



# LAFAYETTE BICENTENNIAL

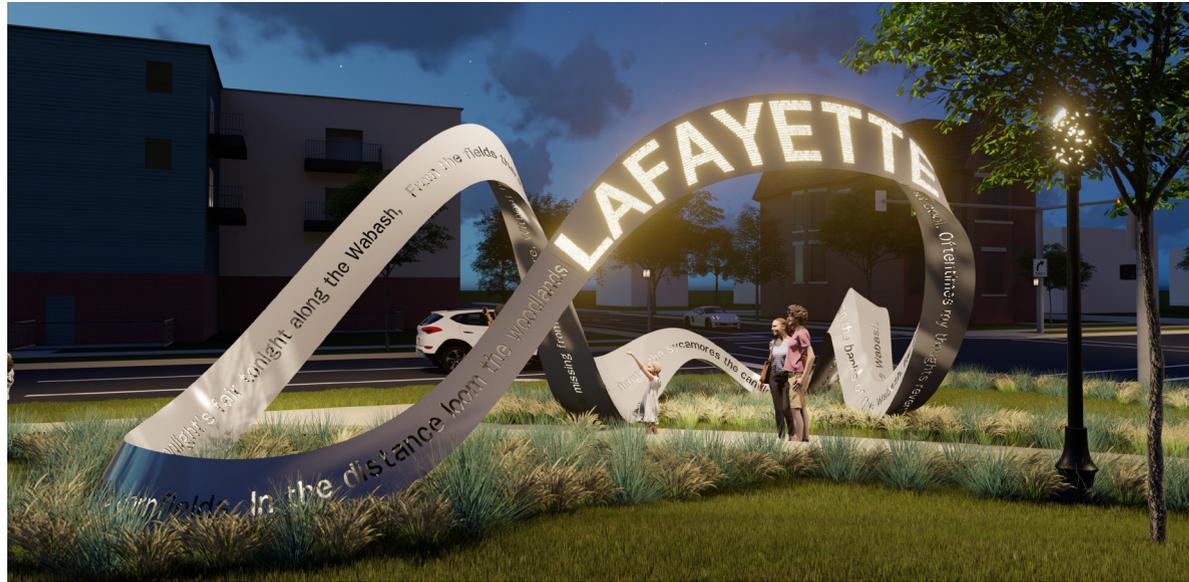
1825-2025



## *“On the Banks of the Wabash”*

A Bicentennial Artistic Monument for  
The City of Lafayette, Indiana

## On the Banks of the Wabash - Celebrating Lafayette's Bicentennial



*On The Banks of The Wabash, Bicentennial Public Art by Cliff Garten Studio*

**The sinuous art piece, inspired by the Wabash River, depicts a current flowing from the City's past into its surging future.**

**Donate today to make possible this permanent, soaring outdoor showpiece.**

*On the Banks of the Wabash* celebrates the City of Lafayette's 200th year in 2025. The public art piece commissioned by the City will be installed and dedicated in September, 2025, on the grassy knoll at the corner of Ninth and South Streets, a prominent thoroughfare.

**Leave your mark by donating to the creation and installation of this lighted, forged metal sculpture, one of the many Bicentennial festivities planned for the year.**

The word "LAFAYETTE" will be cut into the pinnacle of the sculpture's arches and will be illuminated to create a glowing lightbox that will contrast against the night's sky.

Cliff Garten Studio will engage the community to collect words residents feel describe the City of Lafayette and those descriptors will be inscribed upon the piece. People will walk under and around the archway, an inviting stage-like "frame" where City events will be held for decades to come.

### ***On The Banks of The Wabash***

Bicentennial Public Art by Cliff Garten Studio  
Ninth and South Streets

September, 2025 - Installation, completion, dedication, and celebration.

## Sponsorship Levels

Please give to this exceptional project where art and City pride converge, where the symbolism of the Wabash River and the words of our citizens inspire. New walkways surrounding the sculpture will include interpretive text and plaques to honor donors.

