

**CREATIVE PLAY:**  
INTEGRATING ART INTO PLAYGROUNDS  
A TYPOLOGY

BY

ALLISON R. GERTH

A REPORT

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE/  
REGIONAL & COMMUNITY PLANNING  
COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE, PLANNING, & DESIGN

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
MANHATTAN, KANSAS

2011

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MAJOR PROFESSOR  
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## ABSTRACT

Children are imaginative, creative, and active. Children of all age groups are influenced by their surroundings, particularly school-aged children (Frost, 2010). School-aged children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual developmental characteristics are influenced by their surrounding environments. Today, uniform playgrounds are diminishing the opportunities for youth to develop their personal creativity and imagination through play (Thompson 2007, Solomon 2005). By integrating art into playgrounds, these environments will offer children greater opportunity for developmental enrichment through their interactions with the site.

Researched cases of art and play have inspired the development of a typology. The typology is a collection of quintessential ways that settings for play can be visually and experientially enriched by art. This process began with three critical questions; 1) What constitutes a playground? 2) What is art? and 3) How can art be integrated into playgrounds? More than 30 precedents that demonstrate art in a play setting were examined. Noting differences and similarities between the precedents, 12 types were identified. Next, analysis matrices identifying primary and, if applicable, secondary placement of each of the precedents in the 12 developed types, including sub-types, giving art in playgrounds a place. Also classified was type of art, high or vernacular, for each precedent.

The research methodology was an iterative process of literature and precedent research followed by the distillation of types, further research, and refinement of the typology framework.

# *Creative Play: Integrating Art into Playgrounds*

*a typology*



*Allison R. Gerth*

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MAJOR PROFESSOR, KATIE KINGERY-PAGE  
WITH SECONDARY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, STEPHANIE ROLLEY & JON HUNT

# Creative Play: Integrating Art into Playgrounds

a typology

*Allison R. Gerth | Masters Report | 2011*

*Committee Members | Kingery-Page, Hunt, Rolley*

# *Abstract*

Children are imaginative, creative, and active. Children of all age groups are influenced by their surroundings, particularly school-aged children (Frost, 2010). School-aged children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual developmental characteristics are influenced by their surrounding environments. Today, uniform playgrounds are diminishing the opportunities for youth to develop their personal creativity and imagination through play (Thompson 2007, Solomon 2005). By integrating art into playgrounds, these environments will offer children greater opportunity for developmental enrichment through their interactions with the site.

Researched cases of art and play have inspired the development of a typology. The typology is a collection of quintessential ways that settings for play can be visually and experientially enriched by art. This process began with three critical questions; 1) What constitutes a playground? 2) What is art? and 3) How can art be integrated into playgrounds? More than 30 precedents that demonstrate art in a play setting were examined. Noting differences and similarities between the precedents, 12 types were identified. Next, analysis matrices identifying primary and, if applicable, secondary placement of each of the precedents in the 12 developed types, including sub-types, giving art in playgrounds a place. Also classified was type of art, high or vernacular, for each precedent.

The research methodology was an iterative process of literature and precedent research followed by the distillation of types, further research, and refinement of the typology framework.

*“The playing adult steps sideward into another reality;  
the playing child advances forward to new stages of mastery.”*

*Erik H. Erikson*





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*“If you want to be creative, stay in part a child,  
with the creativity and invention that characterizes children  
before they are deformed by adult society.”  
Jean Piaget*

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“Whatever landscape a child is exposed to...that will be the sort of gauge through which he or she will see all the world.”

Wallace Stegner

# *Preface*

When I was growing up, my mom would take my siblings and me on what she would call “A Tour of Playgrounds” every summer. Once, sometimes twice a week, we would pack up a picnic lunch and visit a new playground each time. We would go to every elementary school and public park around the city. I was so excited to see different playgrounds from the ones I was used to playing on at my elementary school. Once we made it through all of them, we would start again, only this time going to the “fun” ones.

From an early age, I was fascinated with playgrounds, as I suppose most kids are. However, this fascination never faded. I, of course had my favorites and my siblings had theirs. One playground was “more fun” than the next “because it had more swings” and those swings were longer and “could go higher” or because the connected wood climbers “gave us a lot of places to hide”. CiCo Park had the tunnel under a hill that was fit just for us and “no adults were allowed”. City Park had the hamster wheel that took the strength of all of us to get it moving. I was forever trying to keep up with my older brother and sister. Of course, many of these do not exist anymore, deemed too unsafe for children.

Now I look back and wonder what it was that made these playgrounds so much fun? The challenge? The excitement they brought? I can tell you; these extinct play elements are some of the most memorable 18 years later. I look at the playgrounds that have replaced those of my youth with a bit of sadness. These new ones just do not look as great as I remembered mine being. Most likely, children will still have some fun; they are always inventing new games and ways to have fun. After all, that is what children do, they imagine.

*“Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children.”*  
*Walt Disney*

However, what can we as adults do to enhance these opportunities for fun? This brings me to the basis of my project and the development of this book. When beginning this process over a year ago I wanted to better understand play and playgrounds, art, and childhood development. I studied the history of playgrounds. I looked to define what art is and why it should be incorporated into playgrounds. Ultimately, using my passion for landscape architecture to improve a landscape that is not addressed often enough in the profession today to the extent it should be, the playground. In doing this, I have developed a typology of art integration in playgrounds. I pulled from over 30 precedents (both past and present) that demonstrate art in playgrounds and offer inspiration for the design of future playgrounds. Playgrounds that will bring back the experience of “fun”, challenge, and excitement for today’s youth while simultaneously enhancing their social, cognitive, and physical development through play. After all, “our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children.”

# Introduction

## *Introduction*

**The following section introduces the project including its dilemma, thesis, and purpose. In addition, it provides information on the project path, possibilities, and the end products that were produced in conjunction with this book.**

*“If you want to know what a child is, study his play:  
If you want to affect what he will be, direct his form of play.”  
Luther Gulick*



## *Dilemma, Thesis, Purpose*

### **Dilemma**

Children are imaginative, creative, and active. Children of all age groups are influenced by their surroundings, particularly in school-aged children when physical, emotional, and intellectual development characteristics are advancing in relation to their surrounding environments.

Playgrounds are not only critical in fostering children's physical development but also their attitudes and habits towards creativity and play. Currently, however, in America's "insurance conscious" mindset notions of perceived safety and protection have devolved playgrounds into sterile, replicated environments from one community to the next. These uniform playgrounds have diminished the opportunities for today's youth to develop their personal creativity and imagination through play (Thompson 2007, Solomon 2005).

### **Thesis**

As children develop, they are highly influenced by their surroundings. By integrating art into playgrounds, these environments will offer greater opportunities for developmental enrichment through their interactions with the site. Through the creation of a typology this project will identify a purpose for art in playgrounds, thus establishing greater opportunity for children's creative development through play. The typology will address ways to integrate art into playgrounds and encourage a future shift away from current trends in playground design.

## **Purpose**

Before designing an art integrated environment, it is important to understand the history of playgrounds and how art has been used to promote creative play. For this reason my project focuses on research and the development of a typology of art integration in playgrounds. This typology responds in a critical way to current trends in playground design by questioning the actual benefits of many uniform pre-manufactured playground equipment. While there has been limited study in this area, the creation of a typology will provide an alternative view of playgrounds and increase understanding of art in play. This typology offers a tool for designing art into playgrounds and can be used by communities, designers, and educators as inspiration for the renovation and creation of play environments in parks, community centers, and schoolyards.

## Key Questions to Be Addressed & End Product

### Project Path

Figure 1.1 illustrates the process and method used to develop the typology. Three critical questions are: *What constitutes a playground?*, *What is art?*, and *How can art be integrated into playgrounds?*. The typology provides an answer to the last question of how art can be integrated into playgrounds.

### Project Possibilities

As previously mentioned, this project focuses on the development of a typology and the precedents that represent its types, therefore, it does not focus on one specific site. In the Key Issues Relevant to Landscape Architecture section, a history of the developmental shifts in playground design is described along with current trends. Using knowledge gained from research on playground shifts, childhood development, and art the basis for the typology was set. This knowledge combined with the study of precedents informed the creation of the typology.

### End Products

In addition to this document, a separate '[Book of Types](#)' was produced. This separate document is refined and distilled to the essence of the typology. It presents readers with a brief history of playgrounds, childhood development, and importance of play before presenting the full typology. The typology is illustrated carefully through sketches representing the essence of each type and subtype. Montages conceptualizing each type are included to help readers visualize possibilities for art in play. The '[Book of Types](#)' and its conclusions provides inspiration for the renovation and creation of play environments in parks, community centers, and schoolyards for use by communities, designers, and educators.



Figure 1.1:  
 Project Path Diagram  
 Illustrates key questions, the  
 process, and method used to  
 develop the typology

## *Introduction to Background*

**The following section provides background information that supports development of the typology. This includes; defining art, relevance to landscape architecture, and information on childhood development.**

*"I believe in the imagination. What I can not see  
is infinitely more important than what I can see."*

*Duane Michals*

## Defining Art

In her book, *Art as Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Art*, anthropologist Evelyn Hatcher explains “Art is not a phenomenon, but a concept...[it] has no objective referent...” therefore, “one cannot say what it is or is not, but only what the user means by the term.” I will define art by its relation to this project, landscape architecture, and playgrounds. Figure 2.1 on page 10 illustrates an adaptation of Hatcher’s three components of art.

*Art* (an activity or object) is defined by Hatcher as having three critical components; Aesthetic, Craftsmanship, and Meaning.

**Aesthetics** is subjective to the artist themselves and the viewer of the piece, it is a personal preference that can only be defined situationally.

**Craftsmanship** can represent both ‘High Art’ and ‘Intuitive’ or Self-taught art and includes knowledge, physical skill, and effort

**Meaning** is the most complex component with five levels; representation (of the subject), symbolism, interpretation or iconology, metaphor, and ambiguity (a sense of mystery which may be present in all levels of meaning).

**ART IS** the conscious production or arrangement of sound, color, form, movement, or other elements in an aesthetic manner. It represents form, texture, and color in the landscape and is typically thought of being created solely by an artist, however when considering a ‘conscious production’ this can be completed by those outside the title of artist including landscape architects, architects, educators, etc. The title of artist does not limit age either as it is a decisive form of creation that the ‘creator’ chooses meaning. Therefore, *art* can be created by a child.

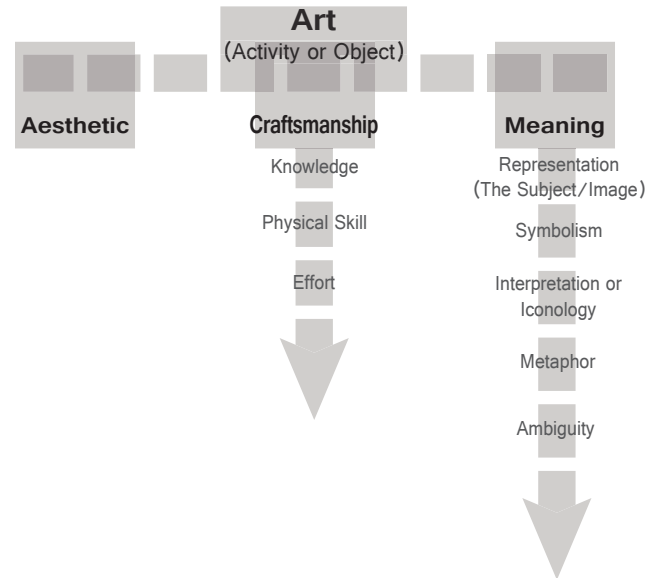


Figure 2.1:  
Three Components of Art, adapted  
from Hatcher's *Art as Culture: An  
Introduction to the Anthropology of Art*

### High Art

High Art is art typically created by experienced professionally trained artists. Its subject matter is respected, admired, and appreciated by the educated public as well as being recognized in published art journals.

### Intuitive Art

Intuitive Art, also known as Self-taught or Outside Art, is art and outdoor constructions made by those not trained as artists, nor does it use analytical techniques of perspective. Its subject matter is more variable than high art. From *Crafting Authenticity: the Validation of Identity in Self-Taught Art*, author Gary Fine describes this type of art as "structures [that] pose alternative models of esteem, relating to the power of the individual, the importance of creative urge...(and the romantic notion of the other)". He is saying that the creation of art comes from one's own desire to create it, regardless of title or profession.



## *Key Issues Relevant to Landscape Architecture*

To better understand issues relating to contemporary playgrounds and landscape architecture, it is helpful to explore the beginnings of playgrounds and each shift in the playground movement. The following is a brief history of playgrounds starting in the late 1800's through current playground trends.

### **Playground Beginnings, late 1800s-early 1900s**

Early forms of playgrounds began in the 1800s as exercise yards with a focus on older children. In 1885, the playground movement gained momentum with the development of the Boston sand gardens. This momentum was due, in part to John Dewey, a psychologist and educator who reported that play of young children helped with their cognitive skills and social development (Tai et al. 2006)

### **Traditional Playgrounds, WWII era**

World War I era encouraged a second shift in the playground movement from parks and neighborhoods to schools due to limited availability of materials. Typical play equipment of these early school playgrounds included swings, slides, merry-go-rounds, seesaws, and climbers mounted on asphalt, concrete, dirt, or other hard surfaces (Tai et al. 2006). These playgrounds consisted of individual elements and lacked any consistent site design features to anchor the play equipment to the playground site itself and the site to its surroundings. Traditional playgrounds of this time served as a foreground to playgrounds of a modern era.

### **Adventure Playgrounds, post WWII**

Adventure playgrounds are typically enclosed areas dedicated to children's development and require the use of play leaders or supervisors. Their goal is to stir imaginations and encompass the benefits of free and natural play by allowing children to build their own play environment. While popular in many European countries, adventure playgrounds rarely occurred in the United States due to their need for trained staff, perceived unattractiveness, and perceived lack of safety (Tai et al. 2006).

