

## **ARTIST STATEMENT**

### ***Water is Sacred: Water is Life***

We can live without food for days on end but not without water or we perish. Our bodies are comprised of up to seventy-five percent water. Two-thirds of the earth is made up of water and yet most of the earth's water and marine life forms are but a mystery to us. Every day water still provides us with myriad sources of food. Water freezes solid into ice, forms glaciers but can evaporate into thin air. Water exists above and below ground. Water can be dead still or flowing in currents, waves and tides. Water is clear and sweet in springs and aquifers but can be saline and salty in oceans, seas and lakes. Water drives down as rain and gathers in floods. It can rage as tempests and swallow us whole. Water can end droughts, put out fires and bring new life. Water is power when it spreads across land, percolates downward into the earth or rises up as a tsunami.

Water is at once a barrier and a mode of transport we must navigate. Water was the vehicle with which humans have developed trade, farming, communication, culture and language. Every culture has at one time or another revered water, used it in rituals and as part of spiritual practice. Its significance to early peoples can be read in the way it shaped and punctuated the landscape and how the ancients responded to its absence, presence, ebb and flow. Desert dwellers worshipped water deities in legend and song. Irrigation channels and wells were dug to access, divert and contain this life sustaining fluid. Dykes have been constructed to control it. Structures were built and erected through the ages to bridge all manner of waters.

Water is considered to have healing properties and is celebrated as a source of life itself. Water must break before we are born and it is into the water we return when the boat is pushed out. Yet, we waste this precious substance and put it at risk to our peril. If, in fact, water is sacred and water is life – rather than a commodity to be bought and sold – then, what on earth have we done here and what is to become of life itself?

**James B. Thompson**