

Pillars of Belonging Pillars of Othering

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Summary

American public education fulfills the mission of instilling a national narrative in the American public. But on the topic of the Holocaust it leaves little but questions. In the decades that have past since the tragedy of WWII much thought and research has been done towards understanding the forces that created it, however. The confluence of the destruction of the first world war, the shell shock of the trenches, the financial chaos that followed, and the psychological phenomenon of mass formation all made the Weimar republic susceptible to totalitarianism and hate. Sociologically and psychologically it was the worst example in recorded history of an imbalance of the necessary mental mechanics of Belonging and Othering.

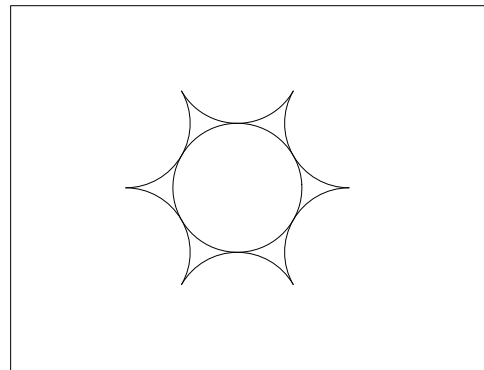
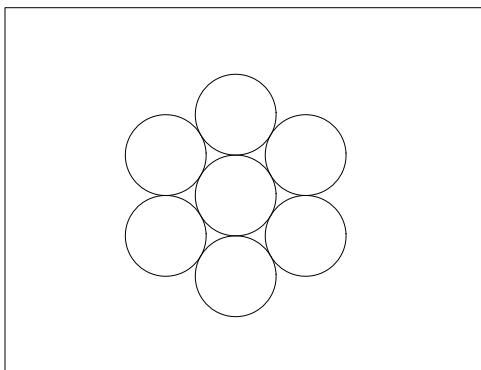
The Pillars of Belonging and Othering are an interpretation of the Kabbalah's Tree of Life using only the sefiroth from the Pillar of Severity and the Pillar of Mercy. This references the historical extremes of the Holocaust and the many factors that made it possible. It just as strongly references the helpers and heroes of the epoch that weaved hope, humanity and grace to assist survivors to bring their stories forward; the arcs that connect the six Pillars reference the balance between discernment and love, risk and preservation, freedom and safety.

The Monument is intended to be minimally invasive, to allow maximum space for gardens and emphasize the ecology of belonging- it is thousands of human relationships and interrelations with the plants, animals, weather and waters that form our place in the world and time. Its construction- curved railroad ties, concrete or granite pillars- will weather all conditions for generations while being unobtrusive; it will generate a sense of belonging and an engaging language for discussing and parsing the difficulties of life for all who engage with it.

What history has taught us is that genocide happens and can happen anywhere. The Holocaust was an echo of past traumas and a foreshadowing of how horribly wrong modern societies can go. Therefor, it is incumbent upon every generation to not only remember, but to practice the wise and balanced application of Belonging and Othering, Mercy and Severity. The best way to memorialize the lost lives of children is to illuminate the enculturation of ongoing generations, both through memory and practice.

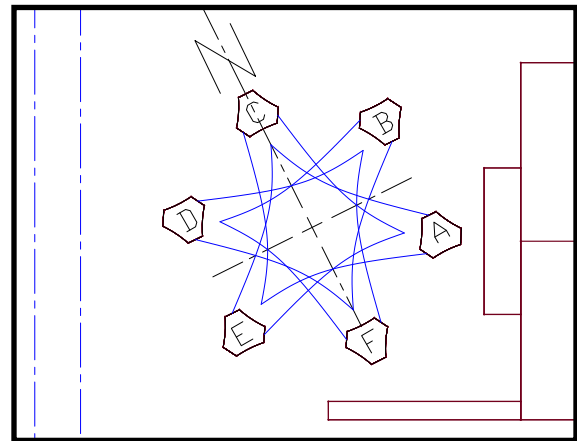
Geometric Analysis

The basis of the design is the six Pillars in the shape of the space between the seven circles which form the Seed of Life



The twelve arcs which create the body of the work form a single Star of David when viewed along the vertical axis (from above or below), but from other angles resemble a bird's nest, jungle gym, or an unfinished basket.

The twelve arcs form two unfinished Stars of David when projected onto the ground plane. These two Stars are separated by a 19 degree rotation, which is the angular distance between two ends of the pillars.

