

They create place-specific memories and give special images to record a visit. Photographs taken at the Fort Worth Water Gardens or along San Antonio's River Walk cannot be mistaken for those taken elsewhere. They are icons of urban Texas. The captivating quality of a collection of water features elevates a setting to urban theater, making it memorable and conferring an identity.

Water displays can go hand-in-hand with artistic achievement. Bernini's heroic stoneworks give their piazzas mythical and magical import. Likewise, Johnson/Burgee's Fort Worth water cascade creates a roar and a spectacle missing from most urban parks. When landscape architect Dan Kiley was questioned about his inspiration for Dallas's downtown Fountain Place, an equally successful water experience, he quoted Genesis: "And a river went out of Eden."³ Perhaps all great water features are conceived with Biblical references. Charles Moore, who created a number of memorable water features, in his poetic work *Water + Architecture* quoted Nicolò Salvi, architect of the Trevi Fountain: "Fountains and the water they give forth can be called the only everlasting source of continuous being."⁴

Johnson/Burgee's intentions for the Water Gardens in Fort Worth are similarly abstract and grandiloquent. Like Kiley in Dallas, the architects were inspired not by what their site offered, but by what it lacked. Unlike Bernini, whose inspiration came from context and milieu, Kiley and Johnson/Burgee saw the cores of these Texas cities as hostile to civic art and as unfinished places. Through the eyes of European or even East Coast urbanists, the fabric and topography of Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth offer little inspiration: these cities are automobile oriented and given to architectural hyperbole rather than coherent urbanist vision. For an outdoor space to succeed in the flat, hot Texas environment, it must overcome a boring site and provide an alternative vision — a virtual place that creates its own space, time, and climate.

The park at Transco Tower in Houston offers many of the same lessons as the Fort Worth Water Gardens. Both create a mythical mindset that seeks to capture a history that never was. The meaning of a landscape is a combination of what users bring to it and what the design evokes.⁵ The design of public spaces needs powerful expression and forceful creative imagination, but serendipity can play an important role as well.⁶ Successful public spaces are those that the public accepts and makes its own. They must be safe, populated day and night, and they must instill pride and a sense of ownership in their users; yet they can be neither too abstract, lest they lose their sensual qualities, nor too literal, lest they become boring and lifeless.

Susan and Geoffrey Jellicoe have pointed out that our society is not, as it was during the Baroque period of Versailles and the Vatican, constant and

static. They suggest that in our world the "only constancy is change, and therefore movement." Water therefore is the most appropriate civic symbol, for "Water is movement."⁷ The two essential states of water, quiet movement and active movement, are seen by the Jellicoes as being akin to the art movements of the abstract (quiet) and the constructive or geometric (active). In his plan for Moody Gardens in Galveston, Jellicoe employed both states of water to a remarkable degree, and the plan contains tributes to his favorite water environments: the Generalife, Shalamar Bagh, Katsura, the Villa d'Este, the Villa Lante, and Isola Bella. It is not surprising that the link between Jellicoe's garden worlds is a river voyage through both time and geography.

A crucial question of water gardening remains: How can we maintain the architectural use of water, skillfully captured and displayed for our pleasure, when the agent is so universally corrosive? Budgets for the gardens in Dallas and Fort Worth suggest that 10 percent of the installation costs are minimal for maintenance of operation. It is also a reasonable expectation that after 25 to 30 years, renovation and improvements will run near the initial capital expenditure. Such high figures might lead decision makers to question the wisdom of constructing water features in the first place, but as a society we know that great civic art through the centuries has proven to be worth any expense.

While it is difficult to measure the pride and enjoyment residents find in returning time and time again to a dynamic water-play, it is impossible to assess the value of a visitor's gasp of recognition upon seeing that which had before been seen only as a video image or glossy photograph. We travel to those places that captivate our imaginations and offer us unique and memorable imagery. The greatest and most alluring of such places almost always include water. ■

1 A list of all "decorative fountains" owned and maintained by the City of Houston was supplied to *Cite* by the Parks and Recreation Department in December 1996.

2 Huitt-Zollar, *Fort Worth Water Gardens—Architectural/Engineering Assessment* (Fort Worth/Dallas, 1994); and author's interview with Robert P. Riley, Superintendent of Park Planning and Resource Management, City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services, 1996.

