

Ground Truth

Way Finding - Stories On and Of the Landscape

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Ground Truth: Way Finding - Stories On and Of the Landscape

Conceptual Art & Design Elements

Ground Truth is a way-finding, storytelling, multi-sensory, experiential, eco-cultural artwork on the landscape; a regeneratively purposeful path exploring place, time, inspired learning and creative imagination. A number of primary elements have been combined as an integrated whole artwork. It is as much a conceptual experience as a physical work on the landscape.

The proposed Ground Truth artwork, sited on the lower bench between the Drogheda house and the Chamisa house, provides a meandering, exploratory path with creatively inspiring, surprising and sense stimulating encounters along the way. It is designed to extend Modern Elder Academy's mission and its learning intentions onto the ranch landscape.

"Liminal spaces are when we're in the threshold between the familiar and the unknown." MEA

The Shape-Shifting Serpent

The Shape-Shifting Serpent, throughout our existence and within many world cultures, has been a powerful symbol, a myth and a metaphor, for water, for medicine, for learning, for wisdom. Hydra, Naga, Serpen, a-Mantsho-ña-Tshol, Awanyu ... now winds its way and emerges to embody Ground Truth.

The Shape-Shifting Serpent takes form, winding, and extending over 3,500 feet from end to end. As a way-finding guide in the ranch landscape, the Serpent changes in form, size and in material. In some places it disappears, seeming to burrow below the ground. Elsewhere, the Serpent rises up, arching over the ground, as it coils and loops. In some places it is an earthen form or scattered rubble, while elsewhere it is a beautifully crafted, color-surfaced serpentine sculpture. The upper surface of the Serpentine form has a narrow indented spinal trough to catch and direct the flow of seasonal rainwater to the Testbeds. The Shape-Shifting Serpent shows the way, offering surprising and stimulating encounters along its path of wonder.

The Path

Designed to join the existing dirt paths that connect the Drogheda house and the Chamisa house, a simple trail through open areas of the site follows next to the serpentine form, providing access to the Amphitheater, the Testbeds, and other installation elements.

The Path consists of two primary loops, allowing for shorter or longer exploratory walks amid this selected scenic and ecologically diverse area with 360° views of Saddleback Ranch. The Path will be wheel-chair accessible, with slight regarding so that no steps or steep slopes will be encountered. The Ground Truth installation area is to be off-limits to equine grazing or riding.

The Labyrinth:

Accessible from the existing dirt road connecting the two residences, between two tall yucca plants, the Shape-Shifting Serpent's path emerges as rocky, earth mounded coils in a labyrinthian spiral pattern on the ground, low, composed of variously sized, occasionally colorful rocks, with lavender plants sprouting in between. Painted text on the larger rocks, as it is read, leads the way along the spiral, from the entry to the exiting path.

Two Prisms strategically mounted on poles, with small solar tracking sensors, create a spectral 'light saber' effect across the Labyrinth at different times of day through changes of seasons.

Ground Truths

Ground Truths are graphic texts, printed words, poetic phrases and symbols on rocks and other appropriate surfaces. They tell stories, ask questions and offer thought-provoking poetic surprise along the way, in proximate synergy with the path-guiding serpentine form and the regenerative ecosystems nature of the Testbeds. They guide the strolling explorer's on-site experience, provoking enchantment while showing the way.

Ground Truths are selected writings from the series, "Poetexts" by Richard Lowenberg. Final selection and location of texts will occur as a part of the many final project design options and determinations.

Testbeds

Testbeds are a series of regenerative eco-art (nested systems, living libraries, learning modules) gardens, to be encountered at sites along the serpentine way.

Testbeds have the pragmatic purpose to serve as small experimental gardens, designed to better understand regenerative life processes and options, in ways that may be learned from and applied at larger scale on the ranch. They demonstrate relationships among a variety of plants, climate, water use, soils, light, energy, materials, pollinators, seasons and inter-relational life processes.

The four Testbeds shown and described in our presentation are small examples for regenerative landscape learning and understandings. Their detailed realization, with ultimate design, location, preparation, planting and watering would necessarily result from a regenerative community collaboration among selected expert advisors and caretakers. Time will be a major partner.

Testbeds are creatively intended to inspire radical (rooted) questions and thought-provoking understandings, by stimulating our senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, memory +), while becoming attuned to the sensory world of other living systems. Like all gardens, Testbeds will require daily and long term care and tending. They may serve as examples for MEA site-based regenerative classes and workshops.

