



Citygarden.  
OPENING JULY 1, 2009

# Two blocks in downtown St. Louis are being **transformed** into something unlike anything else in the country

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The two blocks, now called “Citygarden,” feature two dozen works of modern and contemporary sculpture in a completely accessible setting. Among the sculptors represented are Fernand Leger, Mark di Suvero, Keith Haring, Martin Puryear, Jim Dine, Tony Smith, and Aristide Maillol.



The sculptures have been sited in a series of outdoor spaces designed by Nelson Byrd Woltz, of Charlottesville, Va.; Warren Byrd FASLA, principal, calls the project “the most important and interesting urban project we have worked on to date.” The landscape features imaginative uses of water and stone that play off of the site’s riverine location – within walking distance of the Mississippi at the Gateway Arch and only about a dozen miles from the Missouri. The landscape also features diverse, lush primarily native plantings, selected and arranged both to complement the sculpture and to provide a beauty and power of their own.

What makes the garden unusual is its complete independence and openness in a downtown setting. No walls or fences surround the 2.9 acre site – only office buildings. There is no admission fee, nor is there a link with a museum or any other institution. The garden has been conceived as a kind of oasis, welcoming everyone and eager to interact with everyone. There are no “Do Not Touch” signs on any of the sculptures. Children will be free to run and play in a “spray plaza” featuring 102 separate jets of water in shifting, computer-controlled, color-lit patterns.

The garden represents a partnership between the City of St. Louis, which owns the land, and the non-profit, St. Louis-based Gateway Foundation, which had provided the funding – an estimated \$25 million, covering design and construction, state-of-the-art lighting, ongoing maintenance, security, and insurance expenses. The cost of the sculpture, which is and will remain owned by the Foundation, is separate.

Other sculptors represented are Julian Opie, Ju Ming, Igor Mitoraj, Bernar Venet, Jack Youngerman, Tom Otterness, Niki de Saint Phalle, Laura Ford, Jonathan Clarke, Jean-Michel Folon, Kan Yasuda, Tom Claassen, Mimmo Paladino, Donald Baechler, and Marisol. The selections, which were made by the board of Gateway Foundation, are eclectic: serious, whimsical, tongue-in-cheek, elegant, lyrical, edgy, surprising, mysterious, somber, abstract, figurative, classical, and sensuous. The common thread, in addition to excellence, is engagement: All of the art is meant to stimulate a relationship with the viewer. A large video wall, built into the two-block-long limestone bluff arcing across the site, will accomplish the same goal through video art and movies.

**Citygarden will open July 1.**