3 Patricia Lee Quaid, *Landscape Palimpsest: Layers of Meaning in the Dallas Built Landscape* (Arlington: University of Texas Press, 1966).

4 Charles W. Moore and Jane Lidz, *Water + Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p. 49.

5 Quaid.

6 Amos Rapport, *The Meaning of the Built Environment* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982).

7 Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, *Water — The Use of Water in Landscape Architecture* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1971).

Fifty Fountains

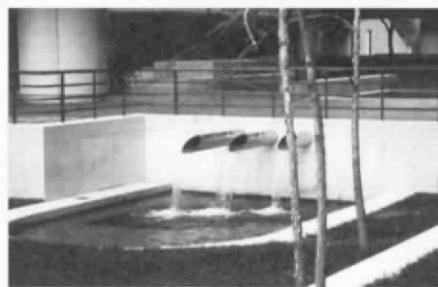
Barrie Scardino

*Houston has more fountains than you think. For what we thought would be a very short side-bar to Richard Rome's **Fountains and Fireworks**, Cite began to look at Houston fountains, beginning with a list of those owned by the City of Houston (*). We found many more fountains and water features than we imagined existed in Houston. Although a few of the city fountains are inoperable, depending on wind velocity and maintenance schedules, all of them are off at one time or another. New fountains in restaurant courtyards, office and hotel plazas, and apartment/condominiums are literally springing up everywhere. The following list is by no means complete, but it contains some of our favorites.*

DOWNTOWN



4. *BALDWIN PARK, 1701 Elgin Street. 1910. This sad concrete dish is forlorn and waterless in an unkempt area with no sign of life.



1. ALLEN CENTER FOUNTAIN, 1200 Smith Street. ca. 1977. The SWA Group. Moving water flows from stepped orthogonal pools under a bridge and spills into a lawn-edged pool from three silvery tubes.



5. CULLEN BANK TOWER FOUNTAIN, 1600 Smith Street. 1984. The SWA Group. A wall slit on Pease lets passers-by see this plaza and fountain from an unusual vantage point.



2. ALLEN CENTER DWARVES, 1200 Smith Street. ca. 1977. The SWA Group. Doc, Dopey, Sneezey, Sleepy, Grumpy, Happy, and Bashful are hi-bo-ing it off to work in Allen Center.



6. GLENWOOD CEMETERY FOUNTAIN, 2525 Washington Avenue. 1871. This three-tier fountain originally stood in Market Square; it was moved to Glenwood Cemetery long ago.



3. *HECTOR AZIOS FOUNTAIN, Guadalupe Plaza, 2311 Runnels Street. 1988. Luis Bodmer, architect; George S. Porcher, landscape architect. This three-tier carved stone fountain is set in an interesting pool next to the failed El Mercado del Sol.



7. HELLMAN-BALDWIN FOUNTAIN, Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Avenue. ca. 1975. Gregory Catlow, landscape architect. This stone basin fountain carved in New York enhances a pleasant churchyard oasis in the middle of downtown Houston.



8. *HOUSTON CITY HALL FOUNTAIN AND REFLECTION POOL, 901 Bagby Street. 1939. Hare & Hare, landscape architects. This fountain spills into a long pool that reflects the City Hall tower.



12. *SCANLAN FOUNTAIN, Sam Houston Park, Allen Parkway at Bagby Street. 1891. This cast-iron fountain was part of Mayor T. H. Scanlan's estate at 1917 Main Street from 1891 until 1937. It now greets motorists entering Allen Parkway.



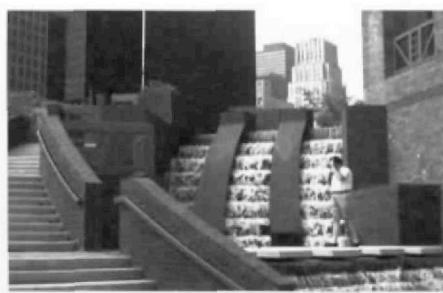
16. *TRANQUILLITY PARK, 400 Rusk Avenue. 1979. Charles Tapley Associates. When it works, water glides down giant cylinders (that hide exhaust stacks for the Civic Center garage) into multilevel pools of water. Except for a few vagabonds, this water park is underused because it is so cut off from the street.



