

Summit Variations

Johanna Grawunder

Art Proposal for Fitch Mountain

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Introduction

Fitch Mountain, this natural, cultural, historical resource that stands guard over Healdsburg, The Russian River, and the surrounding valleys, demands a very special sort of consideration. Protection of nature, cultural acknowledgment, respect for tradition, and an opportunity for accessible recreation and community building are the necessary and thoughtful objectives stated by the Fitch Mountain Arts Commission. Any intervention (art) should be a welcomed and eventually beloved part of the Fitch mountain trails and the "Fitch Experience."

As an artist and designer, my approach to Fitch Mountain has been to try to understand what the mountain wants and what it can sustain. And then to look to the community and ask the same.

In the proposal-making process of the last few weeks, which consisted of many hikes up the

mountain, much designing, drawing, thinking and contemplation of what it means to put something "human-caused" in nature, my initial intuition, after much go-around, just kept being confirmed: functional art. Interactive Art-design. Gift-art and community-building art to enhance the experience of getting to the Summit. And to create a place and destination for the community.

To that goal, the proposal consists of five functional sculptures sited around the top of the summit trail. Each sculpture is designed for a different experience to give users choices. The names describe each "suggested" experience: Lookout Bench, Skyview Chaise, Mountainview Chaise, Loveseat, and Picnic Platform.

It is an honor to present this proposal for the Fitch Mountain Art Project.

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Johanna Grawunder



Project Narrative: Key Considerations

Nature

Nature was consulted in this design. In a process of positive design-by-committee, the trees, ferns, bushes, birds, animals, that is -the "flora and fauna" of the mountain-all had a say in the project.

On a bright day, there is an occasional effect of bioluminescence that comes from dappled light on ferns. The tableaux effect is a stunning contrast of blackened shards of fertile wood, aging grey faded trees blending into the backdrop, dark and light green bushes and the aforementioned sun-dappled ferns that look absolutely luminous. It is a masterful (existing) color palette.



Culture

The cultural significance of the Pomo Nation and other indigenous influences in Sonoma County and specifically on Fitch Mountain is important. Past, present and future- Fitch Mountain is not an island, it is an interwoven part of the indigenous community. The patterns shown on the sculptures are inspired by Pomo Nation basket works with the hope of celebrating and acknowledging this cultural patrimony. The small pieces that form the patterns serve as extra structural strength between the slats. In other words, these patterns are not just decorative but are the heart and soul of the sculptures.



Tradition

There is a strong tradition of functional sculpture in natural parks. From the earliest large logs rolled over onto stones, the beauty of a wilderness park bench is its incongruity (a bench up here?), its appreciated functionality

(oooooh a bench!) and its unavoidable tendency to become one with nature, eventually. Wood planks fade to grey and the edges round-off over time. This natural ageing and settling in is a poetic process that should be embraced.

