

Urban life rockefeller park promotes political ideology research paper examples

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Tribeca is a neighborhood in Manhattan' Upper East Side. Though the area has a storied history dating back hundreds of years, it is one of the most posh areas to live. The crux of the neighborhood is Nelson A. Rockefeller Park, which is an open green area at the north end of Battery Park.

Prominent in the park is an open-air pavilion that was the design of Demetri Porhyrios. The park's function is served of providing Upper East Siders, and visitors a place to jog, fish, have a place to read a book, and also to take their kids with the recently added playground. While the park gets plenty of use, and is enjoyed for multiple recreational activities the current policies restricting it's use, such as the banning of dogs, keeps more people from enjoying it to it's maximum and seems to go against the politically critiquing sculpture art designed by American sculpture Tom Otterness. The park's sculptures depict greedy capitalists and praises bohemia, while the parks function and regulations essentially work against the free expression of resisting political and economic tyranny depicted it its sculptures. In my view the function of a park is to escape the urban context while living an urban life. Like a terrarium recreating an artificial environment, different parks achieve this to different degrees. This park, fails to provide a very convincing escape though, and feels like it does not obstruct the realities of urban life that it is the purpose of parks to hide.

The park was named after the former governor of New York, Nelson A. Rockefeller. David Gordon, from the Department of Urban Planning and Design in New York called Battery Park a " triumph of urban design and is considered to be one of the success stories of American urban redevelopment planning." (Gordon, 1). Gordon has written about the

struggle and financial issues that delayed the park's development. An exploration of this is beyond the scope of this essay, so it only is worth mentioned to realize that when viewing and analyzing the current park that it was the result of committed individuals of vision who trudged through the hardships to make the park happen.

Battery Park consists of several parks made by different design teams and each distinct from one another. Rockefeller Park has most of Battery Park's open lawns it has designed plantings, public art, and a sheltered pavilion and has the largest playground for kids of the park. It also has amenities such as restrooms located in the Solair Building. The Parkhouse loans out equipment during the warm season of May to October and year round provides information about activities and events to the public.

The base plan is restricted by the river, which adds a picturesque viewing from the walking, running, biking trails. One of the nature features that the park's open spaces caters to the natural position of the park along the Hudson River. This openness allows for great viewing of the Jersey skyline at any time of the day, but a more pronounced view at the sunset hour in the evening. When clouds are on the horizon the light reflects off both the clouds and the waters and off some of the buildings, creating a colorful pallet of the horizon. It also offers picturesque views of sailboats.

There are a number of that encourage picnics, or people to bring their lunch and also many of the table have a build in chess board encouraging people to participate in this leisurely activity. One of the most striking features of the park is a carousel, which is reminiscent of the previous century.

The build environment creates a hardscape that features stone steps

boarded by columns up to a pavilion and a brick ground lay that is enhanced by various sculptures, cement trails, and a playground. Ecology wise, the park is host to plenty of squirrels and various seasonal birds, pigeons likes much of New York having a strong showing. The stone walls boarder a point that in the summer months features various seasonal waterfall which come, as well as planted aquatic plants and a stone wall that water flows over creating a comforting white noise in the background of the bustle of people moving through the park, kids playing and the city noises coming from Manhattan.

The lawns are used in the summer time for picnics, and also the city hosts concerts of various musical persuasions. The lawns are alongside the stone paths and feature benches that overlook the Hudson. In one direction is the skyline of Manhattan's Upper East Side and in the other the Hudson. What is most striking is the political statement that that park serves to make from its sculptures. Battery park is located right by New York City's financial district. Wall street is the biggest market exchange in the world, and recently as well as historically, there have been plenty of criticisms leveled against it at how corporate greed has hurt the bottom line of every day Americans. A close look at these sculptures sees that they have a common theme of parodying the current economic system in the United States, which has its hub in New York City's financial district.

The sculptures exist in a sculpture park within a park that is a park within a series of parks. These bronze sculptures consist of the "The Real World" was installed in 1992 and was created by Tom Otterness, whose other work appears throughout the city and at various subway stops. It is also called "

Penny Park” named after one of the sculptures. The theme is clear, money, and money money. It is surprising that the financial powers that be have allowed such a stark criticism so close to their home playing field of Wallstreet.

According to Brenson Michaels of The New York times, Otterness’s art in the Real World installation of Rockefeller park is a " a broad social allegory on art and life, where the games of power and control are played out in miniature by Otterness's adorable and cunning charactersan imaginative park with things to touch and stories to invent."

This seems like soft-selling the sculptures, which depict dramatic narratives aimed at the political status quo and the resistance against the powers that be. In one of the sculptures there are plump men in suits are carrying a bound and gagged big cat-like creature who is tense and looking. They plump men are meant to represent Wall Street men, and they are taking control of a wild animal against its will. This can be seen to represent how in the march to progress the victims were wildlife, native people and natural environments that stood in the way of coveted resources. This park, like all parks, a reaction against such progress that strips land of its natural characteristics. Both national parks and city parks are aimed at remedying the urbanization connected with progress. A park gives back to people what progress and society has taken away. Otterson’s sculptures tell these stories.

In another sculpture, called “ Food Chain” the same cat instead of being bound is free and can be seen stalking an innocent looking bird. Near him, a capitalist seems to be pulling a lever, allowing this hunting to happen.

The sculpture are along a trail inlaid with footprints and pennies. It is sometimes called " penny park" due to a sculpture depicting penny in which two capitalist in top hats and holding goblets had climbed at the bottom are skinner people in simpler clothes who are clambering to climb to the top, but are stuck at the bottom. These pennies continue to a fountain, where there are piles of sculptured pennies and people literally drowning, underwater, within the fountain. Near the playground, there are sculptures that surely some parents have had issue having their kids around. One of these is a severed head lying on the ground. In another sculpture is a large clenched fist holding on to a woman trapped within the clench.

I have explored the artwork at depth, because this is the defining characteristic of Rockefeller Park that set it aside from other parks composing Battery park. It goes to the heart of our country ideals, and the realism with which they are played out. The United States has been guilty of exploitation of other peoples of the world, citizens exploiting citizens and people for profit, and in the march to progress losing site of the natural environment.

The question remains of whether or not that this park, which is overtly advocating against these things is guilty of being part of the very same system it is against. The park has restriction on the hours in which it can be accessed, it bars dogs, and due to a recent New York City Law, it also bans street performers busking within the park in order to make a living. While this is not characteristically different than other parks in the area, it is interesting since Rockefeller Park seems to be advocating against big powers controlling citizens. The sculpture park, the most striking feature of the park

has a strong political message. Yet, Rockefeller park, while it is named after a Governor and not J. D. Rockefeller, bears the name of one of the richest elite industrial capitalist that Tom Otterness advocates against in his artwork. While rallying against it, he is apart of that system. As Rockefeller Park is very much a part of the financial district. It advocates for the level of freedom that many patrons of the parks do not enjoy.

What is most interesting about this though, is the realization that parks can in addition to help giving a natural environment to an urban society, can also be used to advocate a certain political philosophy. This park serves a political ideology as well as being part of the urban renewal movement. Art and architecture in addition to having a form that can serve a function can also be set up in a way to promote ideas.

Work Cited

" Tom Otterness >> Exhibitions." Tom Otterness >> Exhibitions. N. p., n. d. Web. 5 Dec. 2013. .