Although there have been many changes in Bayliss Park since the 19th century, it has always served as a focal point for community gatherings and a place to remember those who have contributed to the history of the city. The fountain, which is a symbol of the city's progress and prosperity, has been a source of inspiration for artists and architects alike. It is a place where people can come together to celebrate their shared heritage and to enjoy the beauty of the natural world. This page is an opportunity for children because they never know when the other jets will pop up and spray them.

Other parts of the park were designed specifically for play. There is another, smaller fountain that only comes on when children push a button that starts nine water jets that form a rainbow over the entire fountain. The center jet creates a woven pattern that resembles the web of rods from the large fountain. This play area is a surprise for children because they never know when the other jets will pop up and spray them.

The nearby performance pavilion, titled Oculus, is made of a similar layered sequence of colored rods forming a dome. Mirrored discs are added to the hubs where the rods meet in order to reflect the light during the day and the illumination at night. The dome, which has a circular opening at the top, rests on four cautiously styled columns. The Oculus, which was designed to evoke the original form of the fountain, is the centerpiece of the park's renovation. It is made of multicolored powder-coated stainless steel rods forming webs in a circular opening which seems like an eye looking up to the sky.

All these architectural features, dome, columns, and Oculus, refer to the ancient Romans' use of these features to shape large public spaces. One example of such a building is the Pantheon in Rome, built in its present form in the 2nd century. The interior of the building is a huge circular space covered with a dome which is 142 feet in diameter and is pierced by a large oculus. When it rains the water falls down through the oculus to the floor below. Another example is the dome of St Peter's in Rome, which has a diameter of about 360 feet. Inside the building the circular opening which holds up the dome is decorated with niches and columns. In Roman time, many people gathered in this area for religious ceremonies. Today large groups of people still visit it as a site of Rome's major tourist attractions.

Brower Hatcher's recommendation to redesign the park is for the project for the specified historic interpretation. The Bayblos Park fountain has a traditional focus and is still the main attraction of the park.

Brower Hatcher's fountain, entitled Springwell, serves as the centerpiece of the park's renovation. It is made of multicolored powder-coated stainless steel rods forming webs in a circular opening which seems like an eye looking up to the sky.

Brower Hatcher's fountain. Springwell, serves as the centerpiece of the park's renovation. It is made of multicolored powder-coated stainless steel rods forming webs in a circular opening which seems like an eye looking up to the sky.

Brower Hatcher's system of domes. The center jet creates a woven pattern that resembles the web of rods from the large fountain. This play area is a surprise for children because they never know when the other jets will pop up and spray them.

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Brower Hatcher says that he wants to evoke the original form of the fountain. Look at his fountain, Springwell, and compare it to the 19th-century fountain. How are they similar? Springwell is also meant to be an image of the future. What does it look futuristic?

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Brower Hatcher uses the word “evoking” as his title. Look at the definition of the word below. Do you think this is a good title? How does this title make a reference to the location and history of the city of Council Bluffs?

The Bayblos Park fountain has a traditional focus and is still the main attraction of the park. In 1971 a new fountain, which featured ever-changing columns of water, replaced the iron fountain. By 2004 the fountain no longer worked, but because Bayblos Park was “the people’s park” and popular year round, the project grew to include a new fountain, a performance pavilion, landscaping, and a children’s play area.

On April 28, 2007, the new Bayblos Park, which includes the performance pavilion as the focal point of the park. In 1971 a new fountain, which featured ever-changing columns of water, replaced the iron fountain. By 2004 the fountain no longer worked, but because Bayblos Park was “the people’s park” and popular year round, the project grew to include a new fountain, a performance pavilion, landscaping, and a children’s play area.

When Brower Hatcher was asked to redesign Bayblos Park, he got in touch with the sculptor and artist Brower Hatcher. Hatcher was delighted.

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The fountain that only comes on when children push a button that starts nine water jets that form a rainbow over the entire fountain. The center jet creates a woven pattern that resembles the web of rods from the large fountain. This play area is a surprise for children because they never know when the other jets will pop up and spray them.

Other parts of the park were designed specifically for play. There is another, smaller fountain that only comes on when children push a button that starts nine water jets that form a rainbow over the entire fountain. The center jet creates a woven pattern that resembles the web of rods from the large fountain. This play area is a surprise for children because they never know when the other jets will pop up and spray them.