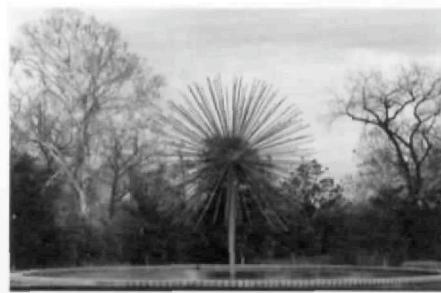
19. *BELL PARK, 4800 Montrose Boulevard. 1970. Wilson, Morris, Crain & Anderson, architects; Allen D. Thompson, landscape architect. This park, close to the Museum District, has a natural-looking pond spouting water and is well maintained.



9. *JONES HALL PUBLIC PLAZA, 600 Louisiana Street. This fountain is at the bottom of the staircase leading from the tunnel-level parking garages to the plaza in front of Jones Hall.



13. *SESQUICENTENNIAL PARK, 400 Texas Avenue at Buffalo Bayou. 1989. TeamHou. Water cascades down several levels below the Wortham Theater can be seen from the Bagby Street bridge over Buffalo Bayou, if you're stopped by a red light.



17. *GUS S. WORTHAM MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN, Buffalo Bayou Park, Allen Parkway. 1977. William T. Cannady & Associates. This dandelion fountain was designed after a fountain the Worthams admired in Australia. Owned by the city but maintained daily by American General, whose headquarters is across the street.



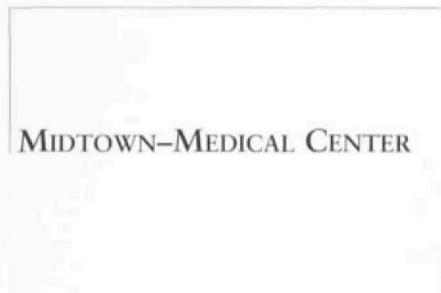
20. DOLPHIN FOUNTAIN, Hyde Park Boulevard at Waugh Drive. 1936. This idiosyncratic fountain, created for a World Floral Exposition in Sam Houston Coliseum, was bought by the Hyde Park Funeral Home and placed in front of its building. Marble dolphins spout into a pleasant pool also fed by a double-tier basin.



10. M. W. KELLOGG TOWER PLAZA FOUNTAIN, 601 Jefferson Street. 1991. Slaney Santana Group, landscape architects. Water bubbles out of the sidewalk around a long sunken lawn.



14. *BOB AND VIVIAN SMITH FOUNTAIN, 1300 Smith Street. ca. 1969. This large, happy water display is on a prominent downtown site.



MIDTOWN-MEDICAL CENTER



21. GARDEN CLUB OF HOUSTON PARK FOUNTAIN, Texas Medical Center, Bertner Street at Wilkins. 1980-84. Charles Tapley, landscape architect. In front of the Institute of Religion, this restful corner is kept beautifully planted year round by the Garden Club of Houston. The fountain is a big gush with water coming and going.



11. *NEUHAUS FOUNTAIN, Sam Houston Park, 1000 Bagby Street. 1991. The SWA Group, landscape architects; Gwynn Murrill, artist. Three coyotes wander in a grove of trees beside a rock-edged rill flowing into a pool. Hugo Neuhaus left this fountainscape in memory of his parents.



15. TENNECO FOUNTAIN, 1000 Louisiana Street. 1988. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Water slithers down zigzag glass panels and rushes over a short flight of tiny steps before falling into a rickrack-edged pool on a busy sidewalk.



18. ALKEK FOUNTAIN, Texas Medical Center, Baylor College of Medicine, M. D. Anderson Boulevard. 1982. Ray Bailey Architects. This high water-spray identifies the front door of Baylor.



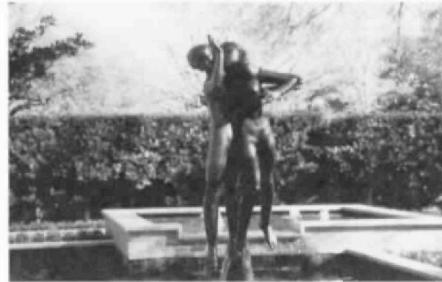
22. *HERMANN PARK: GEORGE HERMANN FOUNTAIN, Fannin Street at North MacGregor Way. 1981. Ben Lednicky & Associates, landscape architects. This footed, curving trough spills plenty of water with a satisfying gush into its basin.



