

---

# Cultivate Cultures: The Study of Friction and Wear on Mating Surfaces

VICTOR JONES  
University of Southern California

City Park, founded in 1853 is one of the oldest parks in the country. This 1,300-acre public park in New Orleans, Louisiana, is the 6th-largest and 7th-most-visited urban public park in the United States and is approximately 50% larger than New York City's Central Park.

City Park is not publicly funded with most of its annual budget acquired from self-generated revenue through user fees, gifts and donations. This uncommon funding model, often condemned for promoting the narrow interests of New Orleans' elite, was suddenly altered in the wake of the enormous damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina. Following the hurricane, the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism began to partially subsidize the park's operations. This new strain of public funding opened up channels as forward thinking park planners, design committees and community boards used this opportunity to redirect the course of "business as usual."

Up until the storm, there was little response to the criticism that City Park was a homogeneous enclave for New Orleans' elite. With close to 50% of the city's inhabitants living under the national poverty line and a rapidly growing population of migrant construction workers it became increasingly more difficult to justify 3 golf courses, a massive tennis facility and equestrian stables for 500 horses.

Cultivate Cultures directly responds to City Park's penury of everyday recreation facilities by proposing

a skateboard park that would serve the city's estimated twenty thousand skateboarders. The scheme is intended to add fresh and affordable modes of recreational activity to the park that would attract a broader population of the city's inhabitants as well as improve park spaces for cultural, social and recreational purposes.

At first glance, the bucolic setting of the park appears to be a spoiled and irreparable as the I-610 highway plows through the southwestern region of City Park. With the aim of fostering ecological remediation and new activity in the park, the project is conceived as a landscape rather than a singular object. The design's organization stems from the orthogonal layout of the commanding concrete structure of the highway overhead. The bubble like depressions and conical forms add a playful quality to the spaces as the boundaries between skateable spaces are blurred with hangout areas for sitting, watching and so on. Architectural forms, earth berms, furniture, lighting and planting all work together to create a constructed landscape that mediates the larger environment of City Park with the intrusive infrastructure of the overhead highway and adjacent railway line creating "*the study of friction and wear on mating surfaces.*"

Cultivate Cultures is a collaborative effort by Victor Jones, principal of Fiebre Jones, Inc. and architecture professor at the University of Southern California, the Tulane City Center and City Park New Orleans.

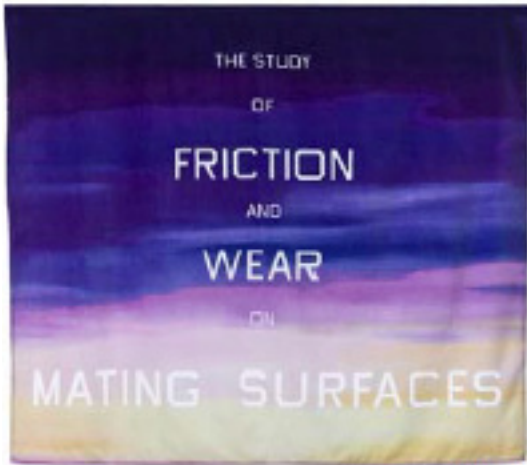


Fig. 1

Figure 1. The Study of Friction and Wear on Mating Surfaces, Ed Rucha, 1983



Fig. 2

Figure 2. Spill IV



Fig. 3

Figure 3. The Flatness of New Orleans

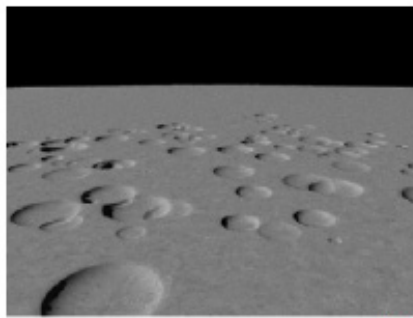


Fig. 4

Figure 4. Lunarscape

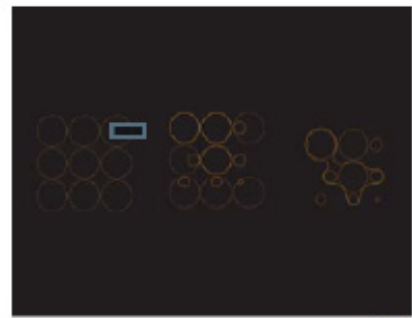


Fig. 5

Figure 5. Organization Diagram

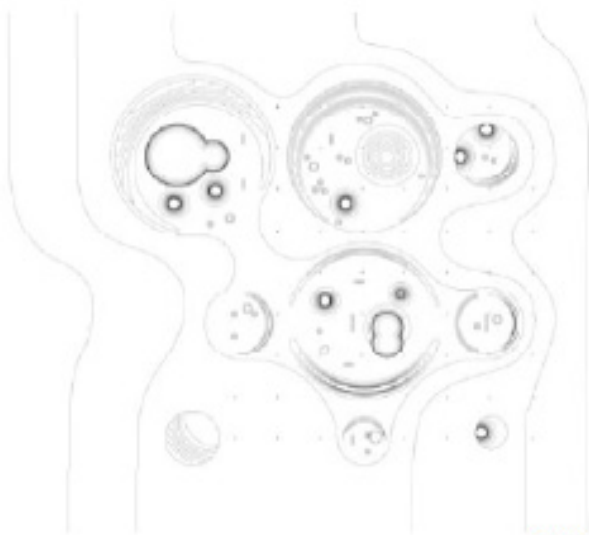


Fig. 6

Figure 6. Topography Plan



Fig. 7

Figure 7. Conical forms

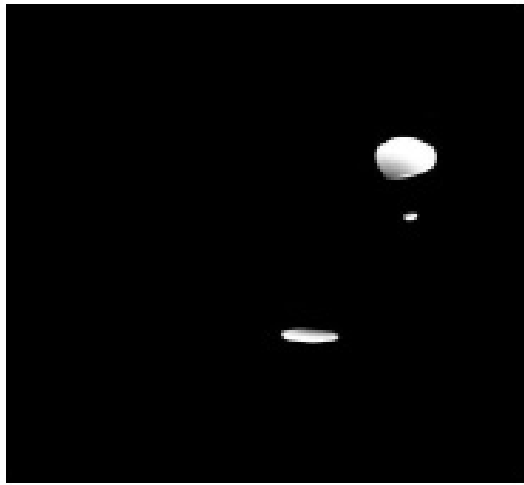


Figure 8. Spill I



Figure 9. Night View



Figure 10. Existing View of Site 1



Figure 11. Grinder



Figure 12. Existing View of Site 1I



Figure 13. The Bowl

Cultivate Cultures is a collaborative effort by designer Victor Jones, principal of Fievre Jones, Inc. and assistant professor of architecture at the University of Southern California, The Tulane City Center and City Park New Orleans.

Images 2-13 are original artwork produced for Cultivate Cultures by the design office, FJA of Assistant Professor, Victor Jones, University of Southern California.