

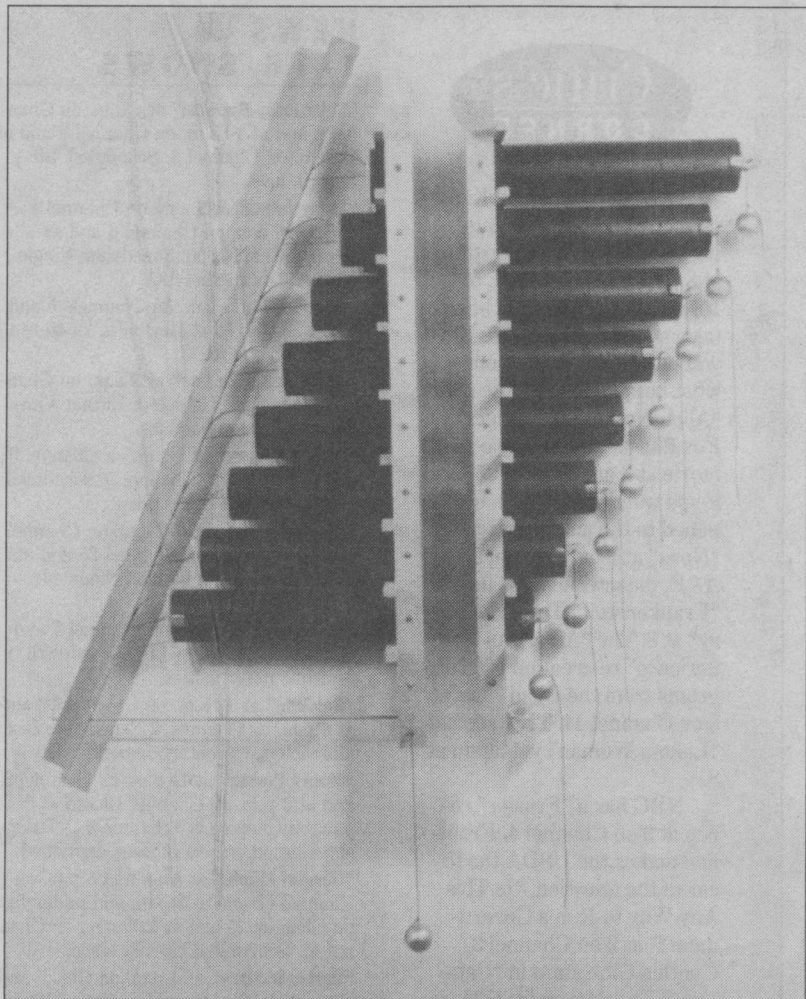
Artists under the influence in Fitchburg

By Robert Campbell
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

FITCHBURG — Not a lot of people seem to visit the beautiful Fitchburg Art Museum. Too bad, because it's easily one of the best exhibit spaces in New England. It's also, at the moment, home to a fascinating show.

David Judelson is a New York sculptor who's also an architect. His sculptures play many of the games architects play. He likes to configure weights and wires and beams into intricate, Rube Goldbergish constructions. These can be almost like teaching tools, because they're so successful at making visible the hidden forces of tension and compression. Judelson also has fun contrasting the natural world with the technical one, as in "Column," where natural rocks, worn as smooth as eggs by the action of tides or streams, are stacked unnaturally into a tower held in place by a steel construction as tense as an erector set.

Judelson's works are part of an exhibition he was asked to curate for Fitchburg. "Influenced by Architecture" is a group show by 10 artists of drawings, paintings, sculptures and installation pieces, all exploring the seam between art and architecture. It's a lighthearted event that doesn't take itself too seriously. Robert Fisher creates a spatial volume that resembles a stage set of falling autumn leaves, and Beth Galston weaves actual red leaves and window screening into an abstraction of an October porch. Judelson himself offers, outside the entrance lobby to the museum, a mad construction: The wind operates a robot that



"Stagger" by David Judelson — sculptor, architect and curator.

Gunnar Thiel hangs old wood beams and rusted steel plates in ways that toy with gravity.

paints a red smear on the lobby glass, while inside another robot, which you unwittingly operate as you open the door, attempts to erase it.

There's great variety. Tim Prentice explores, often with superb sureness and delicacy, themes derived

INFLUENCED BY ARCHITECTURE
At: Fitchburg Art Museum, 185 Elm St.,
Fitchburg, through Nov. 6

from the mobile sculptures of Alexander Calder. Boston's Wellington Reiter offers ink drawings, seen before but still very powerful. David Provan works, through constructions in steel and plexiglass, to articulate space itself. Gunnar Thiel hangs old wood beams and rusted steel plates in ways that toy with gravity. Ilana Manolson shapes collages of rubbings into pictorial, expressionist interiors. Others work in oils: Jack Bolen's layered planes, Janice Mehlman's trick perspectives.

It's an uneven show, but a worthwhile one. And it's a great time of year to be driving in the country.