



a natural state

Artist: Clemson Nature-based Sculpture

Video: Touch the Earth, Part A: Inspiration

[Ernie Denny] The original idea came from a dream that I had one night. I had a very vivid and memorable dream of children playing inside a giant bronze flower, where the flower was anatomically correct. When I awoke from the dream I wanted to do something with sculpture that people could experience experientially as opposed to it being an object that one would go to and look at. That it would be something that would be of a professional art value, but the person would not need to know anything about the art or the artist. It would be their experience of the art piece that would inform them of everything. That's basically what I got from the dream.

[John Kelly, VP Public Service and Agriculture, Clemson University] He had a concept that sculpture really did not have to be organized into almost exhibit style. Particularly in a botanical garden, you had the opportunity to let sculpture be discovered as you went through a nature walk. So you might travel through areas of nature and all of a sudden you would come upon something very intriguing. Obviously man's hand had played a role in the creation of what was there...but an understanding, a willingness to study what had been done was something that Ernie presented as a new way to do sculpture, and in this country its rather unique. There are a few places in Europe that had explored some concepts along these lines but nothing like what has been done here in the South Carolina Botanical Garden.

Touch the Earth is a series of videos that explore the inspirations and processes behind Clemson's Nature-based Sculpture Program. The videos are a valuable resource for understanding the art form and are available through Clemson University.

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