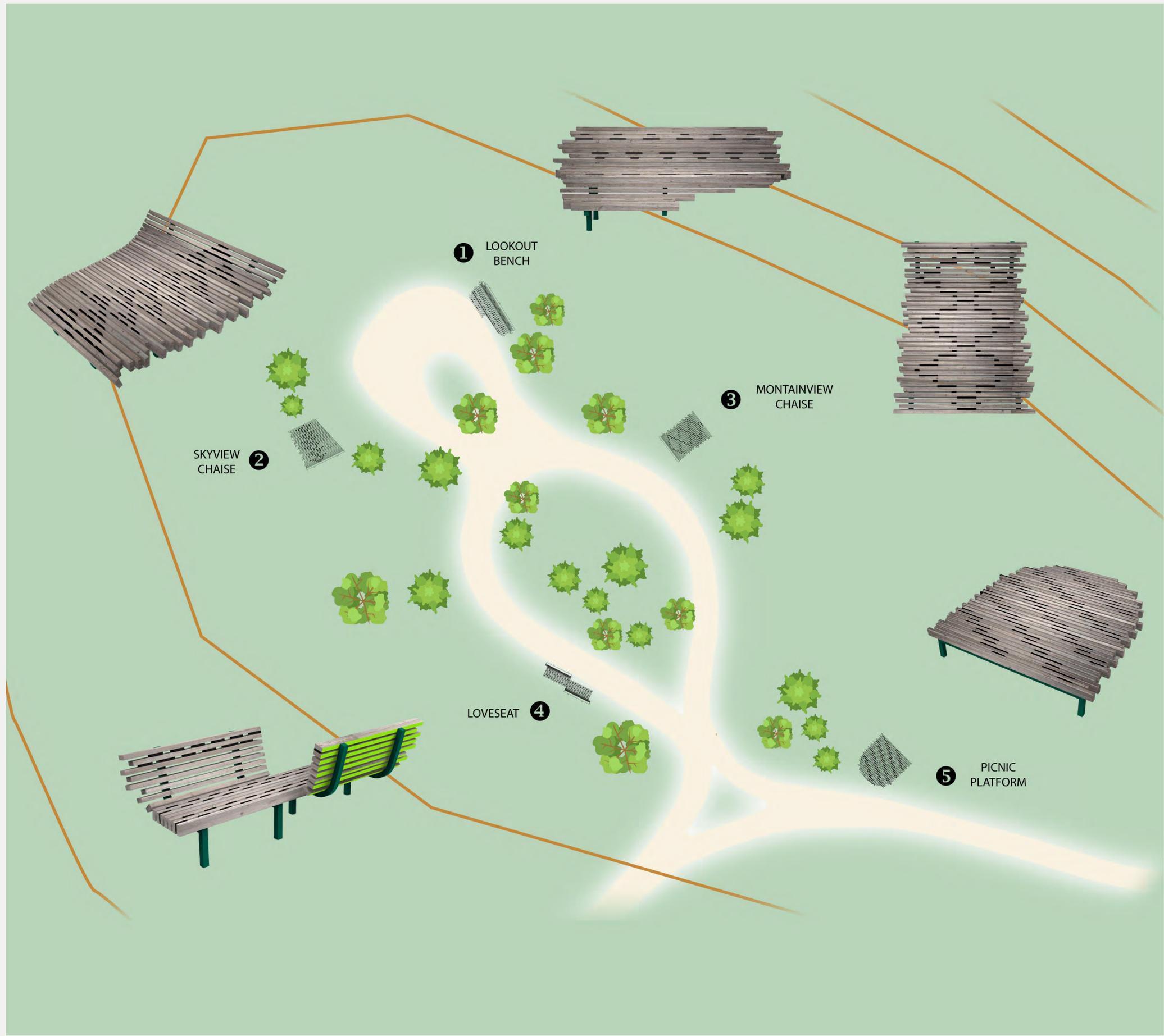


Community

Who owns a mountain? Squatters rights really. That means, the people, animals and nature that use the mountain feel ownership. And that is why Fitch Mountain is beloved and enjoyed by the community: the easy access, unpretentious vibe, orienting views, the well-cared for trails and the lush layers of natural history which include trees, fallen trees, moss, ferns, creatures, and light and shadow.

The proposed functional sculptures for the summit of Fitch Mountain are not precious artifacts. They are sculptural in form and concept, but they are also built sturdy, in materials of the place, with a color palette of the place, and provide a gift to anyone who wants to rest, meditate, nap, picnic, chat, gaze, study, or otherwise just be in the place. Because there are five proposed pieces, they will help define a place, become a destination, and also form an improvised community at any given time.





Description

The five proposed sculptures are variations on a simple construction system: welded 2"x2" tubular steel frames with a powder-coated finish in vernacular "Bridge Green". 2"x4" redwood or cedar slats placed on end at 1" apart form the ergonomic surface. An embedded decoration in dark wood appears in the 1" gaps. The back of the slats are painted with bright "fern-in-sunlight" green to give a slight glow under the sculptures. 2"x2" Tubular "grade-beams" are welded between the verticals of the frames to maintain structural rigidity and work as an in-ground foundation for each sculpture. In this way, the sculptures can be prefabricated off-site and installed with minimal disturbance to the topography. Instead of concrete footings or foundations, in most cases, the tubular frames/grade-beams would be set into trenches dug carefully into the ground and back-filled. This will be enough.

Place

As the sculptures quickly fade to pale grey and become visually one with the landscape, the woven-in patterns, indigenous cultural interpretive references, will become more visible. As the new pieces get lighter, the cultural significance becomes stronger.

Mostly, the sites proposed are existing burn-pile sites, flat areas chosen already by fire-smart experts. The pieces are level but situated into the irregular landscape. Close to the trail but not always on it exactly. Not occupying the center of the peak, (that is for the trees and their roots), but instead the sculptures occupy the perimeter- in a protective embrace.

The existing bench at the overlook is a wonderful gift. As the trail and summit are used more and more, this lovely bench is just not enough, and it currently occupies most of the end clearing. We propose to move the bench to the "overlook" trail spike further east, which sorely needs a bench overlooking the valley, and install this small collection of more options, for privacy, seating, overlooking and gazing, not just at the town and river below, but also to the sky.



1. Lookout Bench and Skyview Chaise

(Sculptures 1 & 2)



1. Lookout Bench



2. Skyview Chaise



3. Mountain View



4. Love Seat



5. Picnic Platform

Relevant Projects



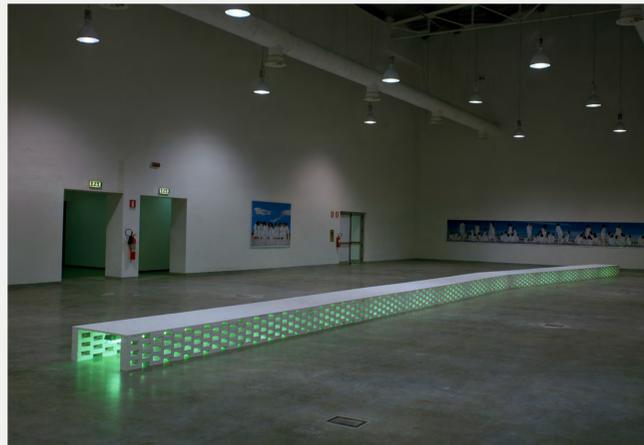
1. View Finder Lounge. 2004.
Stained and painted wood, concrete. 8' x 8' x 2'-6". Parco delle Madonie, Sicily, Italy. One of seven works by artists and designers commissioned for permanent installation in the public park. \$ 30,000 production and design.
<https://www.grawunder.com/view-finder-lounge>



