

Mark Aeling
MGA Sculpture Studio, LLC
515 22nd Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712
mark@mgasculpture.com | www.mgasculpture.com
(727) 327-3473

Artist Statement

Driven by the process of investigation and inspired by patterns in nature, the spatial relationship of elements, and even a play on words, I create elegant and monumental works of art that are both sophisticated and visually stimulating. My work is a mixture of style and structure that challenges the mundane and superficial, and enriches the environment's surrounding. My contemporary style explores themes transformation, curiosity, and the natural world, while nudging the viewer's imagination toward its own discoveries.

I am an object maker first and foremost, working in a variety of materials and techniques. The geometry and patterns found in nature are major influences in many of my designs. I am inspired by the process just as often as the creation itself, and have spent years studying the nuances of form and texture and how they translate through materials, impacting the interpretation of the finished object. Fine-tuning this process is a life-long pursuit.

An overarching theme in all of my art is to create iconic, identifiable works that promote the heart, legacy, and direction of their locations. Immersive research into the spirit and background of a site leads to the design of a sculpture at home in its placement, as if it has always been there. Most of my works are monumental in scale, allowing them quickly to become landmarks in their environments, whether as a meeting place or a quiet spot for inspiration and reflection.

Statement of Interest

Driven by the process of investigation and experimental practices, and inspired by patterns in nature, the spatial relationship of elements, and even a play on words, Mark Aeling of MGA Sculpture Studio, LLC creates elegant works of art that are both unique and visually stimulating. His work is a mixture of style and structure that challenges the mundane and superficial, and enriches the environment's surrounding. His contemporary style explores themes of community, the natural world, wellness, and transformation, while nudging the viewer's imagination toward its own discoveries.

Mark earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture at Colorado State University in 1989. After completing his Master of Fine Art in Sculpture from Washington College in 1993, Mark opened MGA Sculpture Studio in St. Louis, gaining an exceptional reputation with the design, fabrication and architectural industries in the region. In 2005, he relocated MGA to Saint Petersburg, Florida where he resides with his family. Currently the President of Saint Petersburg's Warehouse Arts District Association –a vibrant and diverse cultural center– he has helped to shape the area through active leadership advocacy in the arts and an understanding of the need for community involvement.

In preparation for every project, Mark conducts research and participates in community engagement sessions to learn firsthand about the goals, missions, and the needs of the project and the environment. He incorporates that city's and location's values into the design, so that each work of art stands as an iconic symbol and reflects their identity and purpose. This element is the driving force in his process.

Mark works closely with his clients to determine how to best serve their space, mission, and budget. He has a lengthy history of working with architects, designers, and engineers, maintaining clarity of concept and vision while accommodating the input and needs of collaborators. Mark has a talent for creating work that unifies an area with its values, incorporating subject matter that speaks to its location, their mission, and compliments the surrounding architecture. His reputation for thoughtful design, longstanding track record with return clients, and ability to manage and deliver projects on time and on budget, make Mark an ideal candidate for your project.

Mark's extensive experience spans over 30 years as an international artist, and includes all phases involved in the creation of public art: from concept, design, and budgeting, to fabrication and installation. He and his team do the fabrication of his work in studio, with intimate knowledge of materials to create the highest impact possible. His choice in materials will reflect your city's environmental conditions and needs, while still honoring and creating a work of art that is thoughtful, unifying, and resilient.

Artist Professional CV/Resume

MGA Sculpture Studio, LLC was founded in St. Louis, Missouri in 1996 and relocated to St. Petersburg, Florida in 2005. MGA has provided concept, design, technical design, fabrication and installation for numerous public art commissions throughout the United States. The selected clients represent a sampling of the types of entities for whom MGA has created works. Some highlights of those projects follow.

SELECTED PROJECTS

"Dancer" The County of Hillsborough, FL selected MGA to create a signature piece for their new Tampa Performing Arts Center in Tampa, FL. Installation April 2024. Budget \$100,000.

