“Slow down and let your senses come into focus. To be alive is a condition of having arrived. Enjoy exploring the park and your deeper self.” -- Anthony Caponi
About Caponi Art Park

HISTORY OF CAPONI ART PARK

First conceived in the 1950’s by artist, and Macalester College art professor, Anthony Caponi as an open, natural studio and gallery for his sculpture, Tony began to understand the environment’s potential as a catalyst for communal art experiences.

For the next six decades Tony brought together his skills as an artist, educator, and environmentalist to embark on a labor of love to create the Art Park. In the late 1970’s he was joined by his wife, Cheryl, who shared his passion and commitment for the project. Caponi Art Park was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1992 to preserve and enhance Tony’s vision for generations to come.

Today Caponi Art Park has 18,000 visitors annually and offers a wide variety of family friendly programming. The park is run by Executive Director, Cheryl Caponi, a board of directors, full-time and part-time staff members, seasonal interns and many volunteers.

EXPERIENCE THE ARTS A NEW WAY

This 60-acre sculptured environment was created as a work of art in itself. The meandering trails follow the curves of the topography like contour drawings, retraced and animated by every person who walks on them. The rock walls and shaped hills are the sculpture into which conventional works are integrated.

The grounds are not merely a backdrop for art, but an integrated environment that adds to the experience of the programs and activities in the park. This intentional blending of man-made and natural beauty creates an atmosphere of openness and discovery that makes the arts approachable for everyone.

HOURS

Open:
May - October
Tuesday - Sunday
9 A.M. - 8 P.M.

Closed:
Mondays &
November - April

CONTACT US

Address:
1220 Diffley Road
Eagan, MN  55123
Email:
info@caponiartpark.org
Phone: 651-454-9412
PARK OVERVIEW
Visitors often comment how natural and untouched the park looks. In fact, much of the park has been shaped – at first with a shovel and wheelbarrow and more recently with a Bobcat – with great care and respect for the beauty of nature.

The sculptures on display at the art park are only a small portion of the art works created by Anthony Caponi. The others are in museums, private collections and public buildings.

LEARN MORE!
Sign up for our newsletter to receive updates about the park, programming, and volunteer opportunities!
caponiartpark.org/engage

PARK ETIQUETTE
Go ahead and touch the sculptures, but please be respectful and use your hands. Please do not climb on the park landscapes or walls, especially the moss circles and the snake.

Please help us keep the park clean and place trash and pet waste in the garbage.

Dogs are welcomed at the art park. Please keep your dog leased at all times.

Use of golf carts are for staff only.

DISCOVER THE ART PARK. CONNECT WITH NATURE. NURTURE THE SPIRIT.

PARK ATTRACTIONS
MILES OF TRAILS wind throughout the park’s 60 acres. Walking the trails is the best way to experience this urban oasis. Private tours are available upon request. Please call ahead.

SCULPTURE GARDEN is a work of art in itself with earthworks and sculptures waiting to be discovered along the wooded trails.

THEATER IN THE WOODS is a unique setting for performances nestled in the park’s hilly landscape and surrounded by mature oak trees.

PROGRAMS
Caponi Art Park offers a variety of family-friendly programs that run from June thru October.

- Summer Performance Series
- CAP Super Saturdays
- Yoga in the Park
- Music+Beer
- Hot Art!
- Leaf Fest

More information is available on our website at caponiartpark.org

A list of this year’s programs can be found at the back of this book.
Self-guided Sculpture Tour

Caponi Art Park Sculpture Garden
This sculpture embodies Caponi's search for the inner form of the stone. The desire to find the hidden beauty within is echoed throughout each of his sculptures and the park itself.

This remnant of the Tree of Life marks the beginning of Caponi Art Park. What you see is the concrete reinforcement for the base of a 35 ft. tall sculpture made from a tree that died of Oak wilt. Caponi tried to give this tree new life by carving it into a sculpture but no matter what he did to preserve it, nature and carpenter ants won out.

