



MIRAMAR ARTSPARK



CANDACE WEST/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

HELPING SHAPE MIRAMAR'S IMAGE: New York-based artist Alison Sky has been commissioned to produce a major work for the ArtsPark at Miramar's new Town Center.

SOUL-SEARCHING

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SOUL-SEARCHING

WITH A SCULPTURE THAT FUSES WATER AND WILDLIFE, ARTIST ALISON SKY HOPES TO HELP A SUBURBAN CITY CREATE A SPIRITUAL CORE

BY NATALIE P. McNEAL
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It will be a place to gather, or to be surprised. To look at the sky and the water. To view nature in a work of art.

That's what Miramar is trying to bring to its botanical garden with a sculpture done by an international artist.

For Miramar's Town Center, a new downtown that will include an ArtsPark, Broward County has commissioned New York-based artist Alison Sky to create a "water feature" for the ages. It's expected to be finished by 2007. Miramar is one of the fastest-

growing cities of its size in the nation. With that suburban growth has come a SuperTarget, single-family home developments and crowded streets. The city now needs a soul.

"I want to create a spirit of place," said Sky, who has designed public art pieces across the United States and written books on sculpture.

Creating a "sense of place," or the feeling of being in a distinct environment, has been a focal point of city leaders in Broward County. The county has few unique landmarks such as statues or town squares.

At a botanical garden at the city's Town Center is where Sky will showcase her unnamed work.

"I've created a work that celebrates the phenomena of nature and water as the source of life and nourishment," Sky said.

Standing in a shallow reflecting pool will be a plate of glass with clouds etched in it. A skin of water will run over the glass.

During the daytime, the piece will shimmer, showing the clouds. Then, as the sun sets behind the feature, it will glow

•TURN TO ARTIST, 2B

Artist's goal: Tap city's soul

• ARTIST, FROM 1B

with the shades of the sun — a vibrant golden sheen or purple hue. With the sun setting, opaque silhouettes of an Everglades landscape set behind the glass will appear as shadows on the surface.

The message is to show that “we are pushing nature to the edge,” Sky said.

“It’s a symbolic memory of the vanishing view of nature,” she said.

The reflecting pool where the feature sits is designed to look like it’s flowing into an adjoining lake at the site.

The piece will be in the ArtsPark portion of Town Center, which will feature an 814-seat indoor theater, an exhibit area, classrooms, recital and lecture rooms and an outdoor amphitheater.

This year is Broward County’s 30th anniversary of public art. Already, the county has 208 pieces of art including paintings, sculptures, photographs, quilts and fountains.

In Broward, any capital construction project funded by the county must have 2 percent of its budget devoted to public art. For Sky’s water feature, the project budget is \$200,000.

“Public art offers a sense of place, a unique identity to your community,” said Mary Becht, director of the Broward County Cultural Division “It’s artwork that you are not going to find anywhere else in the world.”

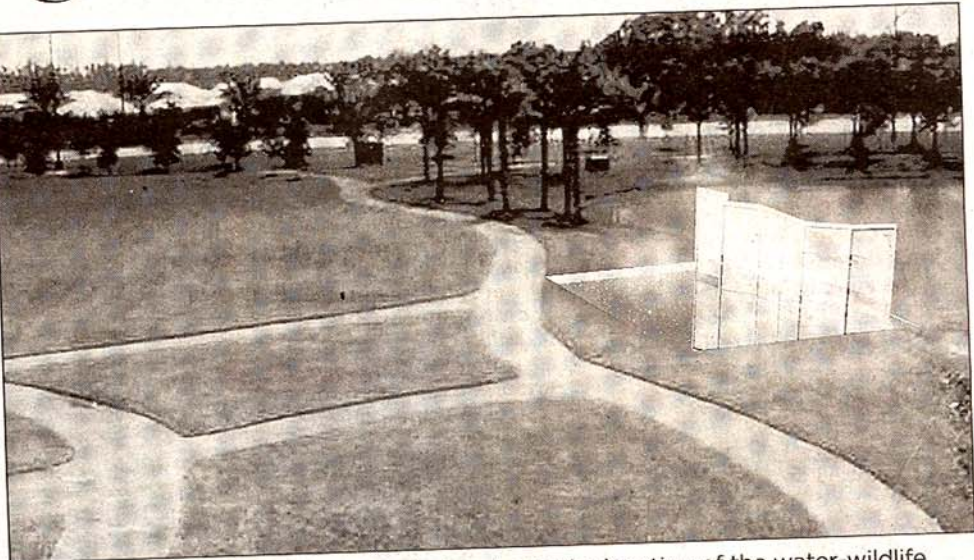
For inspiration, Sky visited the Everglades and drove around different pockets in the county. She did research on the aquifer.

