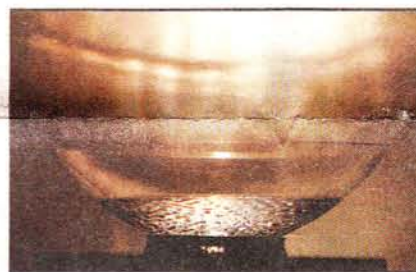




JEFF HINCKLEY | DISPATCH PHOTOS

Visitors to the “Ways of Knowing Water” exhibit view a video of the Olentangy River by Elizabeth Gerdeman and George C. Anderson.



« When they set foot on a mat near *Resonance* by Adon Newman, visitors trigger vibrations in the water of the piece — at rest, far left, and activated.

HYDRO DYNAMIC

Exhibit taps into importance of water in central Ohio

By Bill Eichenberger | THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

In the mid-1800s, water was central to the lives of Ohioans: The state bustled with canal travel, every city of note was situated next to Lake Erie or a river, and many a factory was fueled by water power. ¶ Today, it seems, we central Ohioans barely notice our water. ¶ We take for granted the Downtown riverfront. We often mistake the Olentangy for the Scioto. We rarely travel on either river. ¶ “Ways of Knowing Water,” an exhibit continuing Downtown through Aug. 30 in the Ohio State University Urban Arts Space, seeks to remind us how crucial water is to life and how splendid the waterways of central Ohio can be to the attentive eye.



“We’re hoping that ‘Ways of Knowing Water’ will guide us and help us to be better caretakers of our water,” said Prudence Gill, chief curator for the Urban Arts Space and co-curator of the exhibit.

The multimedia display explores water from the perspectives of artists and scientists, and includes paintings, sculptures, photography, videography and more.

« *Smallmouth Breaking the Surface* by Adam Kaser The featured artists include George C. Anderson, Alan Crockett Jr., Steven Pentak and Todd

Slaughter, whose works reflect their relationships with the Olentangy and Scioto rivers.

Nicole Gibbs, Adon Newman, Ian Ruffino and Sky Shineman address water as an alchemic element. David

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Related events

- **Wednesday** – brown-bag gallery talk: "The Real Science of Water and Sustainability," with three scientists from Battelle, noon
- **Thursday** – film: *Wild by Law: The Rise of Environmentalism and the*

Creation of the Wilderness Act, 5:30 p.m.

- **Aug. 7** – talk by artists in the exhibit, 5:30 p.m.
- **Aug. 14** – dialogue: "Get With the Flow – Find Out How," with representatives of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Com-

mission, Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, Friends of Alum Creek & Tributaries and other groups, 5:30 p.m.

- **Aug. 21** – film: *Rivers and Tides* by Andy Goldsworthy, 5:30 p.m.
- **Aug. 28** – dialogue: "When Art Builds

Bridges: Art, Community and Environment," with artists, educators, landscape designers and others, 4 p.m.
All events, with free admission, will take place in the program space of the Urban Arts Space, 50 W. Town St.

WATER

FROM PAGE E1

amber, Guy Michael Davis and Adam Kaser inspect life in central Ohio rivers.

The cross-disciplinary effort taps sources of expertise such as the Columbus Museum of Art, the Columbus Division of Water and the OSU Department of Ichthyology (the study of fish).

Historical and contemporary photographs, maps and items from the OSU Museum of Biological Diversity are shown.

The exhibit reflects the central Ohio interest in seeking to turn around our relationship with water in the next decade," said co-curator Nick Livingston of the OSU Institute for Collaborative Research and Public Humanities.

"Water quality in our rivers is up, and as a city we're beginning to develop the Downtown waterfront," he said. "But I think public perception has lagged behind.

"We don't have dramatic water like a Great Lake or an ocean or a significant waterfall," but, he added, "We had to have the Olentangy and the Scioto rivers to be here at all."

The exhibiting artists, Livingston said, "related to water in so many extraordinary ways."

"Look at George Anderson's photographs: He has taken photographs for 20 years along our waterways out of the passion of his heart. The results are truly stunning. So many people do care intensely about their surroundings."