In 70 A.D. Mount Vesuvius erupted and buried the city of Pompeii preserving the ancient Roman city and its victims for modern viewers. Caponi imagined how people might have responded to the tragedy, huddling together for protection, and like an archeological dig, only part of the subject is visible. The rest is still buried in the hill. Pompeii was modeled in place out of clay, local dirt and cement. Molds were made and cast in Caponi's studio at Macalester College. The finished pieces were then returned to the site.

Made to evoke the warmth of a family of mice hunkered down for the winter. Winter Nesting was originally created in stone. This metal reproduction was cast from a mold made of the original piece. A second copy of this work is in the permanent collection of the Kuopio Art Museum in Kuopio, Finland; a sister city of St. Paul, Minnesota.
5

Struggle of the Elements
1968
Welded metal, stainless steel, fieldstone

By transforming old car bumpers into a work of art, Struggle of the Elements dynamically embodies Caponi's physical strength in the shaping of the metal and his love of stone.

6

Studio
Completed in 1987
Cement block, redwood, concrete

This building was designed and built by Caponi to use as his studio when he retired from teaching at Macalester College. It was constructed in the same way Caponi sculpts, without a formal drawing or blueprint, developing ideas as he went along. The large concrete columns were poured by hand, one wheelbarrow at a time with Caponi's wife mixing the cement that filled the forms. The building was designed for this specific site and is an integral part of the landscape. It is made of simple materials that gain value by the way they are used. Today, the upper floor serves as the Art Park's office. The building is not open to the public.

7

Steel Helmets
1968
Metal helmets, rebar

These are authentic World War Two helmets, the same kind Caponi wore while serving as a US soldier in Italy during WWII. The symmetrical lines suggest the rigidity of military life, the rods through helmets for the cruelty of war and the red paint inside the helmets for blood. This sculpture, using elements from WWII, was made during the Vietnam War. It still resonates today as an ongoing expression of the unchanging nature of war.

8

Snake
1982-2005
Shaped concrete

The snake at Caponi Art Park is like no other in nature with the head of a rattlesnake and the body of an anaconda. The sculpture was shaped directly in place using poured concrete. This material requires quick work as the concrete sets rapidly, and once it's set you can't change it. Consistent with the philosophy of the park, this sculpture is an integral part of the hill that supports the studio.
Skyroot
1965
Recycled auto parts, stainless steel

Skyroot exemplifies Caponi's use of recycled materials. This piece is finished with Caponi's characteristic textured surface that he created by using arc welding rods.

Untitled
1950
Welded copper

This piece was Caponi's first experiment in using welded metal as a sculptural material. Within this piece we can see elements that resonate through all of his works in metal.

11
Nugget
1986
2-ton granite boulder

Nugget is a good example of Caponi's use of stone. The stone's exterior is left almost untouched as he worked the interior to discover its natural variations. The subject matter of the sculpture is the stone itself. The marks left by the tools have become an element of the design.

12
Coiled Perch
2016
By: Korrin Lohmann

Coiled Perch was made possible by a generous donation from the Italian Cultural Center. The functional bench fractures and twists into the ground, echoing the natural decay found throughout the woods in the park.

Lovers
1967
Limestone

Caponi sculpted this limestone boulder as an abstraction of love and fertility. Caponi carved in response to information given him by the stone and coaxed out the form hidden within.

Cornerstone
1971
Red granite

Cornerstone represents the duality of humankind—the intellectual progression of man. On one side cuneiform letters to musical notes in Beethoven's 5th symphony to the mathematics of Einstein's equation. On the other side, the organic, natural forms that still resonate with our caveman nature.
15
Praying Mantis
1967
“Not Your Father’s Cadillac”
Caponi created this work out of 1960’s era Cadillac car parts. The sculpture was originally installed outside a private home in St. Paul. It was stolen in the 1970s, put up for ransom, and then dropped off of a highway bridge. In 2011 the piece was donated to the Art Park, restored and given a permanent home.

16
Bundle
1951
Fieldstone
Intruding as little as possible on the natural shape of the stone, Caponi transformed it into an embracing mother and child. Upon closer examination, the form reveals elements of Cubism, evident in the faces of the figures.

