

**The Vietnamese American Initiative for Development (Viet-AID)  
THE FREEDOM PUBLIC ART PROJECT  
(Doherty- Gibson Park: Dorchester, MA)  
Finalist Contest**

**A Sculpture Project  
Title: THE FREEDOM TEMPLE  
Material: Stone and Light  
Anh Tran  
Professor of Art**

**ABSTRACT**

This proposal for a site-specific sculpture is based on my personal experience of public art as well as my accumulated knowledge of civic sculpture in America and around the world. My artistic travels have taken me to countries as diverse history, culture, and art where I have observed monumental sculptures in all sorts of contexts. I have been particularly impressed with the wide diversity of sculptures in this country relating to the theme of freedom. My project is predicated on an exploration of the richness of American stone resources towards a solution that allows for completion within the project budget. I am submitting this proposal for the creation of a stone sculpture in fulfillment of the project requirements. The proposed sculpture combines the notion of fragment, and fragmentation, with Gestalt theory in visual art, in a contemporary interactive installation in which the viewers, most specifically the local immigrant community, are invited to actively engage as a means of completing the artwork.

## **Overview**

### **SPACE, THEME RESEARCH AND SOLUTION**

In keeping with the guidelines for this project to serve as an inspiration for the neighborhood's aspirations and to honor the loving people fighting for freedom from poverty and crime. This project seeks to convey a positive impression, capturing the love of freedom characterizing the immigrant community who came here to find freedom. My sculpture does not include imagery of heavy chains, suffering, or tragedy of the human body or spirit that characterizes most of the sculptures relating to freedom around the world. The intent of this design is to create an art-park where intergenerational families can come together to relax and share experiences of gratitude, healing, contribution and teaching, in a celebration of civic pride. As the viewers walk through the central stone sculpture they metaphorically re-enact their journey to find freedom.

### **Spatial Context**

The Viet-AID and the Boston Art Commission require the sculpture to be built within a specific amount of space and in a specific location. This space has been limited by the following characteristics: First, the objects that continue to be used in the project, such as mark the space: post lamps, unchanged terrain, and mature trees. Second, view of this space is limited by nearby architecture. It is very close to the old building, the road, the children's playground, and the football stadium. It comes to a design that the space must be focused on the close view of the sculptural reconstruction process. The spatial context requires a design to satisfy aesthetics of both new and old objects, in which the old objects of the architectural space have to be reused to create harmony with the new sculptural objects.

### **Spatial Solution**

The Freedom Temple keeps all the terrain of the space without making big changes, using the three lampposts of location - object positions of the sculpture. The sculptures are involved in the space as functional, meaningful artworks to open the internal and external space for community park activities, in which viewers, as the same as sculptural object, internally contemplate the inspiration of freedom in close view. At nighttime, the main sculpture will turn into a huge freedom torch because of the floodlight inside. This light is used with the same post- lamp- light- system to light inside the stone sculpture and project the floodlight into the sky. This special torch will be operated the same as the lamp posts in the park and street at night.

### **Space Reconstruction**

The Freedom Temple takes the 3 existing lamp posts as locating the position in the sculptures. These lamp posts will be on the same circle that has main sculpture as the center. In the meaning of design, the Round Circles emphasize union, a gathering point of community activity in philosophical meaning. The composition consists of five round circles to make steps to go into the main sculpture. So, from the center of the main sculpture, there are five concentric rounds, in which 4 rounds function as steps to come to the sculpture. The first big circle, the stone seating sculptures, has a diameter of 504 inches. The rest of the circles are 202 inches, 180 inches, 158 inches, and 74 inches in diameter. The highest of the foundation-circles, which is 27 inches high, is built with 3 divided steps and supports the

main sculpture. Each step is 7 inches high, 11 inches wide making them safe for visitors. All surfaces of circles are covered with brightly colored decorative flagstones.

### **Materials in the Project**

The materials used in this project are: concrete for the foundation, blocks and boulders of stone for the sculpture, flagstones for the faces of the foundation, and a floodlight using the same electric power of the post lamps. The structure will be built using two kinds of stone. The five half-circle shapes of the functional sculpture-benches are made from many kinds of sandstones collected around the states, focusing on diversity of colors and fragmental forms to reflect the meaning of the work. The main sculpture is created of a block of marble, size: (129 or 118 x 74 x 74) inches.