El Paso Wing. The City of El Paso Public Art Program selected MGA to create a sculpture for the Eastside Regional Command Center, a newly designed command center for the El Paso Police Department. Installation January 2024. Budget \$375,000

"Source" The City of Charlotte, NC selected MGA to create a signature piece for their new Water Facility that reflects the service of Charlotte Water, and the city's unique history and character. Installed July 2023. Budget \$195,500.

"Pineapple" This 12 foot tall, stainless steel Pineapple will be installed in the front yard of a Private Residence in Snell Isle, St. Petersburg, Florida. Installation Sept 2023. Budget \$85,000

"Forging the Path" consisting of 7 lined wolves made of ~600 individual pieces, will greet the WolfPack culture at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. Installed March 2023. Budget \$200,000

"Refraction" With over 150 individual pieces, Refraction will become a stunning addition to the JW Marriott Residences in Clearwater Beach, Florida. Installed Dec 2022. Budget \$179,000

"Tip of the Spear" The City of Clarksville, TN selected MGA to create an iconic symbol that would speak to the connection between Clarksville and Fort Campbell, KY, recognizing the men and women who serve this country. Installed Aug 2022. Budget \$200,000.

"Continuum" In 2021, The Village Of Estero, Florida selected MGA to create an iconic sculpture for Estero Crossing. Installed April 2022. Budget \$50,000

"Rise" In 2021, The American Freedom Distillery commissioned MGA to create a monument that commemorates those who lost their lives during and after the September 11th, 2001 attacks. Budget \$585,000

"Illumination" In 2021, The City of Northglenn, CO selected MGA to create a colorful, suspended sculpture for the lobby of the new Parsons Theatre. Budget \$135,000.

"The Gallery Senior Living at North Port" In 2021, MGA created a series of 5 sculptures featuring Florida botanicals and coastal landscape inspired motifs are interspersed throughout the assisted living campus. Budget \$185,000.

"Acumen" In 2021, The Cities of Loveland and Fort Collins, CO selected MGA to create a sculptural icon for the new Police Regional Training Institute. Budget \$162,000.

"Nurture" In 2021, The City of Altamonte Springs, FL selected Mark to create a site-specific sculpture for Cranes Roost Park that captures the spirit of the community. Budget \$169,800.

"First Flight" In 2020, MGA created a life-sized replica of the Benoist airboat that made the first commercial flight over the Tampa Bay in 1914. Commissioned by the Flight 2014 Foundation. Budget \$400,000.

"Gladiolus & Shielded" In 2019, MGA produced a two-part commission for the City of St. Petersburg, FL for its new Police Department Headquarters. *Gladiolus* is an exterior sculpture, *Shielded* is suspended in the lobby. Budget \$380,000.

"Charley & River Shadow" MGA completed *Charley* to pay homage to yacht builder Charley Morgan, and *River Shadow*, both in 2018 for Crescent Development Group's property in Tampa, FL, adjacent the iconic Riverwalk. Total budget \$255,000.

"Rays of Light" In 2018, MGA completed a public art installation for the cruise terminal at the Port Authority in Fort Lauderdale, FL, integrating Florida iconography. Commissioned by the Broward County Cultural Division. Budget \$70,000.

"Splash" In 2017, MGA was awarded and completed a public art commission from the City of Norman, OK to create a thematic icon for the Westwood Aquatic Center. Budget \$130,000.

"OB□JEC□TI□FI□CA□TION" In 2016, Mark Aeling had a solo sculpture exhibition featuring *Butterfly Kiss*, *A Cutting Remark*, *Illuminated Pinion*, *Star Anise*, *Goat Head Thorn*, and other sculptures that explore materiality and form.

"Budding Vortex" In 2016, MGA completed a commission for a Crescent Development Group property in Tampa, FL. The stacked aluminum sculpture illuminated with fiber optics is a beacon for the Tampa Riverwalk. Budget \$75,000.

"Ascent" In 2016, MGA collaborated with artist Christopher Still on a commission for Ocean Properties' Opal Sands Resort in Clearwater, FL. The aluminum and colored glass suspended sculpture greets guests to the beachfront resort. Budget \$150,000.

