

PUBLIC ART



Public Art

Only in Chicago can people find so much pleasure in being soaked with liquid squirting out of someone else's mouth. Of course, it's not really someone else's mouth, but rather video images projected from a spectacularly modern fountain in the heart of Millennium Park. Crown Fountain (above) which was designed by Spanish artist Jaume Plensa is part of a series of wonderfully creative art and architecture which adorns the park. The piece features two 50-foot glass block towers erected on either end of a shallow pool. The larger than life figures peering down from the glass are taken from a cross section of 1,000 locals who graciously lent their faces for art's sake.



▲ *Buckingham Fountain has met its match in Millennium Park with Jaume Plensa's Crown Fountain.*

Just to the north on Michigan Avenue is a 33-foot high, reflective sculpture. The official title is "Cloud Gate", but locals call it "The Bean". After being inspired by the look of liquid mercury, British artist Anish Kapoor created the piece with the intent that it reflect both the skyline and cascading clouds. It does what



▲ *Cloud Gate invites the public into a distorted view of the world around them.*

great art should by magnetically drawing in viewers for a closer look. The only difference is with this piece, the closer you get the more you see a distorted image of yourself gazing back.

Sitting guard over Daley Center Plaza is a rusty bird. Or is that a woman? An Afghan Hound? Suffice it to say it's a Picasso - and that's all that matters. Chicago loves outdoor public art. So much in fact, that in 1978 the City enacted a Percent-For-Art ordinance requiring new municipal buildings to spend 1% of their budget on art. Alexander Calder works can be seen outside the Federal Plaza and inside the Sears Tower. Making a grand entrance to the dedication of his Flamingo sculpture, Calder arrived in the Loop with a real honest-to-goodness circus. Other modern masterpieces which have become city landmarks include works by Henry Moore, Marc Chagall,

Claus Oldenburg, Joan Miro, and Jean Dubuffet to name a few. With such riches, the City can rightfully claim to be the international capital for outdoor twentieth century art.

Those with more conservative tastes may enjoy the lions who greet patrons outside the Art Institute of Chicago. The beasts were sculpted by Edward Kemys and donated by Mrs. Henry Field. In a playful tradition, each year after Thanksgiving the lions are adorned with decorative Christmas wreaths and Santa hats.