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BROWER HATCHER
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Brower Hatcher was born in Atlanta, Georgia. As a young man, he “loved to build and make things and clearly had a talent.” Because he was interested in building and also curious about many other things he studied a variety of subjects. He studied engineering at Vanderbilt University and received a degree in industrial design from New York’s Pratt Institute. Brower Hatcher claims, “I didn’t understand my talent originally other than being able to make sense out of stuff and build. I am lucky to have had a good education. I read a lot about everything – art, science, literature, music, philosophy. I am very curious and like knowing about things.” When Brower Hatcher went to London, England, to study sculpture he found his lifelong career.

Brower Hatcher taught sculpture for 13 years and for the past 20 years has earned his living creating over 35 large-scale public art projects. Almost everything he builds is a site-specific public art work built on a commission basis. Brower Hatcher says, “I like working publicly because it seems more democratic. It is for the common man…and involves approval by committees.”

Brower Hatcher is the artistic director of Mid-Ocean Studio, Inc., in Providence, Rhode Island, a collaborative group of artists, designers, scientists, fabricators and technical personnel. Brower Hatcher explains, “Most projects now begin with a project problem, a site, a site visit. I often just walk around until I have an idea. Then I sketch a doodle. I think about it more and make more sketches – it evolves. I have a computer modeler I have worked with for 10 years. We understand each other. I send him a doodle, we talk, he understands where we’re going, we revise, I draw on his prints, send it back, we revise. It goes on and on until it looks and feels right…. We usually work on about three projects simultaneously. Often proposals need to be done one a week – it can be hectic but creativity grows under pressure…. Every day is focused on designing, thinking up, and figuring out art. I am so involved with the imagining and conceptualizing of large projects, it takes most of my time.”

Brower Hatcher’s advice to students who want to be artists is, “What’s important is curiosity, adventurousness, a talent, and interest in the way things are put together.”

HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site of Brower Hatcher’s sculptures represents a continuation of Council Bluffs’ tradition since the 19th century of having a downtown public square with a centerpiece fountain. It is an important public space where citizens can gather for events.

The park is named for Samuel S. Bayliss who was born in Virginia. As a young man he wanted to make his fortune in the California gold fields. His journey West brought him to Kanesville (today known as Council Bluffs) where he realized that he didn’t need to go all the way to California to make his fortune. He recognized that he could sell supplies to the hundreds of people in the wagon trains waiting in Kanesville to cross the Missouri River. He bought 400 acres of Kanesville for $200 and brought his family from the East to help him work the land and run his business. Bayliss was so successful that he was inspired to give back to the community. In 1853 he donated the land that today is known as Bayliss Park.
Although there have been many changes in Bayliss Park since the 19th century, it has always served as a focal point for community gatherings and a place to remember those who have contributed to the city's history. In the mid-1800s Bayliss Park was a grassy public meeting place with a bandstand pavilion in the center. In 1890 an iron fountain decorated with cupids and human figures, raised on a pedestal, replaced the bandstand pavilion as the focal point of the park. In 1971 a new fountain, which featured ever-changing columns of water, replaced the iron fountain. By 2004 the fountain no longer worked, but because Bayliss Park was “the people’s park” and popular year round, the community organized a campaign to raise money to redesign and renovate their city center. The project grew to include a new fountain, a performance pavilion, landscaping, and a children’s play area. On April 28, 2007, the new Bayliss Park, which includes Oculus and Wellspring by the major public sculptor Brower Hatcher, was dedicated.

There are a number of existing monuments which encircle Bayliss Park and celebrate some of the city’s history and its citizens. These include:
- 1917 - 17-ton boulder, dedicated to Mormons and their passage along the Mormon Trail, with bronze relief by Paul Fjelde which shows pioneers guiding their wagons
- 1926 - Civil War memorial
- 1932 - Spanish-American War Veterans Monument
- 1984 - Vietnam War Memorial by John Lajba
- 2003 - Veterans Plaza Memorial by John Lajba

WORK OF ART

MEDIUM AND DESCRIPTION

Brower Hatcher’s fountain, entitled Wellspring, serves as the centerpiece of the park’s renovation. It is made of multicolored powder-coated stainless steel rods forming webs in the shape of two cones, one inside the other, topped with four tiers of rings. In the summer a geyser of water shoots up through the sculpture cascading over the metal tiers into the pool below. Additional jets of water from below create varying patterns as they rise and fall at different intervals. At night the lighting adds an additional element to the sculpture.

The nearby performance pavilion, titled Oculus, is made of a similar layered sequence of colored rods forming a dome. Mirrored discs are added to the hubs where the rods meet in order to reflect the light during the day and the illumination at night. The dome, which has a circular opening at the top, rests on four classically styled columns.