**Contact: Dennis Carson:**  
[dcarson@lafayette.in.gov](mailto:dcarson@lafayette.in.gov)

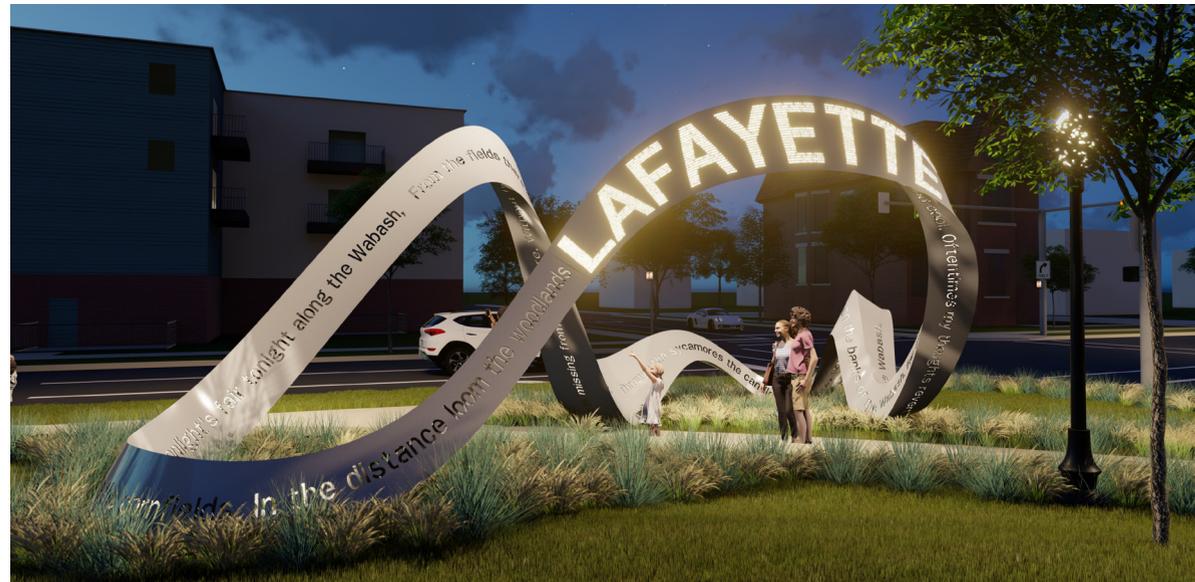
**for more info about Lafayette's Bicentennial and activities visit:**  
[www.lafayette.in.gov/bicentennial](http://www.lafayette.in.gov/bicentennial)

<b>Pioneer</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Trailblazer</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Heirloom</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>Heritage</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Legacy</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Digby</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Marquis</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>

## Project Narrative- *On the Banks of the Wabash*

CGS is pleased to present our proposal, *On the Banks of the Wabash*, to the public art opportunity for Lafayette’s Bicentennial Artistic Monument. We are very invested in this project and we would be honored to design, fabricate and install this artwork to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the city of Lafayette.

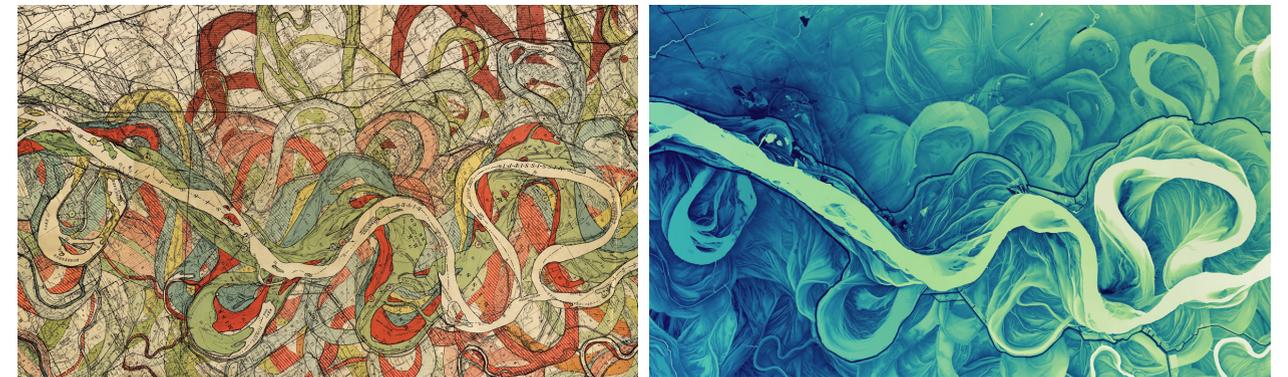
Our sculpture, *On the Banks of the Wabash*, draws inspiration from the Wabash River and its significance for Lafayette’s history. The Wabash River played an undeniable role in the history of the settlement that eventually became Lafayette and it is one of the main reasons that the area now known as Tippecanoe County has been populated since the time it was inhabited by the Weas and other indigenous groups.



