

Art in the garden

Art This word conjures excitement, thought, reflection, and at times contention.

Art is as personal as the car we drive or the sofas we sit on. Some people have more subtle tastes others tend to the bold. It is and should be a personal statement. There are a lot of variables to consider. Color, media (clay, metal, wood), and shapes all play a part in placement.

What does art have to do with landscape design? Some people may not think it has anything to do with the landscape. It could however be argued that garden gnomes, and gazing balls are in fact art. I would like to elevate our expectations of art from the resin box store specials to more one of a kind creations. For instance a bust of a face with a calm and welcome look that happen to move us or an 8' tall polished stainless steel sculpture that has such beautiful curves and reflections that you couldn't go without it. Landscape design has moved from just planting trees and shrubs to designing outdoor living spaces..... expanding our living space beyond our homes four walls to enjoy nature. Placing sculpture in the garden or in view of these "garden rooms" is not unlike hanging pictures on your walls or displaying sculpture indoors. It is our way of personalizing our spaces with things that invoke feelings, Whatever those feelings may be.

Sculpture and art in the garden is really a way to celebrate the beauty of nature. How you ask, is a sculpture a celebration of nature? Look at the curves of a sculpture, and then look at the curves and shapes of leaves, meandering streams or the curl of waves. If you like linear or boxy art the contrast of those lines against nature's airy feel highlights that art all the more. To take it a little further most medias used in fine artists work is taken from nature. Wood, metal, clays, and stone are all natural materials and lend themselves to being outside. In fact a lot of inspiration for artists is taken from views, experiences, and influence of nature. I have even met people that have found a piece of driftwood, or stone that they enjoyed so much they used it in their garden as a focal point. In those cases nature was the sculpture, and it was the individual that found the beauty in those materials.

Placement of sculpture or art in the garden is a little more concrete than someone's interpretation of "art". Typically paintings/pictures would be centered on a wall, grouped for display or framed on either side by sconces. This principal translates to the garden as well and is really key for successful placement. Anyone can set a piece of art in the garden in a random spot. It would be best to put a little more thought into the placement of a work of art. I would liken a quality Landscape Designer to an artist who uses plants instead of stone or metal. Someone with an eye for design can place a piece of art and frame

it or contrast it to make that art more obvious or use it to create a distant view to lead you through and experience more of different garden rooms. Instead of using a beautiful ornamental

tree for a focal point a moving piece of sculpture could be a suitable substitute. Placing art in the garden goes beyond just putting a sculpture in a landscape bed. Designing beds that curve around to create a circular turf area almost beg for a focal point in the middle of that turf space. This would be a place for your eyes to focus and encourage you to walk toward it to explore the setting. If you don't want to sacrifice turf space plantings can be created to artistically complement or frame the centerpiece. The trick is to complement the focal point. An evergreen hedge may be a suitable back drop for a more formal setting. However, for a more organic art piece an ornamental tree off to a side and slightly behind with a few lower plants around that art may nestle that art in and make it feel like it belongs there. The visual weight of a sculpture can be softened or highlighted with the use of plants and often works together to create a great space that would be more ordinary or awkward if it were just home to one or the other. Another point to keep in mind is that most sculpture is three dimensional. This means that you can turn the piece and it may take on a whole new meaning or personality. You need to look at how the art or sculpture is placed to assure that your main view is your favorite. The three dimensional characteristic also means that you will be able to experience that art in slightly different light depending of where you are viewing it. The three dimensional characteristic also means that you will be able to experience that art in slightly different light depending on where you are viewing it. Whether you are working with someone to design a home for your art or placing it yourself one should always remember to set it on a base suitable for that piece. A very large or heavy piece may need a concrete pad poured to keep it from leaning in the winters freeze thaw cycles, or anchored so it won't tip over.

Art in the garden brings a different life to the seasons. The placement of a sculpture is especially important when you have seasons. Through the seasons the garden takes on different appearances, and will accent the art in different ways. Just as a garden ages and matures art may do the

same. Depending on what the art is constructed of it may age and weather. Materials like copper and wood can weather and end up looking very different from when they were created. How the art interacts with nature can be beautiful all on its own. Seeing falls colors littered on a piece of art or even fallen petals of flowers can be an awesome sight. Snow will also interact with the art and accent lines or highlight spaces. These examples are all how art can celebrate nature and why it is an important piece of a landscape.

Art in the landscape can be static or dynamic, interactive or for visual enjoyment. The point is to enjoy it. To make a statement, and incorporate something that speaks to your passion and the client in which you're designing for. It should be able to be viewed or interacted with, placed thoughtfully where it has purpose, bringing a passion for plants and nature into a true expression. ■ The Landscape Committee



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