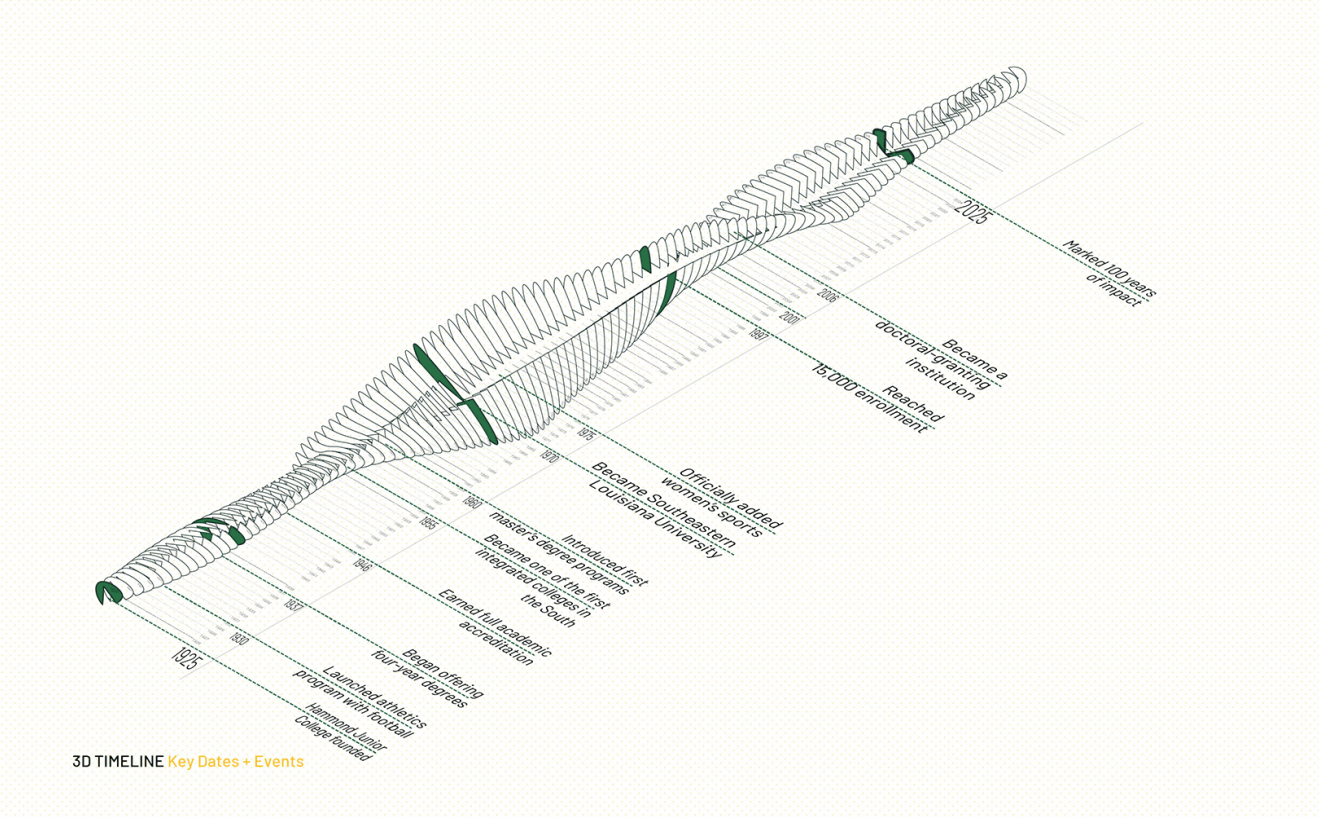
Aion: Turning History into Morphology

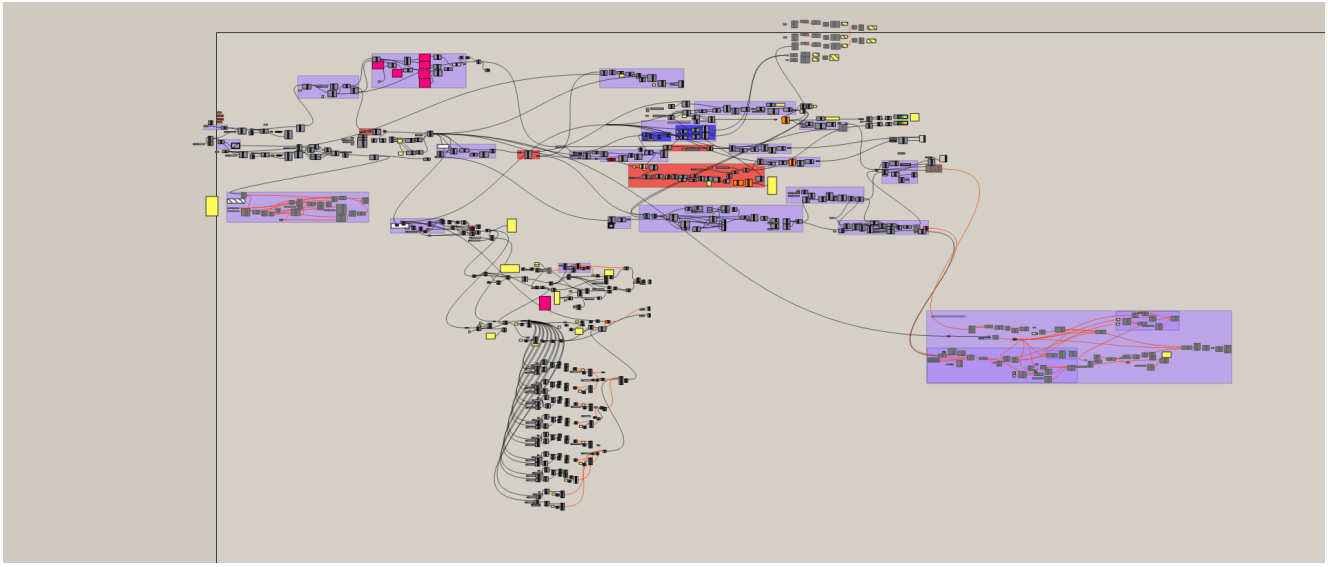
Aion is a site-specific public artwork and centennial monument developed by X-Topia and CRGArchitecture. for Southeastern Louisiana University's 100th anniversary. Located between D. Vickers Hall, the Student Union, and the Memorial Fountain, the installation was conceived not only as a commemorative object but as an active social space capable of connecting memory, movement, and future aspirations through architecture and computational design.