### **TITLE: THE FREEDOM TEMPLE**

In countless ages a fierce desire for true freedom has involved enduring hardship and endless struggle. Every immigrant community has been motivated by a fierce desire for an unfettered pursuit of happiness. One needs look only as far as the local immigrant communities to recognize that they came to America from all over the globe in order to escape from the dark side of life to find the light of freedom. However, Freedom is not free; these immigrants have endured physical agony, trauma, tragedy, and even overcome death in their journey to find true freedom. The desire to be free is transcendent and everlasting, symbolized in this sculpture project by the combined elements of stone and light.

Freedom Temple is constructed in two parts consisting of a functional component – a circle of five stone benches, and a symbolic component – a central sculpture as the temple of freedom. A series of five sculpted stone benches form a fragmented circle surrounding a central upright monolith. The central marble sculpture suggests an architectural form with varied metaphorical references to freedom, inviting the viewer to enter into a journey of exploration and awakening. Conceptually the viewer(s) become an essential living element for completion as they fulfill the meaning of work.

### **THE FUNCTIONAL COMPONENT – CIRCLE OF STONE BENCHES**

The circle of stone benches, in fragmented forms, metaphorically represents the five main local Boston immigrant communities from Africa, Latin America, Haiti, Ireland, and Vietnam. The benches are of various sizes and forms that have unique characteristics relating to the histories and cultures of each group. They are located at different points on the circle with spaces between them creating 5 paths for viewers to enter the circle. The bench consists of 5 pieces of sandstone to make the circle of stone benches. Together they form a seating area totaling 370 inches in length, which can seat more than 15 people.

The benches are fragmented or incomplete forms because fragments can be understood as clues to a larger whole, both in Life and in Art. They contain deeply emotional memories of the past and refer to profound layers of cultures, which can suggest the passage of time. In the history of Art, the statue of Venus of Milo has become the ultimate symbol of the beauty of fragments. In spite of repeated unsuccessful efforts to complete the statue's arms, its beauty has not been dimmed because of its incomplete state.

The slabs of stone and boulders used to form these benches were formed in violent upheavals of massive tectonic movement and torn from their home on their mother mountain. These slabs, fragments from a primordial time of chaos, have been scattered over river bottoms and across the landscape. In this work, fragmented stones are collected and arranged in a circle to symbolize a reunion in love and friendship. They stand together in a new relationship after whirling in time, now in service as a metaphor for human relationships in the unpredictable vagaries of life. In groupings of five, they represent the five major immigrant communities in Boston that have journeyed to this country seeking freedom, and asylum, from the cataclysmic events ravaging their homeland. These fragmented forms, newly united in a circular formation, can be understood to suggest the healing and mending so necessary in the creation of a new life. The circle of sculpted benches invites members of the community to sit together to share their life histories and their daily stories, to promote understanding and to bridge cultural gaps, as the means to creating new friendships and relationships in the community.

### **THE MAIN SCULPTURE -- THE TEMPLE OF FREEDOM**

In the center of the circular system of benches stands the Temple of Freedom, a block of marble, size: 129 or (118) x 74 x 74 inches. This geometrically constructed element is intended to convey a plurality of meanings. First, while existing as an independent form, the geometry of the block is intended to suggest a close relationship with the structures surrounding the Park space. After observing the architectural relationship with the surrounding site, the central column may be seen as having a figural reference as well with the comings and going of visitors as well as the human scale of the monument. Over time both meanings may be integrated upon extended contemplation of the form. The abstract form of the central monolith suggests both the wings of a bird — the spirit of Freedom, and hands folded in prayer — in thanksgiving for arriving at the shores of this great country, which stands as a beacon of Freedom to the world. When standing inside the statue a heart-shaped opening in the “ceiling” frame, the visitor is feelings of love for this country. Next, suggestions of wings, hands folded in prayer, figures and symbols of love invite reflections on freedom, truth, aspiration, gratitude, and enlightenment. Of special note are the hands that express the thanksgiving of the immigrants to America -- the great motherland of freedom – for protection and support in their journey to freedom. To completely comprehend the whole it is necessary to view the structure from many locations and directions and then to synthesize them together in our mind’s eye. Viewers are invited to visit the interior space of the sculpture where their presence extends the imagery