2. WHO Bench (5W's). 2014.
Welded and painted steel with green LED light. 10' x 2'-4" x "1'-4". Public Art commission in San Francisco with artist Ana Teresa Fernandez using the 5 "W's" relating to the SF Chronicle building. \$5,000 production



3. Motocross Tokyo. 2006-2007.
Steel structure benches with outdoor upholstered finishes and perimeter LED light. Various playground pavements. Roppongi Hills, Tokyo. Permanent installation design of street furniture and surrounding area. Approx. \$ 445,000 production and design fee.
<https://www.grawunder.com/motocross-1>



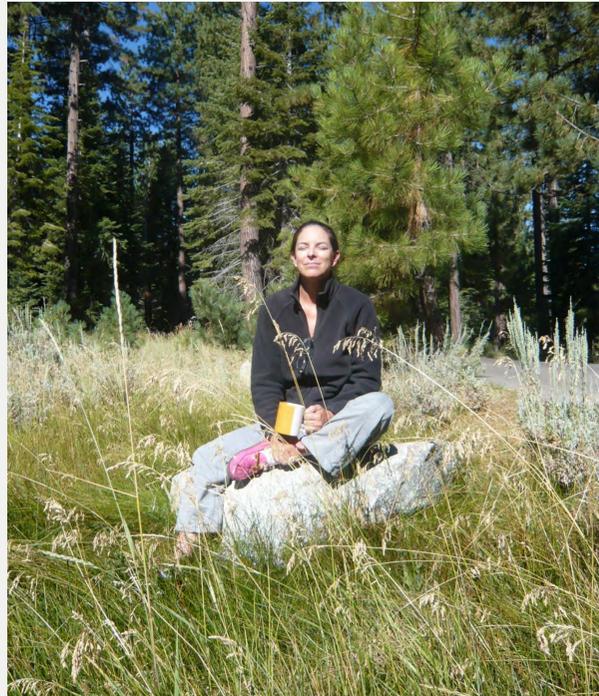
4. Division by Zero. 2007.
Painted bricks and green fluorescent light. 75' x 4' x 1'-4". Florence, Italy. Installation for the exhibition "Genoma-X" curated by Sergio Risaliti in Quartiere 3. \$3,000 production.
<https://www.grawunder.com/division-by-zero>



5. Perf Bench. 2008.
Painted, perforated steel and two fluorescent light tubes. American Academy in Rome. One of the pieces in the collection "Davos Dilemma" presented at the Academy. Davos Dilemma was an exhibition in dialogue with other art pieces by Rob Pruitt. \$3,000 production.
<https://www.grawunder.com/davos-dilemma2>



6. Office Chair for the New Economy. 2006.
Exterior upholstered slats on tubular steel frame with LED street glow. 7' x 7' x 2'-6". Solo exhibition "New Positions: Office Furniture for the New Economy". Gallery Roberto Giustini. Production cost \$15,000. Permanent Collection Los Angeles County Museum LACMA.



Johanna Grawunder

Designer/artist Johanna Grawunder works on a broad range of projects, from large-scale public art, lighting and color installations, architectural interventions and interiors, to limited-edition furniture and light-art collections and private bespoke commissions.

Trained as an architect, she incorporates architectural principles and scale, non-precious building materials and high technology research into her designs. Her work is included in many museum permanent collections, including the LACMA, SFMOMA, Fine Arts Museum Houston, the Art Institute of Chicago and MAD in Paris.

With a degree in Architecture from California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo, she studied and worked with Gianni Pettena and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia of Superstudio in Florence (1984-1985) then moved to Milan to work with Sottsass Associati (1985-2001), becoming a partner in 1989. At Sottsass Associati she was involved primarily with architecture and interiors, co-designing with Ettore Sottsass, many of the firm's most prestigious projects.

In 2001 she opened her own design studio in San Francisco and Milan. In 2018 she was honored as "Designer of Influence" by Collective Design NYC. She has won various WALLPAPER Awards, as well as an Award of Excellence 2020 from EIS for "Coding" a large public art commission for San Francisco Airport (SFO LTPG2).

Since 2016 she has been living happily on Fitch Mountain, in Healdsburg, California, being inspired by the nature and the community and bringing this hyper-awareness of both into her work.

Budget Proposal

1. Fabrication, Transportation, earthwork and Installation on site Includes engineering assistance, materials, labor Pacassa Studios (Paco Prieta)	\$80,000
2. Grawunder Studio expenses Includes Design Development Fabrication supervision (for adherence to design intent) Installation supervision (for proper siting) GL insurance	\$8,000
3. Artist Fee (Johanna Grawunder)	\$8,000
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Total Budget estimate	\$96,000



Thank You

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