

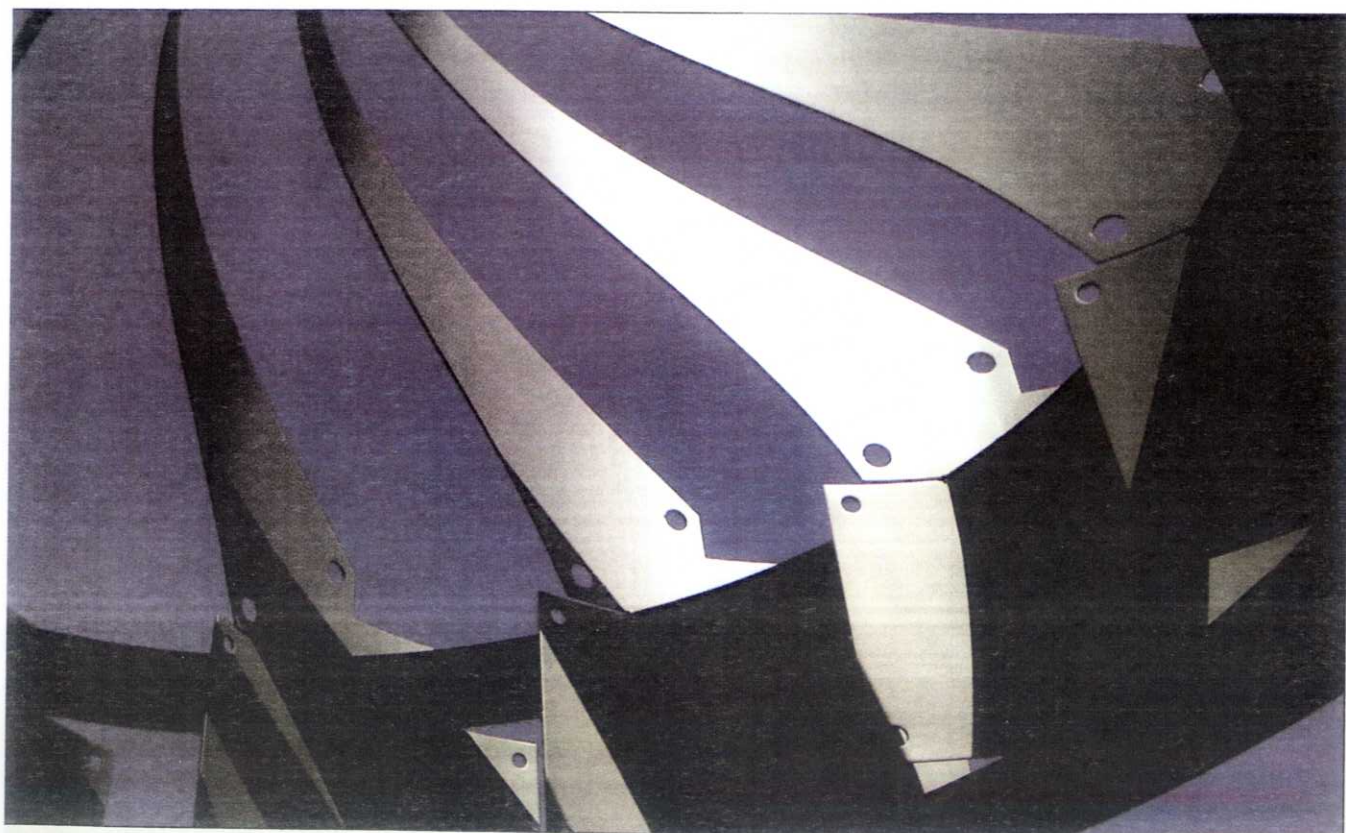
Kickoff for public art

# A vital part of the project

*The first public art installation in the city under the Percent for Art program focuses on construction, fabrication*



The City of Cleveland's Art Quarter along Superior Ave. was recently enhanced by a new installation of public art. The illuminated, stainless steel structural pavilions, designed by Cleveland artist Stephen Manka and located between East 17th and East 22nd streets, reveal just how accessible and important public art is. The installation is the first in the area under the recently passed Percent for Art program, which mandates that 1.5% of large, city-funded capital improvement projects valued at more than \$350,000 be set aside for public art projects. The program keeps the local feel to these projects, by ensuring that 50% of the creations are to be completed by a Cleveland artist. The ordinance was passed by the City of Cleveland and City Council, thanks to assistance from Cleveland Public Art.