- **The Pollinator Testbed:** Seasonally blooming wildflowers and other plants selected to attract pollinating bees, insects and hummingbirds, surround a small domed space, with

west facing opening; a place of colors of sounds, of seeing, of listening and of sitting in quiet meditation. During daylight blue shade of the Dome reflects life's shadow aspects and is a place for shaded reflection. In darkness it hosts a communing with the quiet noise of nocturnal pollinators drawn to its UV illumination. The daily and seasonal cycling of ups and downs, are the serpentine actions of life's journey and the truths of experience.

- **The Healing Testbed:** Native to the site and the region, fragrant herbs, wild edible and medicinal plants provide opportunities for learning and resilient ecological practices.
- **The Native Grasses Testbed:** A garden of selected seasonal native grasses, where the Labyrinth's extended path and the returning, overarching Serpent forms cross.
- **The Wildflower Testbed:** A garden of seasonal colorful wildflowers and fragrances, gives opportunity to learn about soils, water, nutrients, light, seeding and healthy multi-seasonal and annual biotic processes.

The Amphitheater

The Amphitheater is a simple traditionally understood semi-circular place of social gathering, for classes, for events, for contemplation and for considering a purpose-filled life, in the round, on the land. It provides colorful tiered undulating formed seating for 24+, with a small stage area. Amphitheater seating faces to the south-east, in direct line-of-site with the distant 'saddleback'.

A fire bowl may be located at the Amphitheater's center, for evening gatherings around the warm glow of contained firewood flames and embers.

An (archway) arching of the serpentine form, framing the Amphitheater entry and the ranch's inspiring 'saddleback' and big-sky view from the Amphitheater's seating, is a proposed option for consideration, but is not now included or budgeted for.

The Amphitheater is only a five minute stroll down the existing path from the Drogheda house, past the large cottonwood trees (with hammocks), and around the rise. It can easily be accessed during daytime or evenings without the need to walk the entire Serpentine path.

Llaretas

Llaretas are a velvety, chartreuse cushion plants native to South America. They are native to the high desert grasslands of the Andes, at altitudes from 10,000 to 17,000 feet, growing slowly, almost imperceptively, over thousands of years.

Inspired by the Llaretas of the Atacama desert, we propose creating (5) Llaretas-like sculptures that are large, unusually bulbous, colorful forms that surprisingly appear near and sometimes merge with the Serpentine form and Testbed sites. The Llaretas may be climbed and sat upon by one or more. Their surprising forms and spectral colorations mimic the undulating Amphitheater seating area and certain bulbous areas of the proximate Serpentine form.

Ultraviolet and Blue Fiber Optic Illumination

Pathways, forms and structures in the installation, including the Shape-Shifting Serpent, Testbeds and the Amphitheater will have specially designed low-light, fiber optic, blue spectrum illumination. The low blue light will serve to guide night walks and special events amid the installation, slowing one into the quiet of the night. The nighttime ultraviolet (UV) lit Dome carries one yet deeper into contemplation, reaching the edges of human vision, and deeper recesses of thought. At this edge, the human rod-vision tunes more deeply to the creatures of the night, primarily insects, many themselves wired with an attraction to UV light. In designing this illumination, sensitivity is given to preserving the dark-sky purity and refraining from practices invasive to wildlife.

Other Options, Recommendations and Proposals

In determining the extent, limit and layout of our installation, we repeatedly site-walked and gathered knowledge of MEA's Saddleback Ranch property. A few considerations and recommendations emerged, that are not part of our proposal, but are worth sharing.

Hammocks & Swings: Two or three highly colorful woven hangings, for reclining and for looking up at the sky and stars, are proposed to add to the current single hammock amid the big cottonwoods, at one end of the path. They may be created with natural fibers by regional indigenous weavers.

The Food Garden: A demonstration MEA food garden, on the tear-drop shaped site adjacent to the Drogoda House, or other appropriate site, is proposed.

The Overlook: An existing vehicular access turn-around site overlooks most of the Serpentine connected sites and surrounding landscape, is to be noted and maintained.

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Virtual Ground Truth: A Mobile Storytelling (QR Code) App: "Ground Truth" is proposed as supplementary to the physical on-site works, requiring separate budget and design, to be geolocatively interactive and to include composed field recordings, narrative, text, imagery and sonification of remote sensing data, to virtually engage a visitor more deeply into the stories that this landscape wants to communicate.

