

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

“Mixer drum, towering manhole Museum of Contemporary Art Exhibit,” Concrete Products, 5th October 2015

Three ubiquitous concrete elements, one ready mixed and two precast, anchor a Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago plaza exhibit running through July 2016. Dubbed *MCA Chicago Plaza Project Alexandre da Cunha, 2015*, it features the Brazilian artist’s *Mix (Americana)*, a painted mixer drum on loan from a New York gallery, plus *Figurehead* and *Biscuit*, two new “works” from Evanston, Ill.-based drainage products operator, Concrete Specialties Co.



Plaza photo: Nathan Keay, MCA Chicago

Museum staff characterize *Mix (Americana)* as “A full-scale mixer liberated from its typical location on the back of a delivery truck. This red-white-and-blue, stars-and-stripes vessel is not only meant to inspire double-takes for visitors passing through the area, it also functions as a strange, quasi-kaleidoscopic viewing device: when viewers peer into its open end, complex shadows, forms, and the depth of the interior chamber are revealed as sunlight filters down into the barrel through a hole in the top.”

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The artful mixer drum rests on a platform overlooking the museum's entry plaza, two blocks east of Chicago's Magnificent Mile shopping district. At ground level are two elements da Cunha interpreted after an early-2015 visit to Concrete Specialties' Elgin, Ill., plant. The 35-ft. high, 10-ft. diameter *Figurehead* consists of a manhole and two risers, all with various blockouts or penetrations; the 11-ton *Biscuit* is a variation of a drainage structure cap.

Concrete Specialties Vice President Al Nondorf hosted the artist and MCA officials for a day in Elgin, enabling the guests to ponder large precast structures to augment *Mix (Americana)* for the plaza exhibit. After visiting the plant, MCA Chicago observes, "da Cunha was inspired to produce new work that continues his interest in repeating geometric forms. The tower-like *Figurehead* is made from sections of sewer pipe like those under the city of Chicago. Stacked vertically, [they] suggest a ready-made skyscraper. Similarly in *Biscuit*, da Cunha transformed a mundane sewer cap into a playful abstract composition simply by presenting it in an unconventional way."

<http://concreteproducts.com/news/9316-mixer-drum-towering-manhole-frame-museum-of-contemporary-art-exhibit.html#.Vh0aoBNViko>