

DES MOINES ART CENTER GROUNDS WALKING GUIDE

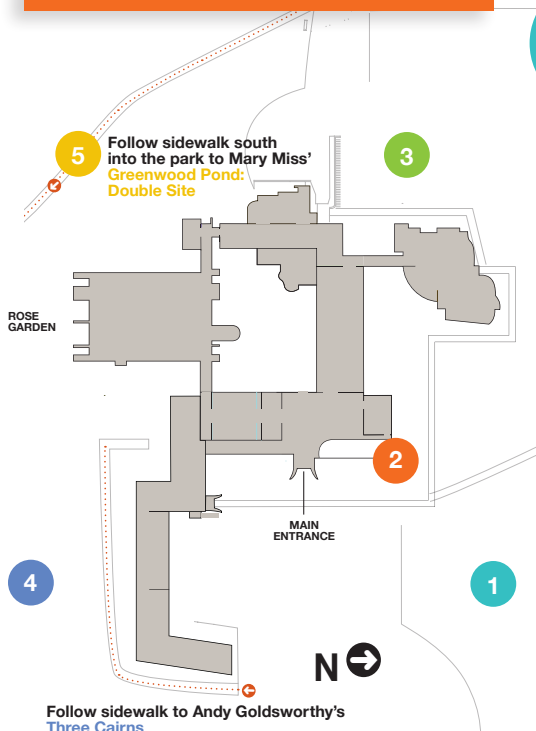
Welcome to the Des Moines Art Center!

This walking guide navigates the sculptures on the grounds of the Art Center nestled in Des Moines' Greenwood Park. The guide includes information about the sculptures as well as open ended activities that provide pathways for exploring art without the use of materials or expertise.

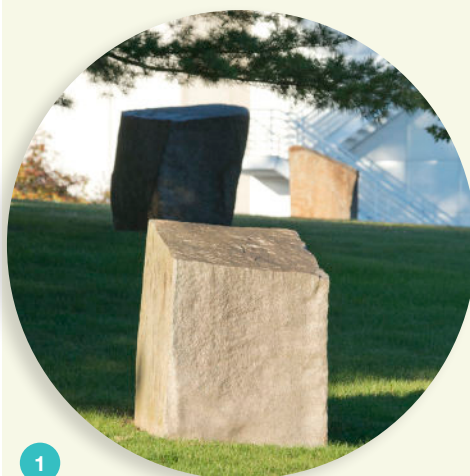
As a reminder, when experiencing the sculptures, please don't touch, climb, or sit on them, with a couple of exceptions. Guests may enter the structures built by Andy Goldsworthy and walk on and sit on areas of the installation by Mary Miss.

THANK YOU

If you encounter other visitors on the grounds of the Art Center, please be sure to follow all recommended social distancing guidelines.



Front lawn of the Art Center



1

Sculptor **Richard Serra** was commissioned by the Art Center to create this site specific work titled **Standing Stones**. Made of six granite stones quarried in Sweden, the rocks are only part of the work of art. Serra visited the museum many times while creating the work, and as he walked around he noticed the slope of the land, the line of the road, and the changing experience of moving across our space. Each stone is thus placed a distance from the others that requires the viewers to recreate his walks as they stop at each one. Although they appear rough, the tops of the stones are actually cut to mimic the downward slope of the lawn. More than just large, square, carved rock, the sculpture is a record of experience, and one that can be renewed by every viewer.

IMAGINE

Find the stone that is closest to the bottom of the hill. Let's start there. Look up the hill and see the others. What do you notice when you view the stones from far away? Even though we know the artist brought the stones here from Sweden, let's make up a pretend story about the origin of these stones. Where could they have come from? How long have they been here? Why are they here? If you follow them, where will they lead you? Will it be an adventure?

RICHARD SERRA American, born 1938
Standing Stones 1989
Six granite blocks
4.5 x 559.9 x 100 feet

Front (north) plaza of the
Richard Meier building



2

Most sculpture is meant to be seen from several angles rather than just one.

Henry Moore was interested in pushing this idea as far as possible, and imagined this work as not even having a front or back, but as an object that could transform its shape from no matter where it was viewed. Furthermore, each angle would be as interesting as any other, and all would work together to form a unified, yet ever-changing object in the viewer's eyes. Although the shape is non-specific and abstract, Moore was usually inspired by nature, so one can imagine the form as organic in some way. He used different metal patinas on the rounded areas, creating the illusion of bulging and movement. The massive structure balances on three tiny points, lending a sense of weightlessness. Even the work's title, **Three Way Piece, No. 1: Points**, lets us know there is no wrong or right way to look at this artwork.

