

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

AND SPECIFIER NEWS

THE INDUSTRY TRADE MAGAZINE FOR THE COMMERCIAL LANDSCAPE SPECIFIER NATIONWIDE!



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Landscape Ornaments

Enhancing Nature With Style...

Of all the philosophies, approaches and styles of embellishing the natural ambiance of a garden or landscape, one thing is clear—ornamentation imbues outdoor spaces with character, often giving them personalities as unique and marvelous as their owners. From grand estates surrounded by sprawling landscapes, to modest homes with intimate gardens, decorative objects can add balance, charm, sophistication and surprise for a continual feast of the senses.

Sculptural features and statuary are of particular importance because they can draw the eye around the space, enlivening it with drama. Whether classical or modern, they typically need to be substantive enough in order to read well in the setting and have a simplicity of outline—although this may vary depending on taste and the desired effect.

Traditionally, a main feature, usually a formal statue, was placed in the middle of a garden as the central focal point of a static design, in which case the rest of the garden was designed around it for the greatest impact. This type of classical positioning is less common these days because few outside spaces have the kind of symmetry needed for such a design. One possible exception is smaller gardens or atriums, which may call for a central feature to hold the eye within the site. In this case size is an important consideration. If the piece is too large, it can dominate the area, imposing on the overall setting rather than being a part of it.

A modern-style design made of asymmetric lines usually calls for sculpture or statuary placement to be a counterpose or counterbalance to the overall design, as if punctuation marks for the language of the landscape.







Monumental Stone Sculpture

"I stand at a distance and see what my work is about when a piece is completed," says Suzanne Biaggi, sculpture artist and owner of Sculptural Landscapes, a full service landscape design firm. "When I am in the process of working on something I function on a non-verbal level. The thread that connects my work is about searching for a reality that I sense but do not consciously perceive; it asks questions about relationship."

Biaggi's medium is monumental stone. She collaborates with the stones and chooses areas where she alters the stones in an attempt to create a harmony between the alteration and the original stone. In this way she is able to "add a new history to the old." While altering the stones, she also uses the same philosophy when "preparing" the site or environment in which they will be placed. The sculpture and environment become one.

A beautiful example of Biaggi's work is *Floating Stone Garden* (top left), a garden about contrast. Biaggi said, "the sculpture court yard provides a contemplative respite in opposition to the frenetic energy of its' urban setting."

Located in a small backyard in Pacific Heights, San Francisco, Biaggi chose large granite stones selected from a quarry abandoned over 80 years ago. They were chosen because they bear witness to the passage of time by the patina moss and lichen that they acquired in the quarry. The serenity of this area is enhanced by the sound of water quietly splashing into a pool which holds fish and aquatic plants.

Quiet Murmur (left) is a piece in Muir Beach, California. It was situated in an existing courtyard, which serves as the entryway to the residence and can be seen from the dining room, family room and hallway. The owners wanted to retain the existing concrete, so Biaggi did a series of redwood planters using bamboo, mondo grass and black pebbles.

Floating Stone Garden (top left), located in a small backyard of a private residence in Pacific Heights, San Francisco, provides the owners a place of quiet reflection amid the clamor and din of the homes urban setting. In contrast to the monochromatic granite courtyard, the garden contains a plant collector's selection of rare and unusual plants. Pathways lead through this unique array of texture and color to a granite bench placed for garden viewing.

Quiet Murmur (middle) is a piece commissioned by the owners of a private residence in Muir Beach, California. At night, the courtyard in which it is situated takes on a mysterious luminescence from hidden low-voltage lighting above the sculpture, simulating moonlight.

Garden on Convergence (left) is situated in a garden on a quarter of an acre where the owner had created a petite, very bountiful and colorful Bouchard. With Biaggi's piece, she continued the exploitation of contrasts, using a minimalist palette of only two types of plants. The colors are opposite—green and red—and the stones, reflecting light and holding water, are set in a circle of black pebbles in opposition to the converging slate pathways.

The Significance of 6 + 1 (previous page) is the focal point of a residence in Carmel Valley, CA. Each stone symbolizes the family of six, with an extra stone set apart, symbolizing future generations.