



Photo by Mitchell Kearney

## Divining

*Buster Simpson*

### Date

Installed September 2020

### Location

Latta Nature Center  
6211 Sample Road  
Huntersville, NC 28078

### Description

*Divining* sculpturally suggests a process of investigation and discovery, an impetus to inquisitiveness for both art and science. The sculptural form is based on a dowsing or divining rod. The act of dowsing has been in practice since the 1500's. For centuries people have used low tech divining rods, typically made from branches shaped like wishbones or the letter Y, to indicate or "divine" the location of desired hidden elements, particularly subterranean water.

People from the Mohegan Tribe were believed to be the first to show English colonizers how to use Y-shaped witch hazel sticks for dowsing, thus the origination of the term water witching. Willow saplings were another popular source for divining rods.

The stainless-steel sculpture is 33 feet in length, 22 feet wide and 12 feet high. It functions as a three-axis wind vane to mimic the act of dowsing. To assess how *Divining* would respond to high wind events, a digital model of the sculpture was analyzed using a computer program called LS-DYNA, which simulated what its movements would be like under intense and varied conditions.

The satin finish of *Divining's* stainless-steel curvilinear surface reflects ambient and natural light sources. As the structure moves with the winds, it conjures a host of notions.

### About Buster Simpson

Simpson, an artist active since the late 1960's, has worked on major infrastructure and planning projects, sight specific sculptures, museum installations, and community interventions. Simpson received his MFA in 1969, and later, the Distinguished Alumni Award in Architecture and Design, at the University of Michigan. Simpson is a recipient of numerous awards, among them, NEA fellowships and the Americans for the Arts Public Art Award in 2009.

In 2013, the Frye Art Museum mounted a major retrospective of his work. In May of 2015 and 2016, Simpson conducted *Rising Waters* at the Robert Rauschenberg foundation on Captiva Island Florida.

Simpson has exhibited at The New Museum, MoMA PS1, Seattle Art Museum, Frye Art Museum, The Hirshhorn Museum, Capp Street Project, International Glass Museum.

## Selection Panel

Manoj Kesavan, Public Art Commission; Shannon Binns, Executive Director, Sustain Charlotte; Carrie Gault, Artist, Color Box Mosaics, LLC; Peter Franz, Landscape Architect, UNCC Facilities Management

## Funding Partner

This project is funded through Mecklenburg County's 1% for the Arts Ordinance. ASC administers the public art program for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Artist Selection and designs are approved by the appointed Public Art Commission.

**Public Art Program**  
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