Let’s Meet Here Again

University City Public Art Series Report

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1 Idea

Figure 1: First visit to Janet Majerus Park

Identification Photo

Drawing

At the start of the fall semester, Arny told us that all of the proposals this year were to be for Janet Majerus Park. I went to the park looking for inspiration, and I was intrigued by the tree pictured above. I took photos of it and drew a picture of it, and before leaving the park I had my heart set on somehow incorporating it into my work. The internet helped me identify it as a Dawn Redwood. I did some research into the history of the Dawn Redwood, and quickly arrived at the basic idea I wanted to propose - a set of prehistoric animals surrounding the tree.

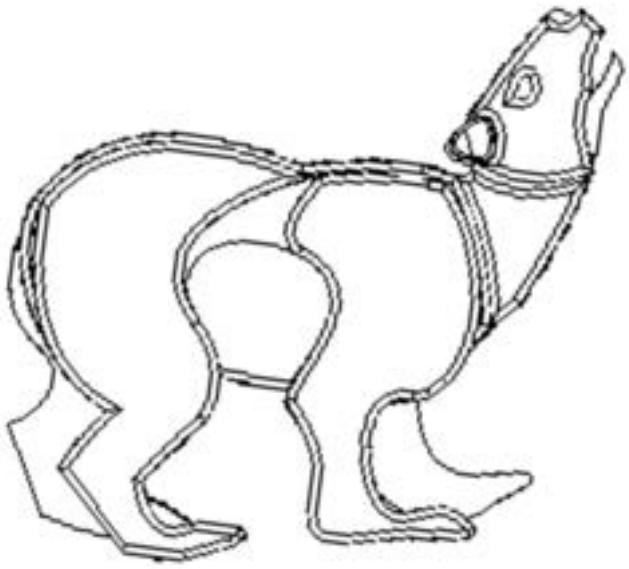
2 Proposal

I have included my full proposal at the end of this PDF, but I wanted to offer some commentary on the proposal process.

2.1 Visuals

Figure 3: Proposal Visuals

The most artistically frustrating part of this entire process. I still hate this picture.



I drafted of one of the designs before giving my proposal, so I could include more professional-looking drawings, and so I had digitized shapes I could laser cut to make a scale model.

2.2 Budget

Figure 4: Proposal Budget

Budget:

- Severe Weather / Pressure Treated Plywood (1/2" x 4' x 8') x 15: $847.76
- Outdoor Paint (White, Black, Red, Yellow): $120.00
- Paint Rollers: $8.00
- Paint Brushes: $24.57
- Paint Bucket: $12.00
- Fasteners: $122.37
- Rockite: $16.39
- Cement: $19.98
- Anchoring Steel: $50.00
- Hose Clamps: $25.00
- Clay: $24.99

Total: $1271.06

Making the budget was difficult, and some of the numbers are way off. I spent over 350 dollars on paint, and less than 30 on fasteners. Some of the things on this list I didn't buy, and I had to buy many things not included.

2.3 Presentation Experience

Figure 5: 1/6th Scale Model

I was nervous before the presentation, but was comforted by my decent looking model. I figured if I could make this, it wouldn't be too hard to make the same thing but six times as large (wrong!). It must have gone well, because a week later my idea was funded.

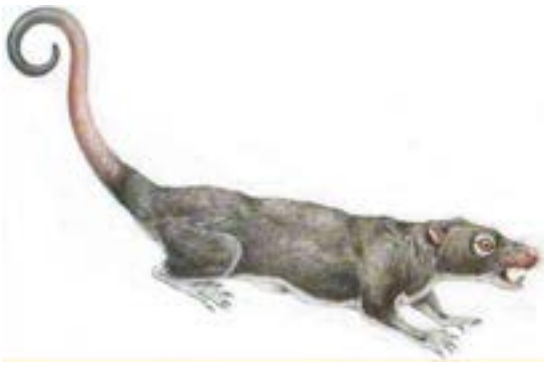
3 Process

3.1 Designs

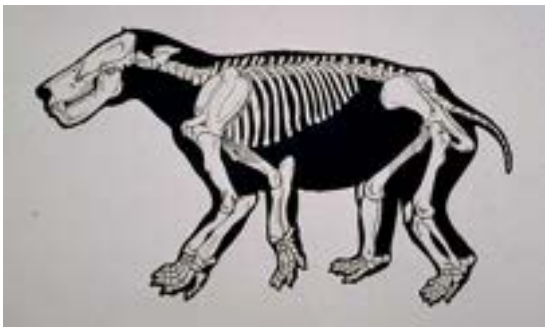
I went into the spring semester with about half of one design done, and vague ideas about the other two. I didn't feel the need to be extremely 'historically accurate' to specific species while working on the designs, but each of the 3 animals belongs to a general class found in the Paleocene. "Barry" is a beryllambda, "Percy" a titanoide, and "Toby" a multituberculate.