The monument's geometry was developed as a three-dimensional timeline, where key moments from the university's history informed the distribution and sequencing of the fins.

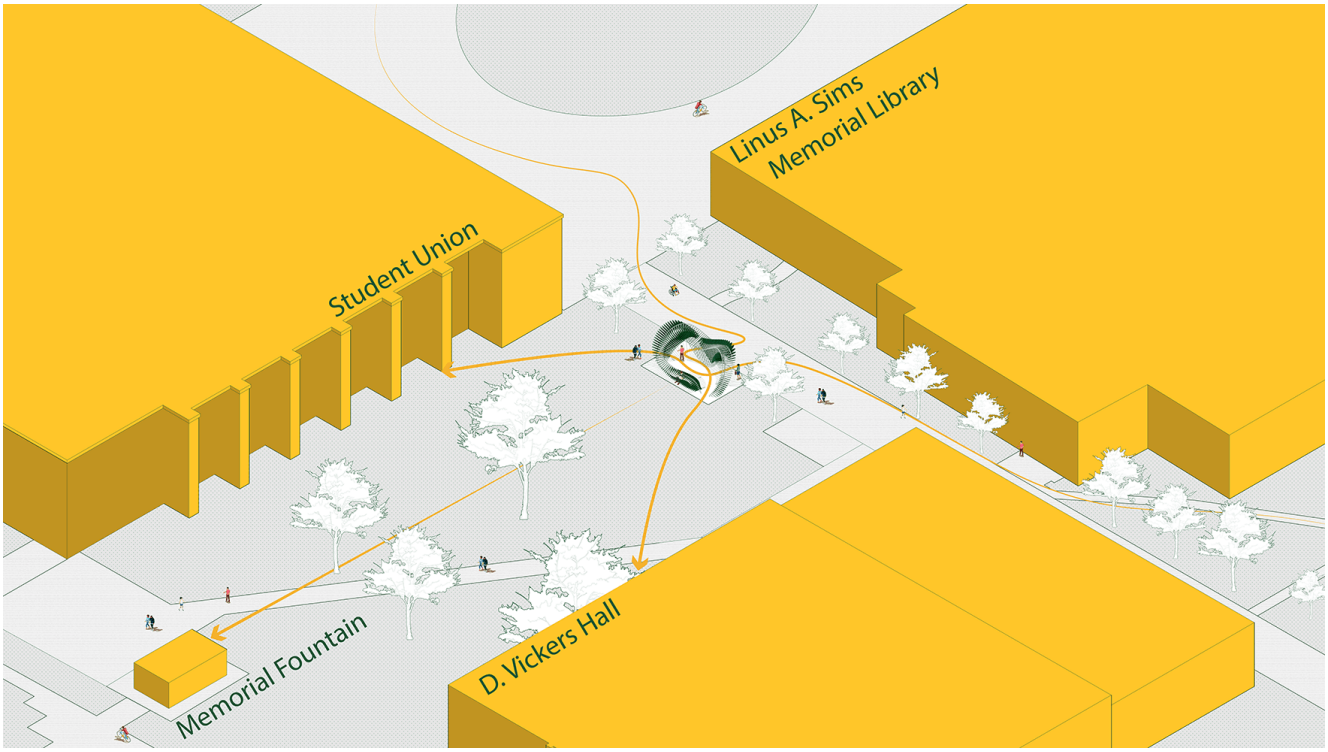
Inspired by the Greek concept of *Aion*, meaning "eternal," the project approaches time as something continuous, layered, and collective. Rather than representing history through traditional symbolic forms, the team translated the university's timeline into a spatial experience composed of 104 unique aluminum fins organized along a structural spine. Together, these elements create a porous architectural field that invites circulation, gathering, reflection,

and interaction from multiple perspectives.



