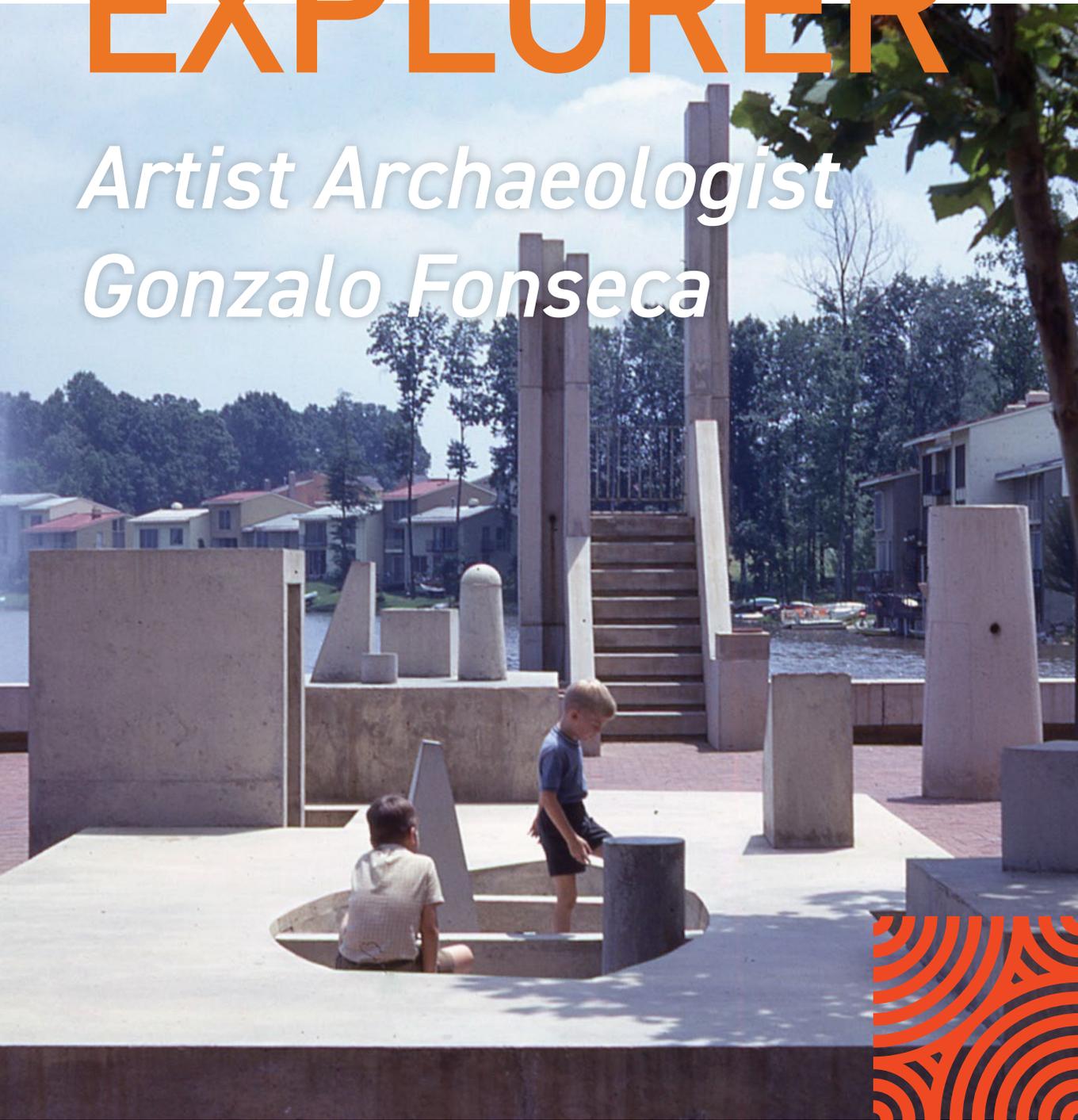


# PUBLIC ART EXPLORER

*Artist Archaeologist  
Gonzalo Fonseca*



# ARTIST ARCHAEOLOGIST GONZALO FONSECA (1922-1997)



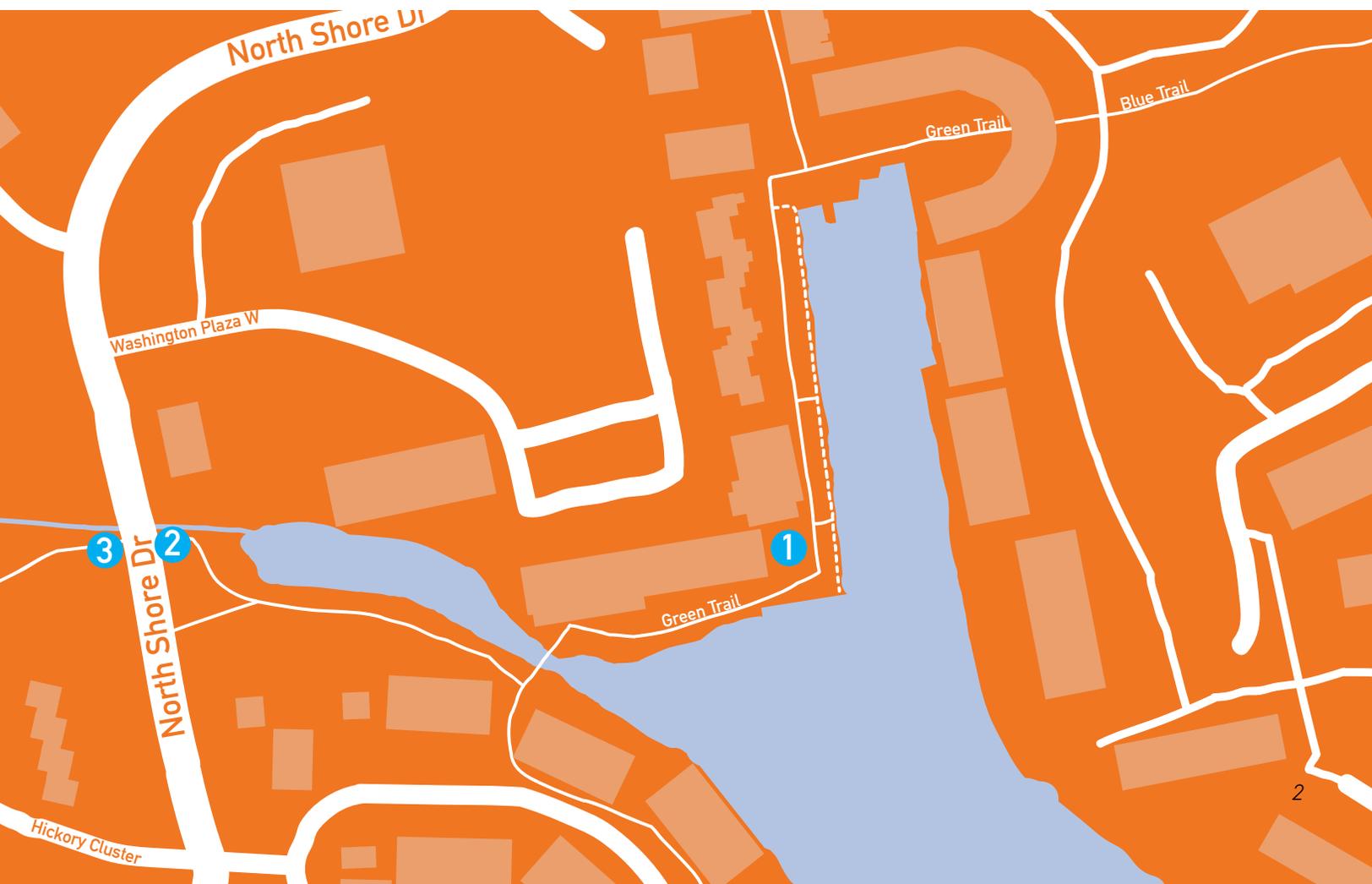
Sun Boat  
1965  
Concrete  
Map #1



North Shore Drive  
