

THE GALLIVAN CENTER  
ASTEROID LANDED SOFTLY  
Artist, Kazuo Matsubayashi

Two main considerations were given to artists in submitting proposals for the art competition of the block 57 Central Plaza Landmark. They were 1) to be about 35 feet high and 2) to relate to the plaza's common theme of "Natural Utah".

This piece titled "Asteroid Landed Softly" is a sundial and suggests the image of Southern Utah's landscape.

Many old European plazas have a clock tower to act as a landmark of the city. This piece carries the same tradition in which time is an element of space. The sundial works in the following manner. Through a slit in the tower a beam of sunlight is cast on the plaza floor. The beam acts as an arm of a clock, and minutes are marked by stainless steel tubes (nine to two o'clock) every fifteen, twenty and thirty minutes. Hours are indicated by double tubes, on which a prism is attached so that when sunbeam falls on it, a small batch of color is cast on the plaza. On the inclined granite slabs are engraved months of the year. When the top of the sunbeam touches the engravings, it marks the month. The farthest tip of the slab indicates summer solstice. The slabs also show dates of Pioneer Day and Utah's Statehood.

The sundial time, which is called "natural time" is based on the principle that noon is determined when the sun crosses the meridian (or true south) of the particular location. Our watch, on the other hand, is based on a system called "real time" where the time zones start in Greenwich, England.

This system is basically human made convention. The natural time and real time coincides only at a longitudinal line where a time zone changes. Within time zones there are differences between the natural and real times. In addition we have summer time, thus at some locations the difference between the two systems is nearly two hours. This piece tries to demonstrate this discrepancy or gap between the two systems and points to the question of what is natural and what is real. (A Roman is said to have complained, "Let the gods damn the first man who invented the hours, the first man who set a sundial in this city! For our misfortune, he has chopped up the day into slices. When I was young there was no other clock by my belly, for me it was the best and the most accurate clock.)

The magnificent Southern Utah landscape is a wonder of natural forces creating in many parts most unnatural rock formations. Many boulders are perched up in the air in most precarious positions, such as Balanced Rock.

This piece tries to capture the image of the Southern Utah with its use of red sandstone rock superimposed with the method of the surrealism painting of René Magritte. The rock, which might be a visitor or an asteroid form part of the sculpture. The lower portion of the tower is clad with rows of coppers sheets whose color will continue to change over many years. The working of a sundial is based on the rotation of the earth, and through this sundial and its movement of the sun beam, we can literally see and feel the rotation of the earth. This rotation suggests an idea of wheels, thus various images of wheels borrowed from different cultures are depicted in the pattern of the pavement for the base of the sundial. They include icons of Judeo-Greek zodiacs, Native American's medicine wheel, Ying-Yang of the Chinese and twisting patterns of wind and water (and perhaps galaxies).

Hopefully this sundial with its floating rock will trigger the observer's mind to the basic scientific curiosity and artistic imagination in their most innocent beginning and to wonder about the mystery of natural forces, to ponder what is nature and reality, what is time and space. Or perhaps one can simply kill time by standing in front of it. Today many of us are being chased by time.

Asteroid astrological symbols



CANCER  
Jun 22 – Jul 22  
CRAB



CAPRICORN  
Dec 22 – Jan 20  
GOAT



LEO  
Jul 23 – Aug 23  
LION



AQUARIUS  
Jan 21 – Feb 19  
WATER BEARER



VIRGO  
Aug 24 – Sep 22  
VIRGIN



PISCES  
Feb 20 – Mar 20  
FISH



LIBRA  
Sep 23 – Oct 23  
SCALES



ARIES  
Mar 21 – Apr 20  
RAM



SCORPIO  
Oct 24 – Nov 22  
SCORPION



TAURUS  
Apr 21 – May 20  
BULL



SAGITARIUS  
Nov 23 – Dec 21  
CENTAUR



GEMINI  
May 21 – Jun 21  
TWINS