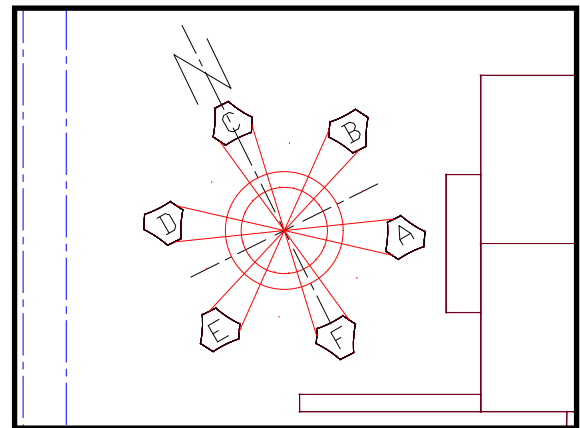


[Floor plan layer:geo4, pylon]

Each of the twelve arcs has just one anchor point on a pillar, and the hanging end of one arc is supported by an arc from the alternate Star. These hanging mutual supports ("Joints") are all set on a mutual horizontal plane at 7' above the inner diameter

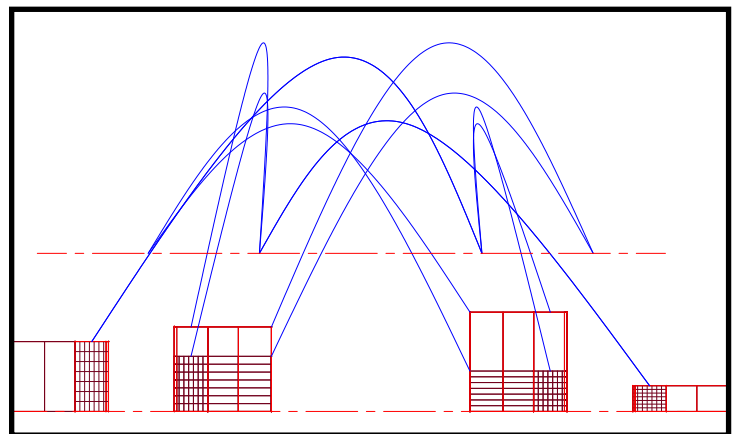
The six Pillars that support the arcs are set to the exterior of the perimeter of a 12' diameter circle, and have an 8" incremental increase in height across the six Pillars for a total of 4' gain in height above ground plane.

This makes the distance between the Joints and the Pillars vary between 6'8" and 2'8" to create space for the growth and development of children in tradition.



[Floor Plan Layer: geo3]

The Pillars nestle into the existing grade so that the tops are clearing the grass by only an inch or two, but for the highest Pillar which rises about a foot above the planned recreational path. This gives the arcs the appearance of floating in space, with the only obvious support being the single Pillar (Hod) which creates curiosity and a drive for inquiry in observers.

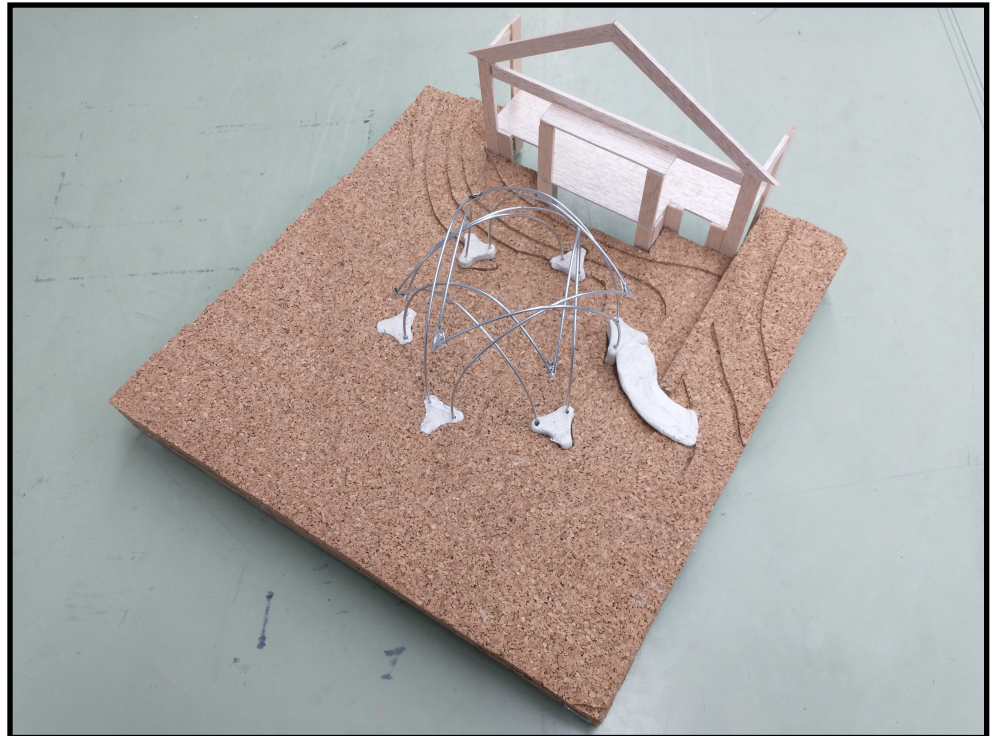


[elevation N/S]