Underpass  
1965  
Concrete  
Map #2



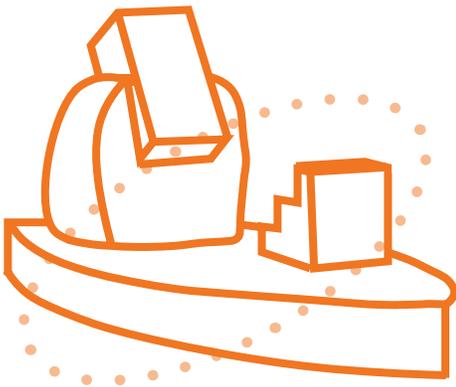
Pylon  
1965  
Concrete  
Map #3



# LEARN

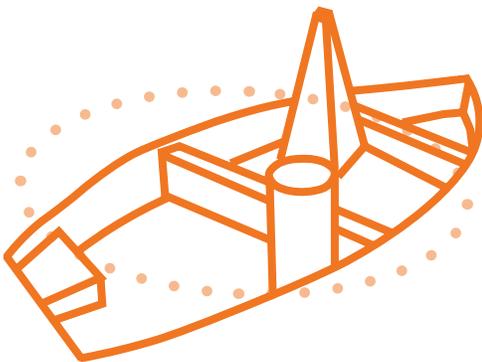
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## Who was Gonzalo Fonseca?