3.1.1 Reference Images

Figure 6: Reference Images



Source: Cox (1998)



Source: Kelly Taylor

Source: Savage & Long (1986)

Source: Cox (1988)

I mixed and matched a lot of different reference images while making the designs.

3.1.2 CAD

I did most of my designing in Solidworks, but I did one of them on my iPad in an app called Shapr3D. I wouldn't recommend either of these products for this use case. I really didn't like this part of the process.

3.2 Models

Figure 8: Painted Models

I wasn't happy with the monochrome mockups I had made, and decided to try out bright primary colors on my next models, which I liked much better.

3.3 Purchasing Materials

Figure 10: Loading the Truck

The first sheet of plytanium that I purchased humbled me greatly and helped me understand the scale of this project.

3.4 CNCing

Figure 11: Maximum Size

An example layout of parts to be CNCed. The 4x8 plywood sheets informed both the size of the final product and their design, as the largest pieces of the animal had to fit within that space.

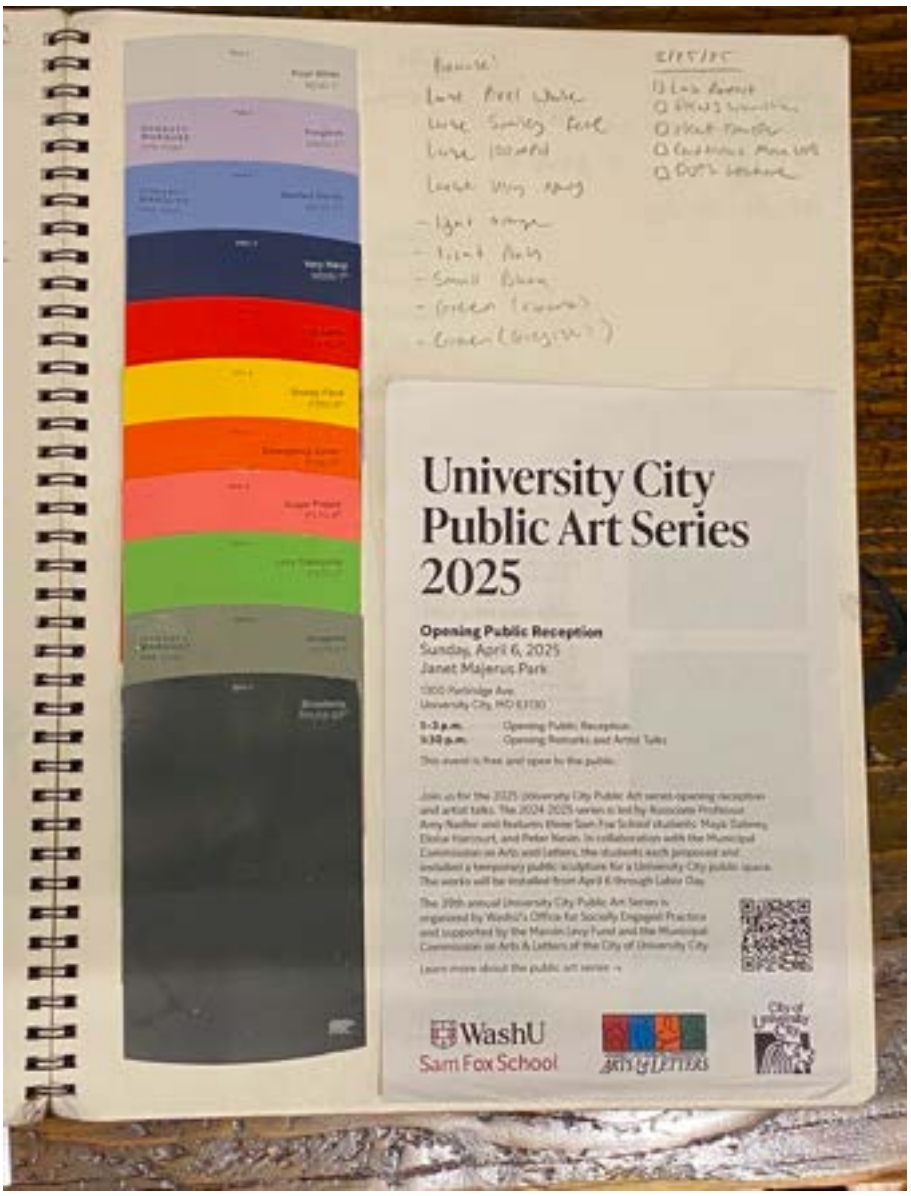
Figure 12: CNC

I had some difficulty with the ply of the wood separating, but was able to mitigate it by holding the wood together in several locations with plastic brads.

3.5 Painting

3.5.1 Paint Selection

Figure 13: Paint Swatches



I chose several of my colors because I liked their names.

Figure 14: Choosing Colors

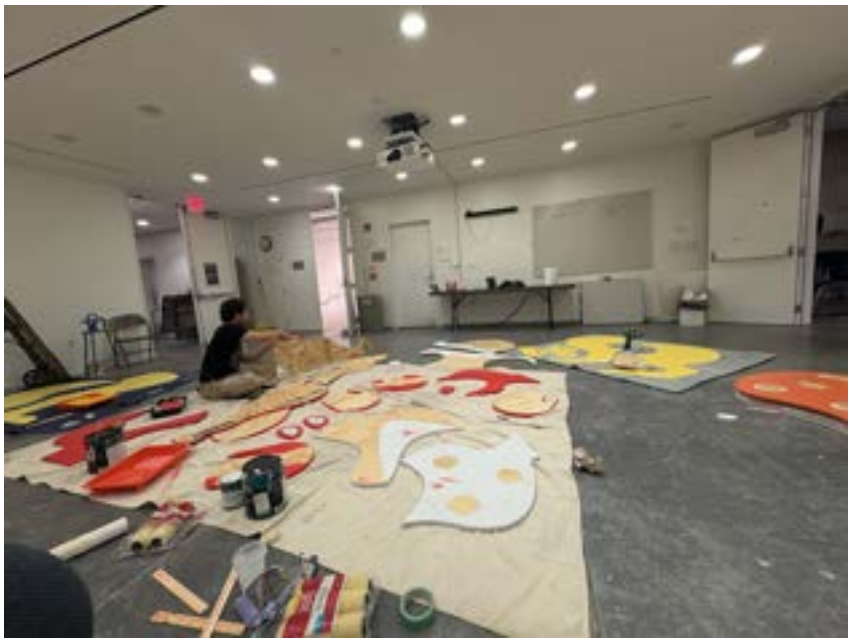
Marking what goes where.

3.5.2 Sanding & Priming

Figure 15: Priming panels with white

3.5.3 Stamping

Figure 16: Don't Paint Where You Glue



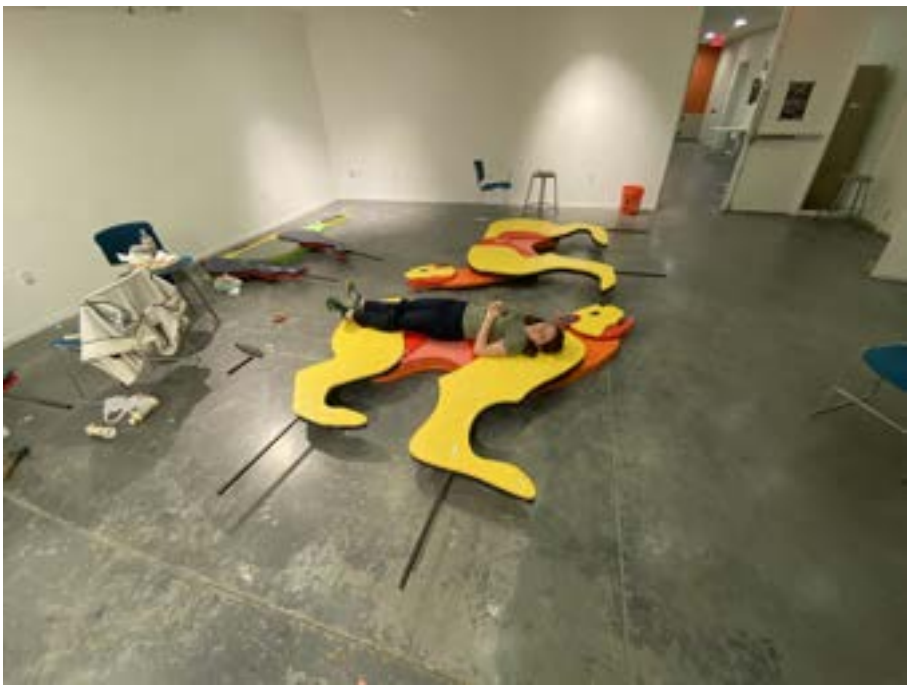
Whitney invented a stamping technique to help mark where the spacers would be glued on, so I could avoid painting there. It was extremely tedious.

