



Illustrative accounts

In ancient texts of the world the awareness of maintaining balance in our environment is a basic teaching. Humanity is authorized to supervise its physical environment, not destroy it. Prophets, philosophers, artists and scientists throughout history, taught the interconnectedness between natural elements and how we should protect genetic diversity and life supporting systems of our natural world.

Today, the threat to our ecology is not minor but an urgent problem that threatens to kill our living environment. Conspicuous consumption and competitive consumerism are exhausting our natural resources. Researchers, ecologists, and citizens are alarmed by the serious adverse impacts of human behavior. Politics united with greed have created a circumstance of imbalance and diminished conservation.

If truth comes from observing nature then what does our future hold when there is less and less to observe? The Element Stories are records of projects that observe nature and respond to our current state of nature. The stories explain process, reveal hidden detail, celebrate imperfection, interpret movement of incompleteness, and describe how all existence inherently shares the same fate.



Illustrative accounts are in forms such as tablets, hand-made manuscripts, illuminations, prayer books and scrolls that serve to merge ancestral imagination with 21st Century concerns of preservation.

The Element Room is designed for completion by 2010-2012. The relics in The Element Room create a certain intimacy that establish links to a time in history. The Element Stories put visitors in touch with a pivotal time in history, the early part of the 21st century, one that will be looked back upon as a time of transition. The Element Room will be a place that encourages reflection, progressive thought, resolution, and creativity. It is the idea that The Element Room be used by others and become a meeting place for unity and renewal.

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not for every man's greed".  
-Mahatma Gandhi

### A concept once hidden



In Florence, Italy, The Palazzo Vecchio is a stone foundation of three buildings from the 13-16th centuries. A room of interest was the study commissioned by the Grand Duke Francesco I de' Medici (1541-1587), son of Cosimo I. The Studiolo (Little studio, 1570-75), was a hidden vaulted chamber with concealed doors, secret passages, and no windows. The principal theme of the studio was the relationship between art and nature. The interior, created by a collaboration of artists, related to the four elements, the four seasons and the four temperaments. A highly intellectual iconographic program, it included representations of earth, fire, water and air on each of the four walls. This mysterious room is Francesco's legacy.

### A 21st Studiolo

The Studiolo stored devices for study in medicine, alchemy, geology, glassmaking and metallurgy. Small, precious, unusual, and rare objects and materials, abundant in that time, were collected. The decor depicted religious, mythological, historical or industrial scenes to reference the contents.

The Element Room will have compartments that hold mementos of a different nature. Items collected are new variations of hand-made works responding to our time. Archetypes of trees, tears, curtains, eyes and birds are used. Objects that interact with the elements such as fans, umbrellas, vessels, and flags will be created. Found objects, donated items, correspondence, hand-made books, photographs and prints are also preserved.

## THE ELEMENT FANE

### and THE ELEMENT STORIES

Lee Tracy, artist  
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Conceived in 1999 in honor of the new millennium, four long-term projects ultimately housed together as one.