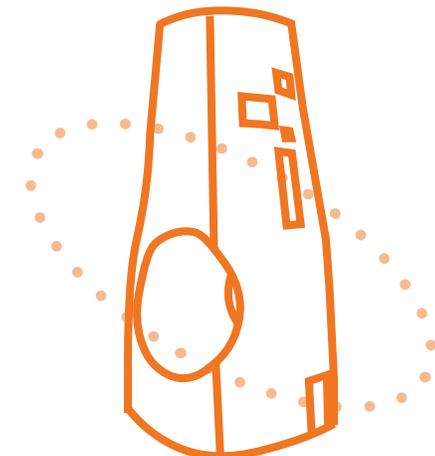
### A Budding Artist

He was born and raised in Uruguay in South America. When he was eleven, Fonseca spent six months traveling in Europe with his family. The things he experienced and saw on this trip inspired him to become an artist. When his family returned home he set up an art studio in the basement.



### A Curious Mind

Fonseca was a very curious person. He loved learning about history and languages (he spoke at least six!). Fonseca is often called a **polymath\***, or someone who knows a lot about many different things. He also traveled to continue his education. On his journeys, Fonseca climbed pyramids in Egypt, helped **excavate** ancient sites in the Middle East and Africa, and visited ancient Greek and Roman ruins. All of these experiences became a part of his artwork.