Figure 17: Last Pieces

3.6 Assembly

After what felt like an eternity of painting, assembly was fairly quick and easy. The only issue was that once a sufficient number of pieces were stuck together, I could no longer safely move the sculptures without the help of multiple other people. I designed the halves to bolt together to make moving them possible, and so they could be disassembled and more easily transported. I also bolted long pieces of steel through the legs which is what sits in concrete anchoring the pieces to the ground.

Figure 18: Ready for Installation Day



The week before my installation day was mentally and physically exhausting, but gratifying enough to keep me motivated.

3.7 Storage

Figure 19: Warning on upright animals stored in spare studio

Figure 20: My Poor Studio

Things got pretty tight

3.8 Installation

3.8.1 Preparation

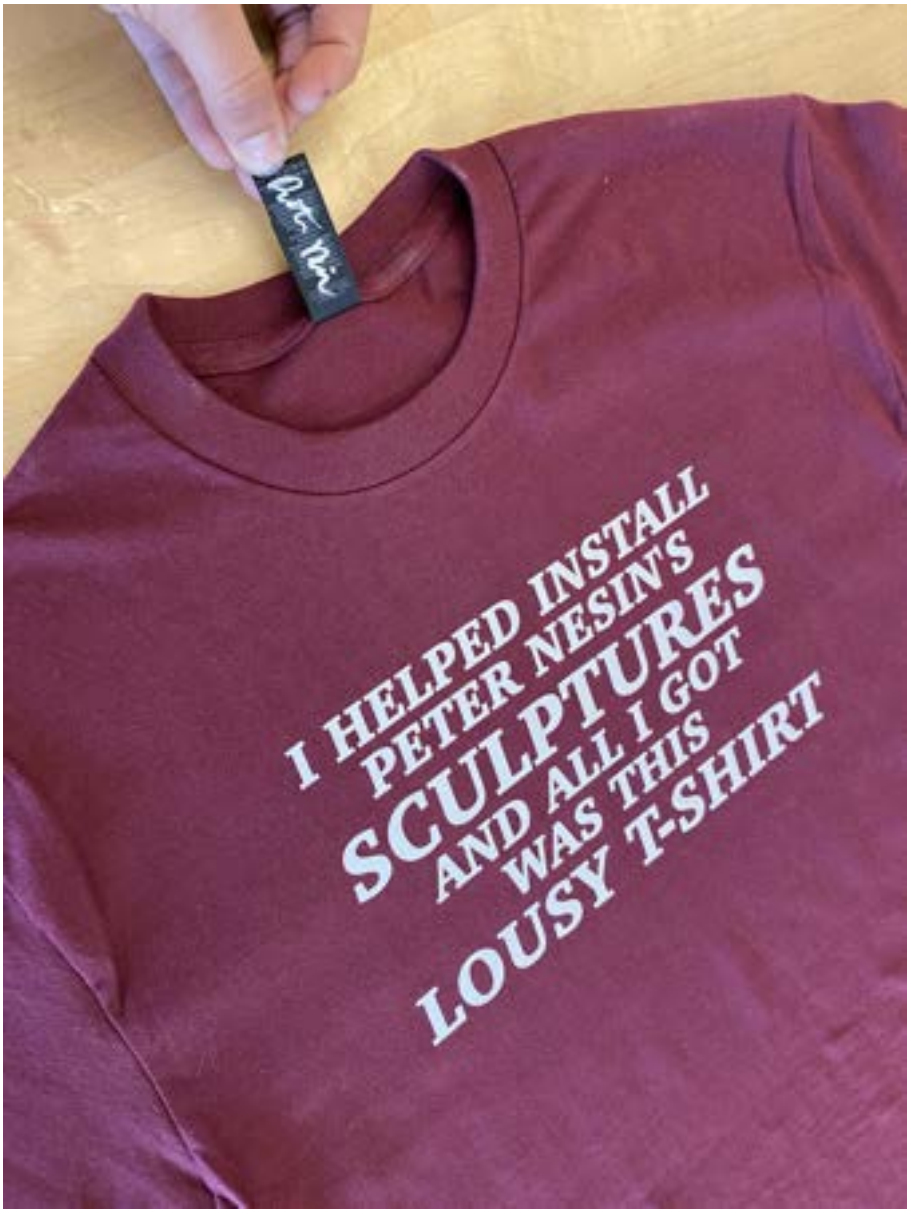