### **Designer Playgrounds, 1950s-1960s**

Designer playgrounds occurred through the 1950s and 1960s. These playgrounds used metal and concrete to develop sculptures. Designer playgrounds also used materials such as wood and rope to construct themed elements such as boats, trains, spaceships, and cars encouraging children to use their own imaginations in play. This was the beginning of modular equipment production by playground manufacturers. With the onset of manufactured modular equipment, playground sites became more frequent allowing more children access to play, however, children lost their ability to play more creatively due the repetitiveness of the equipment (Tai et al. 2006).

### **Creative Playground Era, mid 1960s**

The creative playground era began in the mid sixties as an effort to reestablish creative play. This era brought together both traditional playground elements with elements from adventure playgrounds that were considered acceptable (Tai et al. 2006). During this era there was a critical shift in playground design as designers and landscape architects began to integrate art with playgrounds and their surrounding environments. The mid sixties was one point in time in which art integration in playgrounds was successful; it was a time when "...the place of playgrounds [was] in the realm of art, itself being shaken up by environmental earthworks..." (Solomon 2005). Attention was paid not only to the equipment, but to the site and its context as well.

### **Current Playground Trends**

Current playground trends have pivoted back to the Designer era with a strong emphasis on manufactured equipment in efforts to avoid litigation. Many of these playgrounds have devolved into replicated environments from one community to the next offering little opportunity for creative exploration as well as paying little attention to site context. With a better knowledge of childhood development and play habits today, landscape architects can redesign playgrounds to provide greater opportunities for developmental and creative enrichment through children's interactions with art and the site.

## *Childhood Development*

### **Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development**

Figure 2.2 adapts psychologist, Jean Piaget's stages of cognitive development from his book *Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood*. He presents the ideas of play and imitation as an integral structure from birth for learning and development. Particularly during the preoperational stage of development play helps expand a child's creative imagination and as the child continues to grow evolves into intelligence and intuition. These development structures broaden into symbolic play, creative imagination, reproductive imagination, and representative imagination. These structures affect a child's emotional, social, and intellectual development and evolve into intuition and intelligence as a child matures.

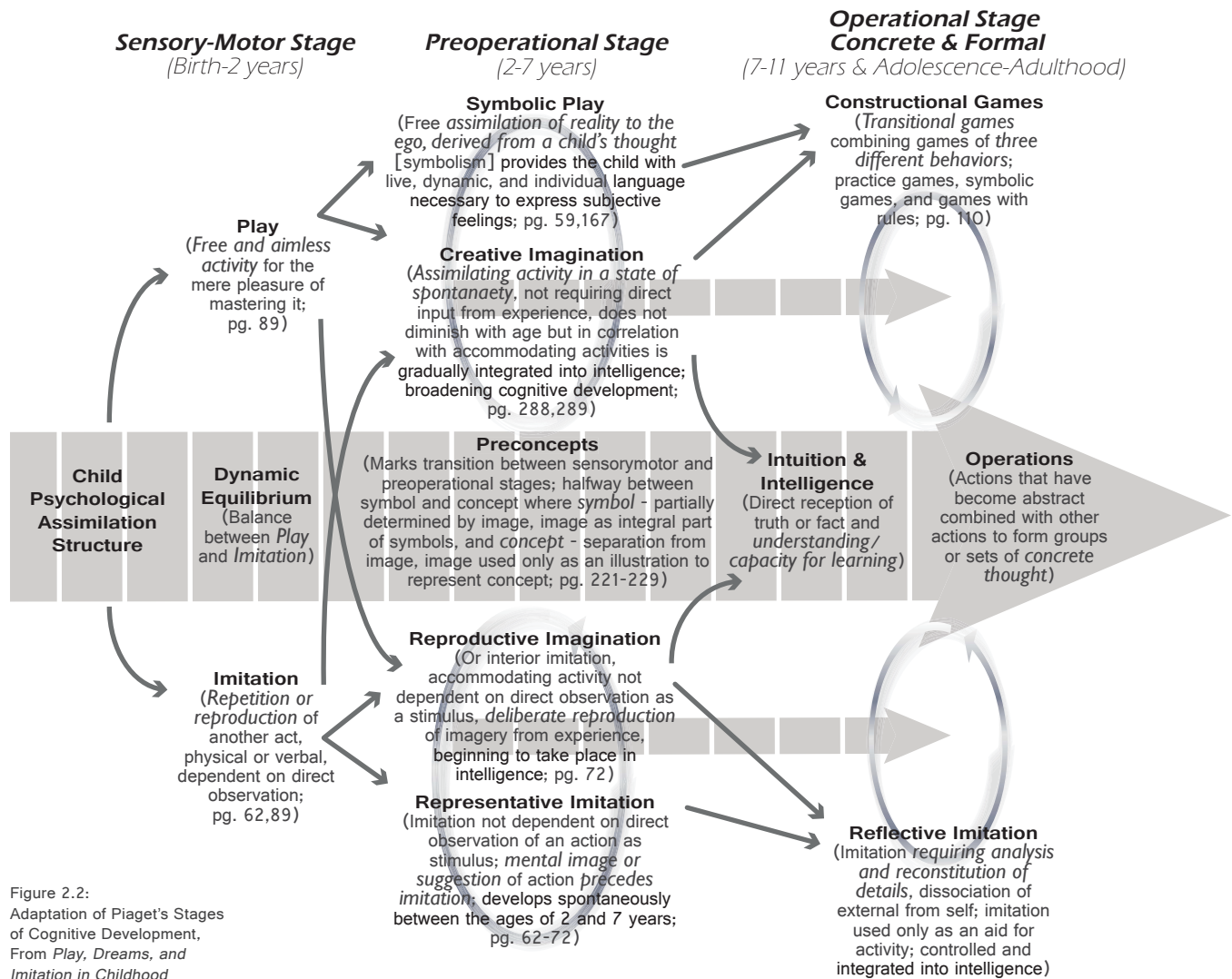


Figure 2.2:  
Adaptation of Piaget's Stages  
of Cognitive Development,  
From *Play, Dreams, and  
Imitation in Childhood*

## Childhood Development

In his book *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, author Stuart Brown discusses different types of play that begin from birth and evolve as children develop. The following types of play appear later in the discussion of types.

### **Body and Movement Play**

Body and Movement Play allows individuals to learn “about self movement [which] creates a structure for an individual knowledge of the world...it is a way of knowing. Through movement play we think in motion.” Brown also states that “movement structures our knowledge of the world, space, time, and our relationship to others” (pg. 83-85).

### **Object Play**

Brown explains the importance of object play, “as skills in manipulating objects develop, the richer the circuits of the brain become” thus making individuals better able to understand, work through, and solve problems (pg. 85-86).

### **Imaginative Play**

Imaginative Play allows individuals to move freely back and forth between reality and pretend. Through development, “kids acquire the capacity to create a coherent narrative.” Brown explains that “as children get older, the line between what is pretend and what is real becomes more solid” however, “imagination remains a key to emotional resilience and creativity” (pg. 86-87).

### **Social Play**

Brown explains Social Play “allows society to function and individual relationships among many to flourish.” Play is important in developing “social competence” as humans are naturally social animals. There are three identifiable subtypes of social play including Friendship and Belonging, Rough and Tumble Play, and Celebratory and Ritual Play (pg. 87-91).

### **Storytelling and Narrative Play**

“Storytelling has been identified as the unit of human understanding. It occupies a central place in early development and learning about the world, oneself, and one’s place in it.” Brown explains that storytelling is a critical function in the dominant left hemisphere of the brain and will “remain central to our understanding well after childhood” (pg. 91-92).

### **Transformative-Integrative and Creative Play**

The importance of these play types is that it “frees us from established patterns.” Brown explains that this type of play “can become a doorway to a new self, one much more in tune with the world...” and “Creative Play takes our minds to places we have never been, pioneering new paths that the real world can follow...” (pg. 92-93).

## *Childhood Development*

### **Properties of Play**

Author Stuart Brown explains six properties of play that he has derived through his clinical research and observations of both human and animal play behavior (2009, pg. 17-18).

“Apparent Purposelessness” – play has no practical value or survival benefits, play is done for its own sake

“Voluntary” – play is not obligatory or required for duty

“Inherent Attraction” – Play provides individuals with psychological arousal, it makes people feel good, it is fun

“Freedom From Time” – Play allows people to lose sense of passage of time and we experience...

“Diminished Consciousness of Self” – Play allows people to stop thinking and worrying about self (similar to the play type Imaginative Play where people can be a different self)

“Improvisational Potential” – When playing, people are open to serendipity, to chance; they stumble upon new behaviors, thoughts, activities, and strategies offering fresh insight

“Continuation Desire” – People tend to have a natural desire to keep playing

## The Process of Playing

Scott Eberle, an intellectual historian of play and vice president for interpretation at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York derived a six step process of play. He believes this is a common path of play for most people, however, each person has their own process and does not necessarily go through each of these steps in this order. While Eberle's process begins with anticipation and ends with poise, it acts as a cyclical process. Once we reach a level of poise, we are ready to go in search of a new anticipation, we are ready to begin a new process of play. Figure 2.3 illustrates Eberle's Six Step Process of Play (2009, pg. 18-19).



Figure 2.3:  
Eberle's 6 Step Process of Play,  
adapted from *Play: How it Shapes  
the Brain, Opens the Imagination,  
and Invigorates the Soul*



## *Introduction to the Process*

**The research methodology was an iterative process of literature and precedent research, followed by the distillation of types, further research, and refinement of framework.**

**The following section illustrates the project timeline and process as well as the precedent research and analysis.**

*“Whoever wants to understand much, must play much.”*  
Gottfried Benn

# Process

## Project Process

Figure 3.1 illustrates the project process with adjoining timeline. The research methodology was an iterative process of literature and precedent research followed by the distillation of types, further research, and refinement of framework.

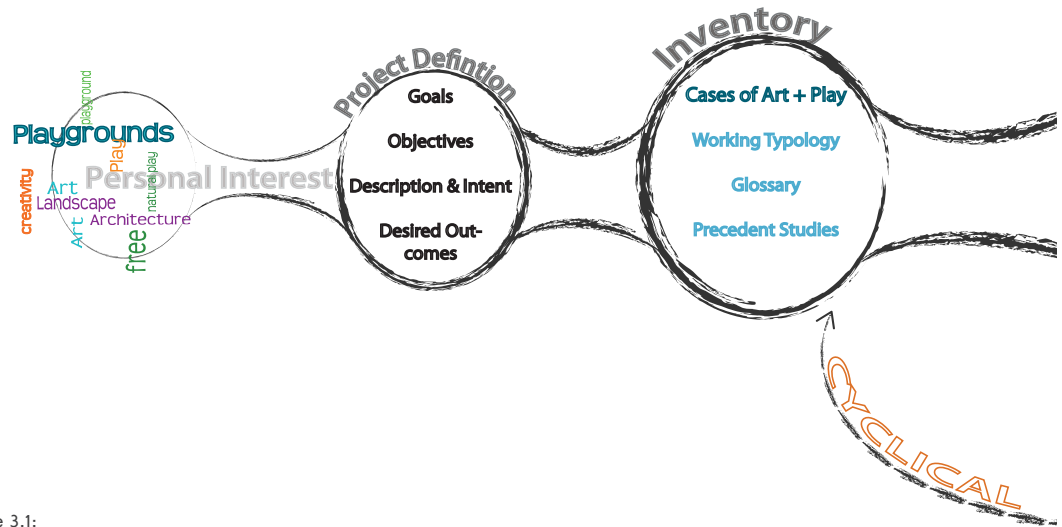
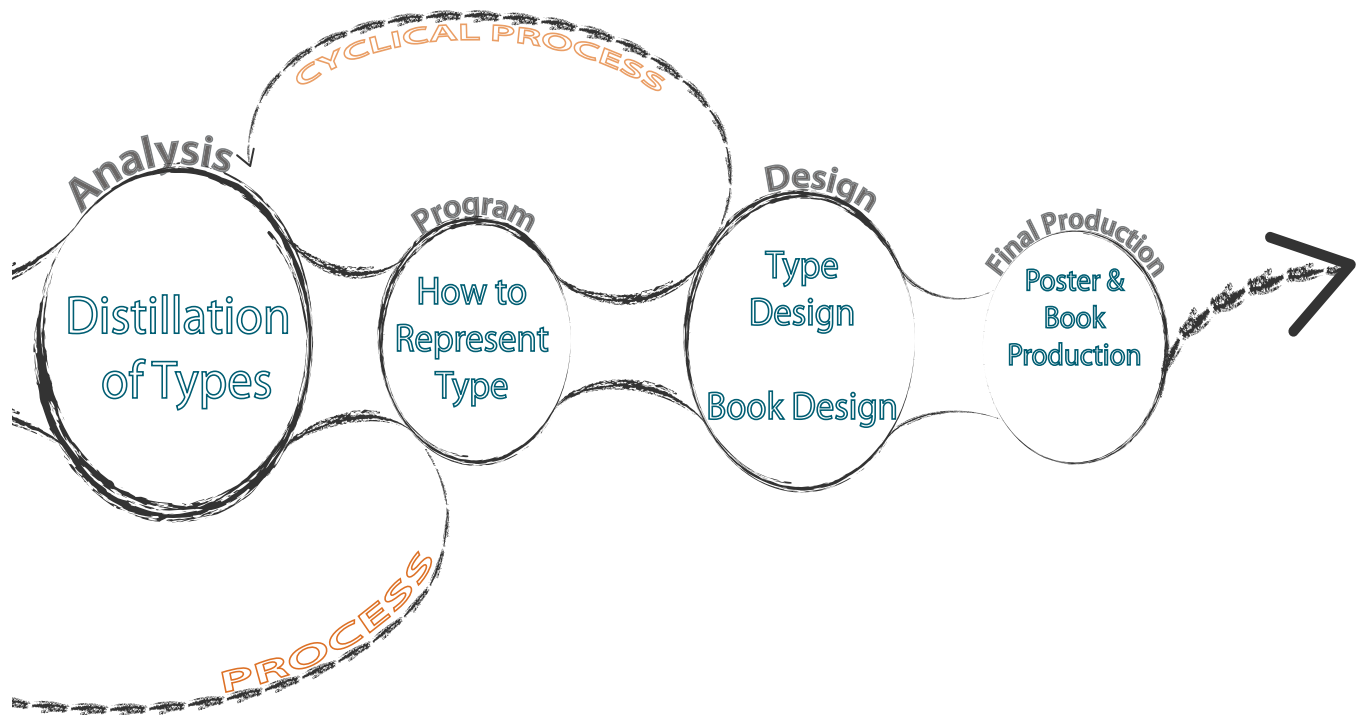


Figure 3.1:  
Project Process



## Precedent Inventory

Each art in play precedent in some way demonstrates a form of art integration within a play environment. The list of precedents in Table 3.1 are by alphabetical order and each example of art integration has been identified by its designer, landscape architect, artist, or architect. Following that, all 36 precedents are presented noting the designers philosophy or intent and the significance in its potential typology correlation. Also identified were type of art (high or vernacular) with each precedent.

