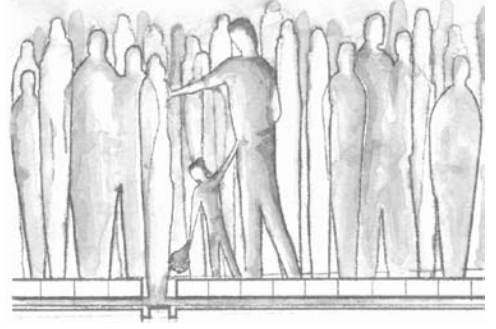


WORLD TRADE CENTER MEMORIAL

GROUND ZERO, NEW YORK CITY

The memorial at Ground Zero was to provide a context for remembering the past, engaging the present, and reflecting upon the future. To accomplish this in a manner appreciable to the context of the event, the language deployed had to transcend geography and nationality.

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We are essentially creatures of water: our bodies are composed of it, our physiology demands it, our society is typically positioned around it, and our culture reveres it. These factors, coupled with water's deep spiritual resonance (it provides a crucial ritualistic element within most of the world's religions), enabled this element to become the principle medium of the proposed memorial, through which all people, regardless of their particular circumstances, might engage the catastrophic events of September 11th.

Yet, this engagement must not be demanded; all who come to the memorial must be permitted to reflect upon this event to the level that they are willing and able. To allow for this process of gradual immersion, only the most general truths related to the scale and immense impact of 9/11 are initially introduced. The striking presence of this display entices greater involvement, prompting the visitor to expand their engagement by descending into the site.

Upon reaching the base of this descent, the guest is confronted by a vast assembly of fountains. The height and position of these features establishes a scalar relationship with the guest. This link is intensified as the visitor realizes that each of these elements is a tribute to the victims of 9/11 – each one (the scale and position of which are respectively linked to the height and birthdate of each individual) is a physical and metaphorical placeholder for one lost. As those visiting wind their way through this assembly, they become part of it – their translated image is refracted through the waters, blurring the distinction between guest and victim. In the process, the magnitude of the assembly is translated to the power held by the testimony of the individual and each fountain.

This perspective is then reflected back upon the event as a whole as the water offered for the individual returns to earth and merges with the waters offered by other fountains. At the footprints of the now vanished towers, the accumulated waters cascade into the site to carve out a place of deeper reflection, prompting the guest to once again intensify their engagement through physical descent. This progressively introspective process eventually culminates as the guest enters into the area beneath the waters and is invited to personally reflect upon the lives of those lost.

By providing multiple avenues of engagement, the memorial extends a modicum of grace to the guest, creating a continually developing and ever-deepening tribute to the tragic events surrounding September 11th. In so doing, the memorial becomes a living monument without sociological or cultural bound, able to evolve in a manner that both marks and transcends time.

