La Muse: a sculpture that pulls up cool air for the people inside to feel inspired.

# Executive summary

This project is a collaboration between an artist and an architect. It consists of a sculpture inspired by the landscape.

The ground under the structure is left barren and shaded, in its natural state. The sculpture is erected from only three points by anchoring its structure to the bedrock. This preserves the environment.

In the hollow of the sculpture, twelve feet above ground (i.e. about three and a half meters) , there is an enclosed space in which people can seek shelter, meet, and find inspiration.

At the high point of the sculpture there is an opening bringing light into the hollow through a window. Opening the window creates a draft as the warmer air rises and pulls up the cool air from the shaded ground underneath the sculpture, eliminating any need for mechanical ventilation and cooling.

The opening also acts as a funnel to capture rainwater.

The materials used for construction are sustainable and hydrocarbon free. Optionally, electricity could be provided from solar panels placed on one side of the sculpture.

# Introduction

La Muse is the name of our proposed sculpture, designed to accommodate the specific needs of people in the desert.

It combines the following key elements: providing proper protection from the sun through adequate shading, and fostering creative energy via its unique aesthetic values.

La Muse is a sculpture under and in which people can find shelter. It will provide open spaces on two levels, which can be used for various purposes, such as meetings, exhibitions, and lodging.

It is to be placed anywhere on the property of Fly Ranch where sanctuary will be most needed, and preferably where the bedrock clods to the surface.

Beyond providing generous shade, the shelter also generates natural ventilation thanks to the opening at the ground level and the air conduit at the top; simply opening its window creates a breeze. Water being a precious resource for everyone, the shelter also features a rainwater collector.

Combining practical with aesthetic functionality, the opening at the top of the shelter also creates an interesting skylight for the mezzanine, located inside and above ground. Thus, once inside the shelter, people also find themselves inside a sculpture. This unique experience of being inside a piece of art is sure to be moving and exhilarating for all who pass through.

The muses of Greek mythology gave the necessary inspiration for this creation, and its namesake remains the same in French. Given the fact that it will serve as a source of inspiration, we named the sculpture La Muse.

# Sculpture

This proposal is the result of an artist working hand in hand with an architect. This was true teamwork to produce a proposal that is both artistically inspiring and architecturally feasible and ecological.

In this section, a description of the work of the artist is presented. The next section will provide some architectural details.

Fly Geyser of Gerlach inspired the creation of this sculpture. It led to a pyramidal shape, with an open conduit at the top and rainwater reservoir. It is quite difficult (some would say impossible) to compete with the beauty of nature. However, my approach as an artist is to observe adequately what is inspiring to the eye and, with the help of mathematics, create something that is rich for the soul as well.

Another source of inspiration came from Pyramid Lake and the beautiful Stone Mother story. Clearly, the pyramid shape has a special meaning for the area. The simplest geometric shapes, like squares and triangles, have interesting properties that, as a sculptor, I personally make full use of. The proposed sculpture is made of 5 sides carefully aligned together: a square, a double square rectangle, an equilateral triangle, a silver triangle (half a rectangle of height equal to its width times the square root of 2) and a trapeze made of a bronze rectangle and a bronze triangle (half a rectangle of height equal to its width times the square root of 3 - which is also the height of the equilateral triangle of the sculpture).

The sculpture sits on 3 legs and is made of 5 flat panels. By making it asymmetric, it provides 10 unique viewpoints from which the sculpture seems to be defying the laws of equilibrium. From one angle, the sculpture looks like a pyramid. From another, the sculpture looks like a bird. This is a reference to Nevada’s state symbol.

# Architecture

To enable the sculpture to be used as a shelter, the architect established an appropriate scale so that there is sufficient space for people to gather inside the hull of the sculpture.

The ground level is left unobstructed to let the landscape and wildlife pass beneath the structure while maintaining the sculpture’s integrity, aesthetic, and inspirational qualities. The edges of the panels are tapered to maintain the clear lines of the sculpture.

The staircase inside the sculpture to go from the ground to the upper level makes use of triangulated railings for its stability.

The low-tech construction makes use of common hydrocarbon free materials and onsite manpower to fabricate most of the components.

The materials are:

* CONCRETE for the underground footings attached to the bedrock;
* METAL for the main structure, staircase, window frames, tin roof, and nails for the mill-run;
* SAWMILL WOOD for the mill-run walls and floor, floorboards, furring strips, and roof boards;
* GLASS for the windows and the door; and
* WEATHERPROOF WOOD GLUE.

The sculpture is fully insulated by the wood, an ecological material that helps prevent rapid changes of temperature, as well as ensure good acoustics.

In order to preserve the wood and make the sculpture last for a very long time, it is covered with tin metal, another sustainable material. By covering the sculpture with tile sheets of tin metal laid with flat seams, a fish scale pattern called “À la Canadienne’’ is created. This is a well-proven technique that requires no sophisticated machinery and can be made on site by folding the small sheets of tin.

At the turn of the 18th century, the sheets used for this roofing system were made from reshaped metal canisters used to bring goods from England to Lower Canada. Because of its efficiency, it is still quite popular today.

We plan to build the sculpture on site with the help of local resources only and materials that are directly available nearby. This will minimize transport which we feel is important for the planet. We designed the sculpture in such a way that this will be possible.

Best regards,

La Muse’s artist and architect