To address the ongoing California drought, the City of West Hollywood (Calif.) featured interactive public art installations in historic Plummer Park through the end of 2016. The exhibition, titled Can You Dig It, confronts human exploitation of dwindling water resources and is meant to encourage conservation and reuse. Three winning projects were chosen by the city’s Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission out of 61 proposals from artists nationwide. Tony Coelho
In the installation called Food-Prints — by Syracuse, N.Y.-based Edward Morris, Susannah Sayler, and Brett Snyder — wooden sculptures of popular California-grown foods are encircled in white pebbles. The size of each pebble circle represents the relative water footprint of each crop.

The project highlights tomatoes as the most water-efficient produce of those selected, carrying a water footprint of only 26 L (7 gal). By contrast, the surrounding 125 m² (1350 ft²) field of gray gravel represents the water footprint of a single pound of steak. Strategically placed next to a farmer’s market, the exhibit encourages sustainable dietary choices. Tony Coelho

By repurposing sheet metal from discarded automobiles, the installation called “Aqueous Skin” resembles the surface of water. Woodbury University (San Diego, Calif.) architecture professor Miki Iwasaki is the artist.

The installation hangs from supports placed at approximately eye-level. According to the artist, this effect is meant to offer shade from the California sun while intentionally being low enough to prevent viewers from taking shelter underneath. In doing so, the piece underscores the importance of water and its inability to meet exorbitant demand from humans. Photo courtesy of City of West Hollywood
Sculptor Tim Murdoch, based in San Diego (Calif.), transformed a tree in the center of Plummer Park into an extension of the complex metaphors presented in Shel Silverstein’s *The Giving Tree* and Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax*.

Emphasizing whimsy and absurdity, the piece, called *And The Tree Was Happy*, uses a system of brightly colored funnels and recycled polyethylene tubes to show a contrast between the manmade and the natural. The tubes, which normally would be used for natural gas plumbing, are meant to represent human manipulation of nature. Photo courtesy of City of West Hollywood

The message of *And The Tree Was Happy* can be found at the base of the exhibition, which features a faucet. Funnels planted among overhead branches collect rainwater that is meant to sustain the tree, but the faucet presents viewers with the option to siphon collected water for personal use instead. While signs onsite indicate that the water is not safe for drinking, the exhibit implies that human demand for water can be devastating to the environment. Photo courtesy of City of West Hollywood