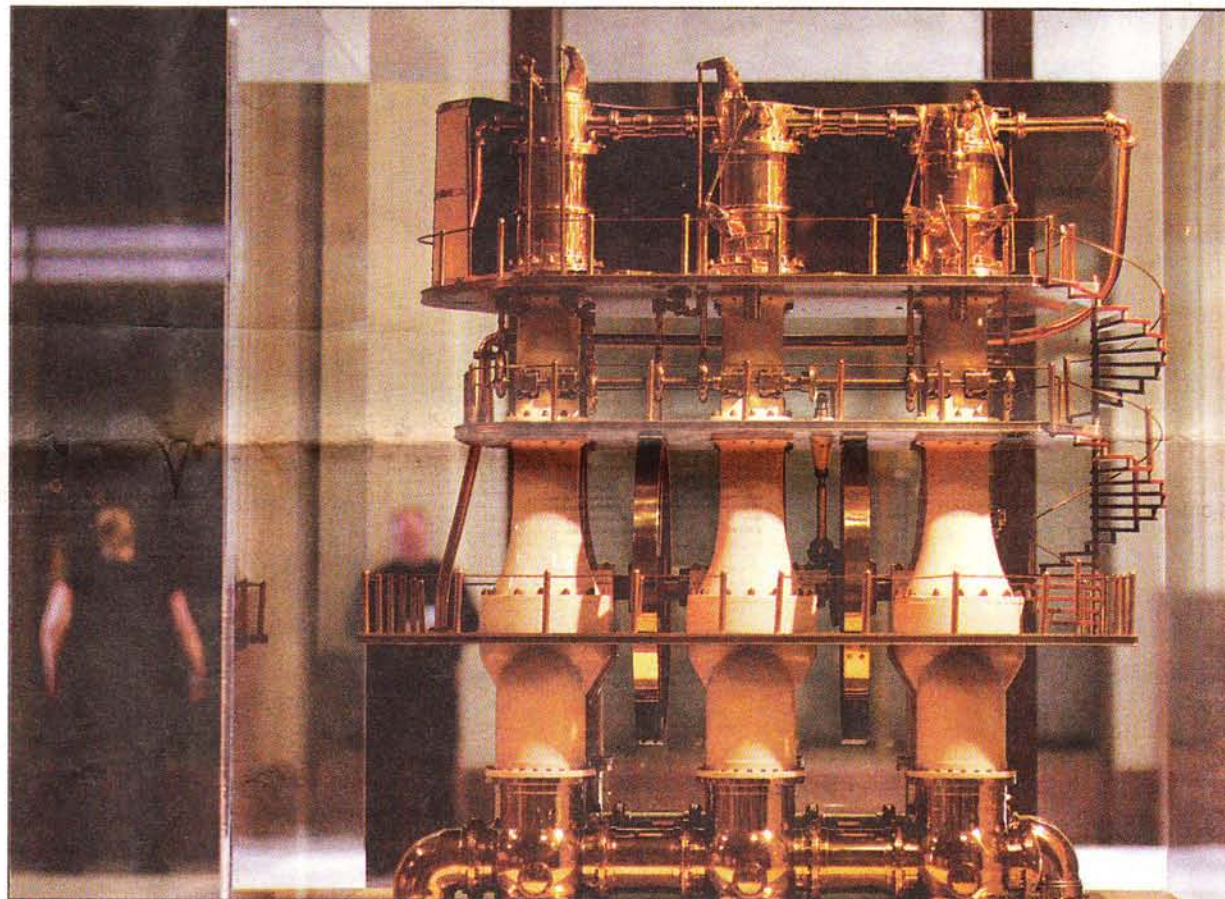
One of the most striking pieces is the 9-foot Bamber sculpture *January*, featuring reeds indigenous to Ohio as well as steel and glass.

"I remember driving back to Columbus from Canton in the middle of the winter," Bamber said, "and going past Killbuck and seeing a low-lying swamp area. You could tell the water had recently been much higher.

"Ice was poking out off the trees 3 feet off the ground, and I'm sure that being that was in part the inspiration for *January*."

Davis, a sculptor, drew inspiration from the gar, a prehistoric-looking fish.

"Is there a more wonderful or bizarre creature on Earth than the gar?" he asked. "I don't think so." The gar, he said, is suited to the Olentangy and Scioto rivers, equipped as it is to withstand pollution and barely oxygenated water.



A scale model of the 1908 steam engine that powered the Scioto River pumping station

JEFF HINCKLEY | DISPATCH PHOTO

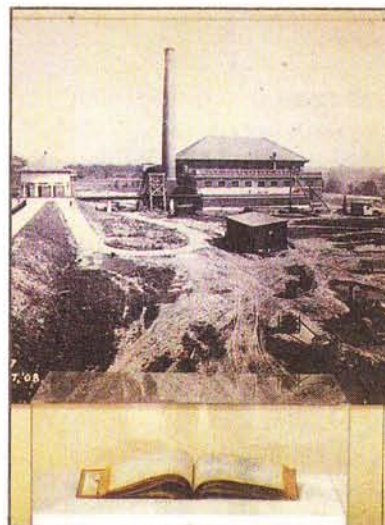
"Back in 1908, a third of the population died of water-borne diseases. And in the middle of a typhoid breakout, we decided to do something about that, plain and simple."

CONRADE HINDS

Columbus Division of Water

With its long (often more than 2 feet), heavily armored body and narrow mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth, the gar is no beauty queen.

"It's essentially a living dinosaur," Davis said. "It's looked down upon probably because it is so ugly, but it has so many fascinating peculiarities, including a swim bladder that functions as a lung. They're often considered vermin to be exterminated, but they're unique."



The pumping station, above, and an album of blueprints

"Ways of Knowing Water" also refers to a bit of history called the Columbus Experiment, a merging of politics and science that created the nation's first water-pumping and -purifying facility.

"2008 is the centennial of the

► "Ways of Knowing Water" continues through Aug. 30 in the Ohio State University Urban Arts Space, 50 W. Town St. Hours: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and until 8 p.m. Thursdays. Admission is free. Call 614-292-8861.

Columbus Experiment, which has been totally forgotten," said Conrade Hinds, a facility projects manager for the Division of Water.

"Back in 1908, a third of the population died of water-borne diseases. And in the middle of a typhoid breakout, we decided to do something about that, plain and simple."

A model of the pumping-and-purification system greets visitors they enter the exhibit.

"The design was used all over the country and all over the world," Hinds said.

Water, he noted, should never be taken for granted.

"Think about it: Americans use 150 gallons of water a day. In the Middle East, on the other hand, they're still working on providing 7 gallons of clean water a day."

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