



Editor-in-Chief Jessica Sheridan, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP
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Art Park is FIGMENT a of Future Artistic Talent

By Jessica Sheridan, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP



(L-R): Chalk drawings on the “Temple of Truth,” by Jennifer Upchurch, Chris Niederer, and Douglas Hart; “Agony of Man,” by Steel Neal made from scrap metal found at construction sites around the city; father and daughter wait for their golf ball at “(Hole) Zero,” by Betsy Alwin and Marget Long.

Jessica Sheridan

This year, Governors Island is thriving with creativity. In addition to an artist- and architect-designed 18-hole mini golf course, 16 large-scale interactive sculptures grace the field south of the McKim, Mead & White-designed Liggett Hall. Called City of Dreams, this small art park is the result of a call for designs and sculptures by the arts organization [FIGMENT](#). While it may not be the Storm King Art Center, FIGMENT has tapped into this rare swath of open space in NYC, providing visitors with the chance to play with the product of some of the city’s emerging young talents.

The most successful aspect of the City of Dreams is its accessibility to the public, young and old. The mini golf course is everything but traditional, from a CNC-milled hole that resembles a guitar, to a replica of a rooftop, to a pigeon coop. Figuring out what the hole does is half the battle. Large-scale sculptures provide lounge space, a platform for a DJ, and large mirrors that one can manipulate to reflect the sun off of the adjacent building. One of the most poetic pieces called the "Temple of Truth," by Jennifer Upchurch, Chris Niederer, and Douglas Hart, is a three-dimensional wooden eye. Made from prefabricated wood columns and chalkboard, the spiraling enclosure offers visitors a place to sit and scribble what's on their minds. The structure becomes the backdrop for a communal art piece that washes away and is renewed with each rainfall.

The city is the stage for many events, but there are few outdoor arenas for emerging visual artists, and fewer still that provide space for artwork to remain installed for almost half the year. I hope FIGMENT continues to grow, expanding the program to take over more of the island's open space. Governors Island could be a leading host to the latest in cutting-edge art, giving exposure to unknown artists and breathing new and refreshing life into public spaces.

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