

#### City of Madison State Street Confluence Public Art Installation Working Title: *Both / And – Tolerance / Innovation*

Artist Team: David Dahlquist and Matt Niebuhr November 9, 2016



"A type of logic used in decision making that allows for a greater variety and scope of outcomes than a rigid either/or decision making process. This approach is useful when comparing two or more possible tracks or outcomes in a real world setting."

The word "Confluence" has been used to identity this special place on the State Street pedestrian mall on the University of Wisconsin – Madison campus. The meaning of confluence is based on the junction of two rivers of approximately equal width, merging into one steady stream. But the concept of confluence goes much deeper, especially in this specific location. Confluence represents the merging of the City of Madison with the University. Confluence is the "town and gown" relationship embodied in a real place. Confluence is the form that knowledge takes, a way of "knowing" that merges the world of research and discovery (the University Library on one side), with the world of belief, (symbolized by three different religious denominations on the other).



Matt and I have spent a lot of time walking this site, photographing it from every perspective. We climbed to the top of the Humanities Building to see, in a bird's eye view, the steady stream of students coming and going from classes, meeting people on their way up and down State Street. It is an unending "flow" that rises and falls, people meeting people each day, a new beginning each year. This "current" is a tangible energy that fills this special place. For me, personally, I have moved through this corridor for over 40 years. I have felt this energy in many ways and carry it with me still.

The title, "Both/And—Tolerance/Innovation" speaks to the confluence of ideas and cultural diversity coming together in a dynamic cause and effect relationship; that a new consciousness arises from this river of people.



Our installation represents a causality, a space and time where reality merges with abstraction, and from this moment of brief turbulence, almost like a river's eddy, a transformation occurs. The flow continues, up and down stream. Both/And is an acceptance of seemingly disparate thoughts, coming together in a way that fosters the tolerance that leads to innovation. The space or resonance between the stone (reality) and the stainless-steel vertical sculpture (abstraction), embodies Aristotle's philosophy of knowledge, "being qua being," the metaphysical reasoning at the heart of learning. It is the mysterious "essence of nature," and the relationship between the natural and the built environment.

# Flow Diagram



The monumental metal sculpture will be fabricated of angel-hair stainless-steel plates. The individual plates will be laser-cut with patterns that allow light to move between the plates to create a transparent moray effect. A cylinder, cut through the plates, is based on the solar equinox and the relative position of the sun. The viewer will orient themselves to this position in the spring and fall, to be bathed in sunlight. At night, this circular path between the plates will glow with interior LED illumination as a bright accent in the sky.



Our concept proposal specifically uses the existing, previously constructed footing, with minor modification. The installation incorporates LED lighting to create a dramatic, glowing ambiance, thoughtful of the site as it changes from day to night. The stone, either selectively guarried native Wisconsin granite or glacial erratic, lit from below, will appear to "float" at night. The monumental stone, like ancient dolmen or cairn, will become a "touchstone." The companion sculpture will be internally illuminated, an iconic beacon seen from a distance in both directions. The installation will mark a new destination where people will gather and where new traditions will begin.



# **Confluence Site**

























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### Process

# Flow Diagram



















Matt Mathews, 2012



### Native Wisconsin Stone






## **Concept Illustrations**















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### North East Elevation

#### North West Elevation



#### South East Elevation

#### South West Elevation









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# Create. Meaning. Together.