Ground Truth Art-Walks and Workshops: the Ground Truth installation is designed to extend MEA's programs onto the ranch landscape. It is also designed as a site for special events (music, dance, readings) to which the area community may be invited, and as the learning environment for elder, adult and youth classes and workshops.

Ground Truth: **Way Finding - Stories On and Of the Landscape**

Construction, Materials, and Maintenance

Ground Truth Team:

This Team has come together for the first time, just for this project. It is a beautiful natural fit, bringing together a range of arts, design, sciences and social skills, experiences and aspirations.

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Introduction

In surveying, cartography and remote sensing, "ground truth" refers to verifiable information collected on location, allowing imaging and geo-locative data to be related to real features and forms on the ground.

The proposed Ground Truth installation is located within and adjoining a concentrated selection of sites within the larger ranch area of paths and potential sites originally designated and shared by LAGI. Our concepts and materials have emerged directly from the history and nature of the ranch site, and in response to Modern Elder Academy's mission, at this unique location and time.

As this is a conceptual design presentation, matters of construction, long-term maintenance, budget, design phasing and detailing are simply preliminary, with a number of options yet to be determined for pragmatic realization, if selected. Our hope at this stage is that Ground Truth strikes a resonant chord.

There are various materials, sensing and energy technologies and regenerative systems that our team has interest in, but given the long-term, low maintenance and site appropriate requirements of this project, Ground Truth has taken a purposeful low-tech, low energy and low water consuming, ecosystems learning-based approach, while aspiring to be most artfully inspiring.

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The Shape-Shifting Serpent: The primary and unifying sculptural element in our design is a meandering, appearing and disappearing, undulating form on the landscape, composed of varying materials, construction techniques and surfaces along its winding path. The serpentine form, constructed in (8-10) small and large primary sections, will be over 3,500 feet from end to end, though only 1,500 feet will actually be a structured and surface-finished form above the landscape. The Shape-Shifting Serpent is the largest single budget item in this proposal.

Construction of the Shape-Shifting Serpent will range from placed stones and stone rubble on the ground, to earthen mounding, to a stacked pumice or adobe brick form, to carved and shaped straw bales, to rebar and wire frame forms coated with colored earthen surfacing, to translucent water and UV resistant fabric, to color glazed adobe and ceramic tile sections in artful patterns.

Upper surface areas of the serpentine form and of the Testbeds will have indented channels formed to catch and trickle rain water to planted areas. Final form, materials, fabrication, construction and labor costs will ultimately be determined and specified, if selected

The structural forms and works on the landscape are designed to be durable and largely care free for many years, under normal circumstances and environmental considerations. Specially skilled regional artisan labor is being specifically considered, having unique skills and experience with concepts, techniques and costs, to assure that this will be a remarkable artwork.

Ground Truths: Text and poetic compositions are to be created and presented at select locations along the serpentine path. Once final texts and locations have been determined, this is a work of off-site and on-site artists' labor, plus paints, graphic art and carving and finishing materials.

The Labyrinth: At one end of our story walk, emerging between two tall Yucca plants, the Shape-Shifting Serpent coils in a labyrinthian spiral pattern on the ground, low, made of pumice and mixed occasionally colorful rocks, with Lavender plants growing and flowering in between. Painted text on the larger rocks, as it is being read, leads the way around the spiral, from entry to exit. The Labyrinth is designed to be approximately 75-80' diameter.

Two Prisms strategically located and mounted on poles, with small solar tracking sensors, create a spectral color 'light saber' effect across the Labyrinth at specific times of day, year round.

The Amphitheater is a seemingly needed, circular place for social gathering, for classes, for events, for contemplation, for considering a purpose-filled life in the round, on the land. Repeating the organic forms that appear throughout this installation, the Amphitheater, as part of a large serpentine loop (32'-36' d.) built into a retained slope, contains tiered, undulating formed seating for 24+ individuals, with a small stage.

Testbeds: Four eco-regenerative Testbeds are proposed. They are located within specifically located loops of the winding serpentine form. The Testbed 'gardens' are designed to be 18' diameter, with a surrounding walkway and the enclosing serpentine loop at approximately 32' diameter. Each loop and Testbed will be uniquely detailed, based on the soils, plantings, water needs, regenerative processes and sculptural finishes.