"Vertical Hum" In 2015, Metro Development Group privately commissioned MGA to create an abstract metal sculpture for their Tampa, FL headquarters. Budget \$25,000.

"Ripples of Life" In 2015, MGA completed a commission for The Florida Aquarium to design, fabricate and install a 70' long donor wall in its main entry lobby. The sculpture features its own programmable LED lighting system and curves to fit the lobby's uniquely shaped interior wall. Designed in collaboration with Carrie Jadus Fine Art. Budget \$85,000.

"Discovery Park" In 2014, MGA was awarded the commission to design and fabricate five life-sized sculptures for Discovery Park in Tennessee. Subjects include Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Reagan, Thomas Jefferson, Ayn Rand and Prometheus, all cast in fiberglass. Budget \$125,000.

"Ripple Effect" In 2014, MGA was awarded a public art commission by BayCare Health Services to create a cast relief sculpture for the lobby of their new administrative facility in Clearwater, FL. Budget \$87,000.

"Sundial Dolphins" In 2013, MGA was awarded a private commission to design and fabricate six life-sized bronze dolphins for a shopping plaza in the heart of Downtown St. Petersburg, FL. Budget \$75,000.

"Wired and Bradenton Bike Racks" In 2011-2012, MGA received a commission from the City of Bradenton, FL for eight sculptures of woven metal wire integrated into existing chain link fence for the new River Walk Skate Park in Bradenton, FL, and three fine art bike racks made of powder coated steel, in collaboration with C Glass Studio, LLC.

"Garden Sprites" In 2007, Owen Development commissioned MGA create four 10' tall cast concrete sculptures representing the phases of the creative process. This award-winning project was created for their compound in Webster Groves, MO.

"Legends Plazas" In 2004 and 2007, working with Art Director Jane McNeely of Jane Designs, MGA was commissioned to create a series of 31 iconic sculptures, many of them monumental, for Legends Plazas in Reno, NV and Kansas City, KS, two linear shopping plazas with large collections of commissioned art. Work began for Kansas City in 2004, and Reno in 2007, completing each within two years. Sculptures were fabricated in materials ranging from cast iron to bronze to stainless steel to fiberglass and had individual budgets from \$2,000 to \$225,000. Highlights include *Cut Throat Trout* (Budget \$160,000) and *Pony Express* (Budget \$225,000), which anchor opposite entrances to the Reno Plaza. MGA received over \$750,000 for its work at Legends Reno alone.

"Ringers" In 2003, MGA developed and fabricated a monumental game of horseshoes in action giving the viewer the perspective of a Lilliputian in 'Gulliver's Travels' Commissioned by The City of Austin, Texas, *Ringers* was a collaboration with Kevin Garber of Fishing Creek Studios. Budget \$60,000.

EDUCATION^[1]_[SEP]

Master of Fine Arts, Washington University, School of Art, St. Louis, MO. Emphasis in Sculpture. 1993

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO. Emphasis in Sculpture. 1989

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Board President. Warehouse Arts District Association, Saint Petersburg, FL. 2012-Present

As President, Mark Aeling spearheaded and directed a capital campaign for the purchase and development of a six-warehouse, three-acre site to be redeveloped as an Arts Center with 50+ studio spaces, art gallery, classroom, and community areas. The site serves the needs of artists of all disciplines, preserving affordable rents for the creative population in this burgeoning arts destination. The Association has raised over \$1,500,000 to date.

MUSE Award - Artist of the Year. In 2018, the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance awarded Mark for achieving excellence in the visual arts.

Rapid Returns Individual Artist Fellowship Award. In 2016, Mark Aeling was awarded a \$5,000 professional artist grant by Creative Pinellas of Pinellas County, FL.

Stone Sculpture Triennial, Takamatsu, Japan. Selected to exhibit in 2012, Mark Aeling was the only American selected for the exhibit.