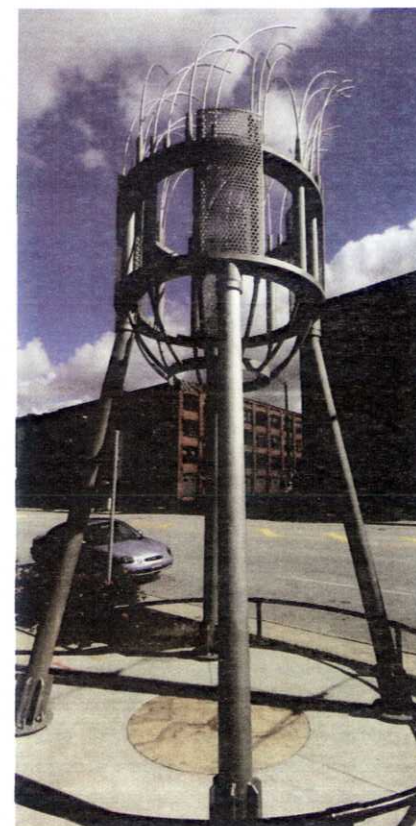
All images courtesy of Jamie Jinos Photography

Cleveland Public Art was commissioned by the Downtown Cleveland Alliance to oversee the projects that will line the street through the selection, design, fabrication, and installation processes. This active hand in all

**Facing:** Public art invokes the feel of the surrounding neighborhood, in this case the lower Superior industrial area.

**Right:** Fabricating the art pieces

**Below:** A piece in place on Superior Ave.



aspects of creation allows CPA to monitor progress while gathering new ideas for the neighborhood. For the latest installment of art, CPA selected Stephen Manka and Amie McNeel of the Cleveland Institute of Art to bring the structures to life. Another integral piece to this project was lighting architect Rusty Culp. The towers are illuminated by a computer programmed lighting technology, and his light design gives scope and power to the installation.

The pavilions on Superior show the importance of partnerships, both large and small. Precision Welding Company, located

in Cleveland, which was asked to take part in the project, "jumped into the production as if the project was its own," says Manka. "They adapted and shifted their skills to work on the project." They were gnarly."

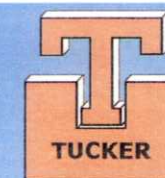
This level of collaboration shows the importance of artists working closely with fabricators and other constructors on the job. And the energy put into the effort came about not in an attempt to gain recognition,

or for profit, but instead out of enthusiasm for the value of public art. The entire process of the fabrication was chronicled by a series of photographs that can be viewed on Manka's website, [mankadesignstudio.com](http://mankadesignstudio.com), and it's worth seeing. These photographs show just how detailed and intense was the process that bought these sculptures to light.

The City of Cleveland itself was also part of this collaboration: the pavilions were

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**Above:** Precision Welding was a vital part of the partnership.

**Below:** Steve Manka's Excavator Plaza

inspired by local architecture, mainly the water towers atop industrial buildings on Superior, with an homage to the construction of the city seen in the use of excavation buckets. The pavilions, individually named as Woven Dome, Watering Tower and Excavator Pavilion, bring the landscape of

the city closer to eye level. Their resemblance to actual industrial features in the city should cause people to stop to look around. Without public art coming from local artists, such as Manka, who understand and appreciate the city, many of its aesthetic proponents can be overlooked.

**Light works**

Manka is also responsible for the EcoFence located at the Cleveland Environmental Center which uses solar panels to create the lighting effects. And coming soon to Playhouse Square are Manka's Luminaries, shaped like chorus dancers, framing the new Euclid Corridor route through the area. Such projects, says Manka, reflect the importance of public art.



The Playhouse Square Luminaries project is part of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's Arts in Transit Program. Similar to the Percent for Art Program, it also allocates a percentage of construction budgets, 1%, for public art. The Euclid Corridor Project will set aside \$1 million dollars specifically reserved for public art along the street. Cleveland Public Art was also hired by the GCRTA to oversee the projects and will help shape ideas for installation and completion.

The use of various lighting techniques in public art and the growing interest in green products and services are two trends that will encourage designers, fabricators and constructors to forge new partnerships and collaborations that focus on art and the environment as a way of improving the excitement and livability of the built environment. **BXM**