

MARCUS CANNING AM CitWA

Marcus Canning's most well known public art work is [RAINBOW](#), Fremantle's internationally instagram famous entry statement, recently profiled in an international compendium of container architecture published by Swiss publishing house, BRAUN.

Alongside his high profile public art works, Canning is also celebrated as the creator behind some of WA's most significant festivals, venues and other impactful arts initiatives including founding the Fringe World Festival in 2012 and growing it to become the third largest Fringe in the world before [retiring](#) as CEO in 2019 to launch The Rechabite, a multi-level venue built around a century old temperance hall.

In June 2025 he retired from The Rechabite to focus entirely on his art practice including the completion of a large new sculpture studio build near Yallingup.

Born in Perth 1974. Canning graduated from the School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Fine Arts, University of Western Australia, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) in 1997 receiving the UWA Graduates Association Prize and the Hewitt's Prize. During this time he was key to the establishment of the notorious Jacksue Gallery & Pad Studios (1996 - 2001), the subject of a documentary in current production.

Canning's history of practice includes commissions by Church, state, and everything inbetween. These include: 'Paradise', Paradise Quays Development, City of Swan. (In progress, completion 2027); 'Wave Flow', Vasse West Primary School, City of Busselton. (In progress, completion 2027); 'GLOBE', Graham Farmer Freeway, Claisebrook Bridge, City of Vincent. (In progress, completion 2028); 'Balancing Act', Roleystone Community College, City of Armadale. 2026; 'The Big Fun Spooky Objects of The Ghost Ship Alkimos', Shorehaven Primary School, Alkimos, City of Wanneroo. 2023; 'RAINBOW', Canning Highway, City of Fremantle. 2017; 'Dirty Deeds' (with Tom Müller), State Buildings, Perth. 2015; 'Onward! Onward!', Perth Town Hall Square, City of Perth. 2015; and 'Ascalon' (with Christian de Vietri), St Georges Cathedral, City of Perth. 2011.

Selected exhibitions include UNBUILT, Wallace Gallery, Perth (2024); [Summer](#), Goddard de Fiddes, Perth (2010); [Weinie Collapses](#), Goddard de Fiddes, Perth (2009); [Primavera](#), MCA, Sydney (2008); 1968, Linden Art Gallery, Melbourne (2008); [SILVER](#), Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, PICA (2008); [Vida Telefonica](#) (with TC&A), ARCO, Madrid (2008); New Disorder, Old Berlin, Perth (2007); BioTechnique (with TC&A), [YBCA Galleries](#), San Francisco (2007); [Still Living](#) (with TC&A), Biennale of Electronic Arts Perth, breadbox (2007); [Winners are Grinners](#), Meat Market, Melbourne and PICA (2006); Supermart, breadbox, Perth (2004 & 2005); Wild Frontier, The Bank, Perth and Downtown Gallery, Adelaide (2003); [BIOFEEL](#) (with TC&A), PICA (2002), Urbane Dream Capsule, Jacksue Gallery, Perth (2001). Highlight curatorial projects include Tactical Intervention Strategies, PICA. 2001; and co-curation with Andrew Gaynor of [SILVER: ARTRAGE 25](#), PICA, 2008.

Canning was Chief Executive of [ARTRAGE Inc.](#) from 2002 - 2019, founding the [FRINGE WORLD Festival](#) (2011-), [Rooftop Movies](#) (2012-), [Girls School Creative Precinct](#) (2017-2021) and directing the annual [ARTRAGE Festivals](#) (2002-2008) and Northbridge Festivals (2005-2006) whilst developing and managing [The Bakery](#) Artrage Complex and [breadbox gallery](#) (2002-2012).

He was a mentor in the Artist Foundation's Emerging Curator program (2003) and Queensland Youth Arts Theatre Board initiative (2004-2005) and was Creative Director of [AWE-SOME](#) Perth International Arts Festival for Young People's Regional Program (1998-2000).

[Canning](#) was Chair of the federal DCITA Festivals Australia Committee (2002-2007) and WA ArtsImpact Assessment Panel (2022-2024); sat on the John Curtin Gallery Advisory Board (2020-2024); Australia Council's New Media Arts Board (2002-2005); Brisbane Festival UTR Curatorial Committee (2009-2010); WA Theatre Development Initiative Committee (2009-2010); the Australia Council Multi-Arts Panel (2002-2007), Theatre Board (2008); Australia Council Visual Arts Board (2007); and Healthway Arts Advisory Panel (2001-2003).

Canning was awarded the Western Australian of the Year for Arts and Culture in 2017, the City of Perth Citizen of the Year in 2020, and was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2021 for contribution to the cultural life of Western Australia and the City of Perth.

HIGHLIGHT MEDIA

- 2021 [Queen's Birthday honours: Marcus Canning](#) becomes Member of the Order of Australia. Charlotte Elton. The West Australian, 13 June 2021
- 2019 Artful Advancement. Great for the State - Edition 10. Cultural Growth. Dan Wilkie, WA Business News. 16 December, 2019
- 2018 [Marcus Canning, fronting Western Australia's](#) youthful cultural fringe. Julian Tompkin. The Weekend Australian. Review P6. January 27-28, 2018.
- 2017 [Marcus Canning reflects on his passion for the](#) arts. Geoff Hutchison interview on Who Are You? Duration: 25min 14sec Broadcast: Wed 31 May 2017, ABC, Drive.
- 2016 [Massive rainbow to shine down on Fremantle](#) for years to come. Brendan Foster. The Age. 12 August 2016.
- 2016 [Containbow gives a very Freo welcome.](#) Stephen Bevis, Arts Editor, The West Australian 12 August 2016.
- 2015 Welcome to Uglieland. Marcus Canning, Agenda. The Weekend West. December 5-6, 2015
- 2011 [The Story of Ascalon.](#) The Very Reverend Dr John Shepherd. Dean of Perth, 1990-2014. St. George's Cathedral.



THINGS I'D LIKE TO KNOW

Which is your favourite site?

After you've made a brain dump of all the things you want the artwork to do once its landed on your favourite site...

What are the three most important things the artwork should do?

If a local were describing the artwork to a potential visitor, how would they describe it using only three words?

If you want - email me your input - hello@marcuscanning.com

SUGGESTED POTENTIAL ARTWORK LOCATIONS

- 1 Entry statement on Alexander Drive



- 2 Large sculpture on grassed area adjacent to playground and shopping centre carpark



- 3 Elevated sculpture that can be viewed directly from Paradise Quays clubroom, by bush walkers and from further afield



SELECT PREVIOUS WORKS

ASCALON (with Christian de Vietri) 2011

15m x 8m x 4m. Composite, polished stainless steel, painted steel plate, concrete foundation, lighting elements. St. George's Cathedral. St. Georges Terrace. City of Perth. \$500,000 commission

Ascalon was awarded from an international competition that asked artists to depict the legend of St. George. Ascalon is the name of St. George's lance in the medieval romances. St. George is depicted in the western art cannon with a diaphanous cape behind him, the defeated dragon form below him, with the lance crossing these planes. This was the starting point for an abstracted depiction of the myth that sought to capture universal themes. New modelling, casting and fabrication methodologies were developed with the boat builders who fabricated this work and the structural engineers. My collaborator was overseas for the entire project and I oversaw all aspects of its delivery.

