

# Fields, Walls, Paths, Grove, Water, Dream: The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Competition

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At every point of contact with the ground, the Memorial — its collaboration of multiple surfaces — merge with, and emerge from the ground, growing out of, and into, the tender, fertile soil of the earth. Consistent with Dr. King's strong advocacy of non-violent action and intervention, the project respects the lines of that which existed before the project design, while simultaneously changing that landscape to accommodate the specific requirements of both collective and individual commemoration this singular figure in American history.

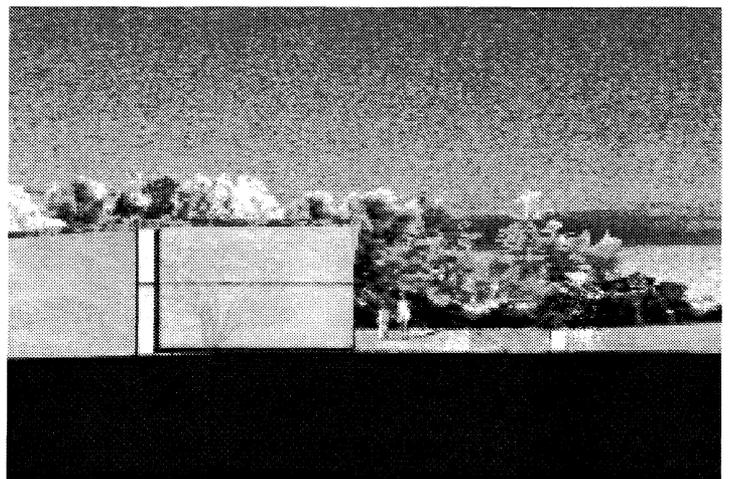
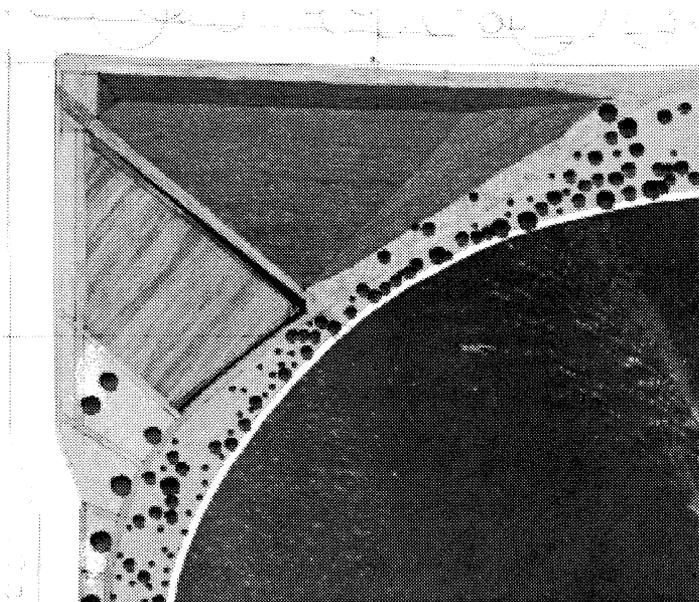
The green field of gathering, the continually changing plain of wildflowers, the edges of the cherry grove are all considered as equal, inseparable parts of a living project. The Walk falls and the Wall rises from the fields of past conflict and resolution, and into the present and possible future hope of a national creed of equality embodied in the words of the Constitution, the words of the Emancipation Proclamation, the actions of Civil Rights Movement, and the words, work and life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