Flowing gently through Lafayette, the Wabash River is a timeless thread binding the City to its past and its promising future. From the days when the indigenous people of this area honored its fertile banks to the bustling trade routes navigated by French fur traders, the Wabash has shaped Lafayette. Its waters once echoed with the rhythmic paddling of canoes and the churning of steamboats, carrying goods and dreams. The Wabash River is not just a geographical feature but a cherished emblem of Lafayette’s history, its resilience, and its enduring connection to the land. It is for these very reasons that we found it appropriate to use it as a source of inspiration for our sculpture.

Within the discipline of geography, rivers are often mapped as fixed lines that traverse the landscape. However, while many rivers have become highly controlled by human intervention, their nature is in fact highly dynamic and mutable. The flow of water constantly changes the shape and path of the river based on the erosion and composition of the landscape and the volume of water that is flowing through the river.

In 1944 Harold Fisk, a cartographer working for the Army Corp of Engineers, completed a comprehensive study that documented the changes of the Mississippi River throughout the ages. In his study titled “Geological Investigation of the Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi River ” Fisk recognized that the Mississippi River was a living, mutable element. While the resulting maps produced by Fisk may seem to be very beautiful and akin to works of art, they are in fact highly precise depictions of the changes in meander of the Mississippi. Most recently, Lidar technology has confirmed the accuracy of Fisk’s observations with a remarkable degree of precision.



*Side by side comparison of one of Harold Fisk Maps of the Mississippi and a Lidar scan of the same area*

The same meandering and mutable nature also applies to the Wabash River and while it has not been as thoroughly documented there have been studies that have looked at segments of the Wabash and observed the meandering changes of its riverbed. Our sculpture, *On the Banks of the Wabash*, is geometrically inspired by this dynamic nature of the Wabash river, and the flowing continuous curves of the sculpture parallel the meandering path of the Wabash’s waters.

## Project Narrative- *On the Banks of the Wabash*

Furthermore, by understanding the Wabash as this ever-changing element of nature we gain the perspective that it holds within its riverbed an eternity of moments, an unimaginable number of small histories that could never be expressed in one fixed moment. The Wabash is thus a symbol of constant change and a collection of the histories that have taken place in Lafayette. This symbolism is another reason we believe the Wabash would be a pertinent symbol to commemorate Lafayette's bicentennial.

The title of the art piece is based on the 1897 song of the same name by American songwriter Paul Dresser. The lyrics of the ballad reminisce about Dresser's childhood by the Wabash. In 1913, this song was adopted by the Indiana General Assembly as the official state song of Indiana. While the song has fallen into disuse in recent decades it remains a beautiful homage to the River and the State of Indiana and we found it an apt symbol for our sculpture. Furthermore, excerpts of the first verse and chorus (seen below) will be laser cut onto the surface of sculpture, their lines flowing smoothly along the soft curvatures of the artwork.

*"(1st Verse)*

*Round my Indiana homestead wave the cornfields,  
In the distance loom the woodlands clear and cool.  
Oftentimes my thoughts revert to scenes of childhood,  
Where I first received my lessons, nature's school.  
But one thing there is missing from the picture,  
Without her face it seems so incomplete.  
I long to see my mother in the doorway,  
As she stood there years ago, her boy to greet.*

*(Chorus)*

*Oh, the moonlight's fair tonight along the Wabash,  
From the fields there comes the breath of new mown hay.  
Through the sycamores the candle lights are gleaming,  
On the banks of the Wabash, far away."*

We found these two verses to be very beautiful and they seem to represent a true love and pride for the State of Indiana and the Wabash river. Giving this often forgotten song a place in the sculpture, not only memorializes its words, but would evoke a sense of pride in the residents of the City while recalling a melody composed more than 100 years ago.

Additionally, we have included a large text element across the pinnacle of the sculpture's arches that reads "LAFAYETTE" in large letters, towards either side of the sculpture. These large letters are in turn composed and outlined by smaller words. As part of our project, we would create a community engagement process to collect words that describe the City of Lafayette for its residents. This process could take the form of a digital survey or an in-person workshop. These collected words would be then rearranged and integrated into the sculpture.



