

Greener Pastures

or

The Effect of Imposing a Modern Aesthetic on a Traditional Landscape.

I'm not that interested in experiencing transcendence through art viewing; nor am I interested in creating a transcendental experience for others (maybe I am). What I am interested in is the rhetoric of transcendence in Modernism and how it dovetails with, opposes, informs, reacts to, and undermines the rhetoric of transcendence in the tradition of landscape painting. I'm interested in art that is about something—that builds for itself a dialectic and holds to it—art that can stand on its own and knows where it stands.

Working with irrigation equipment I explore my roots, as a pipe-mover during high school (and now), and as a descendent of Mormon Pioneers who built the first modern irrigation system in North America when they arrived in Utah. The Mormons sought transcendence through irrigation—they saw God's power in “making a desert blossom like a rose.”

By combining existing irrigation implements into sculptures that remain true to the material (attaching the pipes to water would make the rainbirds rain), like Puryear, I attempt to combine the formal concerns of abstraction with iconic materials ever-present in the Western landscape to reconcile the landscape tradition with that of Modern sculpture. The inherent nature of the materials I'm using is that they are quite linear and quite large. Their linear nature begs to be treated as much as drawing as sculpture.

Ultimately, by trying to reconcile form and content, Modernism and Traditional Landscape, and by flooding the work with personal-cultural meaning, I hope to transcend traditional Art Historical boundaries and re-assert an art-rhetoric of conceptual-formal-craft rigor.