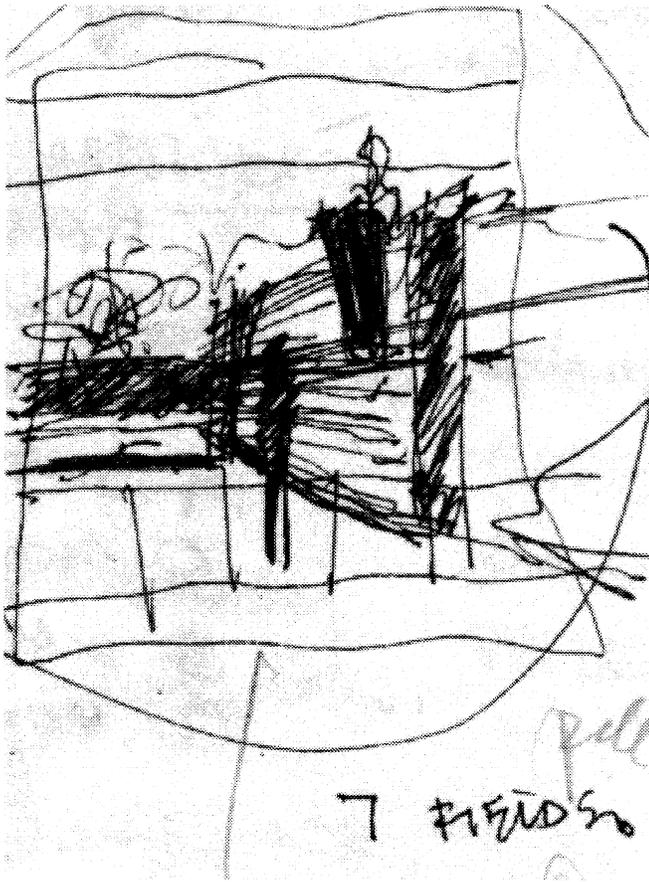
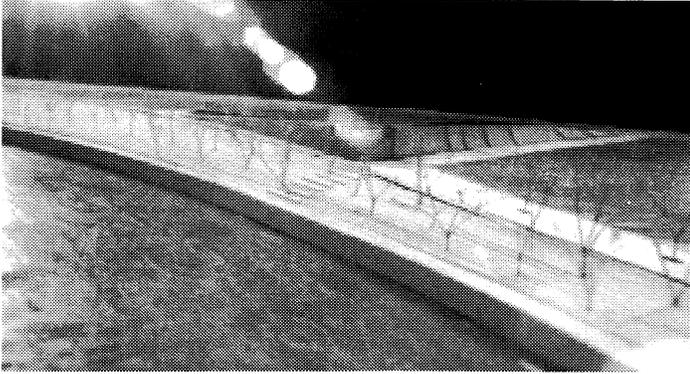
All materials are derived from the earth: the solidity of Georgian stone, the eternal force of gravity in the slow liquid of 3" x 8" x 24" solid glass blocks, the magic alchemical alloy of weathered bronze rubbed to a golden finish in places, and the improbable weeds that

are the grasses and wildflowers grown, cut and harvested as part of this living memorial to Dr. King.

The project physically records the cycle of events of the Civil Rights Movement and their intersection with the life of Dr. King. These intersections are marked across both Walk and Wall in honed stone and bronze, beginning with the words of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and ending with the bronze scar marking the death of Martin Luther King (1968). But it is the memory of the "dream" speech of Dr. King at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 which runs like a mantra across the topographic roll of the Wall. Moving from the horizontal at the Memorial entrance, it emerges from the earth and climbs, arcing up as the Walk moves down toward the contemplative space of the Cherry Grove and the reflective surface of the Tidal Basin.

Running the length of Walk and Wall is a continuous thin bronze incision in both glass and stone. Its only break occurs at the 24" bronze "volume" which marks the space of Dr. King's death. This tiny cut in the Wall provides the long line for action and remembrance. Notes, cherry blossoms and flowers, artifacts of commemoration can be left attached to this thin bronze line. Each person who comes into contact with this piece of bronze is reminded of the moment of Dr. King's death, while simultaneously being able to give thanks for his life.





*Harvesting Flowers:*

*In the spring, school children, parents, teachers, the old who still remember before, the white man, the black woman, the others who need to know and to remember, and who need to dream the dream of one man, one movement, one nation, come to the field of wildflowers. It is the time when the cherry tree blossoms, the time when the dogwoods begin to bloom. It is the month of April, the month of his death. In this month, and in others, they come to pick the flowers, to take hold of them. To take them home to put them in a vase on the dining table. To take them 'round to the wall, to leave them at its foot, or dangling gracefully from the pitons, to leave them in remembrance of someone, or some moment along the line of time which moves inexorably forward. It is a line which is always marked by the visible and invisible striations of change, and the recurrent, but temporary colors of the season's flowers. These are the ones of April.*