A simple low water use, drip irrigation system will be required, to augment the indented water catchment troughs running along the top and down the serpentine form to catchment basins. The Testbeds will require the constant long term care that is the case for any garden, with dedicated, skilled personnel. The budget includes a simple drip irrigation system.

- **The Pollinator Testbed:** This selected wildflower site is unique, in its including a small (11.5' d. x 8' h..) domed structure with entry opening facing to the West, amid 'wavelet' forms sheltering single-colored flower gardens whose color is echoed on its top ridge. Along with a channel for water catchment and direction. The Dome's colorful exterior mimics the Sphinx moth colors, a major pollinator in the region, and with the magenta-edged opening points to one of its favorite flower colors. Nighttime UV illumination on its rich blue interior and banco adds another sensory dimension attracting pollinator insects for study. The anchored rebar and wire mesh structure is stucco coated with special pigmented finishes.
- **The Healing Testbed:** A garden of fragrant herbs, wild edible and medicinal plants.
- **The Native Grasses Testbed:** A garden of selected native grasses, where the Labyrinth's extended path and the returning Serpent forms cross.
- **The Wildflower Testbed:** A garden of seasonal colorful wildflowers and inviting fragrances.

Llaretas: (4-5) large colorful, unusually bulbous forms on the landscape, fabricated partly off-site as well as on-site, with hard-finished earthen coating over wire mesh and rebar armature, are to be anchored on site to concrete piers.

Blue and Ultraviolet (UV) Illumination

A network of low-consumption, solar-powered ultraviolet and blue spectrum illumination devices will be integrated with an installation-wide fiber optic cable system, with individual fiber ends illuminating a number of areas along and amid the serpentine form and within the Pollinator Testbed Dome.

Ground Truth Materials

- **Pumice, Rocks + Stones:** 6” – 12” d. + Boulders: for Serpent rubble and building material; some to be painted/text lettered.
- **Large Rocks:** 18 – 24” d..
- **Straw Bales:** wired together to be carved/shaped.
- **Earth Mounding:** on-site materials.
- **Mud + Adobe Bricks:** for construction, composite mixtures, stucco and coatings.
- **Concrete:** for shot-crete coatings, construction + footers.
- **Spray Foam:** insulation and coating.
- **Metal:** dimensioned + welded rebar, armature framing, wire mesh and anchor hardware.
- **Paints, Pigments + Sealants:** selected, bio-safe, exterior color coatings, plus textures.
- **Clay Tiles + Shapes:** hand-made terracotta, turquoise, beads Serpent skin/scale finishes.
- **Glass + Translucent Materials:** for Serpentine form inclusion.
- **Soil:** various permaculture mixtures for Testbed plantings.
- **Aluminum Pipes (2):** 1¼ ” d. x 8’ h., w/ mounts for (2) **Prisms** + small solar trackers.
- **Water:** connection to ranch sourced drip irrigation system.
- **UV Illuminators:** LEDs w/ optical fibers, connectors, electronics.
- **Translucent Color Fabric:** waterproof, UV resistant, w/ sealants + attachment clips.
- **Small Photovoltaics:** wiring, connectors, electronics.
- **Native Plants:** Grasses, wildflowers, yuccas, wild herbs, medicinals, +.

Local Experts, Artisans and Craftspeople + Advisors, Influencers and Friends:

A few that our team has variously met and consulted with during this project phase.

- **Phillip Tuwaletstiwa**, Geologist, Hopi , Galisteo Resident
- **Lucy Lippard**, Writer, Galisteo Resident
- **Roger Taylor**, President, Galisteo Community Association
- **Emigdio Ballon**, Bolivian (Quechua), Agricultural Director, Pueblo of Tesuque
- **Porter Swentzell, PhD**, Pueblo Historian, Santa Clara Pueblo
- **Bill Reed + Joel Glanzburg**, Regenesi Group
- **Jan-Willem Jansens**, EcoTone, Landscape Planning
- **Gale Haggard**, Plants of the Southwest, Santa Fe
- **Don Kennell**, Sculptor, Santa Fe
- **Mark Goldman**, CNST Technology Dept. Chairman, UNM-Taos
- **Carol Crews**, author, ‘Clay Culture: Plasters, Paints, and Preservation’, Taos
- **Scott Sutton**, Natural ‘Pigment Hunter’, Taos
- **David Lightfoot**, Entomologist, Museum of Southwestern Biology, UNM
- **Richard Jennings**, Water Management Associates, Santa Fe

Ground Truth: A Way-Finding Experiential Walk on MEA's Saddleback Ranch

Community and Regeneration

The seeker has just arrived at the ranch and has begun to settle in to what will be a transformative week. He briefly met the others the evening before, and spent the morning getting his bearings. The air is clean, crisp and dry in his desert surroundings, and is already having a rejuvenating effect, countering the general malaise he usually feels after a long flight.