Project	Landscape Architect	Architect	Artist	High Art	Intuitive Art
1 24th and York Street Mini-Park, Quetzalcoatli snake, San Francisco, CA, Martha Ketterer, Mark Roller, Colette Crutcher, Susan Cervantes, 2006	x	x		x	
2 67th Street Playground, New York City, NY; Friedberg, 1989	x				x
3 Alice in Wonderland, Central Park, NYC, NY; Creeft, 1959		x		x	
4 Ancient Playground (and Adventure Playgrounds), Central Park, New York City, NY; Dattner, 1972	x				x
5 Ashfield Nursery School, large outdoor chalkboard, northern England					x
6 Bay Area Children's Museum, The Lookout Cove, multi-leveled log 'stairway' to nature trail Sausalito, CA					
7 Bay Area Children's Museum, The Lookout Cove, child-sized 'spider web' Sausalito, CA				x	
8 City Museum, St. Louis, MO; Bob Cassilly, 2004		x		x	
9 Contoured Playground, (un-realised), Noguchi, 1942		x		x	
10 Dell Children's Medical Center, Austin, TX; TBG Partners, 2007	x				x
11 EcoTarium, Worcester, MA; PlaySiteArchitecture, Joanne Hiromura, 2002	x				x
12 Imagination Playground, New York City, NY; Rockwell Group, 2010			x		x
13 Johnny Kaw, City Park, Manhattan,KS, Tomasch, 1966		x			x
14 Learning Landscapes (Lizard Leap Land), Denver, CO; Univ. of Colorado Denver, 1998	x	x			x
15 Make Way for Ducklings, Boston Public Gardens, Boston, MA, Schon, 1987		x		x	
16 Moylan School, Hartford, CN; Mikyong Kim	x				x

Project		Landscape Architect	Architect	Artist	High Art	Intuitive Art
17	One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, Dallas Arboretum, Dallas, TX; TBG Partners, 2009	x				x
18	Parque Gulliver, Jardin Del Turia, Valencia, Spain; Rivera, 1990		x	x		x
19	Play Scapes, Piedmont Park, Atlanta, GE; Noguchi, 1976		x		x	
20	Playground at Jacob Riis House, New York City, NY; Friedberg, 1965	x				x
21	Playground at Silver Towers (and private commissions), New York City, NY (MA and CO); Otterness, 2007		x		x	
22	Playground at the United Nations (proposal, unrealized); Noguchi, 1951		x	x	x	
23	Playground Floor Painting, Married Student Apt. Yale Univ. New Haven, CN; Welliver, 1962		x			x
24	Playground on Sacramento Street, 'pin-wheel maze', China Town, San Francisco, CA					x
25	School yard at Mercy Cares for Kids, Albany, NY; colorful ice blocks, fort					x
27	Sound Carnival, PS 244, East Flatbush Brooklyn, NY; Bill and Mary Buchen		x		x	
28	Sound Playground, 'Big Eyes-Big Ears', PS 23, Bronx, NY; Bill and Mary Buchen		x		x	
29	Teardrop Park., Battery Park City, New York City, NY; Van Valkenberg, 2006	x				x
30	The Real World', Nelson Rockefeller Skate Park, Battery Park City, New York City NY; Tom Otterness, 1992		x		x	
31	Tortoise and Hare, Copley Square, Boston, MA, Schon, 1993		x		x	
32	Wishbone House, Washington, D.C.; Greenly, 1968		x		x	
33	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, Children's Garden, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	x	x		x	
34	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, The Labyrinth/ Interactive Stream, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	x	x		x	
35	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, Play Circle, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	x	x			x
36	Yerba Buena Gardens: Sister City Gardens, Dare We Dream in Concrete (Group Poem Plaque), San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	x	x			x

Table 3.1:  
Precedent Inventory

# Process

## Precedent Analysis

SITE DESIGN AS ART	ART AS VOLUMETRIC LANDFORM	ART AS PLANAR SURFACES	NATURAL MATERIALS AS ART	ART AS A FOCAL POINT	ART AS IMPROVED PLAY ENVIRONMENTS
Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, Play Circle, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	Contoured Playground (unrealized), Noguchi, 1941	Dell Children's Medical Center, Austin, TX; TBG Partners, 2007	EcoTarium, Worcester, MA; PlaySiteArchitecture, Joanne Hironura, 2002	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, Play Circle, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	Tortoise and the Hare, Copley Square, Boston, MA, Schon, 1993
Playground at Jacob Riis House, New York City, NY; Friedberg, 1965	67th Street Playground, New York City, NY; Friedberg, 1989	Playground Floor Painting, Married Student Apt. Yale Univ., New Haven, CN; Welliver, 1962	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, The Labyrinth/Interactive Stream, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	Wishbone House, Washington, DC; Greenly, 1968	Make Way for Ducklings, Boston Public Gardens, Boston, MA; Schon, 1987
Playground at the United Nations (proposal, unrealized); Noguchi, 1951	24th and York Street Mini-Park, Quetzalcoatl Snake, San Francisco, CA; Ketterer, Roller, Crutcher, Cervantes, 2006	Yerba Buena Gardens: Sister City Gardens, Dare We Dream in Concrete (Group Poem Plaque), San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	Schoolyard at Mercy Cares for Kids, Colorful ice blocks/fort, Albany, NY; (designer N/A, year reoccurs)	Playground at Silver Towers (and private commissions), New York City, NY (MA and CO); Otterness, 2007	Johnny Kaw, City Park, Manhattan, KS; Tomasch, 1966
Playground Floor Painting, Married Student Apt. Yale Univ., New Haven, CN; Welliver, 1962		Playground on Sacramento Street, 'pin-wheel maze', China Town, San Francisco, CA; (designer/year unknown)	Bay Area Children's Museum, The Lookout Cove, Sausalito, CA; Multi-leveled log 'stairway' to nature trail, (designer/year unknown)	Alice in Wonderland, Central Park, New York City, NY; Creft, 1958	"The Real World", Nelson Rockefeller Skate Park, Battery Park City, New York City, NY; Otterness, 1992
67th Street Playground, New York City, NY; Friedberg, 1989				Tortoise and the Hare, Copley Square, Boston, MA, Schon, 1993	
Teardrop Park, Battery Park City, NY; Van Valkenberg, 2004		Dell Children's Medical Center, Peek-a-boo Wall, Austin, TX; TBG Partners, 2007		Make Way for Ducklings, Boston Public Gardens, Boston, MA; Schon, 1987	
Dell Children's Medical Center, Austin, TX; TBG Partners, 2007		Moylan School, Serpentine Wall, Hartford, CN; Mikyoung Kim (year unknown)		Dell Children's Medical Center, Peek-a-boo Wall, Austin, TX; TBG Partners, 2007	
Contoured Playground (unrealized), Noguchi, 1941				Moylan School, Serpentine Wall, Hartford, CN; Mikyoung Kim, (year unknown)	
				"The Real World", Nelson Rockefeller Skate Park, Battery Park City, New York City, NY; Otterness, 1992	
				24th and York Street Mini-Park, Quetzalcoatl Snake, San Francisco, CA; Ketterer, Roller, Crutcher, Cervantes, 2006	

ART AS STORYTELLING	ART AS TRADITIONAL PLAY ELEMENTS: SWING, SLIDE, CLIMB	ART BY CHILDREN	ART AS DIDACTIC PLAY	ART AS ACOUSTIC PLAY	ART AS HABITAT/ WILDLIFE EDUCATION
One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, Dallas, TX; TBG Partners, 2009	Play Scapes, Piedmont Park, Atlanta, GE; Noguchi, 1976	Learning Landscapes (Lizard Leap Land), Denver, CO; Univ. of Colorado Denver, 1998	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, Children's Garden, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, Voice-Pipe Sculpture, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	Yerba Buena Gardens: Rooftop, Children's Garden, San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 2000
Parque Gulliver, Jardin Del Turia, Valencia, Spain; Rivera, 1989	Parque Gulliver, Jardin Del Turia, Valencia, Spain; Rivera, 1989	Imagination Playground, New York City, NY; Rockwell Group, 2010	City Museum, Aquarium, St. Louis, MO; Cassilly, 2004	Sound Carnival, PS 244, East Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY; Bill and Mary Buchen (year unknown)	City Museum, Aquarium, St. Louis, MO; Cassilly, 2004
Alice in Wonderland, Central Park, New York City, NY; Creft, 1958	Playground at the United Nations (proposal, unrealized); Noguchi, 1951	Yerba Buena Gardens: Sister City Gardens, Dare We Dream in Concrete (Group Poem Plaque), San Francisco, CA; Friedberg, 1998	EcoTarium, Worcester, MA; PlaySiteArchitecture Joanne Hiromura, 2002	Sound Playgroud, "Big Eyes- Big Ears" PS 23, Bronx, NY; Bill and Mary Buchen (year unknown)	EcoTarium, Worcester, MA; PlaySiteArchitecture Joanne Hiromura, 2002
Tortoise and the Hare, Copley Square, Boston, MA, Schon, 1993	Playground at Silver Towers (and private commissions), New York City, NY (MA and CO); Otterness, 2007	Schoolyard at Mercy Cares for Kids, Colorful ice blocks/fort, Albany, NY; (designer N/A, year reoccurs)	Sound Carnival, PS 244, East Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY; Bill and Mary Buchen (year unknown)		Bay Area Children's Museum, The Lookout Cove, Sausalito, CA; Child-sized "spider web"
Make Way for Ducklings, Boston Public Gardens, Boston, MA; Schon, 1987	Ancient Playground (and Adventure Playgrounds), Central Park, New York City, NY; Dattner, 1972	Ashfield Nursery School, Large outdoor chalkboard wall, northern England, (designer/year unknown)	Sound Playgroud, "Big Eyes- Big Ears" PS 23, Bronx, NY; Bill and Mary Buchen (year unknown)		
Johnny Kaw, City Park, Manhattan, KS; Tomasch, 1966			Bay Area Children's Museum, The Lookout Cove, Sausalito, CA; Child-sized "spider web"		

Table 3.2:  
Precedent Analysis

By analyzing similarities and differences in the collection of precedents, types were distilled. Following this, precedents were categorized according to the type best fit for the type of art demonstrated in the precedent. In some cases, more than one typology would have fit. In these instances, the primary type was identified while other working types were assigned secondary type fits. The precedent analysis categorizing precedents in each type and subtype are illustrated in Table 3.2.



# Typology

## *Introduction to the Typology*

**A typology is way of classifying information. This typology represents a collection of quintessential ways that settings for play can be visually and experientially enriched by art. The following section presents each type including subtypes presented in the typology. These types are described through text and illustrations.**

*“It is in playing, and only in playing, that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.”*

*D.W. Winnicott*

# Typology

## Types

### Site Design as Art



### Art as a Focal Point



### (Top to Bottom) Site Design as Art:

Figure 4.1: Site Design as Art Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.2: Yerba Buena Gardens, Play Circle, [yerbabuenagardens.com](http://yerbabuenagardens.com)

Figure 4.3: Jacob Riis House, *American Playground: Revitalizing Community Space* (pg.56)

Figure 4.4: Teardrop Park, Slide, [mvvainc.com](http://mvvainc.com)

### Art as a Focal Point:

Figure 4.5: Art as a Focal Point Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.6: Wishbone House, Leaning Post Productions

### Art as Storytelling:

Figure 4.7: Art as Storytelling Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.8: Alice in Wonderland, W.Visser

Figure 4.9: Parque Gulliver, Aerial, [Playscapes Blog](http://Playscapes Blog)

Figure 4.10: Parque Gulliver, Climbing Ropes, [Playscapes Blog](http://Playscapes Blog)

Figure 4.11: One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, Storybook Playhouse, K.Mendenhall, TBG Partners

### Art as Storytelling



*Art as Traditional  
Play Elements:  
Swing, Slide, Climb*



(Top to Bottom)  
**Art as Traditional Play Elements: Swing, Slide, Climb:**  
Figure 4.12: Art as Traditional Play Elements: Swing, Slide, Climb, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.13: Playground as Silver Towers, tomostudio.com

Figure 4.14: Playscapes at Piedmont Park, Climbing Cubes, blufon.edu

Figure 4.15: Playscapes at Piedmont Park, Slide, blufon.edu

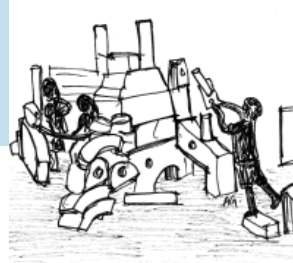
**Art by Children:**  
Figure 4.16: Art by Children Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.17: Imagination Playground, imaginationplayground.org

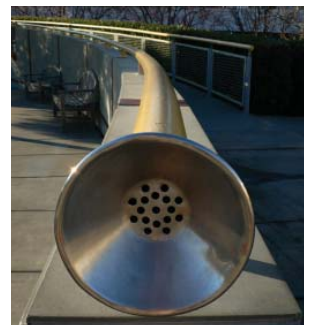
Figure 4.18: Imagination Playground, imaginationplayground.org