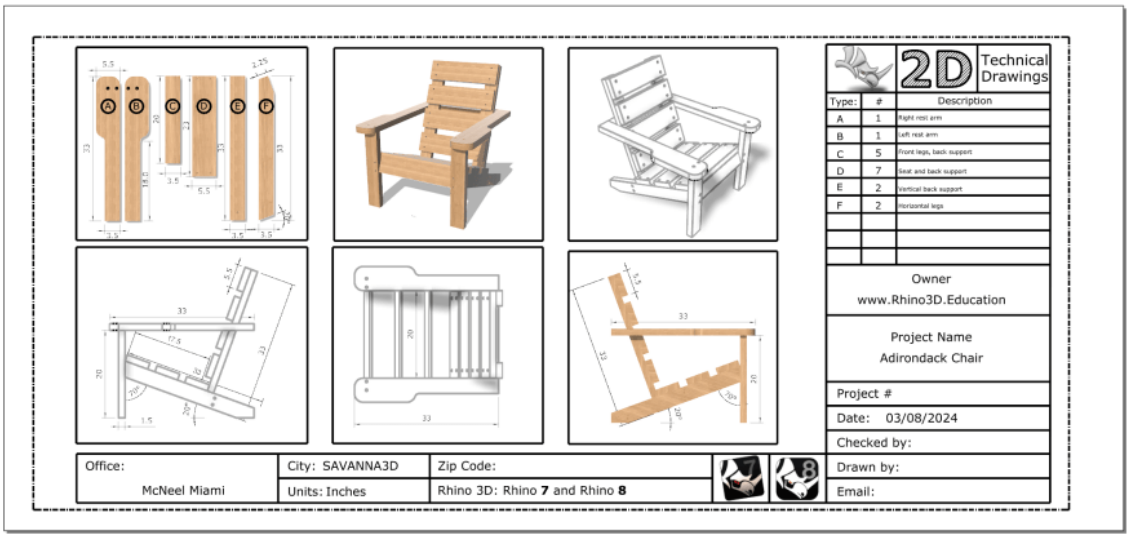
Grasshopper was used to organize the parametric workflow controlling the spine geometry, fin distribution, spacing, orientation, and fabrication logic across the installation.

The design process began by analyzing how the campus is used on a daily basis. Existing circulation paths, gathering spaces, visual corridors, and movement patterns became key factors in shaping the monument’s geometry and orientation. Rather than placing an isolated object on the site, the design team treated the intervention as part of the campus’s connective tissue, allowing it to integrate naturally into everyday university life.



Site analysis played a central role in shaping the project. Existing circulation paths, gathering areas, and visual connections informed the monument's orientation and placement on campus.