17
Monument to a Lumberjack
1970
Saw blades
When Caponi first purchased this land it was covered with fallen trees. These two-person saw blades were used to clear trails and create a lawn that was the beginning of making the park. After the saw blades were too dull for use, he created this monument to the Lumberjacks that helped to build Minnesota.

18
Trinity
1969
Fieldstone, railroad spikes
This piece evokes the Holy Trinity represented by the three railroad spikes. Caponi pierces the bolder to the heart as he explores the interior of the unyielding material.

19
Adam’s Rib
1957
Reinforced concrete
Caponi manipulated and abstracted forms as he modeled this figure in clay. He later cast it in concrete, an experiment that he hoped would prove concrete to be an affordable, castable and permanent material to stand up to Minnesota’s harsh weather.

20
Walk in Outer Space
1968
Corten steel, rebar, granite
This sculpture was inspired by the first walk in space when the astronauts were connected to the safety of the space capsule by only a thin umbilical cord. Here the umbilical cord wraps around a granite Earth that provides the source of life. While modern technology has removed the need for a physical attachment while in space, our connection to Mother Earth remains unchanged. In the construction of Walk in Outer Space, Caponi used a new “space age” material—CORTEN steel—where the surface rust creates a protective coating for the metal.
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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who runs Caponi Art Park?
A: Caponi Art Park and Learning Center is operated by the Caponi Art Park nonprofit corporation that was founded in 1992. The park is run by a board of directors, full-time and part-time staff, several seasonal interns and many volunteers. To secure the future of Caponi Art Park and Learning Center and to preserve the park land as open space in perpetuity, Caponi Art Park entered into a partnership with the City of Eagan and transferred ownership of the property to the City in 2013. Through this arrangement, the Art Park does not receive any financial support from the City of Eagan. All park operations, programs and funding remain the responsibility of the independent Caponi Art Park corporation.

Q: How much does it cost to visit Caponi Art Park?
A: In keeping with Caponi Art Park’s mission to provide access to the arts, the Art Park and its programs are free to the public. This valuable community asset serves the south metro area and draws visitors from across the region.

We encourage you to make a donation to preserve and invest in Caponi Art Park so that it will thrive for generations to come. You can make an online contribution on our website at caponiartpark.org or place your donation in one of the containers provided in the Art Park. Thank you.

Q: How big is the park?
A: Art Park is a total of 60 acres with 40 acres on the south (parking lot) side of Diffley Road and 20 acres on the north side. The two sections of the park are connected by a pedestrian underpass. There are two miles of wooded walking trails throughout the entire park.

Q: When is the park open?
A: Caponi Art Park is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Sunday from May through October. The gate opens at 9 a.m. Closing times vary with the season and are posted on the website and signs at the park entrance.

Q: Where are the restrooms?
A: All restrooms at Caponi Art Park are portable toilets. An ADA compliant portable toilet is permanently available in the main parking lot and additional restrooms are located on the north and south sides of the Art Park. Please see the map; locations may change.

Q: I want to visit the park with someone with mobility challenges. Is this possible?
A: Caponi Art Park strives to be accessible to people of all abilities. In keeping with the natural aesthetic of the land, park trails are surfaced with compacted dirt or gravel, and some can be very steep. Staff members provide golf cart rides to visitors with special needs during performances. Golf cart tours are available on a limited basis; tours must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance. Please call for more information regarding accessibility.

Q: How can I learn more?
A: Tours are available to groups of 10 or more people Tuesday through Friday from May through October. Volunteers also learn more about the park while donating their time and talents. Subscribe to our enewsletter to receive program updates and other Art Park information. You can sign up for the enewsletter at the visitor information tables. Provide your mailing address and we’ll send you our annual program calendar and other materials in the mail.
Thank you for visiting Caponi Art Park. Your donation maintains the park and supports our cultural programs and arts education!

Please visit our website or use a remittance envelope found in our kiosks. Donation online: www.caponiartpark.org/getinvolved/donate

Text to Give
844-966-1061

Sign up online for our e-newsletter and receive updates about the park and programs.