Board of Directors. Morean Center for the Arts, St. Petersburg, FL. 2009-2011

Artist Artwork Samples
With Annotations

Source



Source

MEDIUM: Stainless steel

DIMENSIONS: 30'H x 9'W x 9'D

WEIGHT:

COMMISSIONED BY: The City of Charlotte, NC

COMPLETED: July 2023

BUDGET: \$195,500

LOCATION: Charlotte, North Carolina

Source is dynamic public art piece for the Charlotte Water Zone Four Field Operations Facility that reflects the purpose of the facility and spirit of the Greater Charlotte community. This 30' tall sculpture depicts a drop of water and is so named for the vital role that it plays in our lives. Water is the source of life. This project is funded through the City of Charlotte 1% for the Arts Ordinance. The ASC administers the public art program for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Tip of the Spear



Tip of the Spear

MEDIUM: Stainless steel, cast concrete

DIMENSIONS: 20'H x 20'W x 24'D

WEIGHT: 7,000 lbs

COMMISSIONED BY: Montgomery County, Tennessee

COMPLETED: Aug 2022

BUDGET: \$200,000

LOCATION: Patriots Park - Clarksville, TN / Fort Campbell, KY

The City of Clarksville, Tennessee called for an iconic symbol that speaks to the connection between Clarksville and its neighboring Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and recognizes the men and women who serve this country. The site is unique in that it borders two states with a unified identity shaped by Fort Campbell Army installation, home of the 101st Airborne Division.

MGA's striking sculpture aims to define that interstate connection with a bold, stainless steel eagle caught in action, inspired by the local history and tradition of Fort Campbell. *Tip of the Spear* is a physical manifestation of the literal and symbolic strength of an eagle that pays tribute to the hard work and sacrifice of the soldiers stationed at Fort Campbell.

Nurture



Nurture

MEDIUM: Stainless steel

DIMENSIONS: 19' H x 19'W x 18'D

WEIGHT: approx. 10,000 lbs.

