

REEF IN WAITING

Concept

Sculptural blocks made of concrete and recycled building rubble stand strewn along a path in the woods in north-western Holland. Holes in the blocks make it possible to look inside, and later provide passageways or footholds for marine fauna and flora. On placards descriptions and photos of subtropical fish that will one day live in the North Sea. An artificial reef grows in the woods.

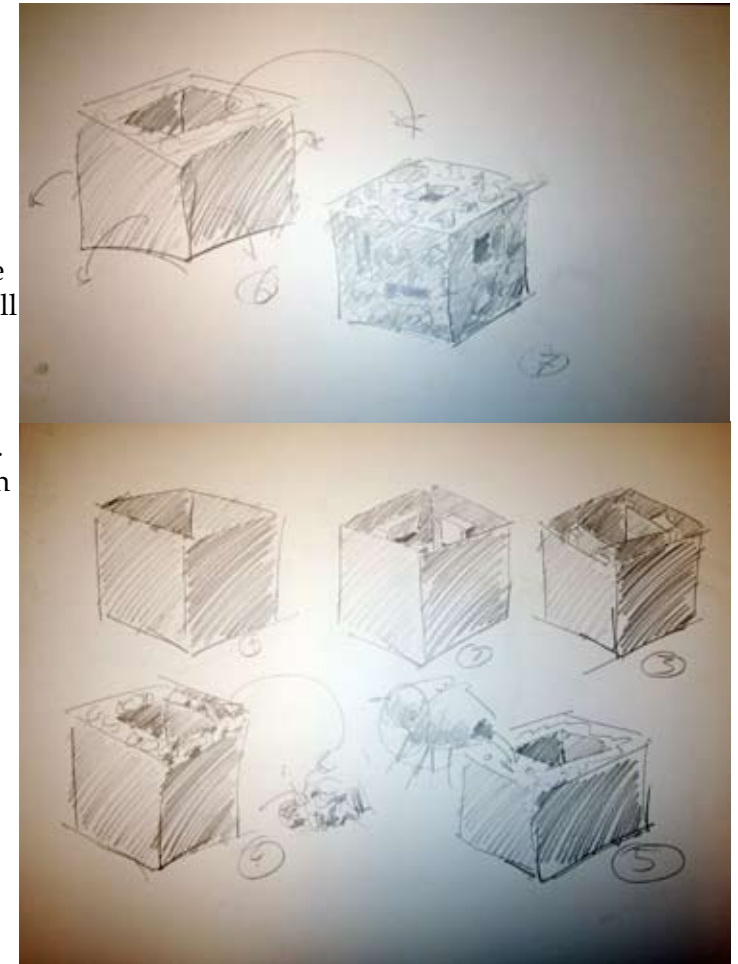
Conceptually the reef is a work examining the poetic qualities of a fundamentally unstable area. The reef lies behind sea barriers and the Dutch dyke system. This land was reclaimed from the sea through human ingenuity, but now human activities are changing the climate, sea levels will rise, and the tide has literally turned. The Dutch government has already determined that this land will be relinquished back to the sea.

The reef anticipates these changes. And when the sea takes back this land the reef offers a habitat for fish and other animals. Until that time visitors can walk along the reef, read the placards, and anticipate not only the submerging of the land beneath the water but the change in species as the average temperature of the water rises. Already species native to southern Europe are moving northward.

Construction

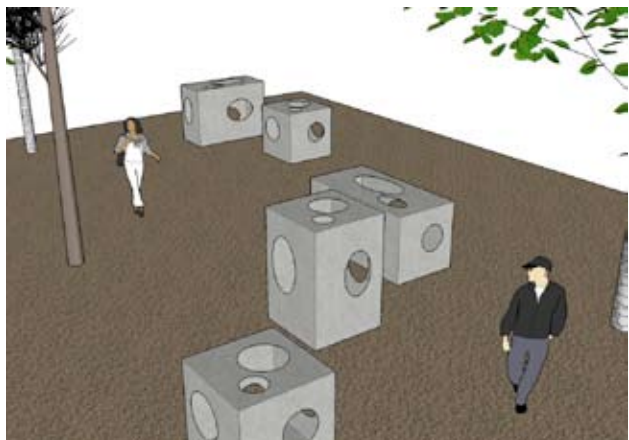
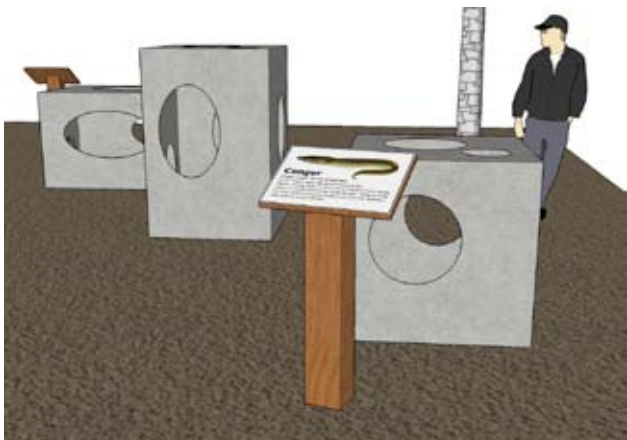
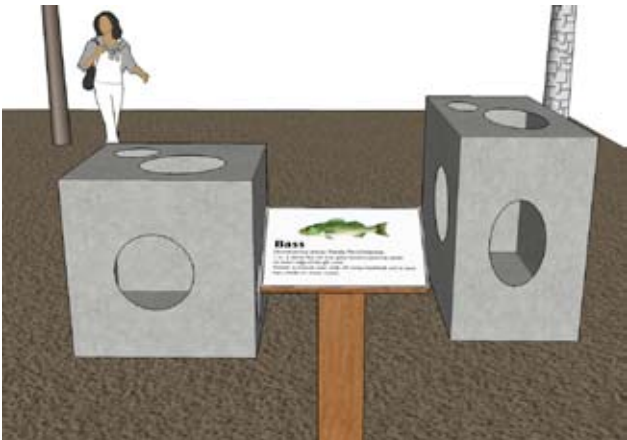
Artificial reefs must be able to resist the strength of the ocean and corrosive salt water for many years. Reinforced concrete is the most suitable material, but as ecological art the reef also wants building rubble and other recycled detrius material that can be mixed with the concrete and still be structurally sound. The use of recycled materials is not just a philosophical requirement but also an aesthetic and conceptual statement.

The modules of the Reef in Waiting can vary in form and scale. Variation makes the reef more interesting, and indeed there should be some measure of improvisation during construction. The form should be aesthically captivating while also providing an alternating biotope for the flora and fauna that will one day inhabit the sculptures.



Julian H. Scaff
email: julian@jscaff.com
<http://www.jscaff.com>

REEF IN WAITING



REEF IN WAITING