After lunch, a guide invites the seekers to follow a path called the Shape Shifting Serpent. Already the name is intriguing to the seeker as he himself often feels like a 'shape shifter' with all the roles that he plays in his life: professional, entrepreneur, father to two young boys and caregiver to his aging parents. He joins a group of eight down to the Shape Shifting Serpent path, towards the arroyo, past a row of three large trees that seem to point in the direction of the path.

Curving around the natural line of the arroyo, and up a slight incline, the group reaches a clearing in which there is a small, rolling amphitheater formed out of what looks like natural adobe, but in a blue-green that seems to glow and glisten in the early summer sun. The seeker had seen micaceous pottery made by the native people of this region, and the amphitheater seems to have a similar sparkling surface. Plantings of native species harmonize with the amphitheater and form a semicircle facing the arroyo, which is a deep red in contrast to the blue-green, twisting and turning in shapes that fascinate the seeker. The amphitheater itself seems to emerge from the ground formed of similar organic shapes, and to invite the group to gather comfortably, each individual in a unique position.

As each member settles in and the guide stands in the center, the seeker notices a unique geological formation in the distance. Two hillsides seem to come together with a flat area between. The seeker asks if the view in the distance is the 'saddleback' of the ranch's namesake and his companion nods. This gives the seeker a sense of the vast size of the ranch that he will explore over the next few days, and a desire to travel out to its edges. His desire is piqued even more when the guide tells a story of the violent history of this land, how the saddleback functioned as a pinch point for invaders and how the ridges contain petroglyphs that served as maps and other markers. Then, the guide invites the listeners to share their own stories of transition and transformation, and each participant comes to the center. As they speak, framed by the arroyo and the saddleback, their sincere words take on resonance for the seeker and when it is his turn, he is eager to share. After all the participants share, a lively conversation emerges. The group is energized and moves around the semicircle to try out other seating areas and perspectives. Some participants walk out to examine the arroyo in more detail and find that the dry bed of the arroyo creates a natural walking path, so they start to journey.

Throughout his days at the ranch, groups of seekers will return to the amphitheater at various times of the day and evening, sometimes bringing instruments to play music echoing through the canyon's walls, sometimes led by low lights that illuminate the amphitheater so it can be found in the darkness, while keeping the focus on the natural light of the stars and moon. The amphitheater becomes another home for the seeker to feel comfortable with his new community.

Listening and Regeneration

The seeker follows the Shape Shifting Serpent path. It is mid-day, and the sun's heat is beating down on the dry land. The seeker sees a lavender dome shape in the distance. They head into a clearing where the dome is centered. It is about 8 feet tall, and surrounded by native plants creating a welcoming setting. The dome creates a steel blue enclosure that serves as an inviting shady spot. The seeker sees the structure as an invitation to enter and relax into an organic, curving form of the inside of the arch to regenerate. While looking, the seeker starts to hear sounds of the surroundings. They are surprised to hear the sound of water, a sound that seems to be amplified by the shape of the inside of the dome. The gentle, burbling sounds of water relax and focus the seeker. The seeker closes their eyes and listens more carefully, and begins to hear rustling of dry leaves, the whistling of the wind, the buzzing of pollinator insects and the sounds of birds in the distance. The seeker is at the center of this symphony of sounds, and in the process of listening, they feel as if they are entering a meditative state. After ten minutes, an hour, or three hours - the seeker is unsure of how much time has passed during their meditation - they take a deep breath, open their eyes and stand. As they look around, colors appear more vibrant, the seeker notices details in the shapes and forms of the native plants that they had not seen before. Despite the hot mid-day sun, the seeker feels refreshed and ready to continue their journey.