Figure 4.19: Children Building with Colorful Ice Blocks at Mercy Cares for Kids School, *Asphalt to Ecosystems* (pg. 158)

*Art by Children*



*Art as Didactic Play*



(Top to Bottom)  
**Art as Didactic Play:**  
Figure 4.20: Art as Didactic Play Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.21: Ecotarium, Hawk's Nest, PlaySiteArchitecture website

Figure 4.22: Yerba Buena Gardens, Voice-Pipe Sculpture, sanfrancisco.about.com

### Site Design as Art

Art as  
Volumetric Landform



(Top to Bottom)  
**Art as Volumetric Landform:**  
Figure 4.23: Art as Volumetric Surfaces Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.24: Noguchi's Contoured Playground, Noguchi Foundation

Figure 4.25: 24th & York Street Mini-Park, Quetzalcoatl Snake, Aerial, sfgov.org

Figure 4.26: 24th & York Street Mini-Park, Quetzalcoatl Snake, Head, Asphalt to Ecosystems (pg. 237)

Art as Planar Surfaces



Natural Materials as Art



(Top to Bottom)  
**Art as Planar Surfaces:**  
Figure 4.27: Art as Planar Surfaces Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.28: Dell Children's Medical Center, Paving, K.Mendenhall, TBG Partners

Figure 4.29: Pin-Wheel Maze, earthsymbols.com

Figure 4.30: Moylan School, Serpentine Wall, LAM March 1999

**Natural Materials as Art:**  
Figure 4.31: Natural Materials as Art Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.32: Tree-Stump Stairway, The Lookout Cove, *Asphalt to Ecosystems* (pg. 104)

# Art as a Focal Point

Art as Improvised  
Play Environments



(Top to Bottom)  
Art as Planar Surfaces:

Figure 4.33: Art as Improvised Play Environments Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.34: Make Way For Ducklings, Nancy Schon website

Figure 4.35: Johnny Kaw, Girls Hanging on Scythe, Johnny Kaw Fan Page, facebook.com

Figure 4.36: Tortoise and the Hare, Nancy Schon website, schon.com

Art as Acoustic Play:

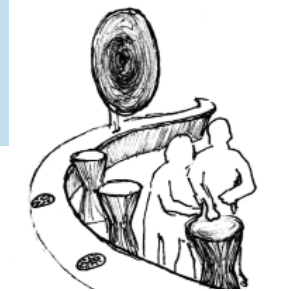
Figure 4.37: Art as Acoustic Play Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.38: Sound Carnival, Drums, *Asphalt to Ecosystems*, (pg. 186)

Figure 4.39: Sound Playground, "Big Eyes-Big Ears", *Asphalt to Ecosystems*, (pg. 187)

# Art as Didactic Play

Art as Acoustic Play



Art as Habitat &  
Wildlife Education



(Top to Bottom)  
Art as Habitat & Wildlife Education: Figure 4.40: Art as Habitat & Wildlife Education Sketch, Alli Gerth

Figure 4.41: City Museum St. Louis, Aquarium, Sculptural Fish, citymuseum.org

Figure 4.42: The Lookout Cove, Child-Sized Spider Web, *Asphalt to Ecosystems*, (pg. 46)

# Site Design

## *Site Design as Art*



*When an adult sees a grassy slope, a child turns that same hill into a mountain, and envisions themselves as logs tumbling down...*



Figure 4.43: Site Design as Art Conceptual Montage, Alli Gerth





Figure 4.44: Site Design as Art Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

## Site Design as Art

Site Design as Art is demonstrated through the **alteration of a groundplane or vertical plane in form, texture, or color**. This type represents site as a whole rather than a collection of elements or objects. M. Paul Friedberg's 67th Street Playground is a prime example of Site Design as Art combining its three subtypes Art as Volumetric Landform, Art as Planar Surfaces, and Art as Natural Materials. Friedberg's design illustrated in Figures 4.45-4.51 on page 36 uses natural landform and alternates textures of natural plant material on the hills with stone for the stairs and granite for the slide.

The following three spreads illustrate the subtypes of Site Design as Art; Art as Volumetric Landform, Art as Planar Surfaces, and Art as Natural Materials.

Typology



4.45



4.46



4.47

Figure 4.45: Teardrop Park, Slide, mvvainc.com

Figure 4.46: Jacob Riis House, American Playground: Revitalizing Community Space (pg.56)

Figure 4.47: Yerba Buena Gardens, Play Circle, yerbabuenagardens.com

Figure 4.48: Yerba Buena Gardens, Play Circle, Slides, yerbabuenagardens.com

Figure 4.49: 67th Street Playground, Slide, mpfp.com

Figure 4.50: 67th Street Playground, Tree-stump climbers, mpfp.com

Figure 4.51: 67th Street Playground, mpfp.com



4.48



4.49



4.50



4.51

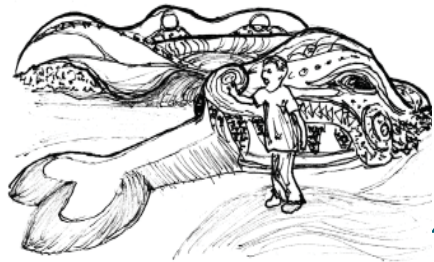


Figure 4.52: Art as Volumetric Landform  
Sketch, Alli Gerth

## Art as Volumetric Landform: A Subtype of Site Design as Art

Art as Volumetric Landform is a subtype of Site Design as Art representing **alteration of the groundplane in form**. Two primary examples of this subtype is artist Isamu Noguchi's (unrealized) Contoured Playground and the Mini-Park at 24th and York Street in San Francisco. Noguchi shaped the landform with inspiration from shapes of the earth in his 1942 design of Contoured Playground illustrated in Figure 4.53 (Torres 2000). The Mini-Park at 24th and York Street in San Francisco, California, illustrated in Figures 4.54-4.55, is a small site that features a Quetzalcoatl snake that weaves its way through the park. The design of the park was a collaboration between DPW Landscape Architect Martha Ketterer and Precita Eyes (a community based mural and art center), along with designers Mark Roller and Colette Crutcher, and ceramicist Aileen Barr. Precita Eyes volunteers worked on the hand painted tiles. The 120 foot ceramic mosaic snake undulates throughout the park and gives the image of disappearing and reappearing from the groundplane allowing children to mount and climb the sculptural body (Alexander 2005-2010).

Typology



Figure 4.53: Contoured Playground,  
Noguchi Foundation Website

Figure 4.54: 24th & York Mini-Park, Quetzalcoatl Snake, Head, Asphalt to Ecosystems, (pg.237)



Figure 4.55: 24th & York Mini-Park, Quetzalcoatl Snake, Aerial, sfgov.org



4.55



Figure 4.56: Art as Planar Surfaces Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

## Art as Planar Surfaces: A Subtype of Site Design as Art

Art as Planar surfaces is a subcategory of Site Design as Art. This type is represented on *two dimensional ground planes and vertical planes*, through *material texture and color*. The Dell Children's Medical Center, Figure 4.59, by TBG Partners is an example of Site Design as art through alteration of color and shape on the ground. The brightly colored plane animates this space offering children a zone for playing and paths to follow. Another example is from a playground on Sacramento Street in China Town, San Francisco, California in Figure 4.57. This design is a pin-wheel maze reminiscent of religious labyrinths used for meditation. This particular maze design offers children choices of paths to follow with no choice leading to a dead end. With four entry/exit points there is space for multiple children to explore the maze (Danks 2010).

Typology



Figure 4.57: Pin-wheel Maze,  
earthsymbols.com



4.58



4.59

Figure 4.58: Yerba Buena Gardens, "Dare We Dream in Concrete", [yerbabuenagardens.com](http://yerbabuenagardens.com)

Figure 4.59: Dell Children's Medical Center, Colorful Groundpane, Courtesy of K. Mendenhall, TBG Partners



Figure 4.60: Natural Materials as Art Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

## *Natural Materials as Art: A Subtype of Site Design as Art*

Natural Materials as Art is a subcategory of Site Design as Art. It has similarities with the concept of 'free and natural play'. However, this concept differs from solely 'natural play' which encourages children's play in nature or natural environments. This subtype stresses the **use of natural materials in a designed environment** that is used for play rather than simply playing outside or in the woods. One prime example of this subtype is the labyrinth and interactive stream at Yerba Buena Gardens in San Francisco. The labyrinth is made of hedges trimmed to fit a child's scale. The interactive stream and fountain allow children to interact and manipulate the flow of water ([www.yerbabuenagardens.com](http://www.yerbabuenagardens.com) 2004). A second example of Natural Materials as Art is The Lookout Cove at the Bay Area Children's Museum in Sausalito, California. The Lookout Cove, illustrated in Figure 4.61, offers a multi-leveled log stairway to a nature trail. The use of the tree stumps in the groundplane differ from a natural terrain due to the conscious use of timber material and placement.

Typology

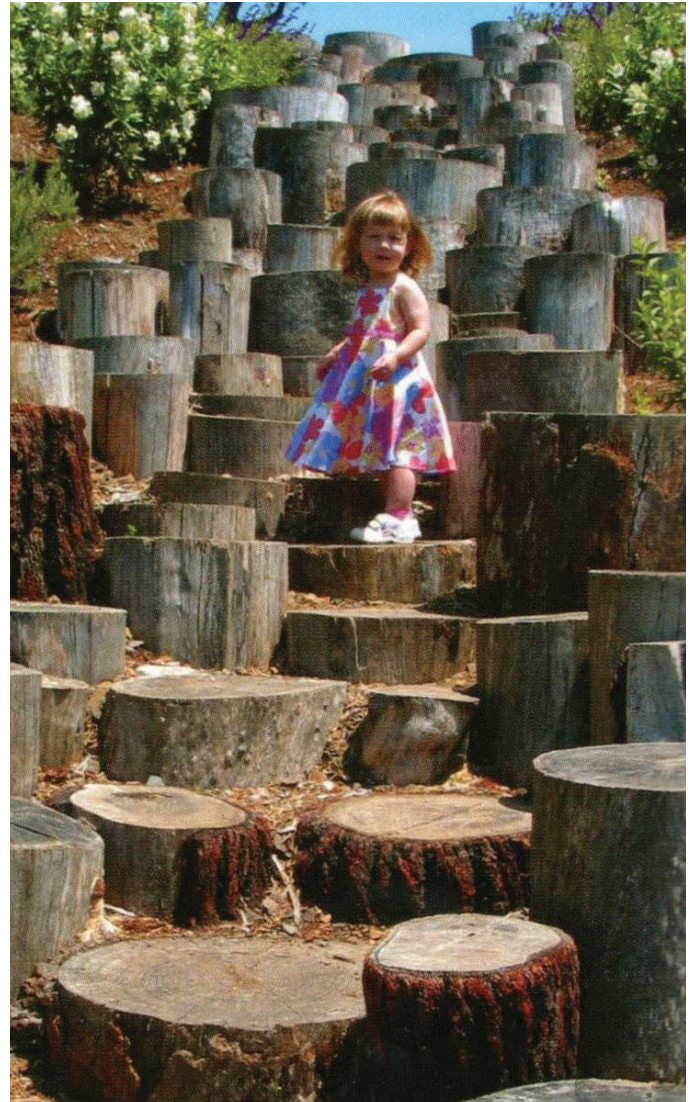


Figure 4.61: The Lookout Cove,  
Tree-stump Stairway, Girl Climbing,  
*Asphalt to Ecosystems* (pg. 104)



## *Art as a Focal Point*

*When an adult admires a sculpture of an animal,  
a child imagines themselves winning a race  
on the fastest tortoise in the world...*



Figure 4.62: Art as a Focal Point Conceptual Montage, Alli Gerth



Figure 4.63: Art as a Focal Point Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

## Art as a Focal Point

Art as a Focal Point can be an individual piece or a collection of elements forming a whole that is visually independent. These **sculptural elements serve as a focal point for their setting**. Figure 4.64 is an image of Wishbone House by artist Colin Greenly. This freestanding climber included interior benches for quiet activity and was installed as a focal element in a local Washington DC park. This type contains a subtype of Art as Improvised Play Environments.

The following spread illustrates the subtype of Art as a Focal Point, Art as Improvised Play Environments.

Typology

Figure 4.64: Wishbone House, Children Climbing, Leaning Post Productions, leaningpost.com





Figure 4.65: Art as Improvised Play Environments Sketch, Alli Gerth

## Art as Improvised Play Environments: A Subtype of Art as a Focal Point

A subtype of the type Art as a Focal Point, Art as Improvised Play Environments is represented by sculptural elements whose **original purpose was not intended as a play structure**, however, through the imaginations of children, they are used for play. The Tortoise and the Hare, Figure 4.67, was initiated as a commemorative landscape honoring the runners of the Boston Marathon and sits in Copley Square, adjacent to the finish line of the marathon. Schön's first production of Make Way for Duckling's, Figure 4.66, was not meant for children to climb on and the duck legs bent. The artist redesigned the ducks making them more sturdy accommodating children's desire to play and sit on the ducks. Figure 4.70 is an image of the statue of Johnny Kaw by Elmer Tomasch, illustrates a mythical Kansas folk hero. The statue was designed to be a focal point for City Park, where it resides, as well as a roadside tourist attraction for Manhattan, Kansas. Figures 4.68 and 4.69 illustrate Tom Otterness' "The Real World" sculptures as part of Nelson A. Rockefeller Park in New York City.