Figure 21: Making Templates

I made cardboard templates to bring to the park to mark and dig the holes before we took the sculptures out.

Figure 22: Using Templates

They worked pretty well. 7/8 holes were close enough to the steel to not require alteration. Additionally, after choosing my locations, I probed around them with a long thin steel rod to check for roots. Before installation day the holes were dug with a gas-powered auger.

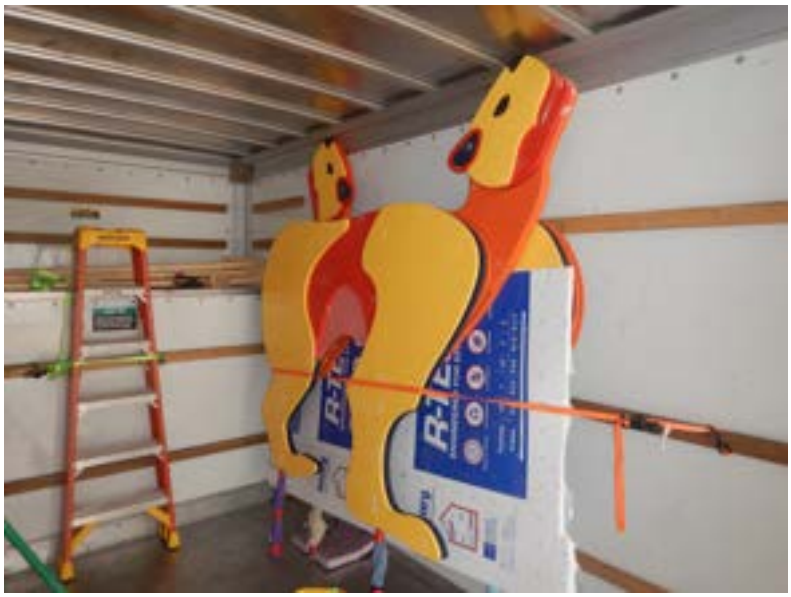
Figure 23: Shirts for Helpers



I was desperate for help getting these things to the park, and hoped to entice those on the fence with some merch.

3.8.2 Large Animals

Figure 24: Perfect Fit in Uhaul



Barry was less than an inch away from not fitting in the Uhaul, a possibility I hadn't even considered.

Figure 25: Screwing the Halves Together

I thought lining up the halves was going to be way more difficult than it ended up being.

