

The host:

Tempoart

<https://tempoartmaine.org>

The location:

Back Cove Park in downtown Portland Maine.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Back_Cove,_Portland,_Maine

The project:

Build a sculptural representation of a house which will rest on the mud flats when the tide is low. As the tide rises the house begins to float. A mechanism actuated by the rising tide will lower all four walls until it becomes a floating platform and gathering space.

The concept:

An event space where anybody can gather at a large dining table. With the walls down and surrounded by the distant cityscape and the water of the Atlantic Ocean, visitors are invited to ponder Portland's place in the world and the cultural influences it imports and exports. With the walls down all can clearly see activity on the platform and the more curious may wander their way down the long skinny dock where they would be invited to join the meal and conversation. As the meal continues, the walls of the structure are actuated by the tide and slowly rise to enclose the former strangers into a more intimate atmosphere symbolizing the inclusion and incorporation of new ideas, peoples, and cultures into the story of Portland.

The purpose:

Create an irresistible spectacle that will entice inquisitive minds to explore meet one another by happenstance in a space that is free of predictable social stigmas. Foster discussion and collaboration between people who may never otherwise meet.

The artist:

Matthew Mazzotta works at the intersection of art, activism, and urbanism, focusing on the power of the built environment to shape our relationships and experiences. His community-specific public projects integrate new forms of civic participation and social engagement into the built environment and reveal how the spaces we travel through and spend our time living within have the potential to become distinct sites for intimate, radical, and meaningful exchanges. Through his process, each project starts by creating temporary public spaces for listening – 'Outdoor Living Room' - as a way capture voices from local people that might not attend more formal meetings. Stemming from this approach are experiences that involve people from a range of backgrounds working together to create new models of living that contribute to local culture beyond the economic realm. Mazzotta received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a Masters of Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Program in Art, Culture and Technology, and is currently a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University. <http://matthewmazzotta.com>

The process:

Matthew may be as much a facilitator as he is an artist. When he accepts an invitation from a community it is generally understood that he is not there to impose a random sculpture in your favorite park. Instead, he attempts to create a collaboration with the people who live there. In this way he never knows what a project is going to be until he has spent significant time discovering what local skills, talents, locations, and materials are available, as well as what the local histories, secrets, themes, and concerns are. In this way the community informs and owns the form, function, and spirit of the work.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_Soup