

The Arts: News and Reviews

Outdoor Sculpture To Sit On Or Climb

MINNEAPOLIS, Sept. 2 (AP) — A sculpture garden where visitors touch, climb and lie down on statues worth millions of dollars attracts people who rarely visit museums.

The Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, which is being formally dedicated this weekend, is on seven and a half acres of downtown city parkland and is the largest urban sculpture garden in the country, city and museum officials say.

It features a giant cherry in a spoon by Claes Oldenburg and sculptures by such other masters as Isamu Noguchi and Henry Moore.

"I see children playing around and among the sculptures," said David Fisher, superintendent of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. "They become active participants like you probably couldn't have in a museum."

The 40 sculptures — a \$12.8 million joint project of Walker Art Center, the park board and the University of Minnesota's Landscape Arboretum — provide hands-on experiences for adults, too.

Visitors can swing on a platform suspended from the large, steel-beamed sculpture "Arikidea" by Mark di Suvero, watching the beams overhead shift slowly from the motion of the swing.

Becoming Part of the Work

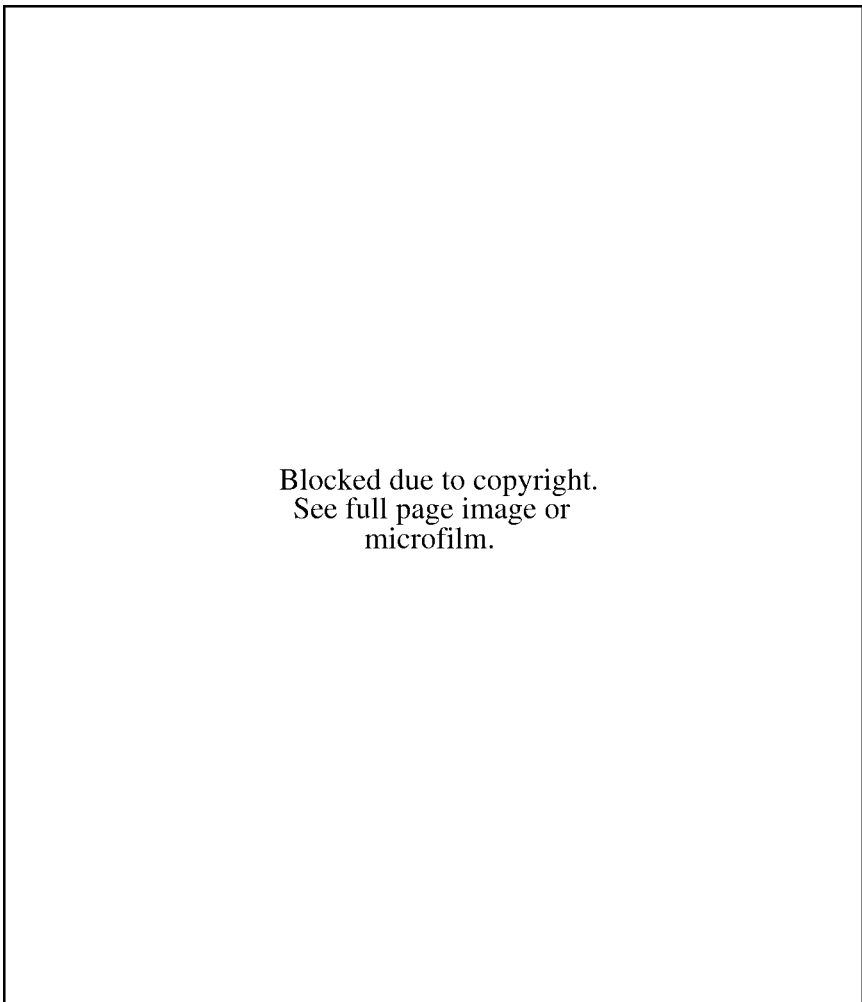
They can lie on their backs in the aluminum human form that faces the sky, and become part of Peter Shelton's "Blackvaultfalloffstone."

They can step inside Meg Webster's "Glen," a plant-filled earthen crater, and enjoy the scents and colors of perennial plants and wildflowers.

"The interaction has been one of the bigger things that we've pulled off," Mr. Fisher said. "To watch the pure joy of some people in their interactions has been a real delight to me."

The sculptures date from early in the century to the present, and range in style from the classical realist to the elemental abstract. They were created by artists working in a variety of media, including bronze, stone and wood.

Permanent installations include such acknowledged masters as Moore, Reuben Nakian and Noguchi,



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Associated Press

George Kelly, left, and his brother, Charlie, visitors to the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, playing on "Without Words," a work by Judith Shea. The garden, which is being formally dedicated this weekend, invites visitors to touch, climb or sit on the artworks.

as well as such leading contemporaries as Deborah Butterfield, Ellsworth Kelly and George Segal.

The garden, designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes in association with the landscape architect Peter Rotschild, is largely symmetrical. Four 100-foot-square plazas are separated by walkways lined with linden trees. The more traditional sculptures are among trees along the walkways, with the larger constructions in the plazas.

A Spoon as Bridge

The garden's focal point is the \$500,000 fountain sculpture "Spoon-bridge and Cherry" by Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen.

The giant gray aluminum spoon holding a deep red bing cherry with a black stem arches from the reed- and iris-lined shore to an island in a free-form pond, giving off a glistening mist and adding a touch of fantasy to the garden.

The Sage and John Cowles Conservatory is a series of three connected glass houses that feature permanent and seasonal horticultural displays.

One exhibit contains a dozen palm trees that rise nearly 60 feet over Frank Gehry's 22-foot-high sculpture "Standing Glass Fish," which rises from a pool of white water lilies.

A footbridge designed by Siah Aramajani spans city traffic to link the garden to Loring Park and the downtown area.

One of the major goals of the sculpture garden, said the director of the Walker Art Center, Martin Friedman, is to develop an appreciative audience by making as much good work available as possible.

The garden is meant to attract art lovers as well as people who don't normally frequent museums. Mr. Friedman said he hopes it will help dispel the perception that a museum is "a somewhat remote presence, even a fortress of art."