At night these large letters would be illuminated by fixtures internal to the sculpture, creating a glowing lightbox effect that would contrast against the night's sky.

For us one of the most important considerations in the design of the artwork was how it could create a destination and a place for any planned bicentennial celebrations or other future City events. We envisioned the sculpture as an archway that could serve as the "frame" of a stage or as the focal point for City events.

The dynamic topology of the sculpture offers a myriad of experiences. As people approach it from afar, it is perceived as two dynamic lines that overlap and seem to shift in relation to one another. As they get closer the sculptures' archways become the focal point, inviting pedestrians to traverse under them. Once inside, the sculpture becomes a framing device that encompasses all your surrounding views.

Through this project, we hope to create a space where art and City pride converge, where the symbolism of the Wabash river serves as a source of inspiration and identity

## Project Narrative- *On the Banks of the Wabash*

for residents of Lafayette. The sculpture not only pays homage to the past but also serves as a symbol of hope and renewal for the future creating a beautiful place within the City



We put a lot of care in designing artworks that are suitable for their environmental conditions. Our artworks are designed to be durable, will be able to withstand public interaction and resist the effects of the natural environment. All components of the sculpture will be made out of stainless steel, a low-maintenance material suitable for the outdoor site. We have carefully designed the artwork to be as maintenance-free as possible. Stainless steel is one of the most suitable materials for outdoor public art and we will provide the city with a detailed maintenance manual once the artwork is installed.

Our fabricator, Kevin Maag from Metal Arts Foundry is someone with whom we have collaborated for years. Metal Arts Foundry is located in Utah and they are a highly-experienced and specialized metal art fabricator. They have been around for over 25 years and have completed countless projects across the US.

We are always conscious of budget limitations and schedules and we are very experienced in designing and managing public art projects. On the banks of the Wabash can be built, delivered and installed within an expedited time frame. We are well-prepared to respond to this project and we will work diligently to meet your schedule and constraints. If selected, our studio will give your project our utmost care and attention to deliver a stunning and durable art piece on time and on budget.

We thank you for your consideration.



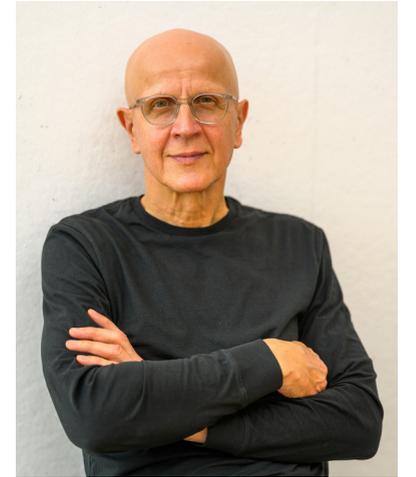
## Team

### Cliff Garten, Artist

Cliff Garten is an internationally recognized sculptor and founder of Cliff Garten Studio in Venice, California.

Working between sculpture, engineering, architecture and landscape, Garten has been an important voice in advocating for what he calls “the expressive potential of public infrastructure.” Insisting on strong social and aesthetic identities for civic places as well as large civic infrastructure systems. His sculptures are built with careful attention to the development of each piece by seeing the development of landscape and its functions as a part of the total composition of sculpture. He refers to this hybrid art that forms urban spaces, plazas, infrastructure and memorials as “landscape sculpture.” Cliff believes that the necessary facts of our public infrastructure are cause for the possibility of a public expression through the conscious design and integration of art. Sculpture defines our interaction and movement by creating energy between things, generating interest in public activity, reframing our private lives and creating a sense of place within public and private.

Garten received a Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design and a Master of Landscape Architecture with Distinction from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.



### Sixto Cordero Maisonet, Project Manager, Lead Designer

Sixto’s work both in architecture and design employs digital technologies and attempts to coalesce these with social, environmental and cultural parameters. His work explores methods of geometric discretization as well as critical approaches to the social function of architecture. Sixto received a Master of Architecture from MIT and a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Puerto Rico. He has previously worked for several renowned design firms such as the Norman Foster Foundation, ZHA Architects and SelgasCano.



### Esther Ho, Designer

Prior to joining Cliff Garten Studio, Esther was trained as an architect, leading research and design efforts for architectural facade systems through product design and in public art. While at CGS, she is currently working toward a Master of Science in Integrated Design, Business, and Technology at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles; Esther has received a Bachelor of Architecture from University of Southern California.



