

Title:

A Princess Memorial

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Summary:

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Article Body:

Diana, Princess of Wales' Memorial Fountain in Hyde Park. Unveiled in July, 2004 with both the late Diana's family and the royal family including Queen Elizabeth II present, the \$6.5 million memorial to the late Princess of Wales is designed by American architect Karen Gustafson. The oval fountain of 545 blocks of Cornish granite - a ring of water likened to a miniature race course near the Serpentine Bridge- has water flowing down both sides for both agitated and calming effects.

The fountain was built with the best materials, talent and technology, and is the result of an impressive, wide reaching project. It was decided in 1999 that a public memorial should be erected to her memory and so the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain Committee was formed, led by Rosa Monckton, a friend of the Princess. Some three years and ten thousand competing designs later, two ideas were chosen from which the winning fountain would be selected. The entry of American designers Gustafon Porter won the vote over that of British artist Anish Kapoor.

The philosophy behind the Gustafon Porter design was that the fountain should express the concept of 'Reaching out - Letting In', in order to symbolize Diana's inclusiveness and accessibility. The presence of the fountain surrounded by open landscape was intended to create an energy which radiates outwards while at the same time draws people towards it, again reflecting the essential nature of Diana.

From its source, water runs down the fountain in two directions, the east side

featuring richly textured steps which the water bounces down before passing under a crossing point to the rock and roll section where it gentle rocks and rolls along a subtle curve. Before entering the reflection pool at the bottom of the fountain, this east-track of water passes through the swoosh - a subtle curve where water jets create patterns in, and pump additional energy into the water.

Water which follows the western channel of the fountain ring firstly passes over the highly textured surface of the Mountain Stream where it dances in a lively play of water before passing under a crossing point then onto the bubbles section where the channel widens out and air bubbles are introduced. The water then becomes a tumbling cascade of white water as it corners over a waterfall. Western channel water then spills over the elaborately carved chadder before tumbling into the reflecting pool where it's re-united with water from the eastern channel.

The water for the fountain is drawn from London's water table and is continuously refreshed. The Princess Diana Memorial Fountain proved to be massively popular with adults and children alike, just like the Princess herself. Such was the demand to interact with the fountain that it had to be closed for a short time just 16 days after it was opened. This was partly following a number of people slipping in the water flow, partly to identify a means of handling the huge demand in a manner which would preserve the site in a sustainable way while allowing appropriate access.