INTERPRETATION

Citizens of Council Bluffs formed a committee to look for an artist to redesign and renovate Bayliss Park to make it a vibrant city center again. Brower Hatcher was given the commission to redesign the park. In his proposal for the project he described his intentions: “The Bayliss Park fountain has been a traditional focus and icon for the community of Council Bluffs since its inception in the 1880s. My design intent is to maintain this historical continuity by evoking the original form of the fountain while at the same time constructing it so that it is an image of the future. The fountain is intended as a representation of the community of Council Bluffs, a community with a strong sense of tradition that also embraces the information age.”

Brower Hatcher says that he wants to evoke the original form of the fountain. Look at his fountain, Wellspring, and compare it to the 19th-century fountain. How are they similar?

Wellspring is also meant to be an image of the future. What makes it look futuristic?

Brower Hatcher uses the word “wellspring” as his title. Look at the definition of the word below. Do you think this is a good title? How does this title make a reference to the location and history of the city of Council Bluffs?

Oculus, the performance pavilion, is in the form of a dome resting on four columns. At the top of the dome is an Oculus, the circular opening which seems like an eye looking up to the sky.

All these architectural features, dome, column and oculus, make reference to ancient cultures and their architectural engineering. The ancient Romans used
these features to shape large public spaces. One existing example of such a building is the Pantheon in Rome built in its present form in the second century. The interior of the building is a huge circular space covered with a dome which is 142 feet in diameter and is pierced by a large oculus. When it rains the water falls down through the oculus to the floor below where there is a drain. The Pantheon’s dome is made of heavy concrete and is held up by walls of brick and concrete that are almost 20 feet thick. Inside the building the circular wall which holds up the dome is decorated with niches and columns. In Roman times many people gathered in this large space for religious ceremonies. Today large groups of people still visit as it serves as one of Rome’s major tourist attractions.

Please see www.iowawestpublicart.org for links to images of the Pantheon.

Look at images of the Pantheon and compare it to **Oculus**. What features are similar to the ancient building; what features are different? Do you see any features that make **Oculus** an “image of the future”?

People from ancient times until the present have been fascinated with the night sky. **Oculus** with its eye looking to the sky reminds us of astronomical observatories.

See www.iowawestpublicart.org for a link to an image of an observatory.

How does this observatory look similar to **Oculus**? How do scientists look at the sky from inside the observatory? Does this remind you of anything you see when you look at **Oculus**?

Brower Hatcher and his team work with scientists, including computer scientists, mathematicians, and engineers to create his sculptures. Scientists and engineers have created a number of different kinds of modern domes. Can you think of any?

Visit www.iowawestpublicart.org for links to some images of modern domes.

Other parts of the park were designed specifically for play. There is another, smaller fountain that only comes on when children push a button that starts nine water jets that form patterns similar to the large fountain. The center jet creates a woven pattern that resembles the web of colored rods of the large fountain. This play area is a surprise for children because they never know when the other jets will pop up and spray them.

Other play areas near the fountain feature a family of six cast-bronze black squirrels. Unlike most sculptures, these are made for children to climb and sit on. The black squirrel is now the official mascot of Council Bluffs because there are so many of them in the city. The black squirrel was first reported in 1843 along the Missouri River near Council Bluffs by John James Audubon, a great American wildlife artist.

See www.iowawestpublicart.org for the link to an image of Audubon’s painting of the black squirrel.

Have you ever been to a park? Why do you go? What do you do there? Have you ever been to a park for a big public event? What kinds of events do you think would be fun to have at Bayliss Park?

Brower Hatcher designed all the parts of Bayliss Park with this particular place in mind. When an artist designs art for a particular place it is called “site specific.”

Consider everything that makes up Bayliss Park. What things in the park refer to the history of Council Bluffs? (Think about Council Bluff’s location on the Missouri River, its place in history, its people, and its natural environment.)

**VOCABULARY**

**Columns** - architecture: a solid, upright shaft serving as support

**Commission** - to select or appoint someone to carry out a function or to create an artwork

**Dome** - the shape of a half globe; architecture: a roof shaped like an evenly curved, inverted bowl

**Fabricator** - to make by art or skill and labor; construct

**Niche** - a hollow or recess in a wall often for display of objects like sculpture
Oculus - an eye; architecture: a circular opening, especially one at the top of a dome

Site-specific - created, designed, or selected for a specific place or location

Three-dimensional - having length, breadth, and depth - existing in real space

Wellspring - the head or source of a spring, stream, river; fountainhead; a source or supply of anything, especially when considered inexhaustible

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

EXPLORE BIG IDEAS

Artists repeat visual forms, references and ideas in their works.