Figure 4.66: Make Way For Ducklings, Nancy Schon Website, schon.com

Figure 4.67: Tortoise and the Hare,  
Nancy Schon Website, schon.com

Figure 4.68: "The Real World", Nelson  
Rockefeller Skate Park, Boy Playing with  
Sculpture, tomostudio.com

Figure 4.69: "The Real World", Nelson  
Rockefeller Skate Park, Sculpture,  
tomostudio.com

Figure 4.70: Johnny Kaw, Girls Hanging on  
Scythe, Johnny Kaw Fan Page, facebook.com



4.67



4.68



4.69



4.70

# storytelling

## *Art as a Storytelling*

*When an adult reads a story to a child,  
the child is just another character in the book  
wandering through wonderland  
talking to a purple cat...*



Figure 4.71: Art as Storytelling Conceptual Montage, Alli Gerth





Figure 4.72: Art as Storytelling Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

## Art as Storytelling

Art as Storytelling is represented through **art pieces that are used to tell a story**. These sculptural elements can be singular or a collection of **elements illustrating the story**. Figures 4.75-4.76 and 4.78 are images of Rafael Rivera's Parque Gulliver in Valencia, Spain. This large, 70-meter diameter park represents Gulliver from Jonathon Swift's story Gulliver's Travels. As children play, they are thrust into the role of the Lilliputians, the tiny human characters who capture Gulliver. Also representing this type is Jose Creeft's sculptural depiction of Alice in Wonderland Figure 4.73, in Central Park in New York City. Figures 4.74 and 4.77 are images of the storybook playhouse, 'One Fish, Two Fish' by TBG Partners illustrating well know Dr. Seuss characters.



Figure 4.73: Alice in Wonderland, Children  
Playing, W. Visser, waynevisser.com



4.74

Figure 4.74: One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, Storybook Playhouse, Children Playing, Courtesy of K. Mendenhall, TBG Partners



4.75

Figure 4.75: Parque Gulliver, Slides, playscapes.blogspot.com



4.76

Figure 4.76: Parque Gulliver, Climbing Ropes, playscapes.blogspot.com



4.77

Figure 4.77: One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, Storybook Playhouse, Children Playing, Courtesy of K. Mendenhall, TBG Partners

Figure 4.78: Parque Gulliver, Aerial, playscapes.blogspot.com



4.78

# Traditional Play

## *Art as Traditional Play Elements: Swing, Slide, Climb*

*Where an adult sees a child 'misusing' a swing by swinging on their stomach, the child is a flying dragon or unicorn that must escape the swamp or sinking sand below...*



Figure 4.79: Art as Traditional Play Elements: Swing, Slide, Climb Conceptual Montage, Alli Gerth



Figure 4.80: Art as Traditional Play Elements: Swing, Slide, Climb Sketch, Alli Gerth

## Art as Traditional Play Elements: Swing, Slide, Climb

The type Art as Traditional Play Elements *reinvents the traditional elements of swinging, sliding, and climbing in sculptural forms*. This type can be individual pieces or a collection of elements making up a unified playground. The Playground at Silver Towers in New York, Figures 4.82 and 4.86-4.88, by Tom Otterness is a singular play structure designed as a whimsical human form with the legs serving as slides. Children can explore tiny character sculptures hidden throughout the form. The images of Figures 4.81 below and 4.83-4.85 depict Isamu Noguchi's Playscapes at Piedmont Park in Atlanta, GA. Noguchi's design transformed a playground of typical slides, swings, and climbing equipment into a sculptural landscape making it a useful part of everyday life for children.

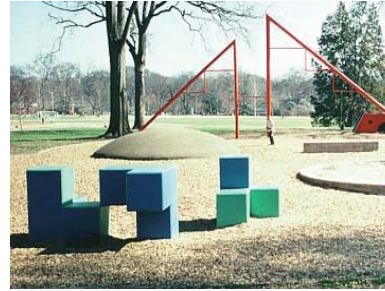
Typology



Figure 4.81: Playscapes at Piedmont Park, Slides, blufton.edu



4.82



4.83



4.84

Figure 4.82: Playground at Silver Towers, Girl Climbing Shoulder, dnainfo.com  
 Figure 4.83: Playscapes at Piedmont Park, Climbing Cubes, blufon.edu  
 Figure 4.84: Playscapes at Piedmont Park, Tower Slide, Spiral, blufon.edu  
 Figure 4.85: Playscapes at Piedmont Park, Swings, pg. blufon.edu  
 Figure 4.86: Playground at Silver Towers, Climbing on Hand, dnainfo.com  
 Figure 4.87: Playground at Silver Towers, Climbing Arm, dnainfo.com  
 Figure 4.88: Playground at Silver Towers, Children Playing, dnainfo.com



4.85



4.86



4.87



4.88

# By Children

## *Art by Children*



*Where an adult sees a pile of blocks,  
a child envisions a castle or fort...*



Figure 4.89: Art by Children Conceptual Montage, Alli Gerth



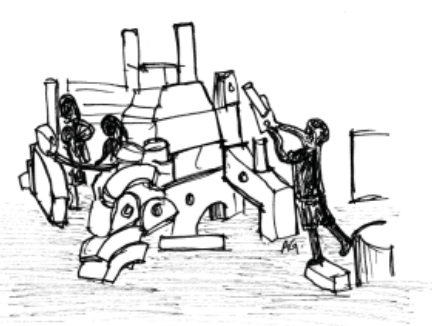


Figure 4.90: Art by Children Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

## Art by Children

Art by Children gives children *an active role in the designing and building of their own play environment*. This type is an expression of the concept free and unstructured play giving children a choice in what their play environment is and how they want to play. Figures 4.92-4.96 on page 60 are images illustrating an Imagination Playground by the Rockwell Group. The loose parts act as building blocks for children to create whatever their imagination dreams up. The Imagination Playground at Burling Slip in New York, Figures 4.95 and 4.96 also includes sand and water that offer children non-traditional media with which to build their own sculptural play environment. Figure 4.91 below, is from the schoolyard at Mercy Cares for Kids school in Albany, New York. Here, children use toys and colorful dyes to make blocks used to build forts in the winter.

Typology



Figure 4.91: Mercy Cares for Kids,  
Children Building with Colorful Ice Blocks,  
*Asphalt to Ecosystems* (pg. 158)



4.92



4.93



4.94

Figure 4.92: Imagination Playground, Girl Playing, [imaginationplayground.org](http://imaginationplayground.org)

Figure 4.93: Imagination Playground, Boy Building, [imaginationplayground.org](http://imaginationplayground.org)

Figure 4.94: Imagination Playground, Boy Playing, [dnainfo.com](http://dnainfo.com)

Figure 4.95: Imagination Playground at Burling Slip, Children Building, [imaginationplayground.org](http://imaginationplayground.org)

Figure 4.96: Imagination Playground at Burling Slip, Children Building, [imaginationplayground.org](http://imaginationplayground.org)



4.95



4.96

# Didactic Play

## *Art as Didactic Play*



*When an adult sees a nest on the ground,  
a child envisions themselves as a bird  
and that nest is their home...*



Figure 4.97: Art as Didactic Play Conceptual Montage, Alli Gerth



## Art as Didactic Play

Figure 4.98: Art as Didactic Play Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

Understanding that all play is beneficial and educational in general, Art as Didactic Play is represented by sculptural pieces with **the intention of educating children about a specific topic**. 'Urge', a sculpture at Yerba Buena Gardens in San Francisco, California, illustrated in Figures 4.102 and 4.103, educates children on movement of the human body. Children activate 'Urge' the human body sculpture designed by artist Chico MacMurtrie by moving levers in the garden surrounding the sculpture. Art as Didactic Play includes the two subtypes Art as Acoustic Play and Art as Habitat and Wildlife Education.

The following spreads illustrate the two subtypes of Art as Didactic Play; Art as Acoustic Play and Art as Habitat and Wildlife Education.

Typology



4.99



4.100



4.101

Figure 4.99: City Museum St. Louis, Sculptural Fish, Aquarium Exhibit, [citymuseum.org](http://citymuseum.org)

Figure 4.100: Yerba Buena Gardens, Voice Pipe Sculpture, [sanfrancisco.about.com](http://sanfrancisco.about.com)

Figure 4.101: The Lookout Cove, Girl Climbing Grass Sculpture, Bay Area Children's Museum photo stream, [flickr.com](http://flickr.com)

Figure 4.102: Yerba Buena Gardens, "Urge" Sculpture, Standing, [yerbabuenagardens.com](http://yerbabuenagardens.com)

Figure 4.103: Yerba Buena Gardens, "Urge" Sculpture, Sitting, [yerbabuenagardens.com](http://yerbabuenagardens.com)



4.102



4.103

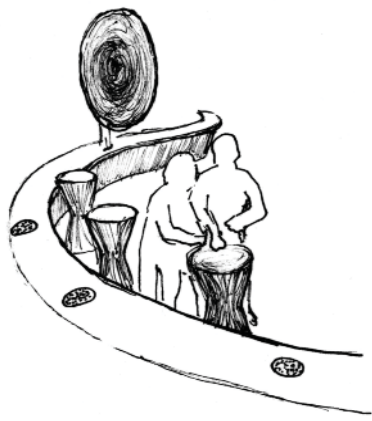


Figure 4.104: Art as Acoustic Play Sketch,  
Alli Gerth

## Art as Acoustic Play: A Subtype of Art as Didactic Play

Art as Acoustic Play is a subtype of Art as Didactic Play and focuses on **sound education through the use of sculpture**. One example is the Voice-Pipe sculpture, Figure 4.105 which also functions as a railing, from Yerba Buena Gardens in San Francisco. Children can talk in one end of the Voice-Pipe sculpture and be heard on the other end. The remaining two examples are by Bill and Mary Buchen. These artists create musical sculptures out of metal. The Buchen's Sound Carnival playground installed at Public School 244 in Brooklyn, New York, includes bronze drums placed in a circle, when played, the sound travels into an underground tank and emerges through 'speaker' grates in the surrounding concrete benches pictured in Figure 4.106. In the "Big Eyes-Big Ears" sculpture, also by the Buchens, is installed at Public School 23 in New York City. This piece uses parabolic dishes attached to a periscope allowing children to experience sights and sounds at higher elevations pictured in Figure 4.107.



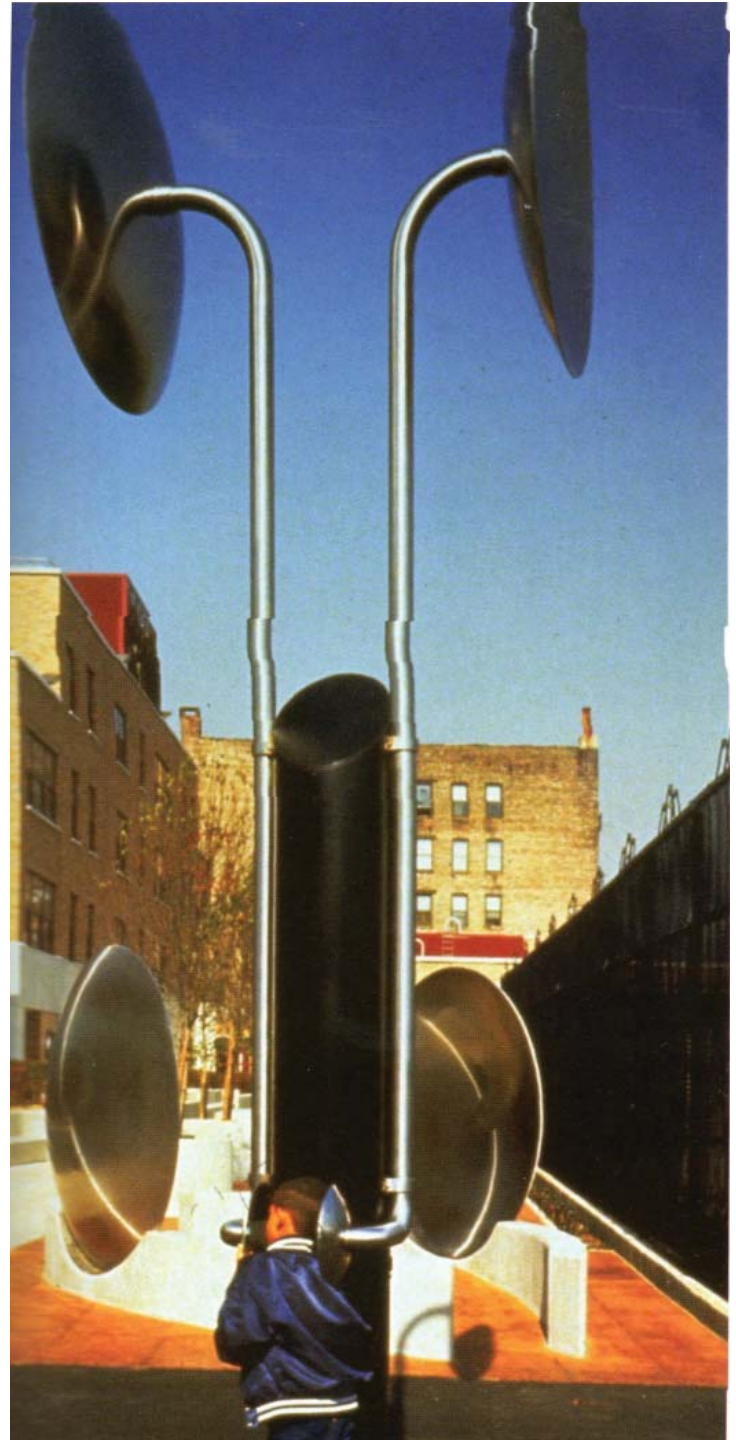
Figure 4.105: Yerba Buena Gardens,  
Voice Pipe Sculpture,  
[sanfrancisco.about.com](http://sanfrancisco.about.com)

Figure 4.106: Sound Carnival, PS 244,  
Children Drumming,  
*Asphalt to Ecosystems*, (pg. 186)

Figure 4.107: Sound Playground, PS 23,  
"Big Eyes-Big Ears",  
*Asphalt to Ecosystems*, (pg. 187)



4.106



4.107





Figure 4.108: Art as Habitat & Wildlife Education Sketch, Alli Gerth

## Art as Habitat & Wildlife Education: A Subtype of Art as Didactic Play

As a subtype of Art as Didactic Play, Art as Habitat and Wildlife Education **uses art to educate children about their surrounding environment**. One prime example is of Joanne Hiromura's Hawk's Nest at EcoTarium children's museum in Massachusetts allows children the opportunity to connect with wildlife they see on the site while playing in the life size hawk's nest, pictured in Figure 4.109. The Aquarium at the City Museum in St. Louis features large walk through sea creatures and native fish showed in Figure 4.110. A third example is from The Lookout Cove at the Bay Area Children's Museum in Sausalito, California showed in Figures 4.11-4.113. Here, there is a child-sized 'spider web' attached to large sculptural blades of grass. As children climb on the web and blades of grass they imagine themselves as spiders or other small insects.



