

## VERMONT

### Brattleboro Museum/Brattleboro Verdant Eyes

Before entering *Verdant Eyes* one encounters *Land Lift*, a flying carpet of green grass by Bob Beomig. This extraordinary grass-and-steel structure, permanently placed in front of the museum, introduces the theme of this exhibition, curated by the museum's director, Mara Williams. For the most part, the artists in this show bring elements of nature into the museum space rather than transforming outside elements into environmental sculpture.

*Requiem* by Jim Florchutz, a fine example of natural forms brought into an interior space and rearranged, acts as the gateway to the exhibition. The huge timbers and rocks removed from the landscape are now used to represent it. According to exhibition information, these materials were brought from an area that was destroyed when a road was straightened; Florchutz's piece is an elegy for this sacrificed space.

Rod Rudnicki has placed one work inside the museum, *Untitled*, a large steel frame that cuts through a torso-sized rock on the floor, and one outside, titled *Amphion*, a group of stones with carved rectangular areas covered with moss. Both emphasize how the simple act of cutting into rock and juxtaposing materials redefines its nature.

To create *Leaf Dreams*, Beth Galston coated

the leaves of ginkgo, sycamore, and magnolia trees in beeswax. They hang, strung like leis, from the skylight and loom like pillars at the top of wide marble stairs on the platform area of the old train station that houses this exhibition. Visible outside the window is a complementary natural form consisting of trailing grape vines that descend three stories to the railroad below. Also pillarlike, Andy Wasserman's peeled and carved, split tree, *My Feet*, ends in carved feet, eerily resting against the wall at near ceiling height. A reference to "walking softly on the land" adds poetic dimension to the use of the dead tree trunk.

Frank Vasellos' *Shrine*, a frame stick house with a path of stones and chair, is constructed mainly of natural elements. Hanging dried flowers, a bowl of bones, and a velvet pillow that reveals a man's hand, remind us of the earliest inclination to integrate ritual spaces and gardens into the environment.

The need to organize the garden seems the whole point of Thomas Rose's complex *Garden Gate, Allusion and Illusion*. The materials alone suggest this: galvanized steel, etched glass tables, granite, photographic murals, and plants result in a work loaded with historical and intellectual references to our desire to "build" the garden.

In contrast, Alan Sonfist's three mixed-media works on the wall picture three distinct, natural bio-regions. By surrounding the central photocollage of each canvas with painterly borders, Sonfist demonstrates how the artist may both record and artfully interpret the environment.

Rounding out this comprehensive and interesting exhibition are photographic essays on ecological projects by Michael Singer and Linnea Glatt, Herb Ferris's *Torii*, and Douglas Riggs's *Watershed Garden*.

—Charlet Davenport