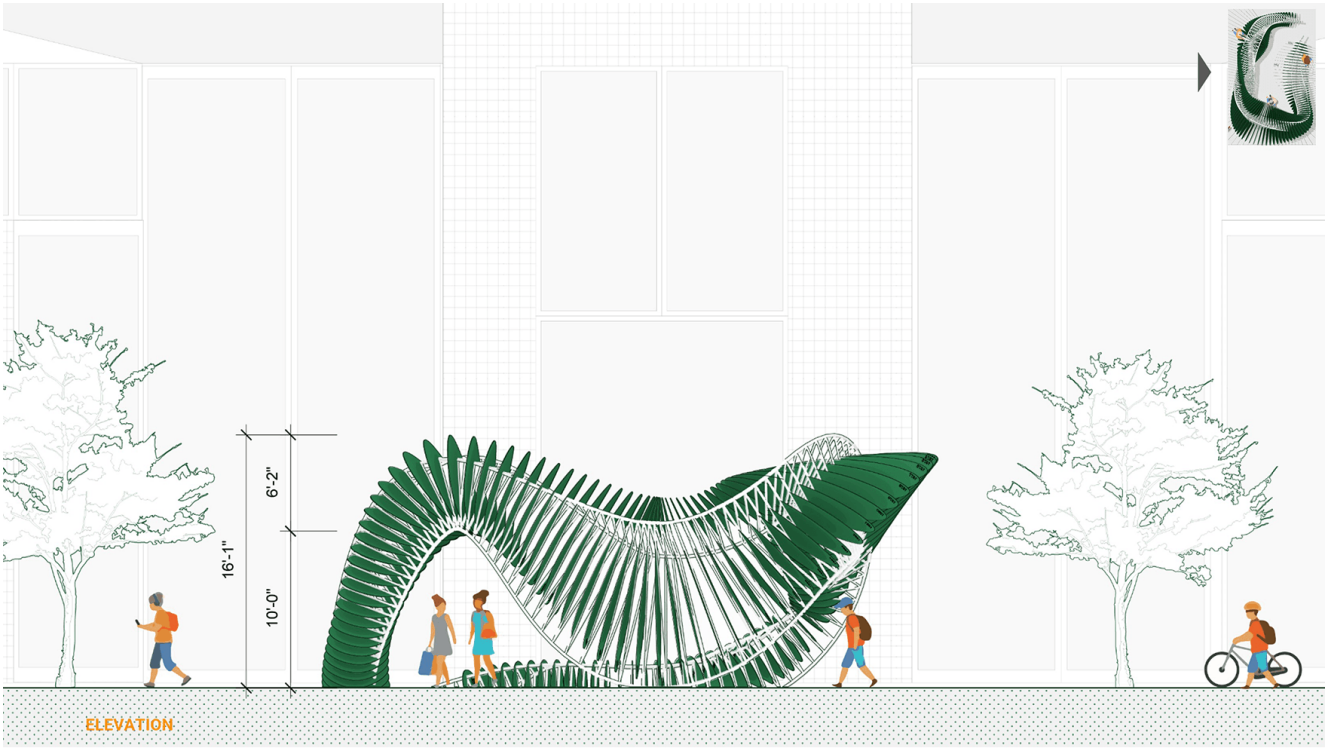
Rhino served as the primary modeling environment throughout the project, enabling the team to coordinate site conditions, spatial proportions, component geometries, and fabrication constraints within a single digital workflow. Grasshopper played a central role in organizing the parametric system behind the installation. Rather than modeling each element individually, the team developed a computational workflow capable of controlling the structural spine, the spacing and orientation of the fins, and their chronological sequencing across the monument.



See Also

2D TECHNICAL DRAFTING WITH RHINO

This parametric strategy became particularly important because the installation relies on repetition with variation. Each fin corresponds to a specific temporal position within the university’s 100-year history, while four additional fins extend beyond the historical sequence to represent futures still unfolding. Through Grasshopper, the team managed variation while maintaining geometric consistency and structural coherence across the entire installation.



Early elevation studies helped evaluate scale, spatial permeability, and the relationship between the installation and pedestrian movement across the site.

The computational workflow also functioned as a bridge between design and fabrication. Instead of using digital tools solely for form generation, the project integrated modeling, fabrication planning, and assembly logic into the same process. The parametric system helped organize dimensions, sequencing, part identification, and production coordination, allowing the design team and fabricators to communicate through a more precise and systematic language.

The porous arrangement of the fins creates framed views and changing spatial conditions, allowing the monument to be experienced differently from multiple perspectives.

Fabrication considerations became a key part of the project's development. One of the main challenges was balancing symbolic meaning with constructability, durability, and long-term outdoor performance. Powder-coated aluminum was selected for its lightness, weather resistance, and structural efficiency.

Each fin was CNC-cut and connected to CNC-bent aluminum frames, allowing the monument to accommodate a high degree of geometric variation while maintaining fabrication clarity and assembly precision.

The structural spine was prefabricated in modular segments to support transportation, assembly sequencing, and on-site installation efficiency.

The modular logic developed through Rhino and Grasshopper also

supported off-site prefabrication and transportation planning. The primary spine was divided into discrete segments for assembly before installation on campus, helping coordinate production requirements with logistical constraints and installation sequencing.

Each CNC-cut aluminum fin was connected to a CNC-bent structural frame, balancing geometric variation with fabrication precision and structural consistency.

Spatially, the installation is organized around three primary

components: a textured ground plane, a structural spine, and the field of chronologically ordered fins. The spine responds to the major axes and sightlines of the campus, while the fins define an inhabitable space that varies with light conditions, movement, and perspective. From a distance, the monument reads as a unified sculptural form. At a closer scale, it becomes a sequence of thresholds, framed views, and gathering spaces.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Each fin corresponds to a specific year in Southeastern Louisiana University's history, transforming institutional memory into a continuous spatial timeline.

More than a centennial marker, *Aion* demonstrates how Rhino and Grasshopper can support a design methodology in which site analysis, computational thinking, fabrication strategy, and public experience operate as part of the same continuous process. The project reimagines monumentality not as a static object, but as an active spatial system shaped by movement, participation, and collective memory.

The installation functions both as a commemorative landmark and as an active public space that encourages gathering, movement, and interaction throughout the campus.

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