Figure 4.109: EcoTarium, Children Playing in Hawk's Nest, PlaySiteArchitecture.com

Figure 4.110: City Museum St. Louis, Sculptural Fish, Aquarium Exhibit, citymuseum.org

Figure 4.111: The Lookout Cove, Girl Climbing Grass Sculpture, Bay Area Children's Museum photo stream, flickr.com

Figure 4.112: The Lookout Cove, Girl Climbing on Grass Sculpture, Bay Area Children's Museum photo stream, flickr.com

Figure 4.113: The Lookout Cove, Girl Climbing on Child-Sized Spider Web, Asphalt to Ecosystems, (pg. 46)



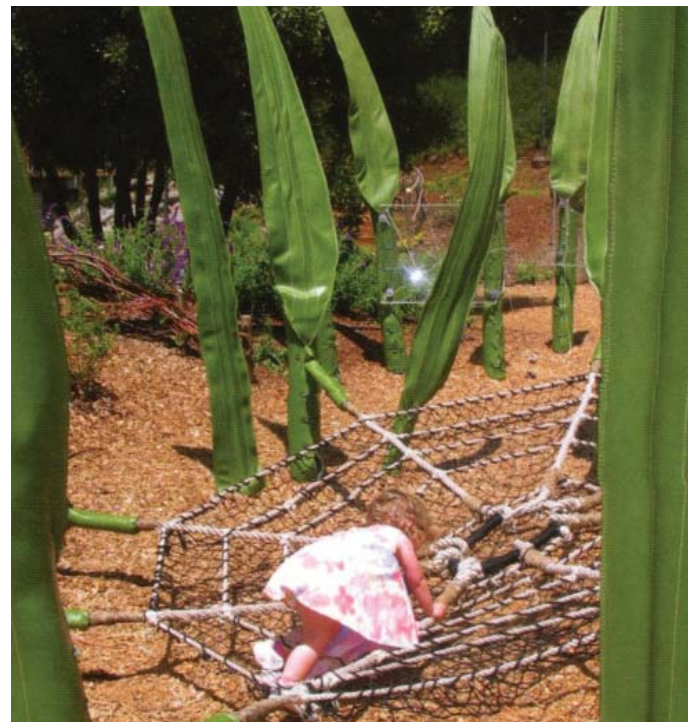
4.110



4.111



4.112



4.113

## Conclusions & Limitations

### Conclusions on Research Methodology

The creation of this typology offers insight into the use of art in playgrounds. Insight into a topic that is often overshadowed by other topics in the landscape architecture profession. In addition, making connections with the art world.

The evolution of the typology began from early readings on playground history, particularly Susan Solomon's book *American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space*. Solomon's examples provided a foundation for research and development of my project and the initial three types. From here I broadened my collection of precedents including works of not only landscape architects, but also, architects and artists.

The initial three types that I had identified early on; Site Design as Art, Art as a Focal Point, and Art by Children, expanded into five, then seven, and eventually the final 12 that are presented in this book. Each new type evolved as differences in precedents were identified. These differences included design intention, play type, and use of the space. For example, Parque Gulliver, while designed with traditional elements (swings, slides, and climbing space), these elements are only a fraction of the design. The focus of this large park is the story of *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathon Swift, and architect Rivera's intention to put children in the story as Lilliputians who capture Gulliver while they play. Thus, the best fit for this precedent is in the type Art as Storytelling.

This evolution of 12 types include the subtypes identified for Site Design as Art, Art as a Focal Point, and Art as Didactic Play. These subtypes were defined as differences were identified in the precedents, however they contained enough similarities to other precedents to remain in the same type category. Art as a Focal Point presents precedents that are sculptural pieces designed for play that are also intended to be a focal point for their setting. In its subtype, Art as Improvised Play Environments, presents precedents that are focal points for their setting, however, these sculptural pieces were not originally designed as a play structure.

*“The greatest need of American life today is some common meeting ground...where business might be forgotten, friendships formed and cooperations established. The playground seems to have great possibilities in this direction.”*  
Henry S. Curtis

When deciding on subtypes, enough precedents with sufficient differences between the original type had to be presented to qualify the development of a new subtype. I had considered developing subtypes for Art by Children to distinguish between more ephemeral art play such as Imagination Playgrounds by the Rockwell Group and those with more permanent children’s art play like the University of Colorado Denver’s Learning Landscapes. However, examples of art by children for this type were too few to qualify developing subtypes so this type remained singular.

### **Conclusions on Typology**

There is no question that play is important in children’s lives. Play helps maintain a child’s physical health but also, mental health and development. In Stuart Brown’s discussions on play types he explains the benefits each type has for children. These include developing “the capacity to create a coherent narrative” in Imaginative Play or their “social competence” in Social Play as they learn to interact with others and build relationships. Narrative Play teaches children about themselves and helps them find their place in the world. Body and Movement Play “creates a structure for individual knowledge of the world” while Object Play enriches circuits of the brain through the manipulation of objects. Lastly, Creative Play “takes our minds to places we have never been, pioneering new paths that the real world can follow...” (2009, pg. 83-93).

Many of these play types occur as activities and my developed typology of art in playgrounds are places that these play types can be further enriched. Through Imaginative Play or Creative Play children can turn sculptures into playgrounds in Art as Improvised Play Environments. Imaginative Play can appear in the type Art as Habitat & Wildlife Education in such examples as EcoTarium or the Lookout Cove. In these examples, children envision what life would be like if they were a hawk in a nest or a spider climbing in the grass. Children experience Body and Movement Play in Art as Traditional Play Elements learning coordination of their own body movement as they swing and climb. While building their own environment in Art by Children, they are practicing Object Play. Art as Storytelling develops children’s Imaginative and Narrative Play types.

## *Conclusions & Limitations*

In addition to each play type, the typology of art integration in playgrounds is beneficial to children as it exposes them to art during the most influential stages of cognitive development according to psychologist Jean Piaget. Like Brown, Piaget explains that different types of play and imagination affect a child's emotional, social, and intellectual development. Piaget further explains the evolution of these play and imagination structures during the later years of the Preoperational Stage (2-7 years) into intelligence and intuition as a child matures into the Operational Stage (7-11 years) (Piaget, 1962).

While children are developing, they are highly influenced by their surroundings. This typology allows children the opportunity to interact and experience of art. In Site Design as Art and Art as Didactic Play, children experience art as it relates to a site, nature, and science. In Art as a Focal Point and Art as Traditional Play Elements, children interact with art as they experience shape and form of sculptures. Art by Children allows children an active role in the creation of their own play environment and encourages their creative exploration. Art as Storytelling exposes children to various forms of expression and narrative not only bringing stories to life for children but encouraging them to be part of the story as they play.

I believe in creating desirable spaces through functional art integration, particularly in children's play environments. I hope that with Creative Play: Integrating Art into Playgrounds, my Masters research will make the idea, design, and integration of art in play spaces more understandable and accessible to the landscape architecture profession and the art world as well as community planners and educators.

## **Limitations**

Art is elusive and open to interpretation, this stands as a limit in my research as the basis for my project is proving examples of art in playgrounds. Since the definition of art is not definitive, who is to say that the precedents I have demonstrated are or are not art? I have defined art to my understanding of it and its best fit for landscape and playgrounds however others may not see the precedents presented as such. Some examples are decisive such as works of Noguchi, an accepted artist, or Friedberg, a well known designer of playgrounds. However, other examples are left up to much interpretation particularly when the designer is unknown, including the tree stump stairway at the Lookout Cove in Sausalito, California. Here, some may see a pile of tree stumps no different than that in a neighbors back yard. In such a case, I have taken the context of the piece in consideration. The tree stump stairway was in fact designed, each tree stump was placed in such a manner that it appears sculptural. This stairway and the nature trail it leads to exist as part of a designed exhibit at a Museum. The surroundings are designed, and therefore, I see this stairway as a designed sculptural piece as well.

Secondly, due to the size of my study and varied locations of precedents gathered, I was unable to visit the sites. Not having my own observations, I was left to infer children's preferred play activities and uses on each site. This limited my understanding of each place to what I was able to derive from images and information gathered from the web and books. These sources, although reliable, are still others experiences and interpretations.

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*“It is in art that makes life, makes interest, makes importance and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process.”*  
*Max Eastman*

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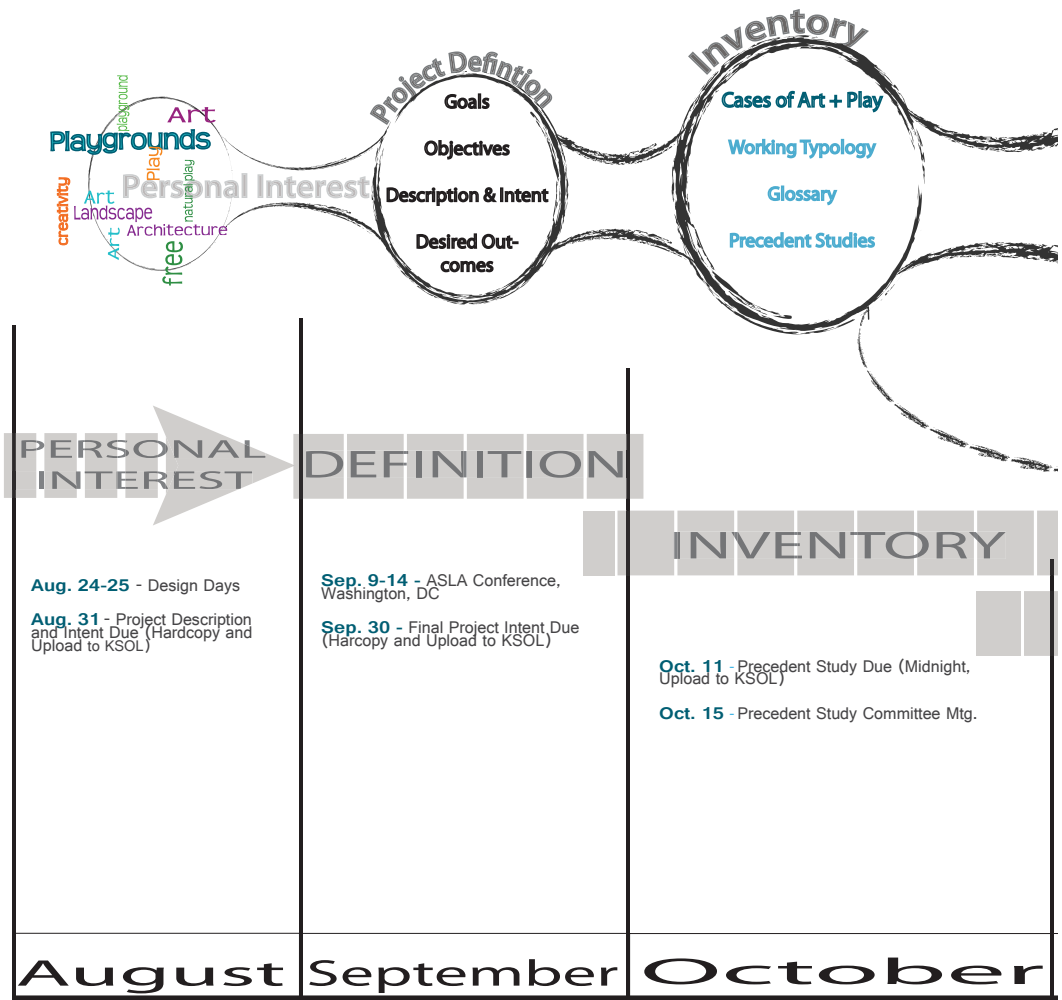
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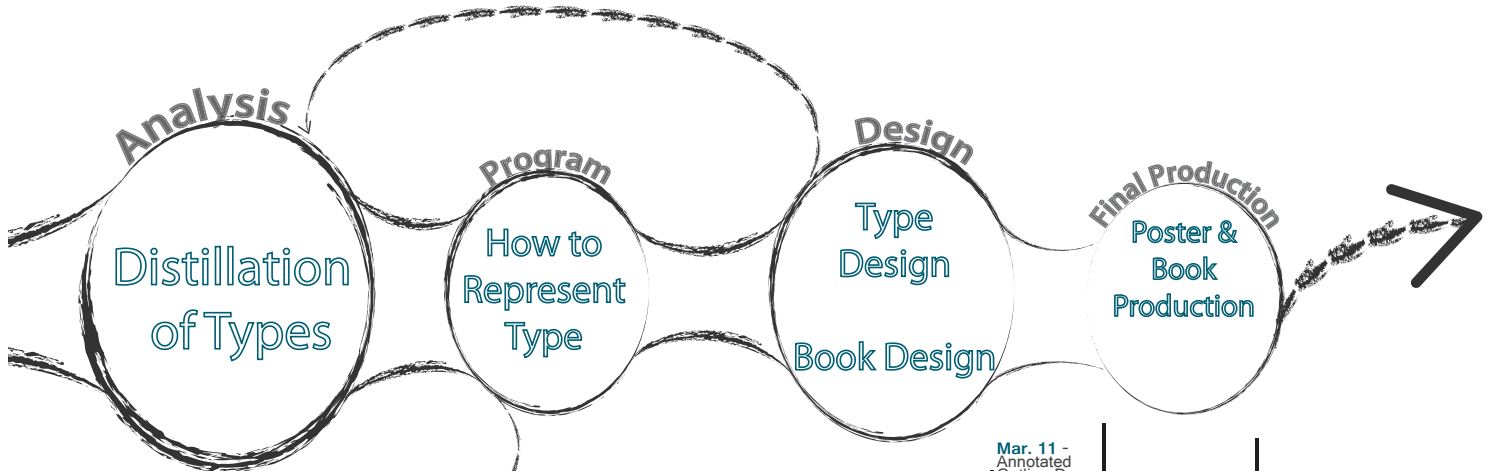
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# Appendix

