





## CHICAGO PRIZE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

**HEALINGWORK:** folding the city of Chicago into its natural context  
The rigorous geometries and monumental scale of Grant Park and Buckingham Fountain create a powerful presence along the lake. Although fitting for a landscape within an urban fabric the scale of Chicago, the size and strength of this environment can overwhelm the visitor, prompting them to frequent the edges and center of this civic asset without exploring the spaces in-between. To bring more attention to these overlooked areas without compromising the potency of the park's formality, the proposed work bases its formal expression upon the lines of influence created by the geometry of the park as well the views and experiences thereby created. The values and hierarchies offered by these forces are then used to create spaces of varying intimacies and use throughout the new extension.

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The resulting language is also used to frame well-known views and offer compelling perspectives to features that might otherwise go unnoticed. For example, one of more important views within the existing park is to the horizon of Lake Michigan. Although this moment is intentionally framed at the primary axis of the park, elsewhere the proposed extension purposely suspends the visitor's view onto this critical joint between sky and water so as to entice occupants to seek out new perspectives. This brings the guest into the proposed landscape, where they are given unexpected glimpses into the surrounding city, highway, and park. As the guest continues this progression away from the fountain and to the water's edge, these views increase in both scale and intensity. By the end of this progression, these glimpses have become 360° panoramas from more than 200' above the surface of Lake Michigan.

The experience from the highway is treated with equal reverence. Driving into the city, the new work appears as a narrow sliver of land stretching out over the highway and lake. This offers drivers an easily read and dramatic stitch between earth, sky and water. As the driver moves closer, this largely iconic presence gives way to a more nuanced experience and the largely undifferentiated views currently featured by the site are replaced with a series of framed vignettes. As the driver speeds past the park, these views flicker in and out, creating a series of tantalizing brief glimpses onto the city, fountain, lake and sky. From the park, this move translates the cars traveling along the highway into slivers of color speeding by the park – giving occupants a unique perspective on this routine event.

Programmatically, these subtle shifts of geometry work with the material palette to suggest specific zones of activity without demanding a single interpretation. In form and texture, the work looks to encourage overlaps of use and provoke new methods of occupation: smooth, gently sloped paved surfaces invite a leisurely stroll, while the more energized paving entices skateboarders and extreme sports enthusiasts; angled landscapes follow the natural angle of repose and invite people watchers, readers and stargazers to rest; large, flat plains of grass invite football and ultimate Frisbee.

Yet, the principle purpose behind the addition is to support Grant Park and Buckingham Fountain and allow both facilities to be completely off-grid. Thus, the rigorous geometry of the folded landscape is specifically designed to collect and filter sufficient rainwater to irrigate the park and supply the fountain. In similar fashion, the park is punctuated with various vertical landscape features that serve to both house essential program and collect and harness the energy offered by the sun and wind. So that the people of Chicago might participate in this act of ecological humility, these small, but incredibly sculptural forms draw attention to the act of collection by changing their form and color according to the amount of sun, water, or wind collected and stored. Surpluses and deficits in rainwater, sunlight, and wind thus become architecturally significant events, catching the attention of the entire city. More than the obvious educational merits of this proposal (which will undoubtedly attract many schoolchildren from the entire city) this celebration of Chicago's distinct natural environment reattaches all who visit this work to their shared natural context.