Contemplation and Regeneration

It is dusk and the seeker has had a full day of deep conversations and discussions, hikes through the land, good food and community. At this time, the seeker feels the need to wander alone and follows the path of the Shape Shifting Serpent. The seeker encounters a bright green organic shape in a clearing in the landscape. The color appears otherworldly in the moonlight, and the form is about six feet tall and 15 feet wide. The shape evokes an ancient plant life, perhaps from a time when the land that is desert now was lush and green, or perhaps an alien life form, crash landed on a strange planet. Involuntarily, the seeker laughs out loud at the surprising, undulating form, which seems to invite her to climb on it. She touches the slick surface, smooth but still able to provide a climbing grip, and lays her body face down across one of the bulbous forms. She finds that the form provides just the right shape and resistance for her to stretch her tired muscles. She laughs again and rolls over onto her back over another form, stretching and massaging her muscles until she finds a comfortable niche in which to lie on her back. From there she leans back her head and gasps as she sees that she is facing upwards looking at the most beautiful sunset. This new physical perspective and vantage point provides an opportunity for her to consider and contemplate the changing colors and day's activities and she stretches out her arms and smiles wide. As her eyes adjust to the darkness, she sees stars and planets begin to emerge in the sky. From the somewhat elevated position on the shape, she sees a wide panorama of the stars, and at this remote site far from urban light pollution, she is quickly able to identify the milky way, and her contemplation expands to an emotional feeling of her position in the universe, on a planet circling a star on one arm of a galaxy of millions of stars.

Ground Truth: A Serpentine Undulation of Light and Shadow as Metaphor

The serpentine oscillation moves us through life. Its energy has captivated worldwide civilizations. So too is the oscillation from dawn to dusk, from daylight to evening, from the chorus of the 'wild others' that rises with the sun, and returns with these creature's sounds at evening sunset. As the morning light ushers in the serpentine energy, it then returns underground at dusk. In the human-vision spectrum of the visible and near visible bands of light, some colors are more present with the rising of the sun and midday, the escalation of the serpentine energy, and evolve to other parts of the spectrum at dusk and in the evening light that follows the serpentine movement underground. The meaning of these oscillations gives deep significance to life's processes.

The focal point of the Pollinator Testbed, the Dome, draws one into an enclosed space that shades one from the harsh sun, encouraging an inner reflection, at times acknowledging psychological shadows. The shadow, or life's serpentine moment going underground, functions to deepen purpose and meaning by slowing the pace down, entering a non-literal liminal space. This quieting light or frequencies in the blue and especially ultraviolet spectrum, taps the human rod vision (night vision) encouraging internal reflection, entering into the deeper essence of mind and heart. The shade and UV light supports the transformative outcome when allowing shadow, bringing on true rejuvenation and regeneration. In the under-worldly traits of the UV spectrum one can ask of this site, who came before (human or animal), who goes unseen, who else is here?

In contemplating who came before, a true story arises. An unearthing of a ruin on a piece of land in a further away valley of La Cienega surprised its owners with remarkable discoveries. With multiple visits from archeological experts to the unearthed site that was preparation for a house foundation, the site was revealed as the possible center of the destroyed La Cienega Pueblo, one of the key Pueblos organizing the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. There was much evidence of a site of terror, a Pueblo burned down, a completely charred 5' diameter corn storage bin. The archeologists, in appreciation towards the landowners for taking the careful steps to keep the site preserved, took the landowners to a very special site south of Galisteo near the ruin of Pueblo Blanco, another key Pueblo organizing the Revolt. Here a giant carved Awanyu, plumed serpent, over 20' long carved into the rocks graced the gorgeous Galisteo Basin views from its height. The serpentine energy as it goes underground and re-emerges reveals hidden stories and histories critical to bring to light, that ultimately, with time, offer healing.

The creatures of the night give us assurance that even in the challenge of the shadow, the world is alive...we are supported. As the human eye adjusts its vision to the depths of quiet UV light, a violet fog appears enveloping one in a deeper universe. This rich night-light does not compete with drinking in the starlight. The UV and the stars feel like brother and sister. Notice the flying night creatures, some who land to drink in that same UV frequency that their eyes are tuned to when searching in daylight, for UV surrounding the flower's pollen center. The brilliant *Mirabilis multiflora* is just one flower to reflect in the UV spectrum at wavelengths visible to White-lined sphinx moths and other insects but invisible to humans. At night one can sustain a quiet inner vision, as one is guided along the site's way-finding serpentine forms by subtle blue/UV illumination on the adjacent trails.