## Process & Timeline





Month	Analysis	Program	Design	Final Production
November	<p><b>Nov. 1</b> - Inventory and Analysis Due (Midnight)</p> <p><b>Nov. 10</b> - Inventory, Analysis, and Programming Committee Mtg. (11:10-11:40)</p> <p><b>Nov. 18</b> - Program Due (11:30, Upload to KSOL)</p>			
December		<p><b>Dec. 7</b> - Final Semester Document Due (Hard Copy and KSOL Upload)</p>		
January			<p><b>Jan. 14</b> - Resubmittals</p> <p><b>Jan. 26</b> - Storyboard Due</p> <p><b>Jan. 31</b> - Plan for Completion of Undergrad Component Form Due</p>	
February			<p><b>Feb. 2</b> - "Research and the State" Poster Session, 9am, KSSU K&amp;S Ballroom</p> <p><b>Feb. 14</b> - Design Expo</p> <p><b>Feb. 14/16/18</b> - Report Mid Crit Reviews</p> <p><b>Feb. 15</b> - Steven G. King Play Environment Scholarship Due</p>	
March			<p><b>Mar. 11</b> - Annotated Outline Due</p> <p><b>Mar. 18</b> - CAPD Photography Competition Due</p> <p><b>Mar. 19 - 27</b> - SPRING BREAK</p> <p><b>Mar. 24-27</b> - LABash Conference, Purdue</p> <p><b>Mar. 28/29</b> - Report Substantial Completion Review</p>	
April			<p><b>Apr. 4/5</b> - Final Draft Text Due</p> <p><b>Apr. 5</b> - Application to Schedule Final Exam Reviews Due to Grad. School</p> <p><b>Apr. 25/27/29</b> - Final Grad. School Deadline &amp; Final Defense</p>	
May				<p><b>May 6</b> - Final Grad. School Deadline for Ballot and ETD Submission (uploaded, Midnight)</p> <p><b>May 6</b> - LAR 705 Ballots to Jayria, 4pm</p> <p><b>May 6</b> - ASLA Student Awards Entry Form Due</p> <p><b>May 14</b> - Graduation</p> <p><b>May 20</b> - ASLA Student Awards Submission Binder Due</p>

# Appendix

## *Literature Map*

"If you want to know what a child is, study his play. If you want to affect what he will be, direct his form of play."  
Luther Gulick

"Whatever landscape a child is exposed to...that will be the sort of gauge through which he or she will see all the world."  
Wallace Stegner

"Structures [that] pose alternative models of esteem, relating to the power of the individual, the importance of the creative urge..."  
Gary Alan Fine

"Art is an activity or object and made up of aesthetics, craftsmanship, and meaning"

"Art is not a phenomenon but a concept...[which]...has no objective referent, and so one cannot say what it is or is not, only what the user means by the term."  
Evelyn Payne Hatcher

As children develop, they are highly influenced by their surroundings. By integrating art into playgrounds, these environments will offer greater opportunities for developmental enrichment through their interactions with the site. Through the creation of a typology, this project will identify a purpose for art in playgrounds, thus establishing greater opportunity for children's creative development through play. The typology will address ways to integrate art into playgrounds and encourage a future shift away from current trends in playground design.

Playgrounds are not only critical in fostering children's physical development but also their attitudes and habits towards creativity and play. Currently, however, in America's "insurance conscious" mindset, notions of perceived safety and protection have devalued playgrounds into sterile, replicated environments from one community to the next. These uniform playgrounds have diminished the opportunities for today's youth to develop their personal creativity and imagination through play.  
(Thompson 2007, Solomon 2005).



"...the child is the starting point, the center, and the end. His development, his growth, is the ideal."  
John Dewey

"We must get people emotional (positive) about saving play and natural play environments for present and future generations, and call on politicians, organizations, agencies, and volunteer groups to develop national and local policies that directly or indirectly help resolve the crisis affecting children."  
Joe L. Frost

"...subject matter never can be got into the child from without. Learning is active. It involves reaching out of the mind. It involves organic assimilation starting from within...it is he and not the subject matter which determines both the quality and quantity of learning."  
John Dewey

Physical fitness has overwhelmed other domains of child development; social, emotional, intellectual, "abandoning any of the imaginative notions of garden or landscape, and the intellectual development of the child."  
Susan Herrington

The mid sixties was one point in time in which art integration in playgrounds was successful; it was a time when "...the place of playgrounds [was] in the realm of art, itself being shaken up by environmental earthworks..."  
Susan G. Solomon



**Play**

- "The Recieved View of Play and the Subculture of Infants" - Susan Herrington
- A History of Children's Play and Play Environments: Toward a Contemporary Child-Saving Movement - Joe L. Frost
- American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space - Sharon Ganson Danks
- Asphalt to Ecosystems: Design Ideas for Schoolyard Transformation - Susan G. Solomon
- Site + Sculpture: The Collaborative Design Process - Kay Wagenknecht-Harte
- "The Object in Space" - Evelyn Payne Hatcher
- "Crafting Authenticity: The Validation of Identity in Self-Taught Art" - Gary Alan Fine
- Isamu Noguchi: A Study of Space - Ana Maria Torres

**Landscape Architecture**

- Designing Outdoor Play Environments for Children: Landscaping Schoolyards, Gardens, and Playgrounds - Lolly Tai | Mary Haque | Gina McClellan | Erin Knight
- "The Recieved View of Play and the Subculture of Infants" - Susan Herrington
- American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space - Susan G. Solomon
- Asphalt to Ecosystems: Design Ideas for Schoolyard Transformation - Sharon Ganson Danks

**Childhood Development**

- Play Dreams, and Imagination in Childhood - Jean Piaget
- Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul - Stuart Brown, M.D.
- SAFE Play Areas: Creation, Maintenance, and Renovation - Donna Thompson | Susan Hubson | Heather Olsen
- The Child and the Curriculum - John Dewey
- "The Recieved View of Play and the Subculture of Infants" - Susan Herrington
- A History of Children's Play and Play Environments: Toward a Contemporary Child-Saving Movement - Joe L. Frost

**Art**

## Literature Review

### *American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space,* Susan G. Solomon

**Author:**

Susan G. Solomon has extensive training as an art historian with concentration on 20th century architecture. She has a Ph. D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Category:**

Play + Landscape Architecture

**Review:**

Solomon organizes her book into two categories, the past and the present. She walks readers through the history of playground design pre-1960 and from 1960-1995. In the section on the past, Solomon has a strong focus on playground design of the sixties and how this time was pivotal in the modern shift in playground design. She describes the importance of art in playgrounds: the mid sixties was one point in time in which art integration in playgrounds was successful; it was a time when "...the place of playgrounds [was] in the realm of art, itself being shaken up by environmental earthworks...". Numerous examples are given of playgrounds designed by collaborative efforts of architects, landscape architects, and artist.

Solomon provides landscape architecture examples in Richard Dattner and M. Paul Friedberg during the mid sixties and early seventies; specifically their influence in the "do-it-yourself" movement. This movement was more informal, less expensive, and allowed for variation, showing that playgrounds did not need to have uniform manufactured equipment. This era also strayed from individual site elements to a holistic approach that addressed both playground elements with their site, and site to the surrounding context.

Solomon also describes the works of artist Isamu Noguchi. Although never built, his design for the playground at the United Nations was artful and highly intriguing. Noguchi accentuated land form protrusions to freeform land crossing boundaries that previously separated artists from landscape architects. He designed a series of “fanciful abstract shapes” that depended on customized equipment. These sculptural abstracts would have given children the opportunity to experience art as they climbed through the equipment.....and a good opportunity for physical activity with “possibilities of stimulating the child’s sense of space and form through playground designed as architectural sculpture”. It is in these examples provided by Solomon that I begin my foundation for research and development of typologies.



## Literature Review

***Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul, Stuart Brown, M.D.***

**Author:**

Stuart Brown is a medical doctor, psychiatrist, and clinical researcher and founded the National Institute for Play. He is an associate professor at the University of California, San Diego. Brown has spent his career studying play behaviors in humans and animals.

**Category:**

Play + Childhood Development

**Review:**

In his book, *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, medical doctor, psychiatrist, and clinical researcher pulls from his observations of play behavior along with studies in neuroscience, biology, psychology, and social science present the importance of play to human development. He introduces readers to research on play types and their affect on children during development including physically, socialization, and mentally through creativity and art.

Early in his book, Brown explains Properties of Play that helps readers understand why play is so appealing to humans including its “inherent attraction”, “freedom from time”, and “continuation desire”. In addition, he presents the Process of Playing developed by Scott Eberle, an intellectual historian of play and vice president for interpretation at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York. Eberle believes most people go through this process, however, not everyone may go through the process in exactly this order or extent. The process involves: Anticipation, Surprise, Pleasure, Understanding, Strength, and Poise.

In the second part of Brown's book, he describes varying types of play that occur throughout development. These include; Body and Movement Play, Object Play, Imaginative Play, Social Play, Storytelling and Narrative Play, and Creative Play. Understanding these types of play leads to a better understanding of how children develop through play actions and behaviors. A better understanding can positively influence landscape architects decisions when designing play environments for children.

Brown's information on Properties of Play, Play Process, and play types, is presented in the background section of this masters report and connections are made with the developed typology of art integration into playgrounds.

## Literature Review

### *Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood, Jean Piaget*

**Author:**

Jean Piaget (1896 -1980) was a Swiss developmental psychologist who spent his lifetime studying children cognitive development and way of thinking. He served as the Director of the International Bureau of Education. Piaget was also a Professor of Psychology at the University of Geneva.

**Category:**

Childhood Development

**Review:**

In his book, Piaget introduces his Theory of Cognitive Development with its four stages; Sensory-motor (birth – 2years), Preoperational (2 – 7 years), Operational (7 – 11 years), and Concrete & Formal Stage (adolescence – adulthood). He discusses each of these stages through ‘play’ and ‘imitation’, two psychological assimilation structures that he identifies as being part of children from birth. Piaget explains symbolic play, creative imagination, reproductive imitation, and representative imitation as important factors in a child’s development during the Preoperational stage. During the later years of this stage and into the early years of the Operational stage, Piaget describes these as being the most influential years in a child’s development. He further explains that as children develop, these structures of play and imitation are critical in the development of a child’s intuition and intelligence in the early years of the Operational stage.

Though published in 1962, this book and Piaget’s research remains relevant in understanding how children develop cognitively. An adaptation of Piaget’s Stages of Cognitive Development and information presented in his book *Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood* has been diagrammed and presented as background information.

**“Crafting Authenticity:  
The Validation of Identity in Self-Taught Art”, Gary Alan Fine**

**Author:**

Gary Alan Fine is a professor of sociology at Northwestern University. He is a former sociology professor at the University of Georgia, and associate professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota. He earned his PhD in Social Psychology from Harvard University and his BA in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania.

**Category:**

Art

**Review:**

In his article, Fine defines self-taught art, also known as intuitive or outside art. He examines the development of the market for self-taught art, which, as he explains, strives for artistic domain, authenticity, and value of object and creator. He further explains self-taught art as a form of “identity art” characterized by the artists themselves and their personal stories. Fine’s article examines the justifications for self-taught art. He has derived his justifications for self-taught art from five years of ethnographic observation, interviews, and analysis of texts.

Fine studied ever-changing, migrating social networks that included artists, dealers, collectors, academics, and curators to help understand this field. He defines self-taught art as people not taught through traditional art world institutions. Self-taught art is also made up of “structures [that] pose alternative models of esteem, relating to the power of the individual, the importance of creative urge...(and the romantic notion of the other)”. He is saying that the creation of art comes from one’s own desire to create it, regardless of title or profession.

## Literature Review

***Asphalt to Ecosystems:  
Design Ideas for Schoolyard Transformation,***  
**Sharon Gamson Danks**

**Author:**

Sharon Danks is an environmental planner. She is also a founding partner of Bay Tree Design in Berkeley, California, a landscape architecture and planning firm. Sharon has extensive experience in designing ecological schoolyards as well as research on over 200 green schoolyards throughout North America, Europe, Great Britain, and Japan.

**Category:**

Landscape Architecture + Play

**Review:**

*Asphalt to Ecosystems* introduces readers to innovative green schoolyards and play environments around the world. The examples presented include edible gardens, wildlife sanctuaries, water and energy systems. Sharon Danks also shares how each example can connect to varying school curriculums of science, math, art, and social systems.

Dank's examples of outdoor art play have provided the most relevance to the research and development of this typology supporting the types; Art by Children, Natural Materials as Art, Art as Planar Surfaces, and Art as Volumetric Surfaces. Examples of outdoor music play such as sculptural pieces for Sound Carnival and Sound Playground by artists Bill and Mary Buchen have further helped in identifying Art as Acoustic Play, the latest subtype of Art as Didactic Play.

Danks also provides examples of how to design with the intention of promoting active play. Each of these examples in some way, helps to promote climbing, balancing, or social interaction. These playground designs and the actions they support tie into play types introduced by Stuart Brown in his book *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*.

## **Art as Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Art, Evelyn Payne Hatcher**

### **Author:**

Evelyn Payne Hatcher (1914 – 2009) earned her doctoral degree in anthropology from the University of Minnesota in 1952. She was a Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at St. Cloud and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Minnesota.

### **Category:**

Art

### **Review:**

Evelyn Hatcher's book is not about art objects specifically, rather the ideas people have about art. As an anthropologist she presents theories and understandings of the subject of art from a social and cultural point of view instead of an education or art history point of view. She addresses the broad complexity of the subject by simplifying viewpoints to the essential knowledge of art. To do this she uses cognitive devices of 1) levels of complexity of phenomena, 2) levels of abstraction in analysis, and 3) the idea of multiple factors, vectors, or dimensions, allowing theories to belong to multiple categories instead of competing.