### Molly Reid, Architect

Molly Reid is a licensed architect in the state of California, as well as a LEED accredited professional, Molly Reid brings over 26 years of professional experience to Cliff Garten Studio. Prior to opening her practice in 1994 and before joining CGS, Reid worked in the offices of Lorcan O’Herlihy in Santa Monica, CA and Naomi Leff and Associates in New York, NY. Reid holds a Masters of Architecture Degree from Southern California Institute of Architects (SCI-Arc) and a Bachelor of Arts from Barnard College.



1826-2026



Renderings Day

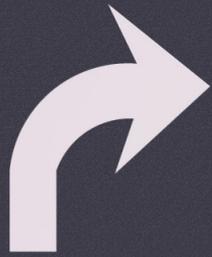


On the Banks of  
the Wabash





# Renderings Day



On the Banks of the Wabash



# Design Concept- Community Engagement

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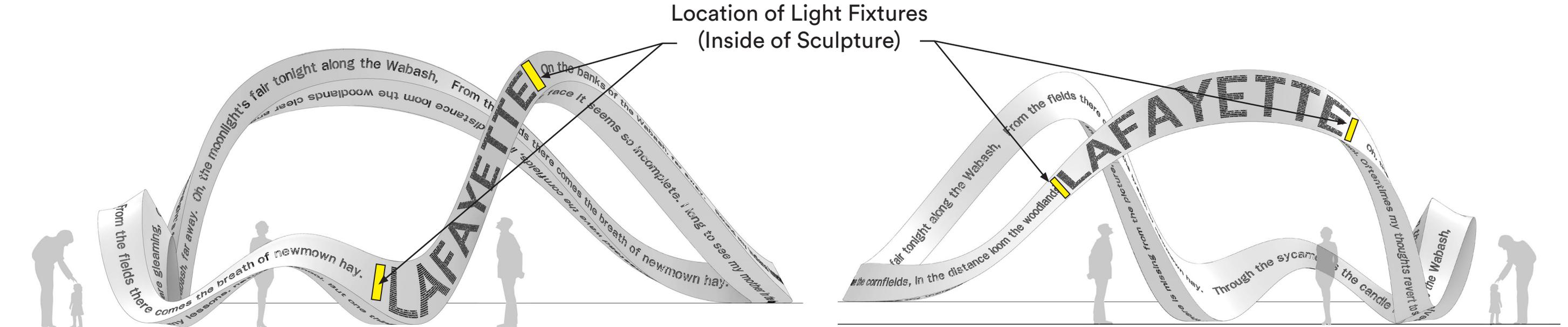


Example reference from our project *I AM A MAN* Plaza of cut-out texts that are illuminated from the inside, creating an ephemeral glowing quality at night.

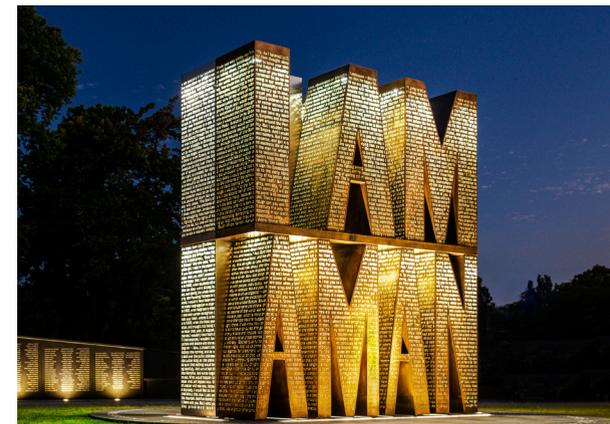
# Lighting Strategy

## Lighting

The sculpture will have floodlights (K-50, K Series or similar) that will internally illuminate the two areas of the sculpture that spell the word "LAFAYETTE." Rectangles on the elevations below indicate approximate lighting placement inside of the sculpture. These lights will create a light box effect that will make the words glow at night



This strategy illuminates the outline of the words to create a dynamic glowing effect.



I AM A MAN Plaza by CGS, 2018.