DIRTY DEEDS (with Tom Muller) 2014

4m x 4m. 69 laser etched granit pavers. State Buildings. City of Perth. \$35,000 commission.

Images shows pages from 'Cathedral Square - The Historic Heart of Perth' describing Dirty Deeds, a site specific work that marks the site of the holding cells of the colony's first police court. The artwork features 69 of the historically accused and their crimes who were held in the cells awaiting court in 1870s during the first years of their use. I drove the intense archival deep-dive involved in finding the strangest criminals and criminal activity from early years of the city. Finding ways to bring arcane, lost and liminal histories rather than grand narratives to the fore is a thread across my practice.

BIG FUN SPOOKY OBJECTS OF THE GHOST SHIP ALKIMOS. 2021.

15 individual sculptures ranging in size. Central sculpture 2.4m x 2.4m x 1.7m. Shorehaven Primary School, Alkimos. City of Wanneroo. \$230,000 commission.

Developed for a new primary school site located near the remnants of the notorious Alkimos wreck, apparently one of the most haunted ship wrecks in the world, the work took this local lore and legend and made it Big Fun, also utilising innovative modelling to fabrication methodologies with high-end fabrication partners.

BALANCING ACT. 2026.

4.3m x 2.6m x 2.6m. stainless steel tensile rigging system, powder coated custom steel caps, century old jarrah pylons charred, stained, oiled, concrete footings, lighting elements. Roleystone Community College. City of Armadale. \$100,000 commission.

BALANCING ACT utilises the structural principle of tensegrity to create a very large sculpture that was assembled on site with assistance from my crane truck with large elements now 'floating' in the air like a frozen magic trick. Tensegrity is used in engineering and architecture fields, especially suspension bridges, but also plays a crucial role in understanding the structure and function of all living organisms, something that appealed to the school selection committee.

A BALANCED REFLECTON. 2026. Concept.

6.6m x 7m x 5.7m. mirror polished stainless steel, custom stainless steel suspension rigging system, concrete footings. South Perth Foreshore. City of South Perth.

A shortlisted proposal for South Perth Foreshore for a monumental tensegrity sculpture designed to take the surrounding landscape and render it as a series of extended reflections to be viewed from both proximate and distant perspectives. Larger cranes would have been used to assemble this work.

GLOBE. 2028. In fabrication.

32.5m x 8.5m x 8.5m. Graham Farmer Freeway. Claisebrook Bridge. City of Vincent. Steel rings, telecommunication tower, carnival lighting system, footing. \$250,000 commission

Originally designed on invitation from the City of Vincent to be suspended over a busy intersection at the top of William Street, GLOBE is a 8.5m diameter 2 tonne steel globe armature covered in 1,500 individually programmed carnival lights that will produce an endless spectacle of algorithmic animations once it is erected in 2027, now on top of a 24m telecommunication mast adjacent to the Graham Farmer Freeway next to the Claisebrook train station pedestrian bridge. The images to the left show the individual coding system used to designate all 1,500 lights individually in the programming of the endless variety of animated sequences that play through the sculpture over time, a tool being utilised to direct the coding of the work at the factory in China where the lighting system is manufactured.

SOAR, 2026. Concept.

Corten steel, fixings, footing, lighting. 10.5m x 15.3m x 3.6m

VROOMS 1-3, 2026. Concept.

H116 Aluminium. Each 80cm x 90cm x 180cm
Brabham Senior High School proposal.

A short-listed proposal made up of a series of sculptures for a new high school being built on the site of a WW2 Airforce runway which then became the primary site for hobby gliders in WA, then later WA's most famous automobile racing track until the 1960's. SOAR is a 10m high corten steel sculpture with a 15m wing span - an abstracted plane / glider form simplified to totemic proportions made from laser cut corten steel components, de-

signed to be transported to site and assembled in a day utilising a 7m flatbed truck with truck crane.

The VROOMS are three racing cars modelled on archival photos from the late 1950s early 1960s racing heyday of the site. The digital models are finely sliced, and each slice transposed to a laser cut aluminium sheet, with slices then reassembled with every second slice removed to create sculptures that appear solid from one view, and see through when viewed from the side.

SAHUL 2026. Concept.

2 x (6.5m x 3m x 3.5m) 70 x Laser Cut Powdercoated Mild Steel Panels. 2 x Laser Cut Mirror Polished Stainless Steel Panels. Lighting. \$280,000 commission.

A short-listed proposal for the public atrium of two new towers at Elizabeth Quay, SAHUL responds to a brief to create two sculptures that express the clients wish to have two Boab trees in the atrium. SAHUL is a 'Sequenced Silhouette' - slicing and dicing the iconic silhouette of an Australian Boab and sequencing the pattern centrifugally around a central axis creating monumental objects that perceptually shift and warp as people move around and through them.

WAVE FLOW, 2027. In fabrication.

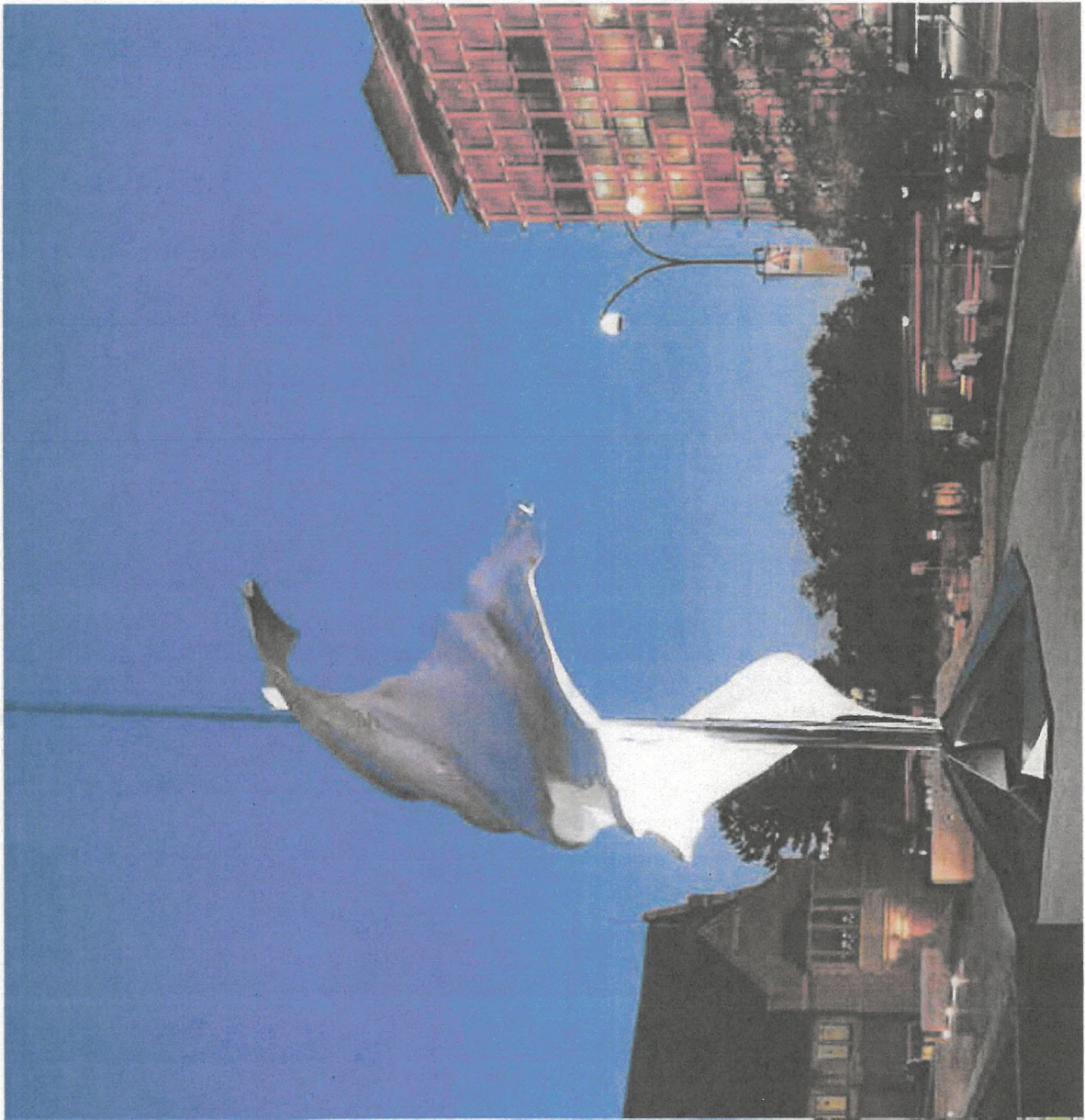
Playable Land Art Scheme made up of 162 elements totalling 94m in length. Concrete printed elements. Mineral paint. Pylon elements. Footings. Vasse West Primary School. City of Busselton. \$100,000 commission

