

On view at the  
Hudson River Museum

*Unnecessary Memorial II*  
(Palisades), 2012  
Mixed media  
152" x 9' 8" x 13'  
Courtesy of the artist



**John Minieri:** Research plays a large role in the conceptualization and creation of your work. Can you explain the role of the research process (site visits, Internet research, interviews, etc.) in developing your pieces at Wave Hill and the Hudson River Museum?

**Blane De St. Croix:** What was interesting about this project when I was approached by Wave Hill was that the project was so close to home, my studio and my practice. The Palisades are also iconic landscapes, which my work is very much about. I think that I'm as guilty as a lot of people in this area, in that I took the Palisades for granted, not knowing much about them. I never realized the environmental implications of the Palisades or understood their overall history as related to the surrounding areas. After visiting the Palisades several times, I realized the main issue is scale. You feel daunted by the Palisades when you are standing next to them, but when you look from the opposite side of the river you're not quite sure about their size or how far the cliffs are set back. Also, to contrast with the photo documentation and Internet research that I did were my conversations with people. One thing that I found out was that everyone's interpretations of the Palisades are very different. It's really fortunate that people will get to see this piece over a period of time where the Palisades change from the lush green of August to the foliage of fall, and eventually to the bare, stark trees of winter—all of which dramatically change the Palisades.

**Your work often varies in dimension. To what extent did the physical size of the Palisades affect the scale of your sculptures at Wave Hill and the Hudson River Museum?**

It wasn't just the visual impact of the Palisades but also bringing together two very site-specific locations with the object I was going to create to interpret the Palisades. So it's bringing these two worlds together that I think is really intriguing. As I looked through my photographs, I began to think that it was really fascinating to combine different aspects of the shape of the rock and the variety of the color into one unique piece. As an artist in my studio, I had to make certain decisions of how to represent this iconic landscape, whether the piece would be painted in an afternoon light and so on. I have certain kinds of visual impressions when I approach the Palisades, and I'm trying to impart the feeling that I get to the viewer. When you are there standing next to the cliffs, they are absolutely stunning. There is a certain kind of pure power that something like the Palisades has, and I'm trying to represent that as an artist.

**In *Unnecessary Memorial I*, you chose to leave the back side of the sculpture exposed to visitors. What effect do you anticipate this having on the viewer?**

With all my projects, I try to venture out and do something new. So, I thought for the first time I would expose and be honest to the back side of the piece. I wanted to present this to be as much a two-dimensional piece as a three-dimensional work. The visual impact of the piece at Wave Hill is in the front; and then the viewer can walk behind, and it almost reads like a painting on the wall, which I find very intriguing. And when you see the Palisades in person, it's a very visually frontal attack. However, from the far side of the river, they seem almost flat. We don't really see the Palisades, so to say, in three dimensions, even though they are quite monumental.