The main sculpture incorporates a floodlight to illuminate the night sky like a huge torch, suggesting a beacon of inspiration, of knowledge, and of the community’s aspirations for freedom. Once inside the monolith, viewers will be presented with the words of President John F. Kennedy carved on the interior walls:

**“The best road to progress is the freedom’s road”**

And from the Viet-AID organization:

**“Honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom and democracy”**

## CONCLUSION

The Temple of Freedom is created for a specific site in the Park to serve the local immigrant community. The design is based on the stated requirements for the project in preserving the intimacy of the small place. As an interactive sculpture it honors the viewers -- most of whom are members of the local immigrant community -- as an important component of the sculpture in experiencing and apprehending the full meaning of the artwork.

The sculpture functions as both metaphor and symbol. It employs the Gestalt theory of visual art to guide the viewer's thoughts towards a contemplation of the multiple meanings of freedom. The Temple of Freedom is an open-air space, filled with light and wind, neither of which can be chained down. The central block of stone surrounded by a ring of seats invites viewers to make a journey to contemplate the true meaning of freedom. Stone is also viewed as a natural living object; stone has a special relationship to mankind because it is older than humanity itself, and it reflects the development of life through historical geology. Stone is employed in this project for its permanence and gravity to praise the living permanence of mankind's desire to be free. Like the fragmented stone boulders, after lengthy travels the immigrants are united in a distant land to make a new life for themselves with a better meaning. The Dorchester community has endured tremendous hardships and sacrificed so much for the sake of personal freedom. Their lives, individually and collectively align with the spirit of the famous words of President John F. Kennedy: "The best road to progress is freedom's road". Everything we do, we do for the sake of truth.

## References

- Buelow, Christiane von. Vallejo's Venus de Milo and the Ruins of Language. PMLA, Vol. 104, No. 1 (Jan., 1989): 42. Modern Language Association. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 September, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/search>.
- Glicksohn, Joseph, and Chanita Goodblatt. Metaphor and Gestalt: Interaction Theory Revisited. Poetics Today, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring, 1993): 86-87. Duke University Press. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 August, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/search>.
- Kennedy, John F. "Speech by Senator John F. Kennedy, Civic Center, Charleston, WV - (Advance Release Text)," September 19, 1960. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=74104>.
- Sircello, Guy. Beauty in Shards and Fragments. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 48, No. 1 (Winter, 1990): 26. Wiley on behalf of The American Society for Aesthetics. *JSTOR*. Web. 8 September, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/search>.

The human pictures used to create the virtual space- illustration from the websites:  
[www.gettyimage.com](http://www.gettyimage.com), [www.cedricbrehaut.com](http://www.cedricbrehaut.com), [www.123rf.com](http://www.123rf.com), [www.konkanuae.com](http://www.konkanuae.com),  
[www.margarnetmasscy.com](http://www.margarnetmasscy.com), [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com), and [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com).

## THE FREEDOM TEMPLE PROJECT ESTIMATED BUDGET

Item number	Items	Cost	Providers
1	Main Marble Block (118x74x74 inches)	\$ 50,000.00	Venders -TBD
2	Stone Boulders (5 pieces of 74 x 19 x19 inches)	\$ 20,000.00	Venders -TBD
3	Other Materials (Marble Slabs, Concrete, etc.)	\$ 10,000.00	
4	Tools	\$15,000.00	Varies
5	Rent for a work place	\$ 12,000.00	Carving Studio & Sculpture Center in Vermont
6	Room and Board for Artists& Service Providers	\$ 18,000.00	
7	Transportation	\$ 20,000.00	
8	Contractors (Concrete, Ground work, Installation, Electrical)	\$ 18,000.00	
9	Artist's Design and Works	\$ 40,000.00	
10	Project Management	\$ 10,000.00	New Space Sculpture. LTD
11	Other Labors	\$ 14,000.00	
12	Utilities	\$ 8,000.00	
13	Permits	\$ 3,000.00	
14	Miscellaneous	\$ 7,000.00	
15	Health Insurance	\$ 5,000.00	
<b>Budget Total</b>		<b>\$ 250,000.00</b>	