As the mystery of the serpentine movement dives into the earth and rises again as daylight, the participant can feel the change from the evening reflection journey. With the morning light and the seasons of flowers abloom, the quieted sharpened mind has its senses peaked and tuned to the buzz, hum, and whirl of pollinators intoxicated by their brilliant flowers' pollen. The senses become more peaked as the increasing light reveals an amplitude of rich colors in floral intensity. Bees and hummingbirds wiz by and into the dome where the physics of the curved roof amplifies the sound. The participant engages in cross-referencing plant color to pollinator sound...each magnifies the other. As each pollinator favors a particular part of the spectrum as flower color, thus the participant develops the familiarity of that relationship. Each wavelet- garden, amid multiple wavelets surrounding the dome, comprising a series of small walls capturing serpentine movement, and hug a single color composed of multiple native flower species.

The 'way finding' serpentine form guides the participant down the path away from the Pollinator Testbed, to explore unknown surprises along the way. With newly peaked senses, emotions arise out of joy, beauty and discovery at rich color explosions, curious textures, and sensual serpentine forms diving in and out of the land. Certain brightly colored forms kinesthetically call one into physical experience, allowing the body to integrate the previous deep reflections. Passing by the sensual gardens, scents alight the brain. The serpentine journey helps reflections recharge and rejuvenate. When times feel weighty, the participant can return to the reflection dome to acquire understanding, or may walk around the labyrinth for renewal. Having become familiar with the small creatures of the day and night, the participant becomes more attuned to the pollinator kingdom and its vital purpose, attending to them along the path. This tuning of senses awakens one to the unique aspects of the site, to one's renewal, and to the shape-shifting serpentine images of the namesake Saddleback.

Ana MacArthur

Regenerative Practices and Processes

Regenerative, like Sustainable, is an increasingly over used and largely misunderstood term, that is nonetheless a key word and concept in these times of complex, concerning change.

Our creative process, in an attempt to be example-setting, has begun with a few simple questions.

- What is this place, and what is the story that it wants to tell ?
- Who are those who came before ?
- What are the delicate balances between localism and globalism, and between society and self ?
- How can these questions be addressed in creatively inspiring, regenerative ways ?

Regenerative Landscape

Our proposed Ground Truth way-finding artwork is designed to augment and enhance the regenerative and revitalizing reason for individuals coming to MEA's Saddleback Ranch. An exploratory walk amid the artwork is intended to extend the classroom learning experience to the outdoors. In all ways, the artwork on the landscape is designed to exemplify the processes that must be addressed in the stated intent to regenerate the ecological health of the ranchlands. The Testbeds will be small-scale, concentrated regenerative processes and practices learning systems. They are also intended to be experiences of beauty, interconnectedness and contemplation.

Regenerative Community

This regenerative landscape artwork is designed in part as a participatory learning environment. Through our contacts and intentions, its construction and realization could involve students from University of New Mexico, Santa Fe Community College, IAIA and others. Once realized, in addition to being on site for MEA class participants and visitors, the artwork may be a joyful experience for public school students of all ages. It is designed to host community gatherings and special events, including art walks, workshops and music and dance on the land performances.

The Ground Truth team proposes to extend the concept of community-building, through participatory involvement of regional, traditional and contemporary artisans in the fabrication and finishing of the installation, as well as in realizing the aesthetic and pragmatic approval of neighboring Galisteo residents.

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“Regenerative practice starts and continues with personal development. It is not a tool but a practice of conscious participation and co-creation. Living in right relationship and practicing the art of transformation, we are realigning with life itself. Working regeneratively is working in an evolutionary way. In a problem-solving and solution-scaling-oriented culture, it is revolutionary to invite a more humble approach by catalyzing and revealing the potential of people as regenerative expressions of place.”

