

# Doing a double-take on Duxbury

## LANDSCAPE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

At: *The Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, through Sept. 8*

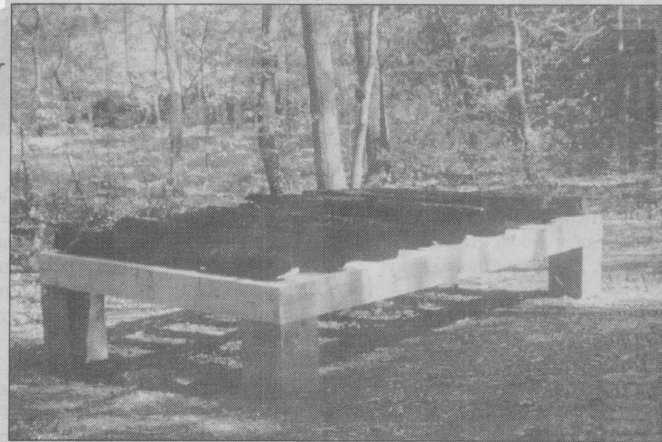
## MORE SPECIFIC

At: *The Art Complex, through Oct. 27*

Nature was also the inspiration for "More Specific," which evolved out of last year's site-specific installations at the Art Complex. The 1995 show featured 22 pieces and a 40-page catalog; this year's show is six works by five artists, documented with a simple brochure, but it feels satisfying rather than small.

Beth Galston was drawn to the museum's secluded little rock-bordered pond, where she has placed a flotilla of oak leaves, painted in iridescent colors, from toothpaste turquoise to shocking pink – the colors of a Caribbean coral reef rather than a New England pond. They're a playful reminder not only of where we are, but when. At odds with the muted tones of the South Shore in late summer, they point the way to autumn, when our leaves are brilliantly colored without the aid of art or artifice.

Rebecca Krinke's "prima ma-



Jim Coates' charred, mossy timbers in "The History of Shelter."

teria" are bulbous or tubular shapes made of soil. Lying on the forest floor or dangling from a tree, their bulging forms suggest breathing. Christopher Frost was inspired by 14th-century Chinese vases, and by the strong Asian collections in the Art Complex, in his "Cobalt," a trio of tall concrete vases with cobalt-blue designs, each encased in a steel cage that sets it apart from the wooded setting. A conceptually ambitious piece, "Cobalt" fails to communicate its ideas clearly.

Interested in both architecture and basketry, Ann Wessmann has created a piece called "Dwelling" out of briars and saplings she found on the museum grounds. "Dwelling" is a long cylinder that burrows its way among trees, the briars creating a prickly barrier protecting whatever spirit resides within. Wessmann's other work, "Remains," is equally powerful. A square on the ground, delineated by birch bark, encloses a graveyard of pails, cans and car parts, all rusting away, with weeds growing through and around them. "Remains" speaks of time passing, a very long time, with patient nature triumphing over the feeble works of man.

Jim Coates' "The History of Shelter" also concerns time and destruction. Four concrete blocks form a foundation that looks unassailable. On the blocks sits a neat rectangular platform, and on the platform are charred timbers, blackened and irregular, being overtaken by mold and moss. The textures of the burned timbers are far more captivating than the manmade forms, even if the timbers are the result of some terrifying blaze that, perhaps, robbed a family of its home. Coates' work is also a reminder of the history of fire in New England, where so many homes are built of wood.

There is still more environmental art on the grounds of the Art Complex – by children and teen-agers who have recently taken part in the museum's education programs. George Creamer worked with one group of them (ages 7-11) on "Duxbury in 1850," a fanciful interpretation of what the town looked like more than a century before the children were born. The kids made wooden cutouts of waves, clouds, trees, cows, sheep, people and other subjects, all stuck on stakes that are in turn stuck into the ground. The result is a delight – especially the playful scale, which allows for a bird so big that the nearby figure of a happy child could ride it.

Groups of students also made outsized papier-mache vegetables and fruits that look as if they've overdosed on Miracle-Gro, plus burlap figures stuffed with grass that grows right through them, plus a zoo's worth of papier-mache animals. What distinguishes all this student work is its exuberance and its lack of the cuteness that sometimes infects the two-dimensional works adorning refrigerator doors.