COMMISSIONED BY: The City of Altamonte Springs, FL

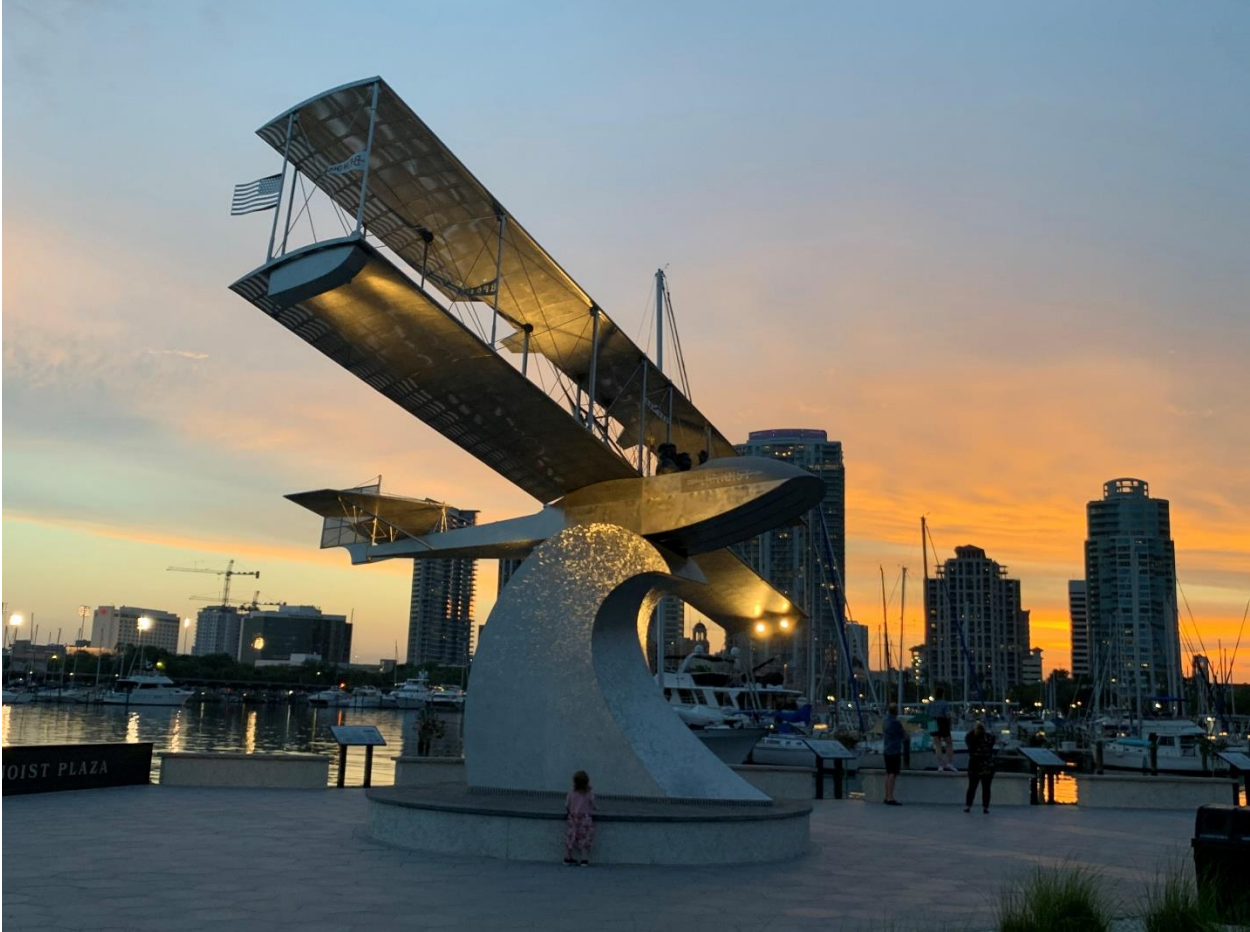
COMPLETED: May 2021

BUDGET: \$169,800

LOCATION: Cranes Roost Park in Altamonte Springs, Florida

The City of Altamonte Springs, Florida selected MGA to create an iconic sculpture for Cranes Roost Park to reflect the unique spirit and character of the community. Drawing upon the local wildlife for inspiration, Mark designed a 19-foot crane bowing to feed its young colt. Titled *Nurture*, the sculpture was installed May 2021.

First Flight



First Flight

MEDIUM: Stainless steel

DIMENSIONS: 29'H x 46' W x 26'D

WEIGHT: approx. 15,000 lbs.

COMMISSIONED BY: Flight 2014 Foundation

COMPLETED: November 2020

BUDGET: \$400,000

LOCATION: St. Petersburg, Florida

MGA created a life-sized replica of a Benoist Airboat to commemorate the world's first ever commercial flight, which traversed the Tampa Bay as the first flight of the St. Petersburg-Tampa Airboat Line. Piloted by Tony Jannus, the bold, Benoist airboat - what we would now call a seaplane - departed on January 1st, 1914 from St. Petersburg's shore. This remarkable airboat made history right off the shores of MGA's hometown and will be commemorated with a sculpture befitting of the event.

A lifesize airboat takes off on a 12' wave in this magnificent stainless steel sculpture installed at the St. Petersburg pier. To create an airplane and ensure that it will not fly, withstand Category 5+ hurricanes, and withstand the test of a time is no small feat. A masterwork of engineering and technical design, *First Flight* is MGA's largest single piece sculpture created to date.

Rise



Rise

MEDIUM: Copper w/ Verdigris Patina

DIMENSIONS: 25' H x 40'W x 40'D

WEIGHT: 2,000 lbs

COMMISSIONED BY: American Freedom Distillery

COMPLETED: 2021

BUDGET: \$585,000

LOCATION: St. Petersburg, Florida

In 2021, The American Freedom Distillery commissioned MGA Sculpture Studio to create a monument that commemorates those who lost their lives during and after the September 11th, 2001 attacks. The last piece of tower 1 was unearthed and became the centerpiece of Rise. Wanting the Monument to look forward and focus on how the community recovers and heals from an event like this, MGA Sculpture studio created the copper phoenix wing displayed behind the I-beam. Rising from the ashes- or rebirth - became the primary theme for the monument. It is reiterated in the arched wall backing the monument- symbolizing the rising sun - the dawn of a new day.