D. C. Wahl, 2022

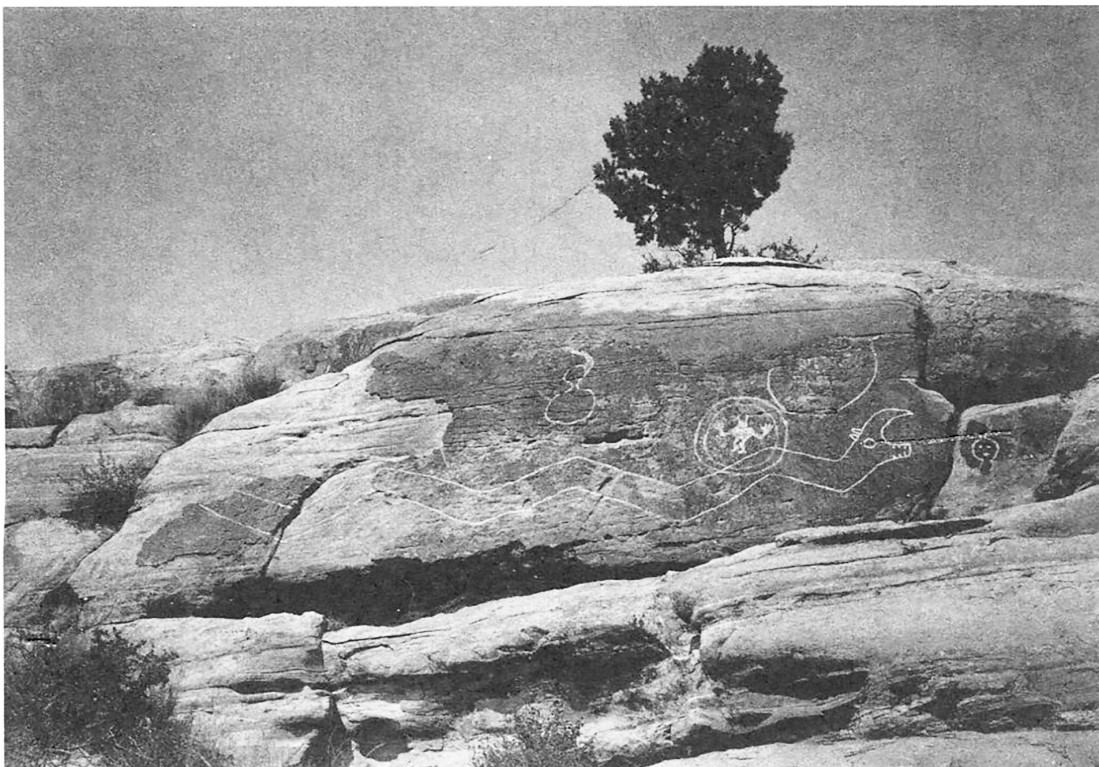
Awanyu

For more than a millennium, the horned or plumed serpent, known in the Tewa Pueblo language as Awanyu, has occupied a place of great importance within the culture and cosmology of the Puebloan Indians of this region. Symbolic both of earthly and supernatural phenomena; clouds, rain, lightning, bodies of water and the fusion of the terrestrial to the heavenly, its likeness has snaked itself across steep desert rock faces and sheer cliff overhangs in the high desert terrain.

Between 1200 and 1450, it eventually wound its way into this upper Rio Grande region. Here it retained its significance as a symbol of the various properties of water and thus as a sustainer of life itself. The serpent also has a metaphorical reference to lightning, which bolts from its open mouth in an attempt to influence the celestial guardians to coax rain from the sky. The serpent may be associated with the four (or six) directions, the colors of which the snakes also assume.

The 'giant' serpent (Awanyu) petroglyph near Galisteo, was first brought to our attention by a member of our team who witnessed it in person, and then recommended a photo in Lucy Lippard's book, *Down Country*. Its significance among pre-Tewa people resonated with us, as did the serpent form's meaning in other cultures. This inspired us to consider the form as a unifying way to guide visitors along a path of learning and creative inspiration.

Porter Swentzell, PhD, pueblo historian, from Santa Clara Pueblo, was most helpful in refining our understandings of Tano-Tewa history and about the serpent, specifically. We are not creating the "Shape-Shifting Serpent" as a literal serpent or snake, but rather as a sculptural work on the land, with much significance and many influences.



Ground Truths

(Poetext composition on the path leading around the Labyrinth)

This place does not speak to us.
It does not speak our language.
It has no words.
It is silent.

This place does not speak.
Winds whistle.
Trees tremble.
Flowers bloom.

This place does not speak; it whispers.
Water gurgles.
Coyotes howl.
Herons dance.

This place does not speak; it sings.
Arroyos flood.
Humans build.
Earth quakes.

This place does not speak; it shouts.
Pre-cognitive recollections.
Supra-linguistic tone poems.
Post-modern redefinitions.

This place does not speak; it resonates.
It provokes.
It stimulates.
It inspires.

This place fills our senses with wonder.
With insights.
With emotions.
With clarity.

This place speaks to us.