

From Concrete to Jungle: Adam Anderson continues to bring life to Rhode Island cities



You may already be familiar with **Adam Anderson**'s work. He's behind one of the more glorious sights during the summer in Providence, *10,000 Suns*, the field of sunflowers that blooms across the parcel of land left vacant by the I-195 highway relocation. When the city put out a request for proposals last year for the new Roger Williams Park Gateway Entrance on Broad Street, Anderson's studio Design Under Sky (DUS) was a natural to be part of the INFORM design team; their entry became the winning bid.

I asked Anderson about the impact of landscape architecture on urban life. "I think it is that connective tissue which makes city life possible, this thread that is essential for our existence," he said. "As an art form, it expresses our relationship to nature and the living world, and makes us ask questions about how we are living."

Prior to forming DUS, Anderson worked for the award-winning offices of Landworks Studio and Ground, Inc. in Boston. There, among other projects, he designed gardens for numerous hospitals, both here and in China. "It's another function of landscape architecture - incorporating the healing balm of nature with the urban realm. We bring nature and culture together in an artistic way, a sculptural way, that allows the two systems to work with each other."



The colorful new RW Park Gateway Entrance is designed to welcome the Broad Street community and beckon them into the park, but the gardens also serve an environmental purpose. “We took a 100% asphalt site and turned it into a 70% permeable site. I think it’s going to play a big role in increasing the vibrancy of that area.”

Anderson notes that the influence of landscape architecture isn’t always obvious. “The designs aren’t in your face, you don’t necessarily recognize that there’s been an architect involved, but when you see it, you know it - you move through it and then you say, ‘Oh, that was nice.’”



Anderson’s focus for now is on cities. “I’m particularly interested in urban spaces and bringing the joy and delight of the living world into them so that people can continually reconnect and have that sensibility,” he said. And the simplest design can often be the most effective. Anderson recalls his

project *Living Edge*, just north of the new pedestrian bridge. “There was a beautiful willow tree and all I did was put a bench under it and it became this beautiful little serene spot to look at the river.” He smiled.

“Sometimes all you need is a good tree, a nice seat and a good beer.”

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