The landart scheme spreads throughout a new primary school site and references the water systems that define the landscape and culture in which the school will reside. The work will be complete only when it is kinetically activated by the school population moving through and over it.

RAINBOW. 2016.

9m x 12m x 6m. Custom engineered and painted sea containers, concrete footings, lighting elements. Canning Highway. Between the two bridges. City of Fremantle. \$165,000 commission.

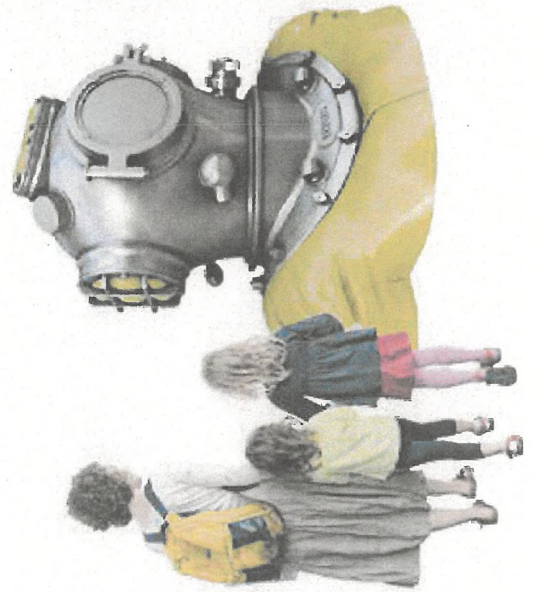
'Containbow' as it's colloquially known is one of the most photographed sculptures in Australia and a globally recognised landmark, featured in international airline commercials, instagram's own instagram profile and has become the image identity for countless Freo businesses and community groups, used for the full spectrum of proposals, weddings, music video sets, rallies, protests, politician portait backdrops and the end point for Perth Festival's gargantuan 'Highway to Hell' event. Iconic! The images show the work featured in an international compendium of container architecture produced by Swiss BRAUN publishing.

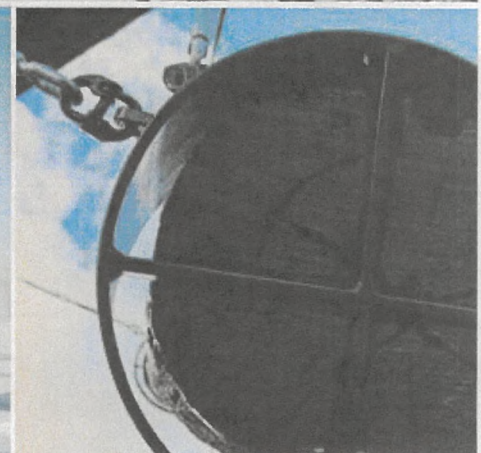
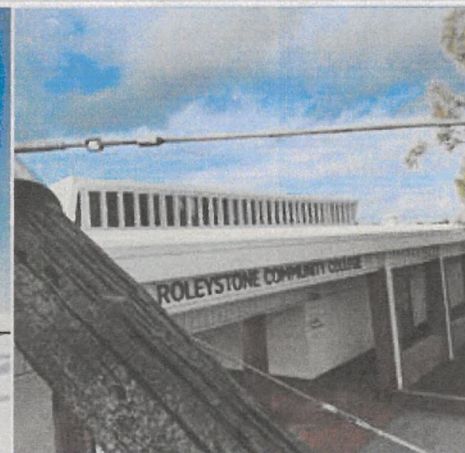


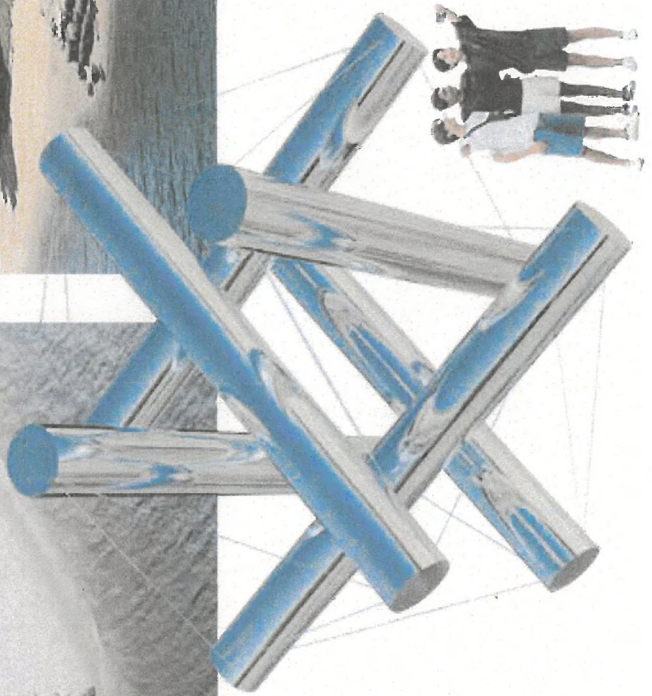
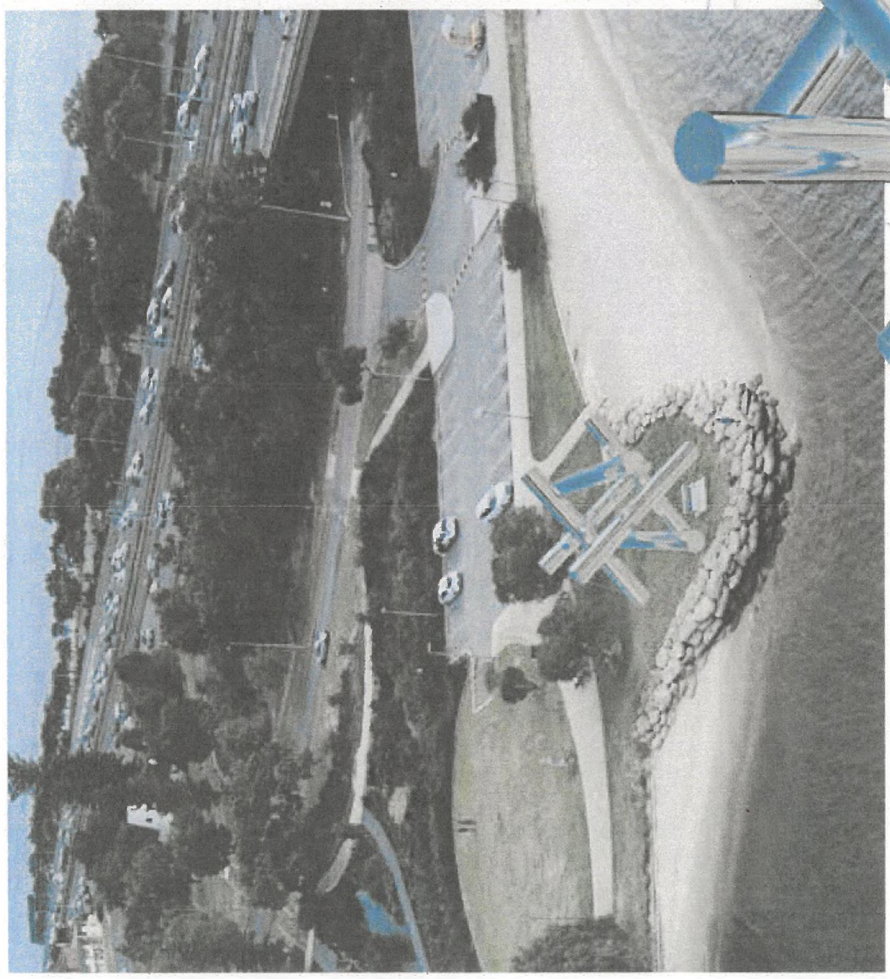
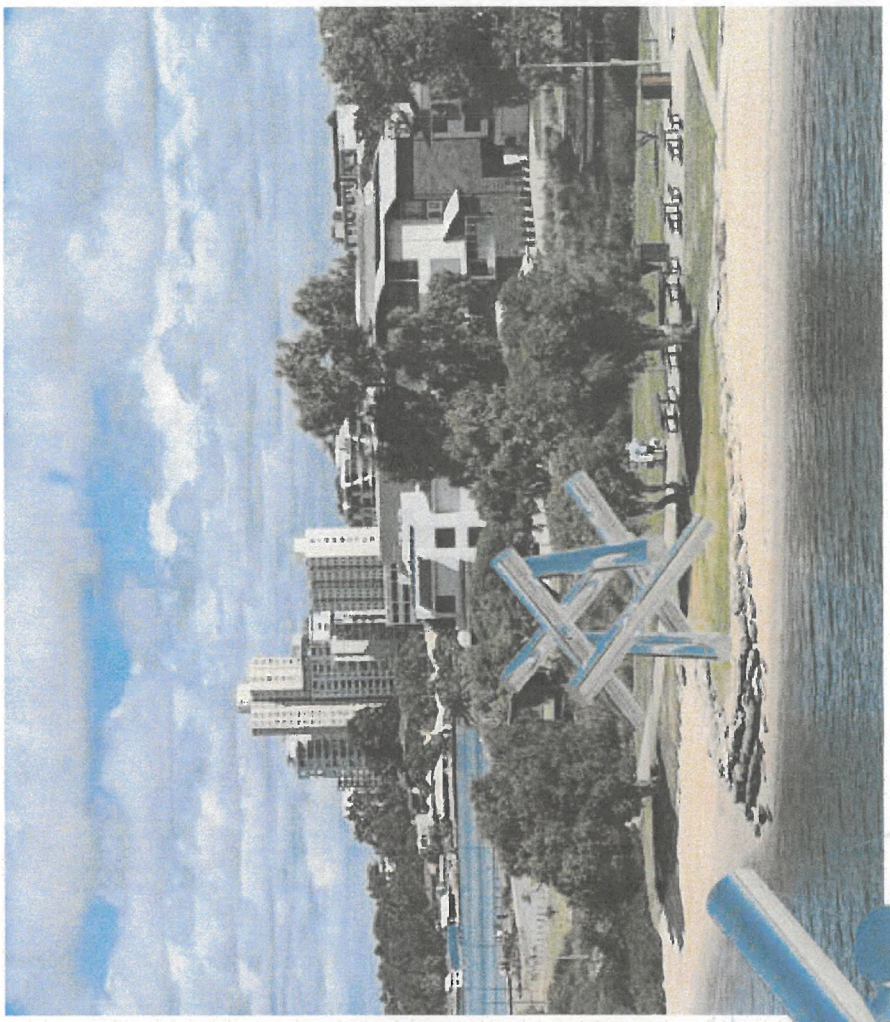


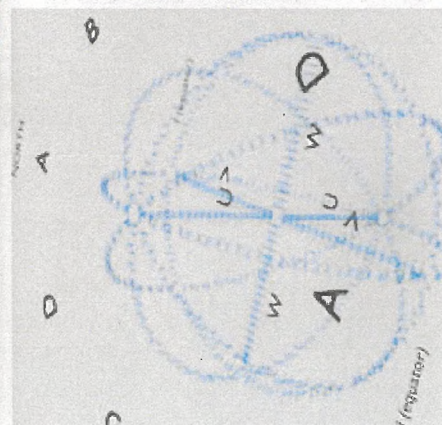
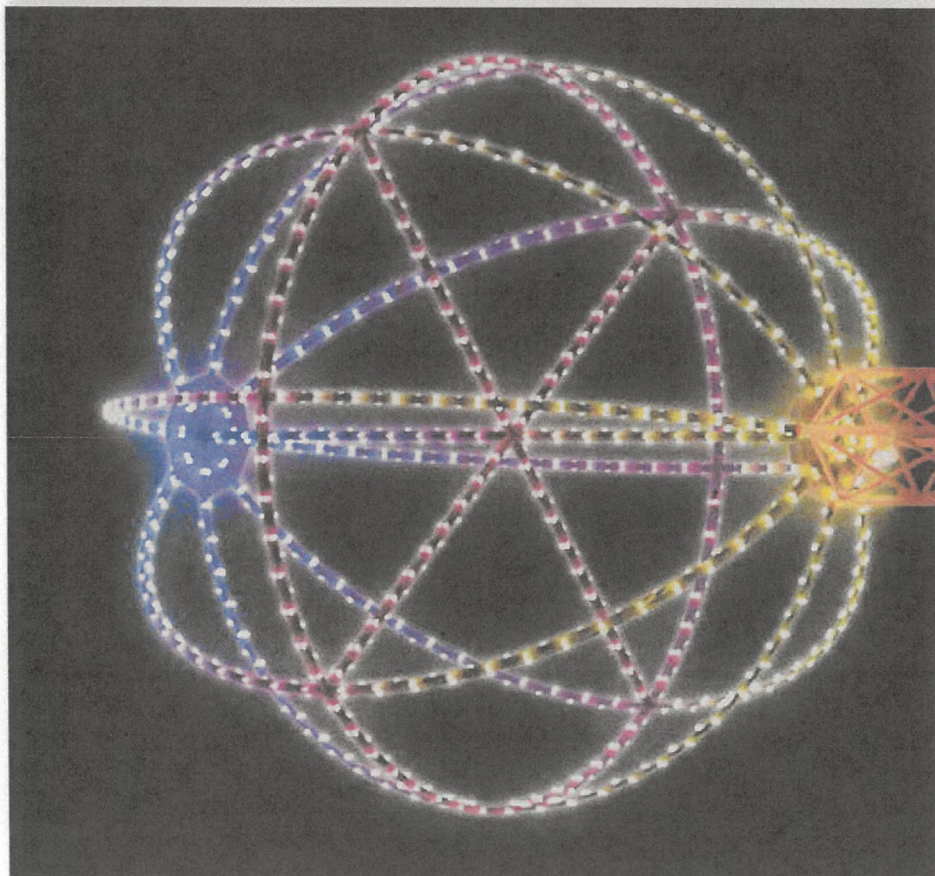
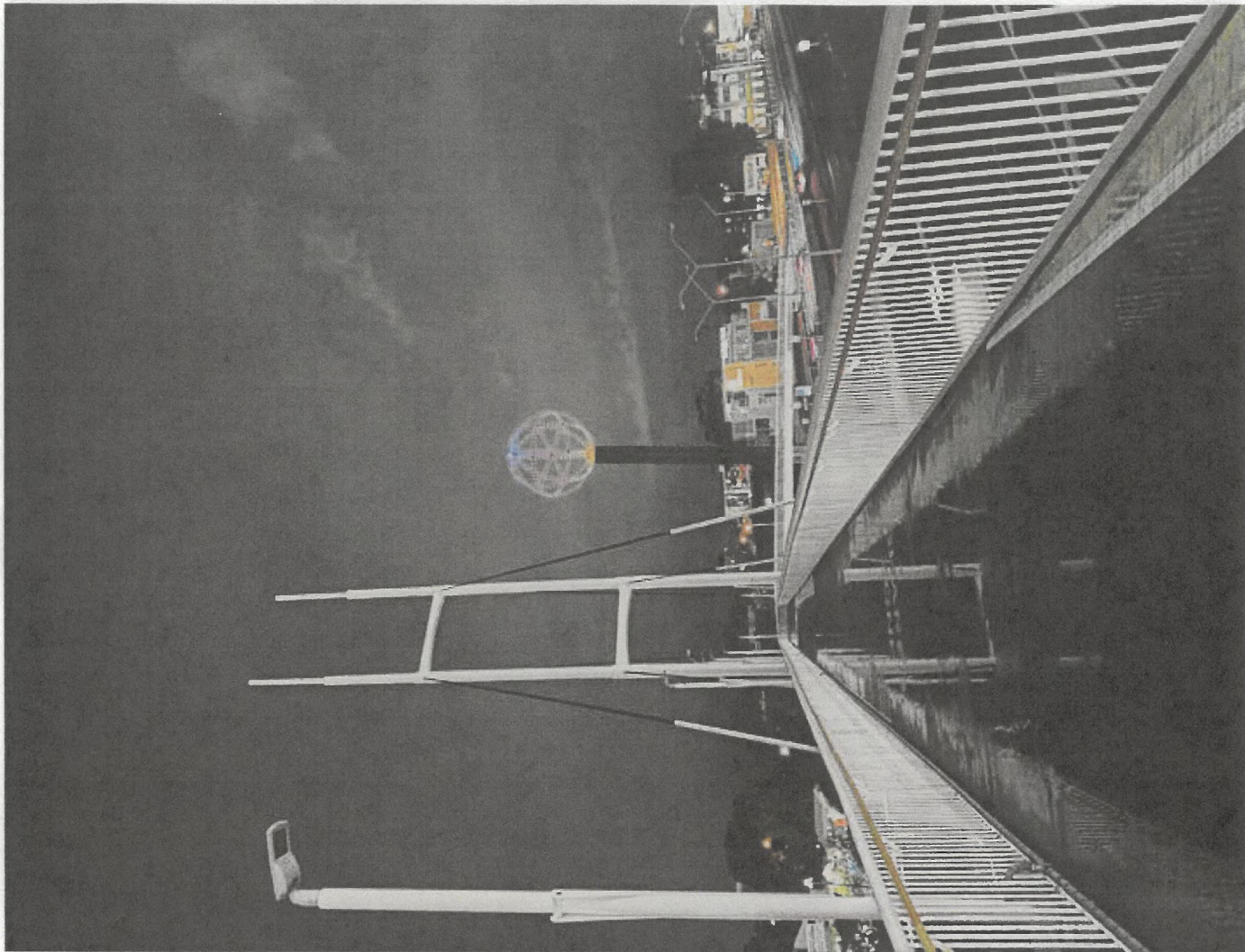
The 1910s were a time of great change for the United States. The country was experiencing a period of rapid growth and development, and the population was increasing. This was a time when many new ideas and technologies were being introduced, and the country was becoming more modern. The 1910s were also a time of great social and political change, with many new movements and ideas being introduced. The country was becoming more diverse, and the voices of different groups were being heard. The 1910s were a time of great opportunity, and the country was becoming more united.

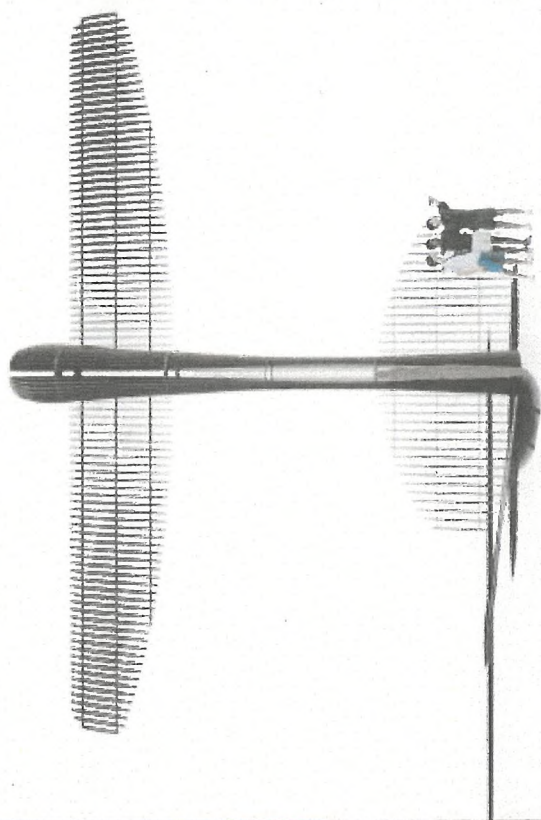
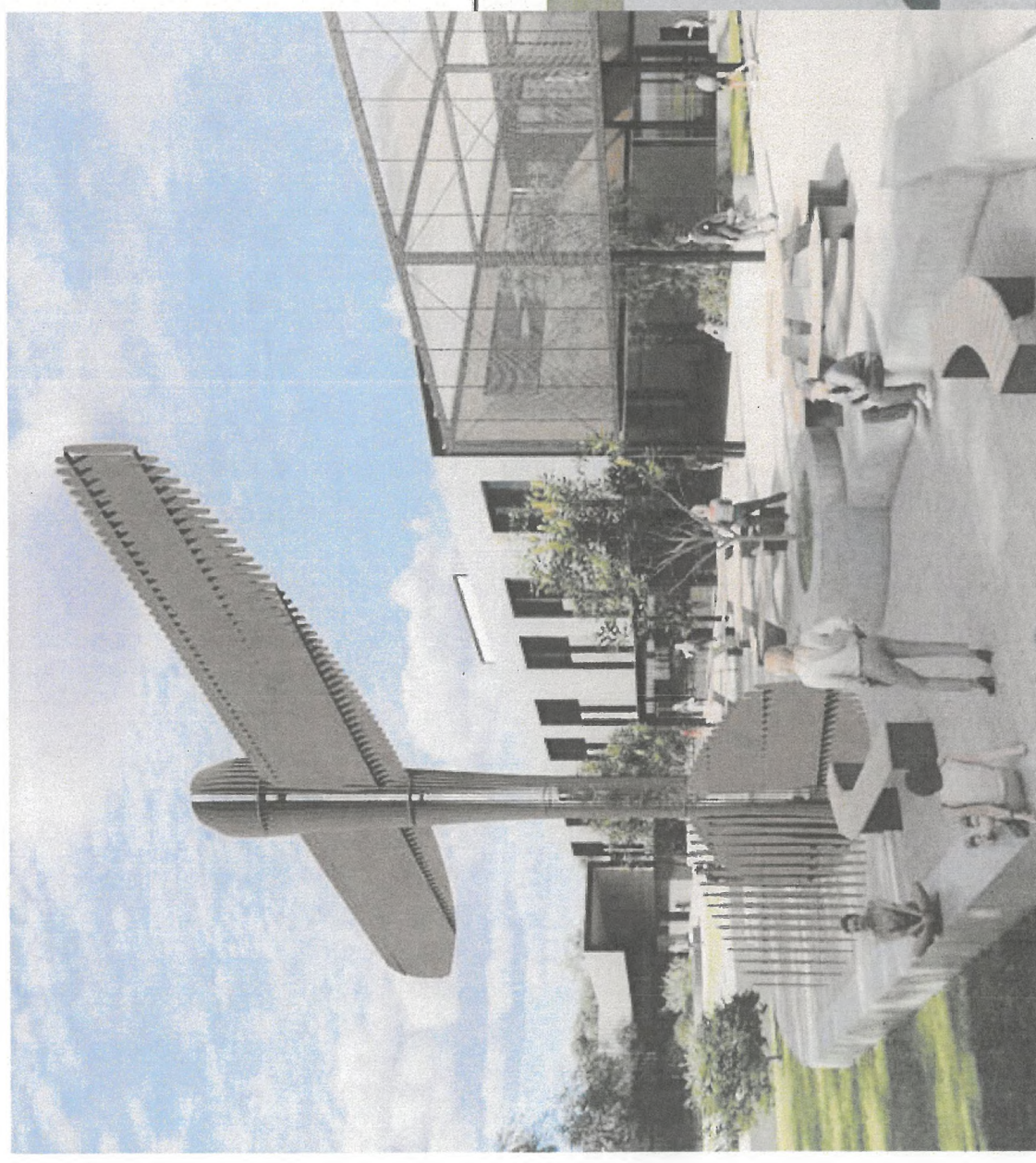
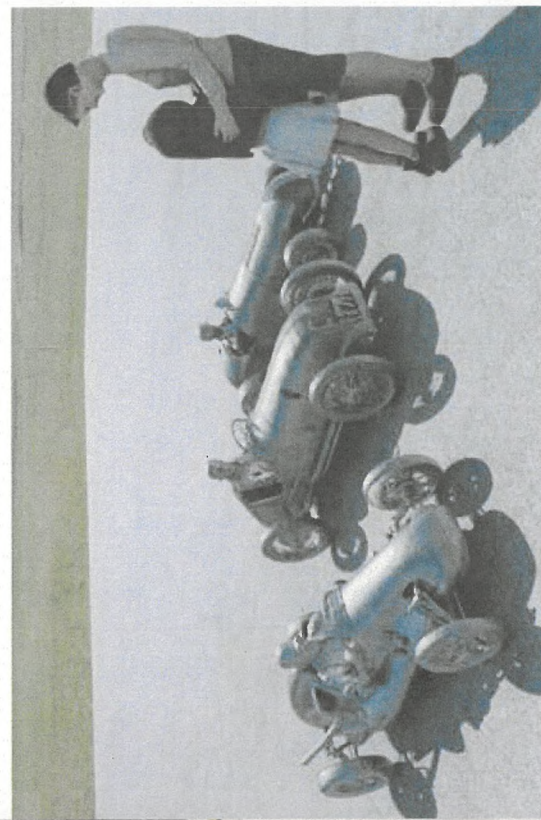
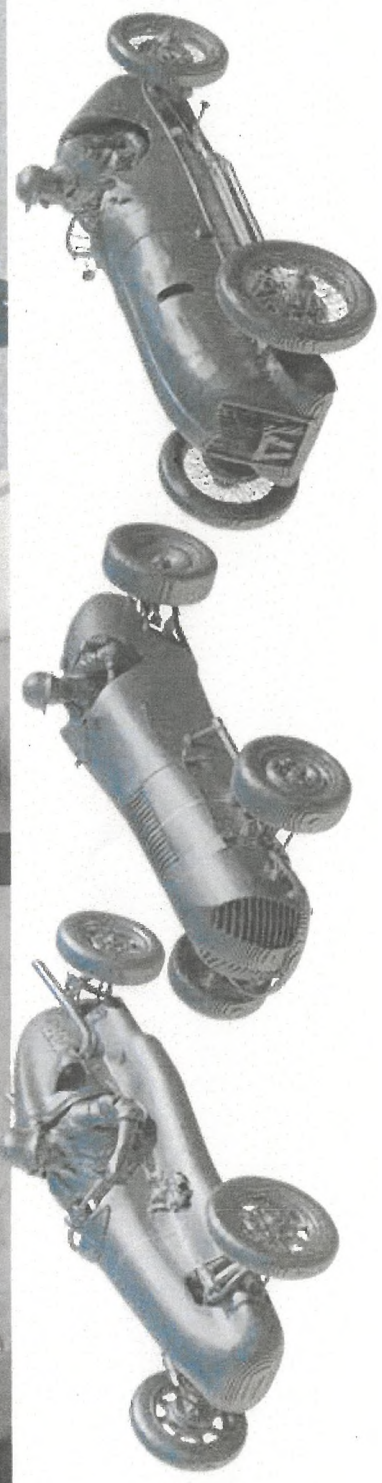
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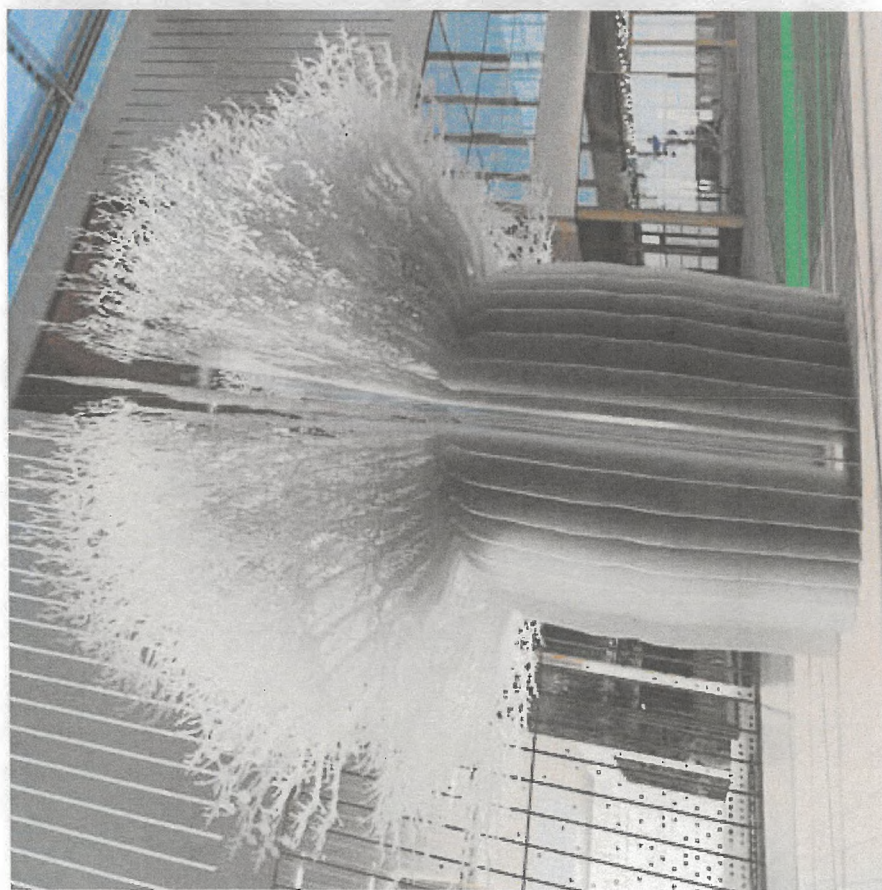
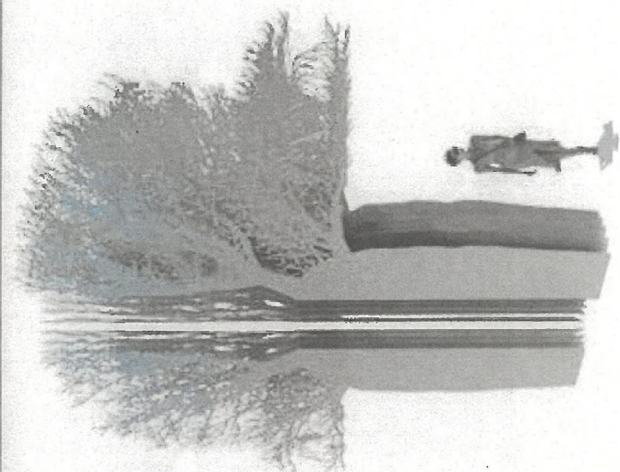


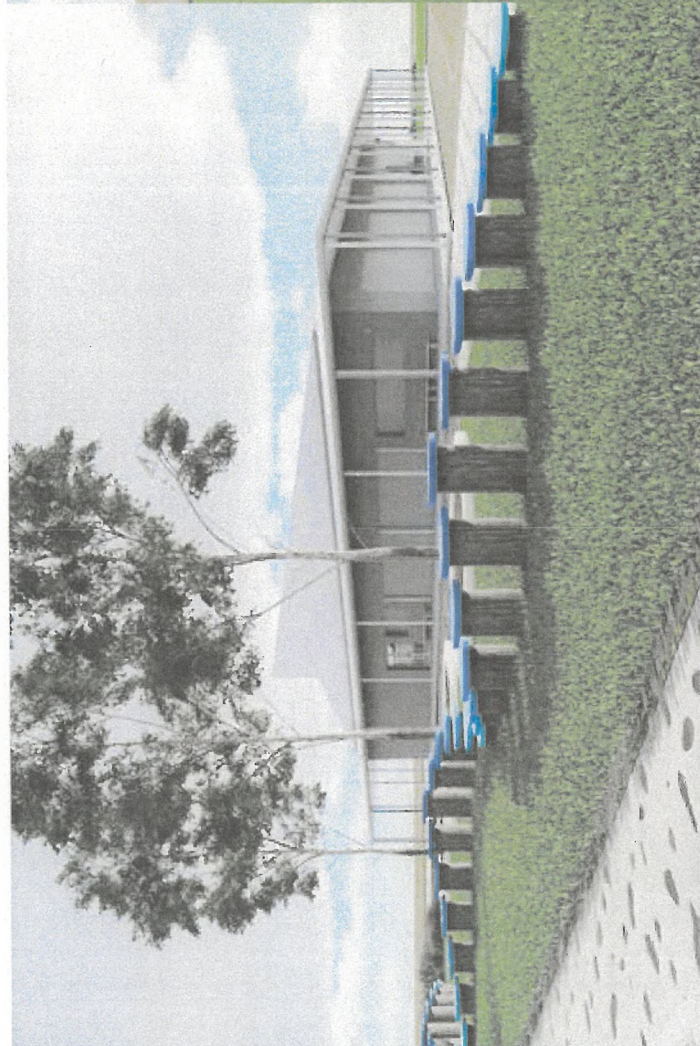
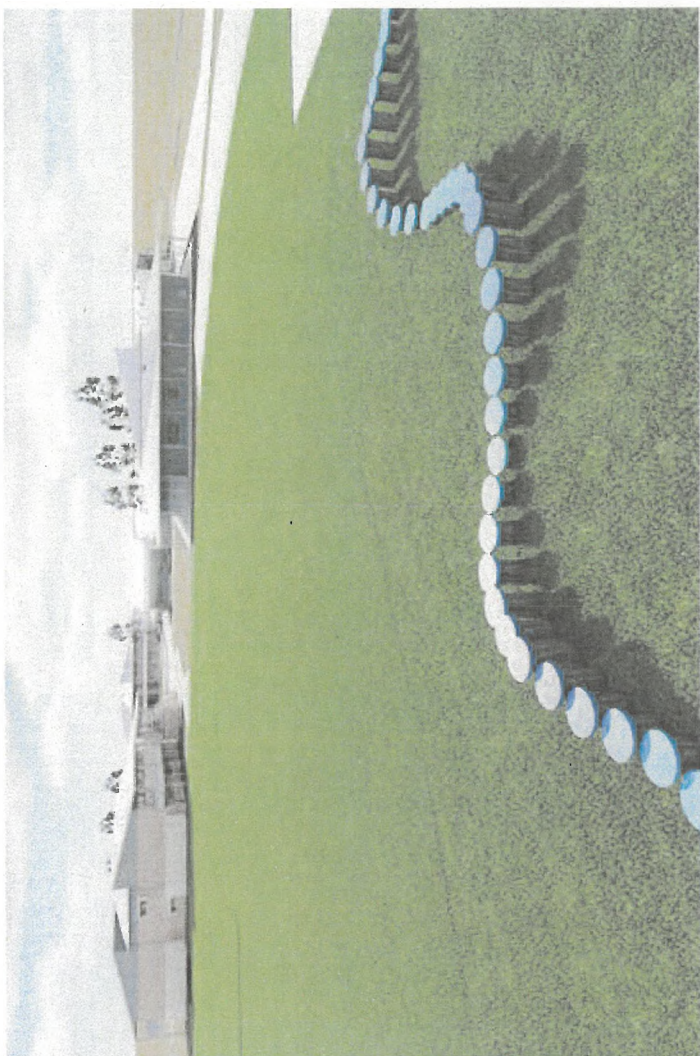
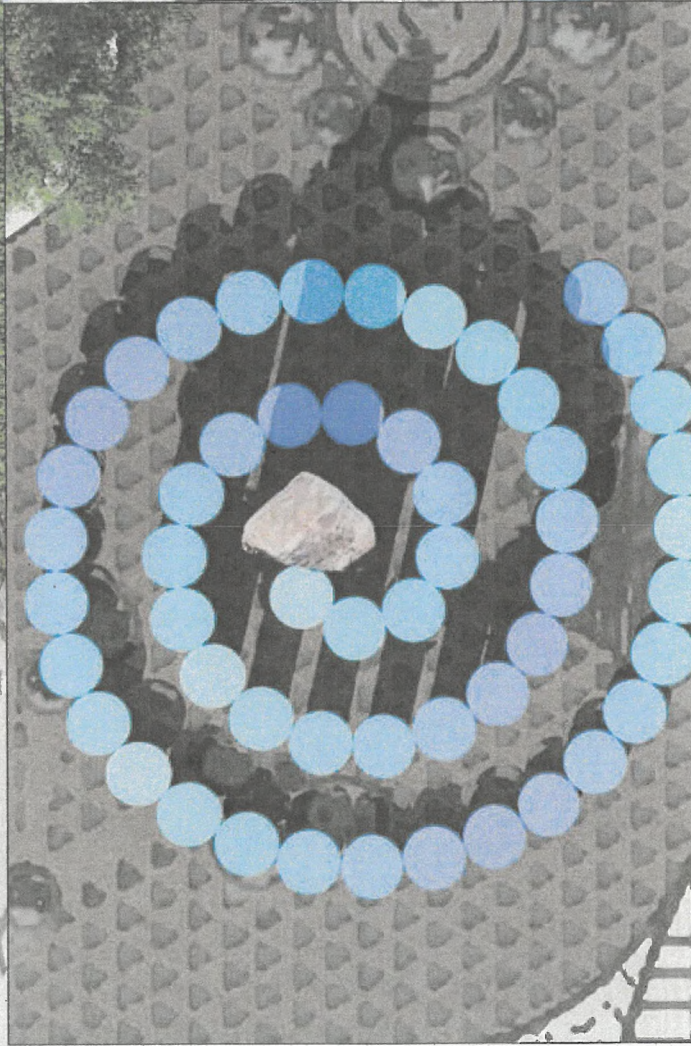
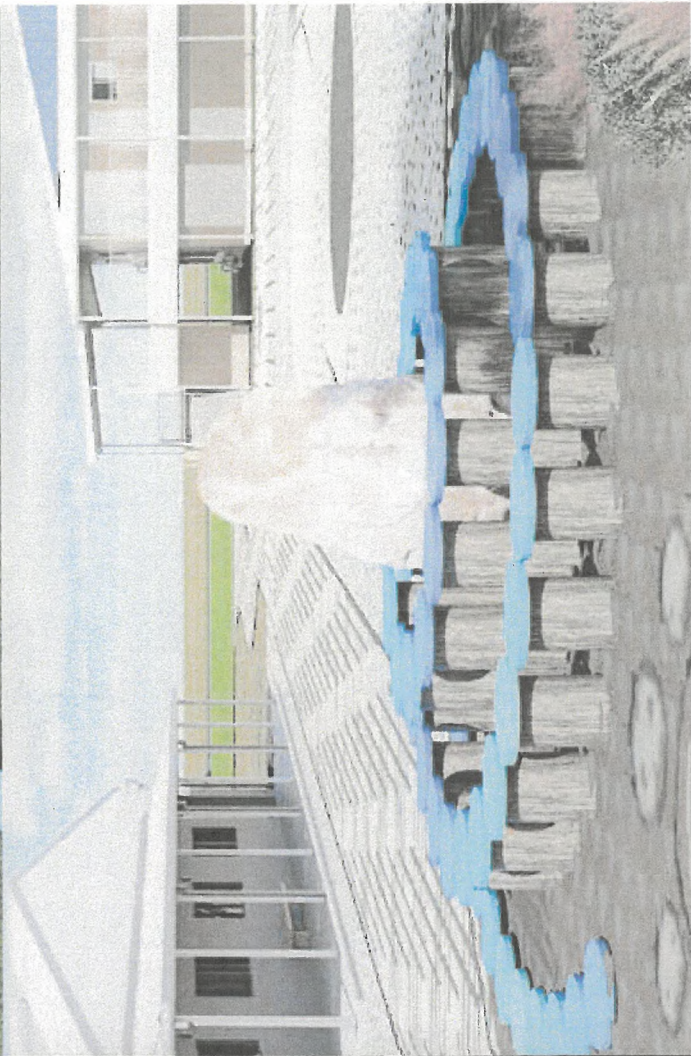


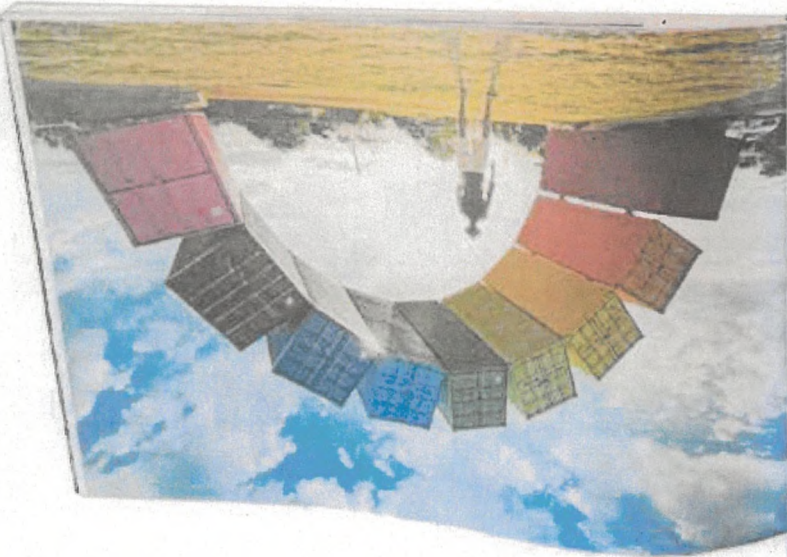
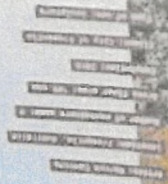










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RAINBOW
FREEMANTLE, AUSTRALIA