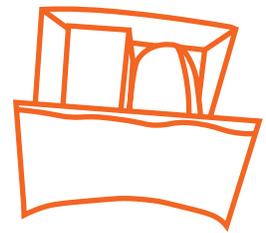


### An Inventive Sculptor

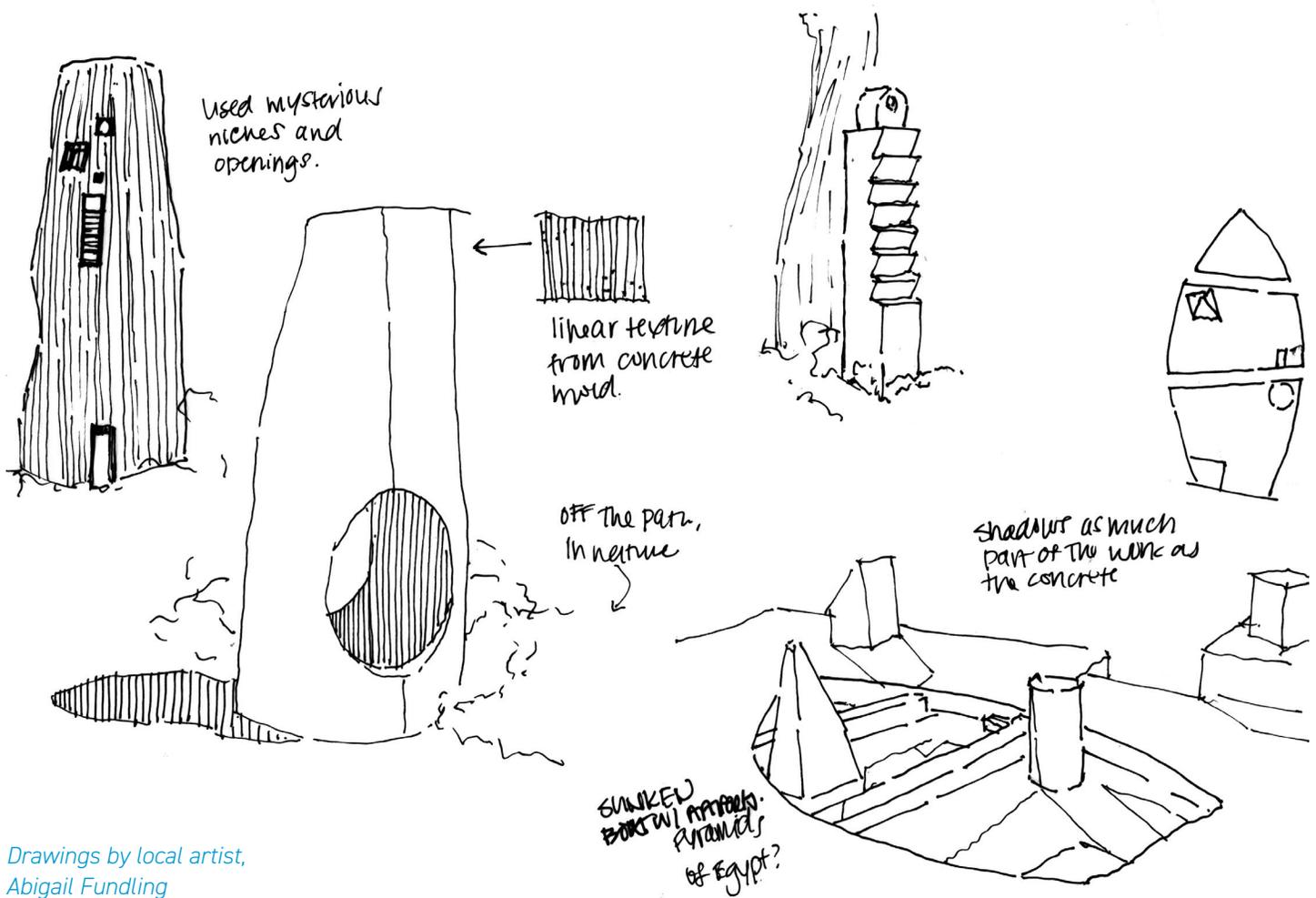
Fonseca trained to be a painter but switched to sculpture because he wanted to work in **three dimensions**. The Lake Anne **play sculptures** are some of the only **public art** he ever made. They are molded from the same concrete used in the surrounding buildings. Fonseca was excited to have such big spaces to work with, places like the plaza by the lake and the underpass. He enjoyed working in Reston so much that he made two extra **sculptures** in wood — *Wooden Horse* and *Building*. Visit [www.gonzalofonseca.com](http://www.gonzalofonseca.com) to see some more examples of Fonseca's art.

\*Go to page 9 to see the definitions for the words in bold!

# FUN FACT



Fonseca thought with his pencil! He filled countless notebooks with sketches and ideas. Look for some of these things when you visit Lake Anne:



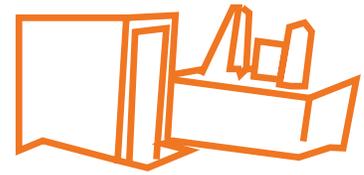
Drawings by local artist, Abigail Fundling

# WATCH

Click [here](#) to watch Caio Fonseca talk about his father's sculptures for Lake Anne. This is an excerpt from the film ["Fun, Beauty, Fantasy: Reston's Public Art."](#)

Click [here](#) to watch Robert E. Simon, Jr, Reston's founder, talk about Gonzalo Fonseca's sculptures for Lake Anne. This is an excerpt from the film ["Emerge: The Making of a Community Public Artwork."](#)

# EXPLORE



Fonseca thought like an **archaeologist**. He once said, “**I am interested in all cultures.**”

Do you know what archaeologists do? They study the things that people leave behind to learn how they lived. Buildings, artwork, everyday objects and even the things people throw away are all important to archaeologists. Archaeologists excavate at sites all over the world looking for **artifacts** that help them

understand the past. The things preserved under the ground are often found broken and in pieces. We call them **fragments**.

Fonseca liked the fragments people leave behind. He collected them, filling his studio with art and objects gathered from all over the world. These things inspired him to create his own fantastical, imaginary sculptures, and he made them in many different shapes and forms that

he put together in surprising ways. They feel both familiar and strange at the same time. His ideas came from his fascination with the things people built and made in the past, but he also wanted his art to speak to future generations. He wanted his audience to discover his sculptures in the same way archaeologists uncover a lost civilization and look for visual clues to unlock their secrets.

You are an archaeologist that just discovered the remains of an ancient civilization (Fonseca’s sculptures at Lake Anne!). Record some of your findings in words and pictures here.

A large rectangular area enclosed by a dashed orange border, intended for students to record their findings in words and pictures.

# CREATE: AT HOME

Create your own imaginary worlds like Gonzalo Fonseca. Visit [www.gonzalofonseca.com](http://www.gonzalofonseca.com) to see some of his sculptures for inspiration!

