

Artist: Radha Madhava Fitch

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Statue Proposal – Title: **“Equality”**

(See attached mockup images and link to interactive 3D model at the bottom of this document)

Background

The problem:

The removal of the confederate soldier statue resulted from concern by the city to resolve divisiveness stemming from differing racial and political attitudes in the Gainesville community.

For those supporting the old statue, it was an historical landmark commemorating the deaths of confederate soldiers in a battle which took place in that location during the U.S. civil war.

For those opposed to the old statue, it was a representation of the lingering attitudes of inequality between races, and political differences stemming from that period.

The solution:

At the root of conflicts based on attitudes of inequality is the concept that we are the bodies which we inhabit.

Due to this misconception, we take pride in the body which we have, and denigrate others based on bodily differences, upon which are attached all social, political, economic, religious, secular, ideological, national, generational, etc. conflicts.

If indeed we want peace, love and justice, it must have a solid foundation in understanding the reality of the nature of our equality.

If we look on the bodily platform, there is no equality. Externally everyone is completely different in every way. But we are all equal internally as we are by nature spiritual beings.

This concept is foundational to our nation, as written in the Declaration of Independence:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

The understanding of our constitutional nature of spiritual equality resolves at the root the misconception of the bodily concept of life, which in turn erases the foundation of false-pride which fuels the divisiveness plaguing our communities.

As we can see, over 200 years later, due to lack of properly understanding this, these tensions are still active. They are being passed from generation to generation, and until the next generation understands how to actually resolve them, they will continue to erode any peace, love or justice we seek to have prevail.

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Artwork Communication:

The solution to the bodily concept of life was spoken on the battlefield of the largest civil-war in history, which happened at the battle of Kuruksetra in India, 5,000 years ago.

At the onset of the war, Sri Krishna the Supreme Personality of Godhead spoke to the primary warrior Arjuna:

“As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change.” - Bhagavad-Gita 2.13

The Bhagavad-Gita and the understanding of reincarnation was appreciated greatly by early American transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, as well as by Benjamin Franklin and many other prominent figures throughout history:

“In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial.”

- Henry David Thoreau

“The soul comes from without into the human body, as into a temporary abode, and it goes out of it anew it passes into other habitations, for the soul is immortal.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

“I believe ... that the soul of man is immortal and will be treated with justice in another life, respecting its conduct in this.”

- Benjamin Franklin

Artwork Physical Description:

To illustrate this concept the sculpture is designed as follows:

A 12' foot diameter ring, standing 7' feet tall, resting on the concrete slab, is cut with silhouettes of a man's body, at stages graduating from fetus, childhood, maturity, old age, until death.

Between birth and death a star/flower/spark shape represents the soul.

In the center of the ring is a 4' diameter reflective metal sphere, on a 1.5' concrete pedestal, which acts as a mirror to reflect back to the viewer the continuation of their self through the silhouette of the various body stages.

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Artwork Experience Description:

As passerby see the sculpture, they will wonder what it is, and see something shiny in the center, and approach it.

From whichever side they approach it, they will see a stage of bodily development, and see their reflection within its shape on the metal sphere.

They will look to see what stage of development they are currently in, (and then walk around the sculpture on the opportunely placed cement walkway), to look to see from whence they came, as well as understand where they are going to.

This experience sobers the viewer into understanding the reality of the impermanence of their current bodily situation which can release them from absorption in frivolous concerns, among which are racial, political and segregational views.

At the confluence of birth and death (located at the back of the sculpture, facing the administrative building) the shape representing the soul invites inquisitiveness of the nature of the self, and it's destination after death.

What is the condition of the living being after death is subject to debate amongst various schools of thought, but that the self is distinct from the body is universally undeniable.

By logic we can understand this distinction in our phraseology: "My body." We don't say "I body." This body and everything in relation to it we call "Mine", but who is the I who possesses the body? That is the self/soul.

Artwork Representational Description:

The sphere serves to represent a number of concepts:

1. It represents the soul which is constant despite the change of body. Modern science has observed that the body changes practically all its cells every 7-10 years, yet we as individuals remain the same, despite this change of body, even within this one lifetime. Similarly, we can understand that when this present body is gone, we will continue to exist in one state or another.
2. The spherical shape of the ball reflects a distorted image of the viewer. This represents that when we look at ourselves through the bodily paradigm (the silhouette of the body) our sense of self (the viewers natural bodily state) is distorted and inaccurate.
3. The presence of the sphere behind all the various silhouettes illustrates the constancy of the soul/self, despite the change of bodies.

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4. The view of the sphere through the silhouette of the symbol of the soul shows only the viewers face, which communicates that they are the observer of the body and its functions, distinct and transcendental to its changes.

The ring also serves to represent a number of concepts:

1. The ring is made of rusted metal. The rust represents the erosion of the material elements of which the body is comprised.
2. The silhouettes cut in the metal, show the various stages of development of the living being, through different bodies, within one continuous lifetime, with the symbol of the soul/self, indicating continuance of life in another state / set of bodies in another lifetime.

Accepting this statue proposal has the following significance:

3. This statue concept acts to serve the original purpose of the old confederate statue by honoring the lives of the soldiers who died in battle, by honoring their continued presence in eternal existence, thereby giving resolve to the purpose for which they fought – the freedom to pursue their ultimate wellbeing. The former conflict was based on bodily misconception, and now so many years later, that conflict is being genuinely resolved through this higher understanding, fulfilling the purpose for which this country was founded.
4. By accepting this installation proposal, it illustrates that our community and the current stage of humanity has finally matured to acknowledge the way to achieve what our nations' founders intended, a free and peaceful way of life, based on true equality.
5. The city of Gainesville is named after General Edmund P. Gaines who fought against native Americans and African Americans, enslaving and killing them. These actions and the perspectives which fueled them are unconscionable in the modern era, as we have advanced in our understanding of the equal value of mankind. To resolve the conundrum of representing peace, love and justice in a city named after a person who engaged in just the opposite of those principles, a new definition of Gainesville can be adopted: The community (ville / village) where one **gains** a higher understanding of oneself.

Fabrication:

I have spoken with and made arrangements to fabricate the piece with the following people:

The central metal sphere can be made by <https://www.metalsphere.com/>

The ring and silhouettes can be made by artist Leslie Tharp: <https://www.leslietharp.com>

The small cement pedestal upon which the sphere is attached can be made by a local expert.

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Conclusion:

Thank you for taking the time to review this application.

Please contact me to discuss further options/considerations.

This proposed design is the simplest most minimal approach, and can be made more elaborate for greater aesthetic appeal if desired.

Sincerely,
Radha Madhava Fitch

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Designedbrilliant.com

Artwork Mockups:

Interactive 3D model:
<https://skfb.ly/6QFUX>

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Front view:



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Rear view:

