



—
36

SUMMER
2012

—

A 'Granite Landscape'

JESÚS MOROLES' RED GRANITE SCULPTURES
SETTLE INTO NEW HOME AT VAIL'S FORD PARK

by Molly Eppard – Art in Public Places coordinator, town of Vail



The serenity of Vail’s Ford Park serves as the new home for the timeless sculptural art installation “Granite Landscape” by internationally renowned artist Jesús Moroles. With the Gore Creek and Vail Mountain as a backdrop, there is a harmonious connection between the sculptural elements and the nature it represents. The relation between the art and earth is achieved.



OPPOSITE PAGE
THE WEDGE SHAPED
GRANITE BENCH IN
MOROLES’ “GRANITE
LANDSCAPE” SUITS
ALL AGES

BELOW
THE NINE-FOOT-
TALL SCULPTURE
“STRATA” REPRESENTS
THE MOUNTAINS
GEOLOGICAL
FORMATIONS

WITH THE AMPHITHEATER-LIKE setting and a number of granite benches, it serves as the perfect gathering place for people to enjoy community activities, peaceful contemplation, or a simple game of hide and seek. Its non-obstructive design complements the natural venue. Visitors appreciate the interactive nature of the exhibit. Created from red granite, the material and vertical elements echo the mountains that embrace it from all directions.

Moroles creates a sense of atmosphere and space with “Granite Landscape.” One can wander through the installation and peer through the pillars to the Gore Creek, or sit upon a bench and gaze at the majestic Gore Range.

“Granite Landscape” was originally acquired by the town of Vail in 1998, and placed at the top of Bridge Street. The sculptures were relocated to Ford Park in Vail during the fall of 2011.

“I really like the new placement of the granite plaza, the setting in nature, river and mountains is a perfect surrounding,” Moroles says. “It captures a feeling that the granite landscape has always belonged there.”

The three free-standing sculptures are titled “Strata,” “The Fang” and “Gore Creek.” “Strata” is the tallest sculptural element, standing at nine-foot tall, and represents the valley’s geological rock formations in its roughly hewn, horizontally patterned texture. “The Fang,” an East Vail winter ice climbing attraction and a popular summer waterfall, is



LEFT
THE CREW FROM
ICON, INC. OF AVON
PREPARE THE BASE FOR
THE AMPHITHEATER-
LIKE SETTING OF THE
INSTALLATION.

RIGHT
JESÚS MOROLES
CHISELS A PORTION OF
"GRANITE LANDSCAPE"
ON SITE IN FORD
PARK DURING THE
INSTALLATION IN FALL
OF 2011.

represented with a highly polished arc that contrasts with the sculpture's natural rocky texture on the opposite side. Finally, an interactive wedge-shaped bench portraying a fish is symbolic of Gore Creek, to which "Granite Landscape" is now adjacent.

By combining both the polished and coarse textures of granite, Moroles reveals the beauty of this robust material, from the pristine elegance represented in the "Gore Creek's" highly polished finish to the rugged permanence in the more rough textures. With state of the art tools, and his bare hands, Moroles transformed what is nature's hardest stone. Each mark is thoughtful and intentional.

The son of Mexican immigrants, Moroles was born in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1950. He was enrolled in art classes as a young boy and received his first commissions when he was 13 years old. After enlisting in the Air Force for four years of service, Moroles graduated from North Texas State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1978. He apprenticed for a year with sculptor Luis Jimenez, and the following year he worked in Carrara, Italy. In 1981, Moroles opened his studio in Rockport, Texas, where

he presently resides. The massive working studio encompasses three city blocks of this Gulf Coast town and is truly a family-run operation.

Over the course of Moroles' career, his achievements have steadily grown, and he's garnered major recognition for his work. In 2008 the National Endowment for the Arts awarded him the National Medal of Arts Award, which was presented by President George W. Bush. This is the highest award given to artists and arts patrons by the United States government. He now joins the ranks of Georgia O'Keefe, Willem de Kooning, Jasper Johns and Andrew Wyeth, to mention only a few of the other visual artists who have received this honor. In 2011, he was the recipient of the Texas State 3D Artist of the Year.

His work is included in many major private, corporate, public and museum collections throughout the world. More than 300 of his pieces have been celebrated worldwide in museum and gallery exhibitions and 2,000 are in collections throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Mexico and North America. Moroles recently completed his largest granite plaza to date in China, at the Shanghai Zizhu Science-based Industrial Park.



Photo Special to Art

PRESIDENT GEORGE W.
BUSH PRESENTED JESÚS
MOROLES WITH THE THE
NATIONAL MEDAL OF ARTS
AWARD IN 2008



THE HIGHLY POLISHED SURFACE OF "THE FANG" SYMBOLIZES THE EAST VAIL WATERFALL THAT TRANSFORMS INTO A POPULAR ICE CLIMBING DESTINATION DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

THE TOWN OF VAIL'S PUBLIC ART COLLECTION INCLUDES 40 WORKS RANGING FROM PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES TO MURALS, PLAYGROUND COMPONENTS AND SITE-INTEGRATED ART. THE COLLECTION MAY BE VIEWED ON AN INTERACTIVE MAP AT ARTINVAIL.COM.

