

Design

Title: Property atStake

Medium: design product/sculpture

Materials: plywood, paint

"I'll design any building from a cathedral to a chicken coop."

H. H. Richardson

This project had a real client with specific functional and emotional needs, a detailed program that developed through research, a strong relationship to site, and a scale appropriate to the user. The client was a bird. The project was a house.

Property atStake is a birdhouse that raises questions of property ownership, how we use or abuse our land, and the potential for direct relationships between human development and habitat destruction.

The stake and ribbon (or survey stake) is the first blatant visual suggestion that new development is about to occur. It clearly identifies the location of new construction and begins to diagram the size and limits of development. The survey stake has always had a profound emotional impact on people and seemed a simple, powerful, and appropriate concept for this project. Dramatically increasing the scale of a standard survey stake adds influence to the statement. Development can be viewed as positive or negative, and this birdhouse does not stand as a symbol of right or wrong, but presents itself as the conscience of avian life forms that speak beautifully, but not in a language that factors into decision-making.

The stake portion of the birdhouse stands eight feet tall and is five inches thick. The red survey ribbon extends five feet across. Located near the top of the stake is a cavity that measures five inches in all dimensions. The volume of this space is excellent for several species of cavity nesting birds. The red ribbon portion of the house can be removed for cleaning and maintenance of the nesting cavity.

The mounting system for Property atStake is site-specific. The images you see are for documentation, and do not represent the final destination of the piece.

This project was created as a public service. I was one of fifty artists invited to create a birdhouse for a Habitat for Humanity Fundraising Auction. The auction took place on one grand evening, and raised 30,000 dollars for our local Habitat for Humanity.