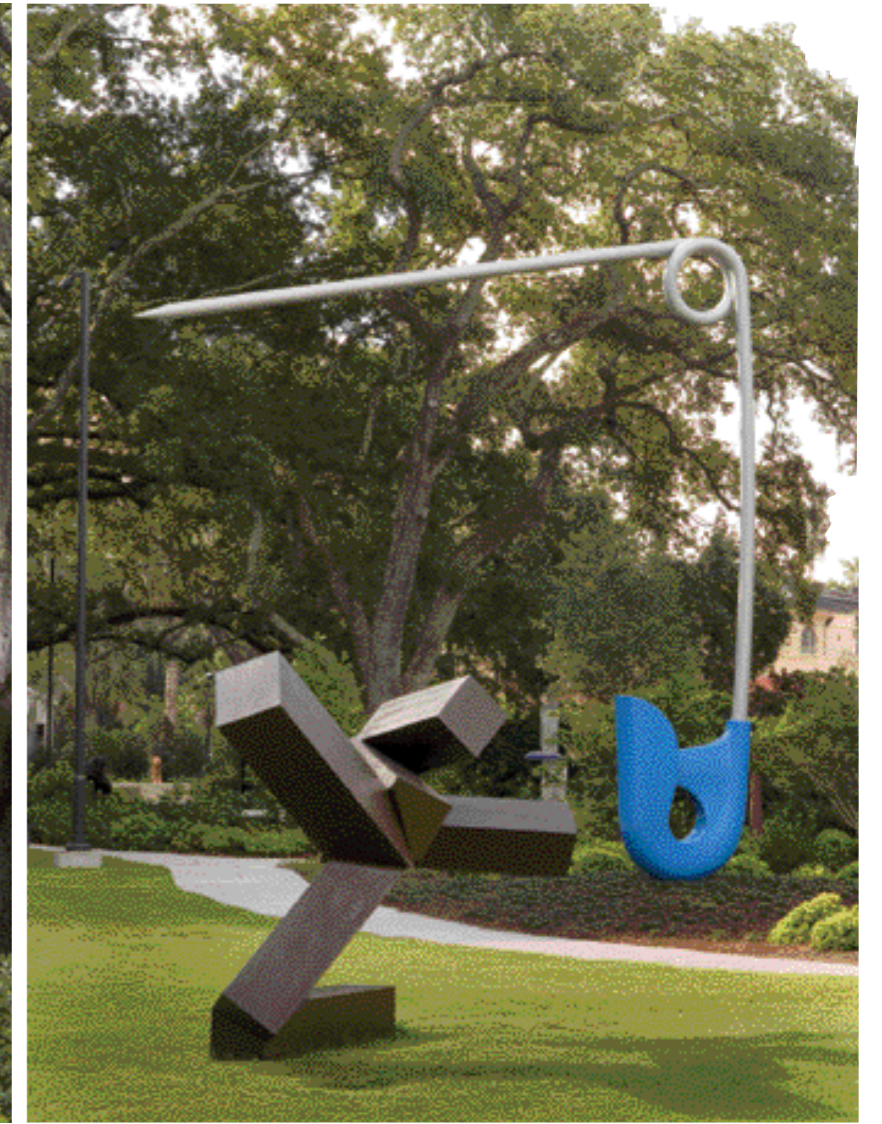
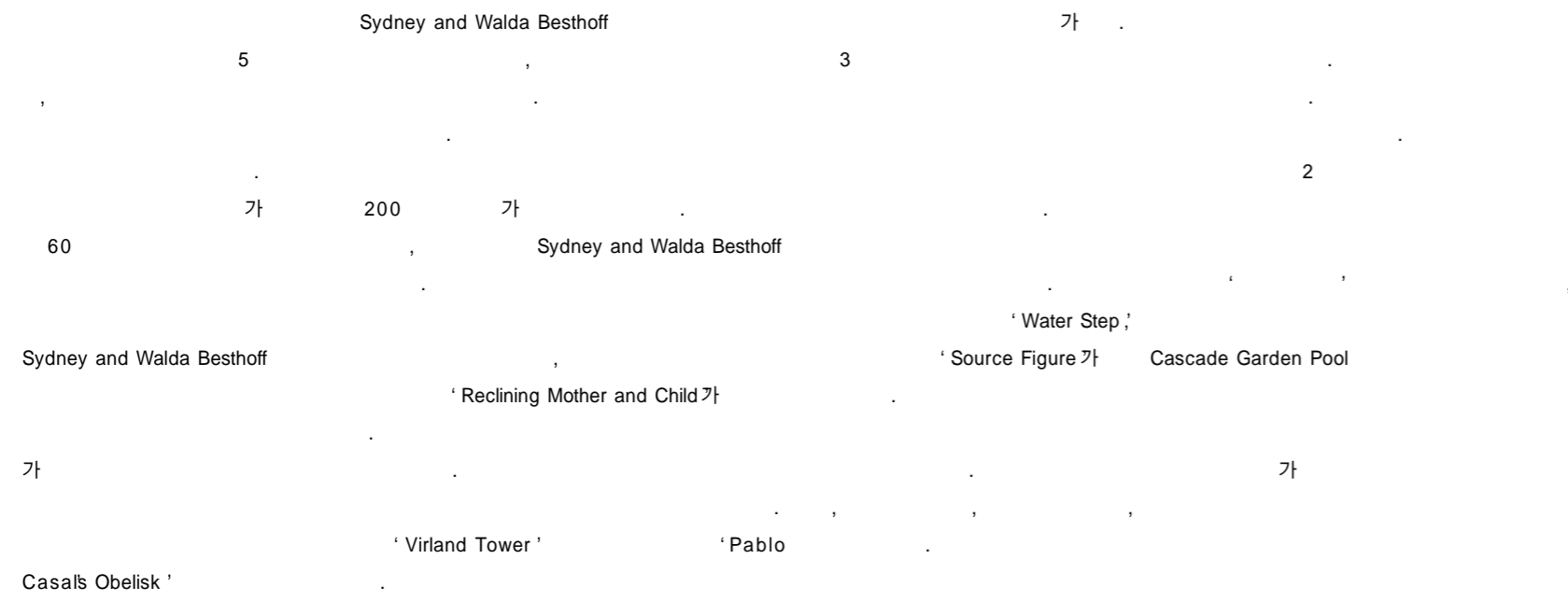
The garden is bisected by a lagoon which has been re-shaped into two basins on either side of the central pedestrian bridge. These lagoon basins each contain a sculpture, Kenneth Snelson's 'Viriane Tower' and Arman's 'Pablo Casal's Obelisk'. By locating these vertical sculptures in the water, their reflections become part of the compositions.



A total of three pedestrian bridges cross the lagoon and connect the two sides of the garden. The entries to the bridges are marked by simple, cast stone pylons that support bronze lanterns. Side rails constructed of bronze and stainless steel mesh reflect the light and allow views through the bridges. This combination of cast stone lantern pylons and bronze with stainless mesh is repeated in the form of monumental gates at the main entry and two secondary entries.

A picturesque composition of curvilinear paths compliments the mature trees while creating smaller viewing areas, or 'galleries', within the garden. These paths also connect a series of garden features including the Overlook Terrace, the Exedra at the end of one of the pedestrian bridges, the monumental Water Steps at one of the secondary entrances, the elliptical Sculpture Theater containing smaller pieces of sculpture and the Cascade Garden Pool containing Robert Graham's 'Source Figure'. The pathways also frame the elliptical Pine Grove immediately off of the main entry plaza and the large Oak Lawn at the opposite end of the garden. With the exception of the lagoon, the Oak Lawn is the most open space in the garden and contains some of the larger sculptures including works by Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Elizabeth Frink, Joel Shapiro and Claes Oldenburg.









Plan