This book is used to help define art as it is a broad and elusive. Hatcher explains that “art is not a phenomenon but a concept... [which]... has no objective referent, and so one cannot say what it is or is not, but only what the user means by the term”. She explains that many languages do not have a specific word translation for ‘art’ but do have related concepts. Hatcher’s definition of art is an activity or object and has three components, aesthetics, craftsmanship, and meaning. Craftsmanship is made up of knowledge, physical skill, and effort. Meaning includes; representation of the subject, symbolism, interpretation or iconology, metaphor, and ambiguity.

## Literature Review

***S.A.F.E. Play Areas: Creation, Maintenance, and Renovation,***  
**Donna Thompson, Susan D. Hudson, Heather M. Olsen**

**Author:**

Donna Thompson, PhD is the executive director of the National Playground Safety and is an expert nationally and internationally in playground development and safety.

Susan D Hudson, PhD is an expert in playground safety. She is the educational director of the National Program for Playground Safety. She holds an endowed professorship at the University of Northern Iowa.

Heather M. Olsen, MA is the operations director for the National Program for Playground Safety at the University of Northern Iowa. She has been involved in the development of playgrounds and public education on maintenance, supervision, and age appropriateness.

**Category:**

Play + Childhood Development

**Review:**

Thompson discusses safety and maintenance issues in their relation to playgrounds. Of particular focus is age appropriate playground design in relation to children's development. Thompson introduces this topic in chapter four and discusses children's physical development patterns (physical gross and motor actions, vision, figure-ground perception, ground perception, movement awareness, auditory awareness, perceptual motor development, vestibular simulation, and size differences). She explains the developmental progression of physical actions from sit-stand-roll-crawl-creep-walk-run-jump-hop-gallop-skip-slide-leap. In this same chapter Thompson discusses children's emotional development including their emotional balance, egocentricity, and need for approval. Third, children's social development with a discussion of Parten's

Description of Social Development. Finally, Thompson introduces Piaget's periods of Intellectual Development. With information on these developmental characteristics, the book connects children's ages with development and what this implies for playground design.

In chapter five, Thompson further explains how play areas can be designed to be developmentally appropriate. She discusses this in relation to the ASTM standard and CPSC guidelines of ages 2-5 years and 5-12 years. In the second portion, age groups are further refined and discussed in the following age groups; 5-7, 8-9, and 10-12 years.



## Literature Review

***Designing Outdoor Environments for Children: Landscaping Schoolyards, Gardens, and Playgrounds, Lolly Tai, Mary Taylor Haque, Gina K McLellan, Erin Jordan Knight***

**Author:**

Lolly Tai is a professor and chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture at Temple University. Much of her teaching and professional work focused on how environment affects landscape design. As an educator she uses hands-on learning and community outreach design programs including schoolyard projects .

Mary Taylor Haque is an Alumni Distinguished Professor of Horticulture at Clemson University. She uses a service learning model with her students and colleagues by collaborating with USDA, the Sustainable Universities Initiative, and other partners to design children's gardens throughout South Carolina. Much of her educational research and outreach has focused on sustainable schoolyard habitats that incorporate sustainability, resource management to create useful learning and play environments for children.

Gina Kooiman McLellan is a professor of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management at Clemson University. Her teaching focuses on recreation, leisure environments, and natural resource management. As an educator, she has used service learning projects emphasizing design and development of creative, quality environments for children. These children's environments help children develop a respect for the outdoors, enhance learning opportunities, and improve socialization through play.

Erin Jordan Knight is Director of Natural Resource Protection at Upstate Forever, an organization that promotes sensible growth while protecting special places in South Carolina's Upstate Region. Her work focuses on public landscape designs and has included children's gardens and environments.

**Category:**

Landscape Architecture

**Review:**

This book focuses on designing children's schoolyards, gardens, and playgrounds from a landscape architect's expertise. It includes all phases from the initial research in the design process, site analysis, cost estimation, the inclusion of volunteers and community outreach, design, construction documentation, implementation, and maintenance and evaluation. The authors have included varying design elements that can be considered when designing children's environments and walks readers through precedents that demonstrate these varying elements.

This book also looks at historical playground development with psychologist John Dewey's influence , traditional playgrounds during World War I era, designer playgrounds in the 1960s, and current playground trends.

## Literature Review

### **A History of Children's Play and Play Environments: Toward a Contemporary Child-Saving Movement, Joe L. Frost**

#### **Author:**

Joe Frost is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas and has authored or co-authored 18 books. He is well known for his expertise and work on early childhood and children's play environments and has consulted on playgrounds worldwide. Frost is a former president of both the Association for Childhood Education International and International Play Association/USA.

#### **Category:**

Play + Childhood Development

#### **Review:**

In his book, Frost traces historical play patterns from wilderness and natural environments to vacant lots and parks in cities. He discusses current trends with children's sedentary lifestyles and indoor 'cyber play' of video games, internet surfing, and television watching. He explains that these current trends are causing play deprivation leading to issues with health, learning, and the development of children. Frost presents both natural and built play environments along with the benefits they offer towards childhood development.

In Chapter 4, Frost looks at the playground movement throughout American history, influenced by German tradition of physical fitness and advocates such as Charles Darwin, Karl Groos, Herbert Spencer, and G. Stanley Hall. Later noting a better understanding of child study and childhood development movement influenced by John Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, and John Dewey. In this same section on the Playground Movement, Frost presents the stages of playground environment development.

Chapter 5 looks at the Child Study Movement of a developmental approach to play with nursery schools and kindergartens. This movement was the beginning of understanding of childhood development and how it is affected by playing.

Finally, Frost presents a new child-saving movement using lessons from the past stages and movements in play. He acknowledges various programs and organizations who share a purpose of furthering awareness of play and play benefits. These include the National Institute for Play, KaBoom, and YMCA's Activate America. He also, offers ways to confront the play, fitness, and health crisis in America and how to restore outdoor play. "We must get people emotional (positive) about saving play and natural play environments for present and future generations, and call on politicians, organizations, agencies, and volunteer groups to develop national and local policies that directly or indirectly help resolve the crisis affecting children."

## Literature Review

### *Site + Sculpture: The Collaborative Design Process,* *Kay Wagenknecht-Harte*

**Author:**

(1951-1997) Kay Wagenknecht-Harte was a member of the department of art and archaeology at Princeton. She earned her master's degree in architecture from the University of Texas and a master's in landscape architecture from Texas A&M University.

**Category:**

Public Art

**Review:**

In this chapter of Wagenknecht-Harte's book she discusses four categories for public/site art that Robert Irwin identified in his book *Being and Circumstance*. These categories: site-dominant, site-adjusted, site-specific, and site-conditioned/determined identify the amount of interaction between site and sculpture

**Site-Dominant Sculpture:**

This category calls out sculptures which are objects that have their own integrity, "...are conceptually independent of site; as objects they can be appropriately exhibited in a variety of sites within a city or within many different cities." In this category, scale becomes a major factor and critical to understand as sculpture often becomes too visually overwhelming when placed in inappropriate spaces. When considering common playgrounds today, pre-manufactured equipment can be considered site-dominant as the purpose of it is to go on almost any site and often appears large and overbearing within the context of the site.

**Site-Adjusted Sculpture:**

As with site-dominant sculpture, site-adjusted sculptures are created for multiple sites, however it is dependent upon a site for some specific visual interactions including scale, color, texture, or mass. These sculptures require a landscape architect to integrate the design of the sculpture with the design of the site context.

**Site-Specific Sculpture:**

This category “is a combination of form the artist creates and the environment in which that form is placed. The work of art is contingent not only on the artist’s ideas but also on the physical, cultural, and historical characteristics of a specific site that the completed work can exist”. This category can be represented by a landscape architect being hired to design a playground on a specific site, not using pre-manufactured equipment.

**Site- Conditioned/Determined Sculpture:**

The last category “draws all of its cues (reasons for being) from its surroundings”. The author explains the design process of site conditioned sculptures begins “with an intimate hands on reading of the site,” with an approach that is cooperative or collaborative resulting in a sculptural environment. This fourth approach is representative of a play environment that encourages free and unstructured play; a play environment that focuses on the site offering children many opportunities for discovery on their own.

**Site- Conditioned/Determined Sculpture:**

Finally, Robert Irwin describes a fifth category in the relationship between site and sculpture as “the collaborative effort of designers, visual artists and performing artists to create new perceptual experiences” in part, a combination of the first four categories.

## Literature Review

### **“The Received View of Play and the Subculture of Infants”, Susan Herrington**

#### **Author:**

Susan Herrington is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Iowa State University. She earned her MLA from Harvard’s Graduate School of Design. She received her BLA at The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. She focuses her research on the history, design, and theory of young children’s outdoor play spaces.

#### **Category:**

Play + Childhood Development

#### **Review:**

In Herrington’s article “The Received View of Play and the Subculture of Infants” she questions what common outdoor play apparatuses actually offer children. While in the article she focuses on younger ages, which are increasingly placed in corporate, commercial, and institutional settings, the value of her study comes in her understanding of types of play activities children are involved in and how this understanding can be used in the design of their play environments.

She describes the word landscape can “evoke memory, mystery, sacredness, pride, power, delight, belonging, coolness, warmth, exhilaration, relaxation, contemplation” and that these psychological, physical, and philosophical are rarely found in environments of play. Herrington stresses the importance of cultural interpretation in outdoor play. Although, children spend a majority of their waking hours in physical environments their interaction results in limited experience due to play environments being dominated by manufactured equipment or ‘site-less structures’. Thus, landscape becomes only a neutral setting where play is located rather than the place of play itself.

Herrington studied material factors including physical, historical, and cultural common in today’s play lots. She proceeds to explain The Received View of Play, its assumptions, and the theories that follow.

#### The Received View of Play:

Describing a common 'tot lot' play area in a California neighborhood, this ordinary play environment makes several underlying assumptions with the most critical one being "Play takes place upon the land with play structures placed onto the land". Placing this small square lot for play with equipment bolted to the ground reinforces the lack of form. It emphasizes the 'product' or the equipment rather than the place of play as a whole. Herrington explains these play spaces are "separated from the surrounding landscape both physically and aesthetically". She further describes the bold manufactured color palette as the current means of identifying and separating a 'play' environment from everything else "the bright colors of the stationary equipment stand out against the sinuous vocabulary of green trees, shrubs, and grass in the "adult" park". The idea of separating a play environment negatively influences children by creating a notion that the only place to play is at a designated lot rather than encouraging a child's exploration and improvisation of their own play environments beyond the designated lot..

#### History:

Herrington briefly explains the history of formalized playgrounds over the past 100 years being safety, morals, and physical fitness. Physical fitness has overwhelmed other domains of child development; social, emotional, intellectual, "abandoning any of the imaginative notions of garden or landscape, and the intellectual development of the child".

#### Theory of Reduction:

A second assumption in the received view of play is the theory of reduction as it applies to the design of play spaces. This explains that play equipment for younger children is similar to that of older children but is scaled down to appropriate size. However it does not consider the differences in a child's social, emotional, or cognitive abilities.

#### The Subculture of Infants:

Here Herrington describes the design of the Infant Garden at the University of California, Davis. Its design was based on the premise that landscape can support to four child developmental characteristics (physical, cognitive, social, and emotional). It is a collaboration of theory, concept, and multiple disciplines using the theories of experience, order, harmony, sacredness, and place as part of landscape theory.



## Literature Review

### *The Child and the Curriculum, John Dewey*

**Author:**

(1859-1952) John Dewey was a major figure in American intellectual history taking into consideration his work on philosophy, psychology, education, politics, and social thought. His writings are some of the earliest in the educational philosophy and whose work led to “progressive education”. He was a professor of philosophy and education at Columbia University. (<http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/dewey/dewey.html>)

**Category:**

Childhood Development

**Review:**

Although Dewey wrote *The Child and the Curriculum* in the early 1900’s many of his ideas still hold validity in today’s educational theory. He suggests that the problem in educational curriculum is that facts are separated from experience. Dewey explains that, “Classification is not a matter of child experience...the vital ties of affection, the connecting bonds of activity, hold together the variety of his personal experience”.

Dewey describes two conflicting philosophies of educating children; the first one being goal driven, the second experience driven. Regarding his first philosophy, “subject matter furnishes the end, and it determines method. The child is simply the immature being who is to be matured; he is the superficial being who is to be deepened; his is narrow experience which is to be widened. It is his to receive, to accept...” here, the focus is taken from the child to the curriculum and outcomes. Conversely, the second philosophy is entirely focused on the child’s growth and development, the child’s experiences; “the child is the starting point, the center, and the end. His development, his growth, is the ideal”. The second method does not eliminate curriculum rather treats it as an instrument to serve the needs of growth instead of the sole path to the outcome.

He further describes the learning process of children in support of the method of experience over that of the goal driven approach, “...subject matter never can be got into the child from without. Learning is active. It involves reaching out of the mind. It involves organic assimilation starting from within...it is he and not

the subject matter which determines both the quality and quantity of learning". I assert active learning that broadens the mind and encourages organic assimilation can be achieved through the integration of art into children's play environments. Art itself is a creative expression and by introducing it to children in their play environment, they will be encouraged to explore their creative expression as well.

Dewey contrasts these two methods as "guidance and control" verses "freedom and initiative", law enforced in the first, spontaneity encouraged in the second. He encourages educators to "abandon the notion of subject matter as something fixed and ready made in itself, outside the child's experience" as well as to "cease thinking of the child's experience as also something hard and fast" and instead "see it [experience] as something fluent, embryonic, vital; and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process". This supports the need for creative play environments and free and unstructured play. Consider a children's play environment as the subject matter and play as the experience. This environment should not be fixed, rather variable encouraging play to be fluent, embryonic, and vital in a child's development. Play environments that are free and unstructured allow children to improvise their own path of discovery, to initiate their own play activity, thus broadening their creative minds.

Later, Dewey tries to resolve the conflict of the two methods by explaining the value gained from both the child's experience and through subject matter. Combined, these two methods "are the initial and final terms of one reality... to oppose one to the other is to oppose the infancy and maturity of the same growing life...it is to hold that the nature and the destiny of the child war with each other".

“If you never did,  
you should.  
These things are fun,  
and  
fun is good.”

- Dr. Seuss

*Go Play!*