Doing public art can be challenging. Not only must the artist be creative, he or she must be able to deal with permitting and planning departments as well as landscape architects.

For instance, Sky’s water feature for Miramar must be able to withstand wind speeds up to 140 mph.

“All the things the architect must face, I have to deal with the same criteria,” Sky said.

In 1999, Sky designed a 50-foot-tall *River Sculpture* made out of granite, aluminum panels, and glass bubbles for an



PROPOSED SITE OF SCULPTURE: This rendering shows the location of the water-wildlife sculpture that artist Alison Sky intends to produce for Miramar’s Town Center.

Idaho hotel. The sculpture is reminiscent of the Boise River.

In 2001, she created *In the beginning...*, a three-story-tall sculpture with glass panels and etched images of marine life outside the University of Connecticut’s Marine Sciences Building.

In 2003, Sky completed *Indelible* for the Independence National Historic Park in Philadelphia. Made with glass with text, film, light, stucco, steel and paint, the work is on a wall at the visitor’s center. Developed as a memory wall, *Indelible* restores a passage condemning slavery in the Declaration of Independence deleted by Congress in 1776.

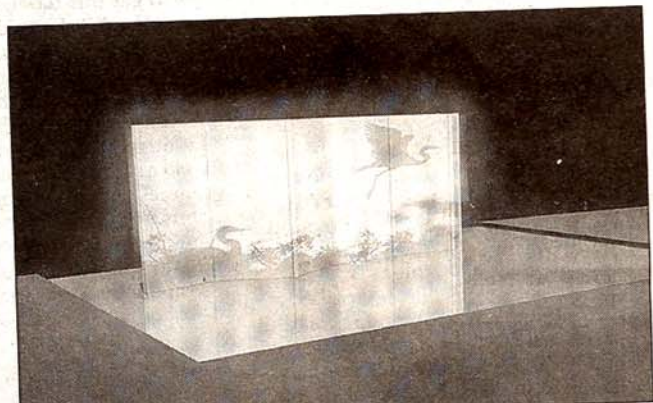
In 1970, she co-founded SITE, Sculpture in the Environment, a design firm for environmental arts.

The county is glad to have her.

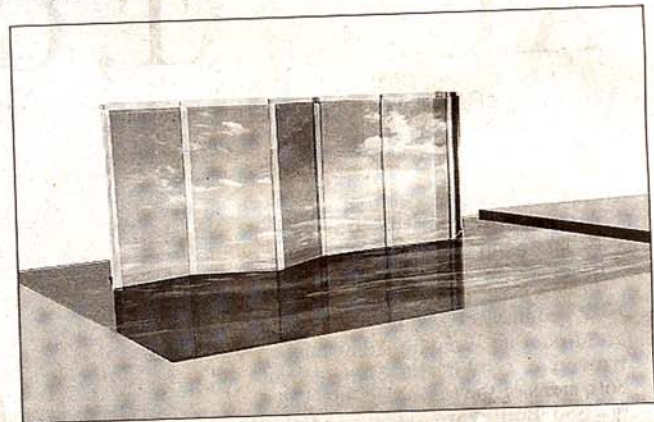
“She’s a magician,” said Steve Glassman, arts and community development manager for Broward County. “She has a wonderful imagination and makes it happen.”

Miramar’s Town Center is an ambitious project still underway. The aim of the Town Center is to give a pulse to Miramar, which in recent memory has been a bedroom suburb.

In 2004, the City Hall portion of the Town Center opened, in the center of the city, hoping to unite the city’s



TWO VIEWS: Rendering above shows night view of sculpture; by day, below, it reflects the sky.



new western sprawl and older eastern communities. Also planned for the site are restaurants, apartments, condos, all in hopes of bringing a downtown to a suburb. The Town Center is at the intersection of Miramar Boule-

vard, Hiatus and Red roads. “We just can’t be a bricks and mortar city,” said Miramar Mayor Lori Moseley. “We have to have culture.”

For more information about the artist, visit www.alison-sky.com.

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IN MY OPINION

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POLITICS