

PRIMAVERA
“La Sciarpa di Flora”



photo by William Wright Studio

Description

Primavera is an installation in two major parts, consisting of 200 spring-blooming bronze flowers in the ground plane of the Spring Park plaza, and a columnar sculpture with a flowing ‘fabric’ wrapping that is the wellspring of the pavement flowers. There are 30 different species of flowers, and over fifty different images, showing the flowers at different stage of development. These include roses, rhododendrons, poppies, peonies, tulips, snowdrops, primroses, hellebores, pansies, trilliums, daffodils, and many, many more. There are also three Japanese family crests of cherry blossoms, a tribute to people who once lived here.

The columnar sculpture at one end of the installation is 13 feet tall, crowned with an image of the sun. The sphere of the sun is divided precisely in half by a corona of rays, symbolizing the vernal equinox, when the day and night are divided equally in half. A graceful fabric-like 'scarf' wraps the column, covered with flowers that seem to flow down onto the pavement.



Inspiration

The starting point for thinking about this project was Sandro Botticelli's early renaissance painting called *Primavera*, or the *Allegory of Spring*. Among the figures set in an orange grove is Flora, the goddess of spring. She is clad in an unusual—for the era—and especially lovely gown covered with blossoms, and is shown scattering the roses she's holding in her skirt onto the meadow below everyone's feet. There are 500 flowers in the painting, around 150 different kinds, of which about 130 have been positively identified as being spring flowers that bloom in Tuscany.

Our initial design proposal included the collection of bronze flowers in the pavement, along with an abstracted figure with a flowered skirt. Cindy Edens suggested just a *piece* of fabric—a scarf— instead of a dress. We have often created columnar sculptures, and love the form, so we took Cindy's wonderful idea and wrapped the flowered fabric around a column so that it would look like the plaza's flowers were flowing down from the 'scarf'. It was a perfect solution. The sun on the top of the column refers to the Vernal Equinox that takes place in late March.

Length of Time to Complete

The research, design, fabrication and installation of the project took place primarily over a time span from mid-2019 to August 2021. In those 26 months we spent more than half of our time completely devoted to *Primavera*. My best guess would be that it took us about 14 or 15 months of full-time work to create it. But it took over 30 years to acquire the skills and develop the techniques that made this work possible, which is what I often tell people when they ask this question.