\*Budget subject may change due to material/labor cost.  
Oct, 2014

# THE FREEDOM TEMPLE PROJECT

## From Nov 10, 2014 to Dec 21, 2015

From Nov 10 - Dec 27, 2014: Paperwork (documentation and reports).  
 From Jan 2-Dec 21, 2015: Project implementation.

Jan	Permit applications (construction, electrical) <b>Jan 2-15</b>	1) Material purchase 2) Tools purchase 3) Work environment <b>Jan 2- Feb 28</b>	
Feb			
Mar	Stone work – Main sculpture <b>Mar 2 – May 29</b>		
April			
May			
June	Permit applications (Construction, electrical) <b>June 1-15</b>	Stone bench sculptures <b>Jun 1- Aug 31</b>	
July			
Aug			
Sept	Ground preparation <b>Sept 1 – 15</b>	Foundation Space Construction (concrete) <b>Sept 16 – 30</b>	Electrical wiring <b>Sept 16 – 30</b>
Oct	Art transportation <b>Oct 1 – 15</b>		Installing artwork <b>Oct 16 – 30</b>
Nov	Decorating, cover concrete surfaces <b>Nov 2– 17</b>		Project Inspection <b>Nov 16 – 30</b>
Dec	Time buffer <b>Dec 1 – 18</b>	Inauguration the artwork <b>Dec 21, 2015</b>	



"The Freedom Temple" . Day view, 2014, Anh Tran



"The Freedom Temple" . Night view, 2014, Anh Tran



"The Freedom Temple" . Day view, 2014, Anh Tran



"The Freedom Temple" . Night view, 2014, Anh Tran

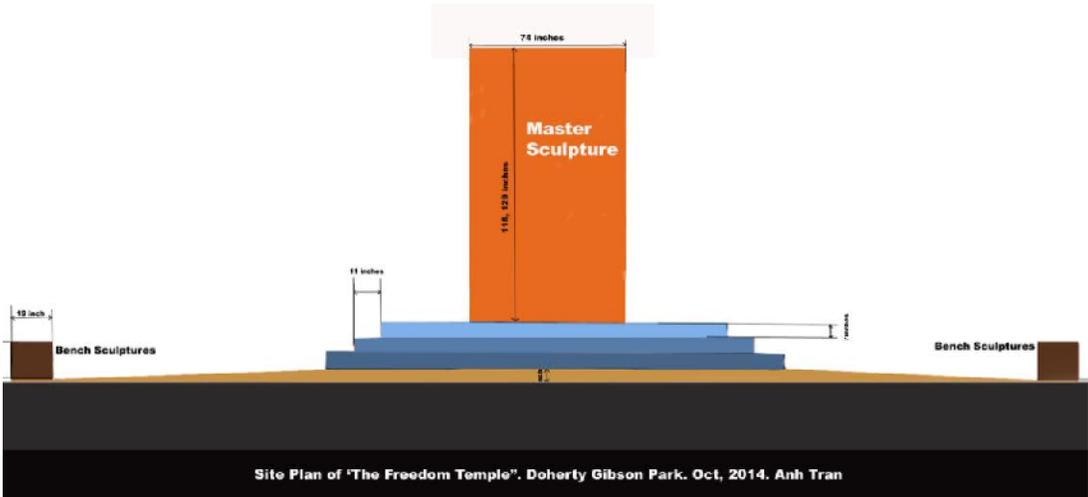




Site Plan of "The Freedom Temple", Doherty Gibson Park  
 Scale: 1 inch = 33 inches. Material: plaster, colors, and light



Site Plan of "The Freedom Temple", Doherty Gibson Park. Scale: 1 inch = 33 inches. Oct, 2014. Anh Tran



Site Plan of "The Freedom Temple". Doherty Gibson Park. Oct, 2014. Anh Tran