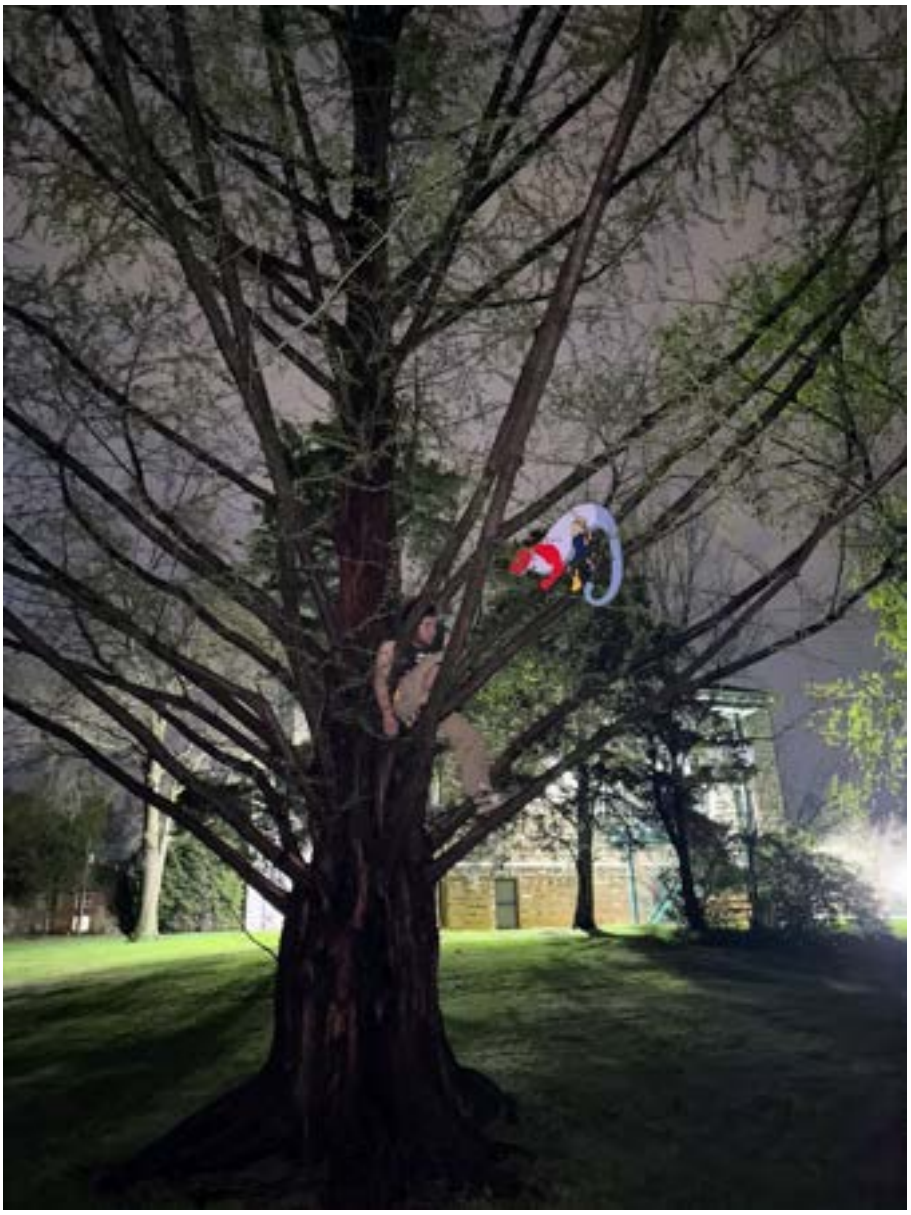
Figure 26: Filling Holes

Holes were filled with gravel and concrete.

Figure 27: Secured While Concrete Sets

3.8.3 Tree Animal

Figure 28: Tree Climbing



I came back to the park and installed Toby later. The clamps didn't end up working out and he's just screwed into the tree.

4 Final Documentation

Figure 29: Full Scene

Figure 30: "Barry"

Figure 31: "Percy"

Figure 32: "Toby"

Figure 33: Additional Images

Figure 34: Additional Images Ctd.

Figure 35: Additional Images Ctd.

5 Discussion

I am pleased with the final result of this project. I feel I captured what I aimed to in my proposal, and created some very high-quality and polished-looking work. The main lesson I learned is that when you make something large and heavy, the large and heavy nature of the object is a 'problem' from start to finish, every step of the way. I vastly underestimated how much of a challenge simple things like buying large pieces of wood, or moving pieces between working spaces would be. It was only through the help of many friends that I was able to get things where they needed to go. I also underestimated how time consuming and physically demanding it would be to paint all of the panels. If I were to start over again, I would work more on the designs over winter break, and try to begin CNCing as soon as possible in the semester, to spread out the physical labor a bit more. I would also try to claim some courtyard real estate so I wouldn't have to worry about moving in and out of the crit space.

6 Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Whitney Short for her significant contributions to the labor required to complete this project. Additionally, I would like to thank Arny Nadler for his indispensable guidance, as well as Maya Dabney, and Eloise Harcourt for their advice, support, and sound judgment. I would like to thank the Arts and Letters Commission, the Forestry Department, Dryden Wells and Matt Branham, and my friends Brian, Maeve, Dorothy, Griffin, and Jessica who all supplied some much needed muscle.