Connect With Other Art, Artists And Cultures

Please visit www.iowawestpublicart.org for links to view four of Brower Hatcher’s sculptures.

Read the information given about Brower Hatcher’s sculptures and share the images and relevant details with your students. All of these sculptures were commissioned and are site-specific.

Student discussion questions:

What are the visual similarities and differences among these works?

What kinds of materials and shapes does Brower Hatcher reuse in these works?

Do you see any similarities in these works to Wellspring?

We have seen references to ancient cultures, to modern buildings, and to astronomy in Oculus from Bayliss Park. Do any of the other sculptures make reference to these ideas?

Brower Hatcher says that “nature is a strong inspiration” in his works and he tries “to incorporate aspects of the natural environment into the work itself.” How do these works incorporate elements of nature and their environments?

Experiment With Art Making

When Brower Hatcher made El Arbol de Esperanza for Thomas Jefferson Park in New York City, he invited students to create small clay figures of common sights they saw in the park. These objects were cast in bronze and added to the tree’s branches. When he created Prophecy of the Ancients he added objects representing past and present cultures to the dome structure.

Imagine that you are underneath the dome of Oculus in Bayliss Park looking up through the “eye.” What might you see? Think of as many things as you can. Imagine yourself in different seasons, at different times of the day and in different weather. Imagine that you can see far away or that you can see tiny objects that are close by. Choose one of these objects and create a small three-dimensional sculpture to represent it. (Students may make objects out of clay, modeling medium, wire, or other found materials. Specify a maximum size, such as three inches.)

Create a framework to attach the objects for display. Using pushpins in a bulletin board, make a large circle placing the pushpins about 2 inches apart along the circumference of the circle. Use string wrapped around the pushpins to create a web-like design within the circle. Attach students’ sculptures within the web. As an alternative, create a geodesic dome or sphere of straws and pipe cleaners. Have students attach their sculptures within the web. Please visit www.iowawestpublicart.org for instructions on creating the dome.

EXPLORE BIG IDEAS

Artists work with other people to create public spaces for communities.

Connect With Other Art, Artists and Cultures

Go to www.iowawestpublicart.org for a link to look at the following five public spaces designed by artists.

Read the information given about these spaces with public art and share the images and relevant details with your students. All of these sculptures were
commissioned and are site-specific. People are meant to walk through these spaces and interact with the art.

**Student discussion questions:**

Which of these public works of art relate to events that have occurred in these areas? How do they encourage people to remember these events?

Which of these public art spaces are in parks? How do they reflect the natural or man-made surroundings?

People interact with the art works in all of these spaces. One of the elements with which people interact in some of these spaces is water. How are these interactions with water similar or different? What are some other ways people interact with the works of art?

**Experiment With Art Making**

Students will work together in small groups that will function as design teams. Choose a public site at your school, in the neighborhood or in the larger community and have students research the history and significance of the site and its surroundings. Have each group make a proposal for enriching this public space with art. Proposals may include sketches, written descriptions and/or three-dimensional models. Some questions to consider:

- How will your proposal reflect the history of the site?
- How will the natural environment and the surroundings be considered in your ideas?
- How will people be able to interact in your space and with your art?
- How will your design enhance the site?

Have each design team present their proposal to the class.

Now have each small group serve as a selection committee to choose one of the designs (excluding their own) to build on the site. Have each committee explain in writing the reasons for their choice.

**WHAT IS IWPA?**

Iowa West Public Art (IWPA) is an initiative of the Iowa West Foundation that started in 2004. IWPA is guided by a community-driven Public Art Master Plan, which selected over fifty public art sites in the City of Council Bluffs, Iowa. IWPA's vision for the year 2015 is a community with a national and international reputation for high quality art that attracts visitors from all over the world and fuels economic development. Learn more at www.iowawestpublicart.org.

Curriculum author credits: Center for Innovation in Arts Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Shari Hofschire, Dr. Joanne Sowell

**CONNECT WITH OTHER SUBJECTS**

The above activities and discussions address the following subject areas:

Science: astronomy and observatories, engineering and structural design, environmental science and animals

Math: geometrical shapes in webs and in architecture

Social Studies: history of Council Bluffs and other cities, the movement West, Civil Rights, history of wars

Language Arts: biographies of historical figures, written responses