Close-up of illuminated text cut-out.







tonight's fair tonight along the Wabash, From the fields that  
Without the  
In the distance loom the woodlands

WABASH

On the banks of the Wabash,  
 Oftentimes my thoughts revert

Through the sycamores the canopies



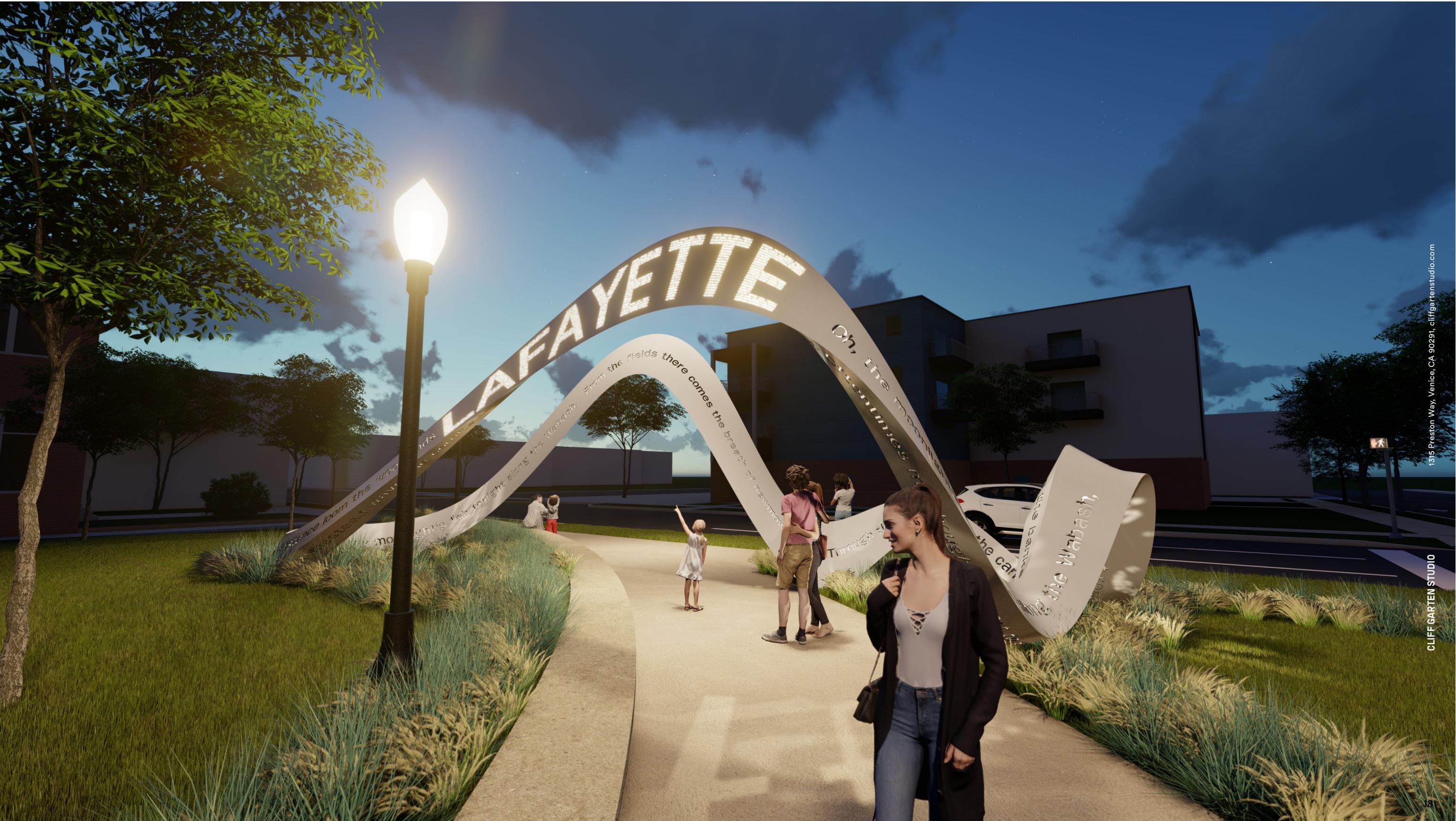


ONLY

1315 Preston Way, Venice, CA 90291, cliffgardenstudio.com

CLIFF GARTEN STUDIO





LAFAYETTE

From the fields there comes the breath of newmow

Oh, the moonlight adventures in

the Wabash,



SOUTH ST

ONLY



From the fields that  
In the distance loom the woodlands  
Often times

LAFAYETTE

On the banks of the Wabash