Gladiolus



Gladiolus

MEDIUM: Stainless Steel

DIMENSIONS: 22'H x 18'W x 18'D

COMMISSIONED BY: The City of Saint Petersburg, FL

COMPLETED: 2019

BUDGET: \$380,000 for both/ \$230,000 Gladiolus only

Part of a two-piece project created for the Saint Petersburg, FL police department. The Gladiolus petals represent the core values of the department while Shielded (a 30 ft. eagle wing) flies high above the entry to the building, embodying comfort and protection

The woven gladiolus petals represent the function of the police in the community: to protect with honor and integrity, while the mirrored sphere on its interior represents the community it serves.

Shielded



Shielded

MEDIUM: Aluminum

DIMENSIONS: 30'L x 15'W x 10'D

COMMISSIONED BY: The City of Saint Petersburg, FL

COMPLETED: 2019

BUDGET: \$150,000

'Shielded' is part of a two-piece project created for the Saint Petersburg, Florida Police Department. The 2,000-pound aluminum eagle wing flies high above the lobby entry to the police headquarters, embodying comfort and protection. The sheltering eagle wing evokes bravery, wisdom and courage.

Acumen



Acumen

MEDIUM: Stainless steel

DIMENSIONS: approx. 17'H x 16'W x 7'D on 6' concrete base

WEIGHT: approx. 7,900 lbs.

COMMISSIONED BY: The Cities of Loveland and Fort Collins, Colorado

COMPLETED: December 2020

BUDGET: \$167,000

LOCATION: Fort Collins, Colorado

The Cities of Loveland and Fort Collins sought a sculptural icon for the new Police Regional Training Institute, which MGA has designed and is fabricating in the likeness of a deconstructed ammonite shell. Training is a refining process, the natural development of skills through repetition until actions are second nature. Ammonites also mature in this layered manner, progressing through growth chambers as they develop. The design for *Acumen* was inspired by this ancient shell fossil found throughout the state of Colorado, symbolic of skills perfected through layers of repeated action. Commissioned by the Cities of Loveland and Fort Collins, Colorado.

Splash



Splash

Created as a primary theming element for the Westwood Aquatic Center in Norman, OK, this large ball, caught as it strikes the water's surface, unites the tennis center and the park's water recreation area.

MEDIUM: Powder Coated Aluminum

DIMENSIONS: 12'H x 20'W x 20'L

COMMISSIONED BY: The City of Norman, OK

COMPLETED: 2017

BUDGET: \$130,000

This dynamic 12'H x 20'W x 20'L aluminum sculpture was created as a primary theming element for the Westwood Aquatic Center in Norman, Oklahoma. This large ball is caught as it strikes the water's surface, uniting the tennis center and the park's water recreation area. This project was the first of MGA's designs that employed an engineering tactic based on the acclaimed Buckminster Fuller's concept of tensional integrity. Mark and his team collaborated with specialized engineers to develop the concept and ensure its feasibility through to creation.

Pineapple



PINEAPPLE

MEDIUM: Stainless Steel

DIMENSIONS: 12' H x 6' Diameter

WEIGHT: ~2,500 lbs

COMMISSIONED BY: Private Residence

COMPLETED: October 2023

BUDGET: \$85,000

LOCATION: Snell Isle, St. Petersburg, Florida

This 12 foot tall, stainless steel Pineapple installed in the front yard of a Private Residence in Snell Isle, St. Petersburg, Florida. The pineapple is the international symbol of warm welcomes, celebration, and hospitality.

MGA Sculpture Studio, LLC

Estimated Budget Breakdown

Engineering/Tech. Design	5-10%
Material/Fabrication/Labor	Labor/Fab 30% Materials 20%
Footer/base	10%
Lighting	5%
Installation	5-10%
Artist Fee	15-20%
TOTAL	**

**Please note, these percentages are estimated and do not represent the final budget breakdown. An accurate breakdown and timeline can be finalized when a proposed project is created and technical designs are completed.