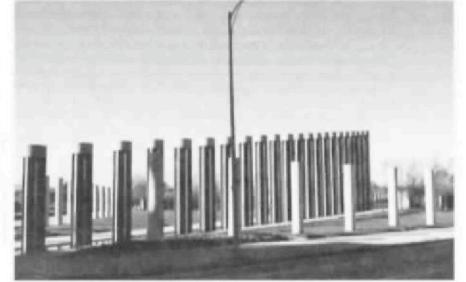
23. *HERMANN PARK: GARDEN CENTER FOUNTAIN, 1875. J. Worrington Wood, sculptor. A handsome Italian marble sculpture kneels in the center of a small bubbling pool amid well-tended rose gardens.



27. *HERMANN PARK: SANDY REED MEMORIAL KUGEL BALL FOUNTAIN, 1995. Lauren Griffith & Associates, landscape architects. A 5,100-pound, perfectly balanced polished granite ball rests on a water bed created by a 1.5 hp pump. Even small children can rotate the sphere. Big success.



31. "THE SISTERS," Mary Ellen Hale Lovett Courtyard, Jones College, Rice University, 6100 Main Street. 1969-70. Carl Milles, sculptor. The oversize bronze sculpture by the renowned Swedish sculptor Carl Milles (1875-1955) stands in the center of three rectangular pools with syncopated fountains.



35. WORTHAM FOUNTAIN, front Texas Medical Center, Main at Holcombe. 1990. Johnson/Burgee Architects; Martin Schwartz, landscape architect. This is not really one of our favorites, but it is too big and too expensive to ignore. We still miss the Shamrock pool, which made this corner look like Miami Beach.



24. *HERMANN PARK: JOHN MECOM FOUNTAIN, Montrose Boulevard at Main Street. 1964. Eugene Werlin & Associates. Houston's best set amid mature Live Oaks, this series of major water displays is across from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at the entrance to Hermann Park.



28. *JESSE H. JONES FOUNTAIN, 7898 Fannin Street at Greenbriar near the Astrodome. 1983. The SWA Group, landscape architects. This huge empty concrete dish would be a great UFO landing site. Houston Endowment requested that the fountain be repaired or Jones's name be removed; it's not fixed, and his name is still there.



32. ROSE FOUNTAIN, South Main Baptist Church, 4000 Main Street. ca. 1965. Although this church was built in 1930, it was not until the 1960s that it was able to obtain its frontage on Main Street. The fountain is a memorial to Wade Hampton and Nannie Sue Irwin.



36. WORTHAM FOUNTAIN, back, Texas Medical Center, Main at Holcombe. 1990. Johnson/Burgee Architects; Martin Schwartz, landscape architect. Behind the graceless monolithic marching columns (see above) is a most pleasant reflecting pool flanked by pergolas.



25. *HERMANN PARK: MECOM-ROCKWELL FOUNTAIN, across from 1111 Hermann Drive. 1992. Lauren Griffith & Associates. High water plume in the center of a colonnade created from the Doric proscenium of the original Miller Theater designed by William Ward Watkin (1923). Preferred site for bridal photography.



29. *PEGGY'S POINT PLAZA, 4240 Main Street. 1964. Neuhaus Associates, architects. When it's working, this lively water display brightens the bus stop on a dreary corner almost underneath U.S. 59.



33. ROTHKO CHAPEL REFLECTION POOL, 1409 Sul Ross. In front of the Rothko Chapel, a quiet reflection pool has Barnett Newman's sculpture "Broken Obelisk" (1964) installed by Mr. and Mrs. John de Menil as a memorial to the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.



37. WYNDHAM WARWICK FOUNTAIN, 5701 Main Street. ca. 1975. This series of fountains is special because it is, with the Mecom, Mecom-Rockwell, Warwick Towers, Natural Science Museum, and Garden Center fountains, along a 15-minute stroll, where one is never out of earshot of water.



26. *HERMANN PARK: VIRGINIA AND ERNEST COCKRELL, JR., SUNDIAL FOUNTAIN, 1 Hermann Circle Drive. 1989. Hoover & Furr, architects. At the base of an asymmetrical polished black granite pyramid sundial, called a gnomon, a fountain shoots 10 feet into the air, then cascades down over a weir into a pool shaped like the coast of Texas.