INSPIRE

As we just read, a special thing about sculpture is that it's three-dimensional and presents many different ways to be seen. Looking at **Three Way Piece No. 1: Points**, what do you see? Does it remind you of anything? Notice its color and shape. Now slowly walk to another side of the sculpture, what has changed? Are there parts that are hidden or new parts to see? Does it look like something different now? If it's a sunny day, find its shiny side. Can you also find its shadow? Using a camera or your imagination, play photographer and take a snapshot of the sculpture's "best side."

HENRY MOORE British, 1898–1986
Three Way Piece No. 1: Points 1964–1965
Bronze, from an edition of 3 / 73 x 53 x 99 inches

West side of the front lawn



3

Animal Pyramid was made specifically for this location, and has a relationship with both Greenwood Park and the architecture of the Art Center, particularly the shape of the Richard Meier wing (the tall white building to the east of the statue). The artist, **Bruce Nauman**, stated that “the formal parts of the building, the squareness and then the curves, must have something to do with how I thought about the pyramid.” Images of animals in groups, or engaging in unnatural activities, often appear in Bruce Nauman’s work. The absurd pose of *Animal Pyramid* is darkly humorous, and has several possible interpretations, from a strange circus act to a bizarre taxidermy display. The animal forms may also be stand-ins for humanity, and the pressures society and culture place on us to perform or act in certain ways.

CONNECT

At first look, what do you think this is? *Animal Pyramid* has many parts that are combined to make one big piece of art. Let’s search for details! Get a little closer, what new details do you notice? How many animals do you see? What kinds of animals might they be? How do you think the artist was inspired by the park to make this sculpture? Do you know any yoga or balance poses that you can do to balance yourself like the *Animal Pyramid*?

BRUCE NAUMAN American, born 1941
Animal Pyramid 1990
 Silicone bronze with stainless steel armatures
 12 x 7 x 4 feet

Behind the Art Center in Greenwood Park



4

With Des Moines as its heart, **Andy Goldsworthy’s Three Cairns** spans all the way across North America. What you see on the Art Center grounds is the key to a giant project in which Goldsworthy and his team built three cairns—one here, one in New York, and one in California, forming an invisible line across the continent. If brought together, each cairn would fit into its stone shelter on these grounds, to the east or west of the central cairn here, which would fit into the middle shelter. Cairns and hand-built stone walls are found often in Goldsworthy’s work, inspired by the commemorative stone piles and ancient walls found in Northern England and Scotland. Goldsworthy’s art reflects on time and space, from the quick experience of standing in one of the shelters and feeling the stone surround you, to the timelessness of rock constructions and the monumental distance covered by this work.

CREATE

The artist Andy Goldsworthy makes art with things from nature. What can you find on the ground that could be used to build with? Look low and closely; are there fallen leaves or sticks, rocks or acorns? Gather some of these items and use them to create a design or assemble a form. If you were to visit your creation tomorrow, would you be able to find it? Would other people see it and know that you have been here? Give it a try! You can look at other art by Andy Goldsworthy online for inspiration.

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY British, born 1956
Three Cairns 2002
 Iowa limestone, lead, steel
 Dimensions vary

Down the slope in Greenwood Park beyond the Rose Garden



5

In 1989, several artists and architects were invited to propose a renewal project for Greenwood Pond. At the time, the area was algae-choked and neglected, surrounded by dilapidated structures. Artist **Mary Miss**, working with the Art Center and various other cultural, historical, and environmental groups, created **Greenwood Pond: Double Site**, the first urban wetlands project in the United States. The pond was cleaned and native plant and animal species were introduced. Miss designed walkways, pavilions, and even a sunken bunker for visitors to see the pond and surrounding park from unique and inspiring vantage points. Miss’ art is interested not only in preserving nature, but in our respectful experience of our surroundings.

EXPLORE

Looking at Mary Miss’ *Greenwood Pond: Double Site*, it can be hard to see the difference between nature and art. Spending time exploring will help you find the art all around! Look across the pond as far as you can see, do you see any “inside places”; are there any roofs that would keep you dry if it was raining? Are there any walls that would keep you warm if it was windy? Looking and pointing, what things do you see that were built around the pond? If you follow the path, where will it take you? Did the artist make it easier or harder for us to explore Greenwood Pond? Visit some of the spots that you see built around the pond; how does being in these spaces change how you explore nature?

MARY MISS American, born 1944
Greenwood Pond: Double Site 1989–1996
 Wood, galvanized steel, cement, and granite
 6.5 acres