## WORLD IN A BOX *(All ages, but younger children may need assistance)*

Use the inside of a box (and the outside too!) to invent a miniature world. Imagine who lived there by what things they left behind. What do these objects tell us about them?

Using these materials, decorate and attach items inside and outside of your box. Use scissors to make openings to peek inside this world from different angles. Will you be looking at it from above or from the side?

### MATERIALS:

- A box
- Paint, markers, and crayons
- Paint brushes, scissors, and glue
- Magazines, newspapers, toilet paper and paper towel rolls, cardboard, construction paper, fabric scraps, Q-tips, straws, bottle caps, empty match boxes, rocks, and anything else that would be fun to add.



Photo: Detail of North Shore Drive Underpass

# CREATE: AT HOME

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## MINIATURE UNIVERSE *(All ages, but younger children may need assistance)*

### CARVE AN ANCIENT CITY!

Use your paper and pencil to draw some ideas of what you want your sculpture to look like. What things will you include in your world? Think about the small size of your sculpture. Click [this link](#) for an easy to follow video demonstrating the steps for creating a soap sculpture using the materials listed below. Soap can be tricky to work with so go slowly as you remove pieces.

#### MATERIALS:

- Fresh bar of soap or Dove
- Plastic knife
- Paper clip
- Pencil
- Paper

### SCULPT AN ANCIENT CITY!

Fonseca loved to make elaborate sand sculptures on family beach vacations. Create your own imaginary city with curving walls, winding staircases, hidden openings, cubes, pyramids, suns, moons – the sky is the limit! Use your sculpting materials and tools to make shapes that you will place on your cardboard base. Paint and decorate the cardboard to enhance your artwork.

#### MATERIALS:

- A sturdy piece of cardboard at least 12" x 12"
- Playdough or air-dry clay (search the internet for easy homemade recipes)
- Plastic utensils, rubber stamps, pencils, dixie-cups, and whatever else you could use to mold 3D forms.

### BUILD A LOST CITY!

Build your own archaeological site. For this, you can use whatever buildable material you have around the house - Legos, construction blocks, empty shoe boxes, popsicle sticks, newspaper, string, etc. Use these items to construct your imaginary world!

#### MATERIALS:

- Building blocks
- Legos
- Cardboard
- Whatever buildable material that helps you create your vision!

Photo: Detail of *North Shore Drive Underpass*



# CREATE: AT LAKE ANNE



## FILL A NOTEBOOK:

If possible, have each person in your group take a pencil and pad of paper to Lake Anne when you visit the sculptures (or use the space provided below). Make quick drawings and write down any ideas that come into your mind as you look. After you look and record your thoughts, find a spot to sit and share what you have observed.

While you are walking around the sculptures, talk about what they make you **FEEL, THINK, and WONDER:**

- What are some of the first things you notice as you walk around these sculptures?
- Do any of the shapes remind you of different types of buildings?
- Do you recognize other familiar objects? How would you describe them?
- What things seem strange?
- How many different types of openings can you find? What kinds of things can you see inside or through them?
- What would you like to ask Fonseca about his work?

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a dashed orange border. The corners of the box are rounded. This area is intended for students to draw and take notes during their visit to Lake Anne.

# WORDS TO KNOW

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- Archaeologist:** Someone who studies history through the excavation of sites, artifacts, and other physical remains
- Artifact:** Man-made object of cultural or historical interest or significance
- Excavate:** To dig to uncover artifacts, fragments, etc.
- Fragment:** In archaeology, it refers to a broken piece of a man-made object
- Niche:** Shallow opening often in a wall and used for holding an object
- Play Sculpture:** Interactive spaces to spur the imagination
- Polymath:** Someone who knows a lot about many different things
- Public Art:** Any artwork purposefully made for and placed in a public site and accessible to everyone
- Pylon:** Type of tower or pillar — it might mark an entrance or gateway to a site
- Sculpture:** Three-dimensional artwork that can be representative or abstract
- Three-Dimensional:** Objects with length, height and depth



Find and draw the shapes you see in the *Sun Boat* (pictured here)!

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Photography — Charlotte Geary Photography, Public Art Reston,  
and Robert Webb  
Film and videography — Storycatcher Productions

Public Art Reston seeks to inspire an ongoing commitment to public art and create a new generation of artworks in Reston.

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[publicartreston.org](http://publicartreston.org)

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