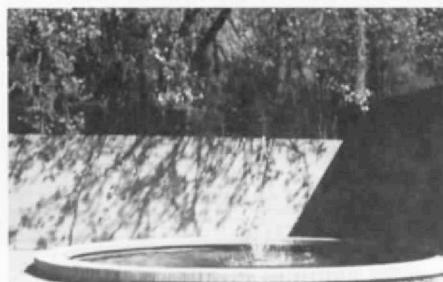
30. SHIRLEY BAKER POND FOUNTAIN, Palmer Memorial Church, 6221 Main Street. 1979 (pool, Charles Tapley Associates); 1994 (fountain). This unusual fountain is enjoyed not only by parishioners but also by homeless people to whom breakfast is served every morning in the courtyard.



34. WINLOW-WESTHEIMER DISTRICT PLAZA FOUNTAIN, 1901-1915 Westheimer. 1996. McDugald-Steele, landscape architects. This unusual sidewalk fountain and plaza were added to a strip development by T-CONN Properties, Ltd. as a way to attract attention. It works.

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James F. Wilson: 48

RIVER OAKS—MEMORIAL



41. *MEMORIAL PARK: HOUSTON ARBORETUM AND NATURE CENTER FOUNTAINS, 4501 Woodway. A pair of sprays on either side of the Arboretum entrance welcomes visitors.



45. *RIVER OAKS PARK FOUNTAIN, 3600 Locke Lane. 1938. This is another nonworking concrete dish. Glad to see parity with Baldwin Park.

SOUTH AND EAST HOUSTON



38. BAYOU BEND: DIANA FOUNTAIN, 1 Westcott off Memorial Drive. 1938. Fleming & Sheppard, landscape architects. Water jets form a series of arches in front of the marble Diana, goddess of the hunt. Bayou Bend Gardens, once private, are now open for tours; this is one of the loveliest fountain settings in Houston. Bayou Bend has several other fountains.



42. *MEMORIAL PARK: ANITA AND CHARLES WEINER FOUNTAIN, golf course clubhouse. 1995. The golf course serves as a backdrop for this curving brick cascade on the terrace of the golf club restaurant.



46. *SLEEPY HOLLOW PARK, 3400 Sleepy Hollow at Chevy Chase, River Oaks, ca. 1930s. This charming cherub is located in an old-fashioned setting, but the fountain looks as if it hasn't worked for decades.



48. EXXON BROOKHOLLOW, 4500 Dacoma. 1996. The Office of James Burnett, landscape architects. Burnett's new landscaping for old Exxon buildings is centered around a gurgling, contemplative linear pool that invites stone-stepping. Exxon employees are happy to have visitors join them.



39. GOODE COMPANY HAMBURGERS & TAQUERIA, 4902 Kirby Drive. 1986. Each shelf of this four-tier Mexican fountain is carved from a solid piece of stone. Squeezed into a small parking-lot courtyard, this is one of the best local restaurant fountains.



43. OMNI FOUNTAIN, Omni Hotel, 4 Riverway. 1981. The SWA Group, landscape architects. Three fuchsia colored wall-trough fountains in front of the hotel were inspired by the work of Mexican architect Luis Barragán.

NORTHWEST HOUSTON



49. TOWER OF CHEYENNE FOUNTAIN, Anne Garrett Butler Plaza, University of Houston. 1972. Peter Forakis, sculptor. The Cullen Family Plaza and the Student Life Plaza at the UH also have memorable water displays.



40. *MEMORIAL PARK: BARBARA AND GEORGE BUSH PRESIDENTIAL GROVE, 6501 Memorial Drive. 1996. Lauren Griffith, landscape architect. Just south of the golf clubhouse, this water garden has a rock-lined nature pond filled by water cascades. The water leaves the pond to wander gently in a rock-lined brook through the golf course.



44. RIVER OAKS BOULEVARD FOUNTAIN. 1995. In front of a private house, this rather institutional looking fountain is one of several in the River Oaks area that can be seen from the street. There are probably hundreds of hidden fountains behind garden walls of private houses in such neighborhoods.



47. TRANSCO FOUNTAIN AND PARK, Hidalgo at Post Oak. 1985. Johnson/Burgee Architects and Richard Fitzgerald & Partners. Houston's most famous fountain destination, especially popular at night with young lovers. The fountain's high curving wall and great waterfall plays yin to Transco Tower's yang.



50. *WILSON MEMORIAL PARK, 100 Gilpin. 1962. WAY outside the loop, this fairly large water pond looks stagnant and unkempt; no operable fountain feature was visible.