



ARTWORK **FLUTTER**

ARTIST **MAYA LIN**

INSTALLED 2005
WILKIE D. FERGUSON, JR. U.S. COURTHOUSE
MIAMI, FLORIDA

Taking her cue from the boat-like image of the courthouse, Maya Lin created an earthwork of soil and grass that rises and falls in waves as if to give the building a surface to float upon. *Flutter* consists of a pair of sculpted lawns that mimic rippling water or sand, a familiar sight to residents and visitors of coastal south Florida.

Although *Flutter* occupies more than an acre of land in front of the main entrance to the courthouse, its scale is decidedly human, encouraging visitors to take a walk through its undulating terrain. The idea of making a place for individuals within the urban landscape, a refuge where they can have a moment of quiet reflection, has been important to the artist throughout her career. In her book, *Boundaries*, Lin reflects on the meaning of her art: “I like to think of my work as creating a private conversation with each person, no matter how public each work is and no matter how many people are present.”

Flutter, like Lin’s other large-scale earthen artworks, reflects her passion for exploring natural phenomena and translating naturally occurring environments into sculpted form. Her works are artistic responses to the beauty that exists in the natural world. Lin’s interest in landscape and topology began when she was a child growing up in southeastern Ohio, where the terrain is hilly and wooded. Additionally, the presence of American Indian earthen mounds within this landscape also had a profound and lasting impact on her art. Although her earthworks are made of simple soil and grass, Lin’s view of the landscape—and her manipulation of it—is distinctly twenty-first century. To create works such as *Flutter*, she studies aerial photographs, sonar maps, and satellite images, and spends a considerable amount of time planning, drawing, and modeling to conceptualize her work. [NA](#)





Maya Lin first received international recognition in 1981 when, as an undergraduate architecture student, she won the design competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Setting up her studio practice in New York City in 1987, she has maintained a careful balance in her career between art and architecture, creating a remarkable body of work that includes large-scale, site-specific installations, intimate studio artworks, and architectural works. A committed environmentalist, Lin consistently promotes sustainable building design in her architectural practice, while in her art she asks us to pay closer attention to the natural world.

Lin was born in 1959, in Athens, Ohio, where both of her parents were educators at Ohio University; her father was a ceramicist and the dean of fine arts and her mother, a poet and professor of literature. She earned a BA in architecture in 1981 and an MA in architecture in 1986, both from Yale University. A film about her work, *Maya Lin, a Strong Clear Vision*, won an Academy Award for Best Documentary Film in 1995. Lin also completed another commission for GSA's Art in Architecture program in 1996: *Sounding Stones*, for the Daniel Patrick Moynihan U.S. Courthouse in New York City.



MEDIUM SCULPTED EARTHWORK OF SOIL AND GRASS

DIMENSIONS 459 FT X 105 FT (1.1 ACRES)