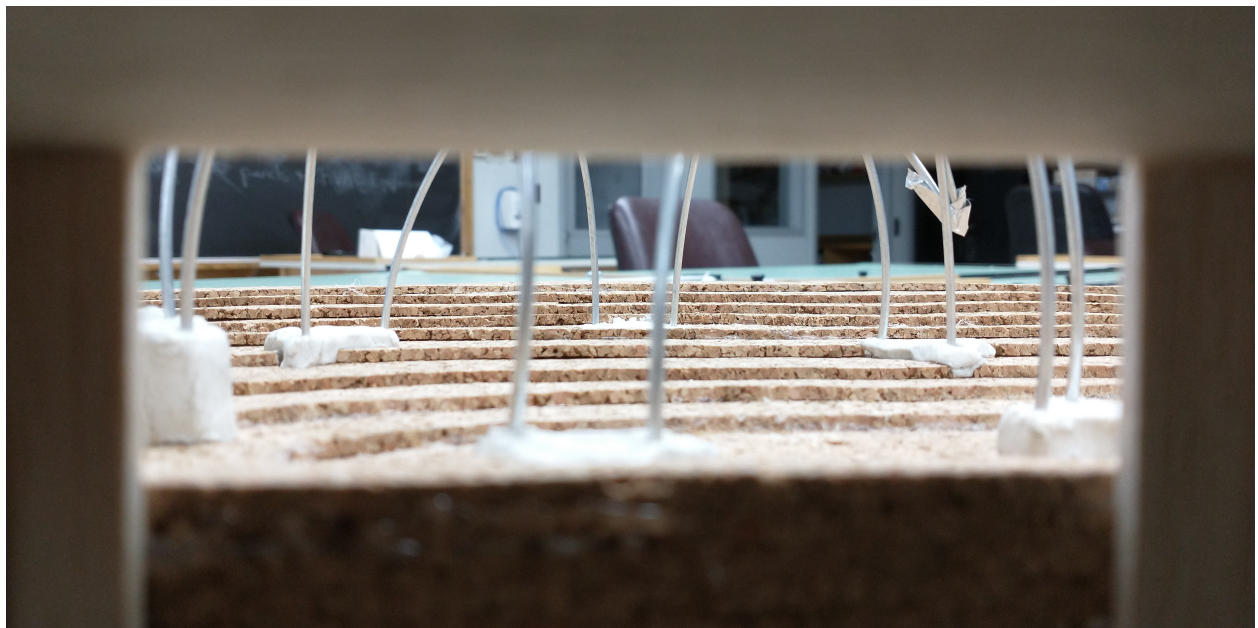
[Street View]



[Arial View]



[View from
Basement]



Symbolic Analysis

Since the Arcs attempt to connect alternating pillars they nearly recreate the original pillars of Jachin and Boaz through steel rails. In their interruption at the Joints they reveal the positive feedback loop that sociological phenomena rely upon, as each arc is joined to another from the same pillar. This enjoins us to cross the center and strike the balance between extrema. We must be active and engaged participants in both culture and history at large, as individuals and communities, in order to prevent atrocities. To connect with the Arcs is a symbol of connection to Tradition, learning from its discernment and wisdom, and leaning into its familiarity and strength of identity. But they are also a symbol of ossification, bureaucracy, being put on rails. In this, it re-impresses the continuous active engagement and fluid sway between discernment and compassion that is present in a healthy society.

There are a few more universal symbols in the basic design. North and south, representing insight and action respectively, are indicated clearly by the pillars Chesed and Hod. East and West, representing future/youth/dawn/coming light and past/old age/sunset/fleeing light respectively, are open channels to symbolize the creation of culture and tradition through the present moment. If desired, the monument easily allows for a permanent path from the playground to the rec path or gardens to the SW, with the only straight section passing through the center to accentuate this aspect of East and West.

Upon analysis and reflection I realize the design is intended to be used similarly to the Native American medicine wheel tradition, in which one dances through four quadrants (laid out in the four cardinal directions) with movement towards the center meaning introspection and movement towards the perimeter meaning outward action in the manner suggested by the cardinal direction it takes place in. Gestures towards the sky and ground represent the immaterial and material, respectively. This encourages the acknowledgment of the importance of developing an inward life, and puts its communal practice front and center. It also balances our weighing of the material and immaterial, and encourages our full exercise of all dimensions of our freedom. Fortunately, Judaism is no stranger to circular dances!

Chokmah- Mercy- Pillar **A**
Wisdom, Cosmos
Vision of God Face to Face

Binah- Severity- Pillar **B**
Understanding, Void
Vision of Sorrow

Chesed- Mercy- Pillar **C**
Mercy, Grace, Lovingkindness
Vision of Love

Gevurah- Severity- Pillar **D**
Courage, Might, Judgement
Vision of Power

Netzach- Mercy- Pillar **E**
Everlasting, Victory, Shine
Vision of Beauty

Hod- Severity- Pillar **F**
Awe, Glory, Truthfulness
Vision of Splendor

