

Luminous Garden by Beth Galston

BY BLESSING AGUNWAMBA

It's hard to miss them. Walking into the dinning hall, hurrying, on your way to quiet your growling stomach, you are accosted with a field of glowing, seemingly floating lights in a darkened room. The first thoughts that come to your feverish, starved mind are elves, ghosts. Then, duh, you remember hearing something about blue lights at some gallery during roll call. "Cool," you think, "I'll come back after lunch to carry out a full investigation, hmm...maybe lunch can wait, I've gotta really see what this thing really is." There, that summarizes the typical reaction of an innocent Grottie at the sight of such magnificent art work.

Located at the Christopher Carey Brodigan Gallery, *Luminous Garden* will be open from March 28 till April 29. The artist's talk was held on April 7, from 7:15-8:00 and was followed by a reception in the gallery. Amongst other compositions, Beth Galston talked about the creation of this particular piece during the lecture.

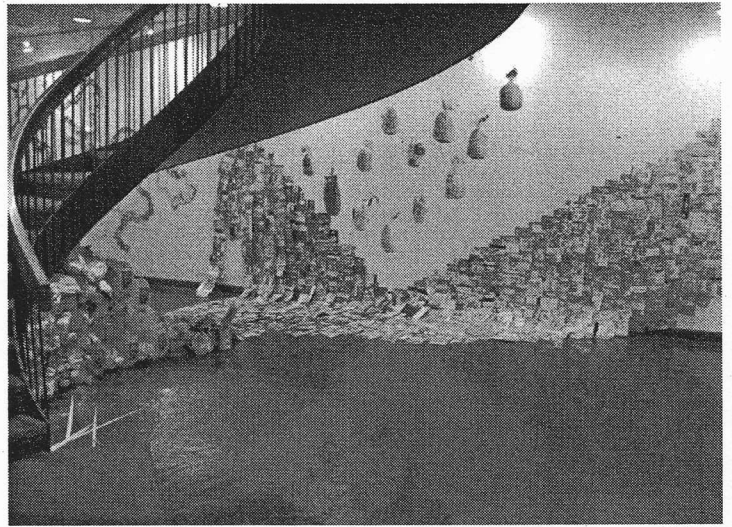
The artist, Beth Galston, began thinking about the exhibition in the fall, but started working on it around January, when she began to experiment with the lights and putting the exhibition together. This work, though having Nature as its theme, is made entirely of industrial material. She cast water chestnut pods in resin, to produce the flowerlike structure at the tip of each stalk. Then, she drilled holes and inserted LEDs (light emitting diodes) into them for luminescence. The LEDs are attached to copper wires by alligator clips, which in the end are connected with a power outlet. The exhibit is

'planted' on birch plywood.

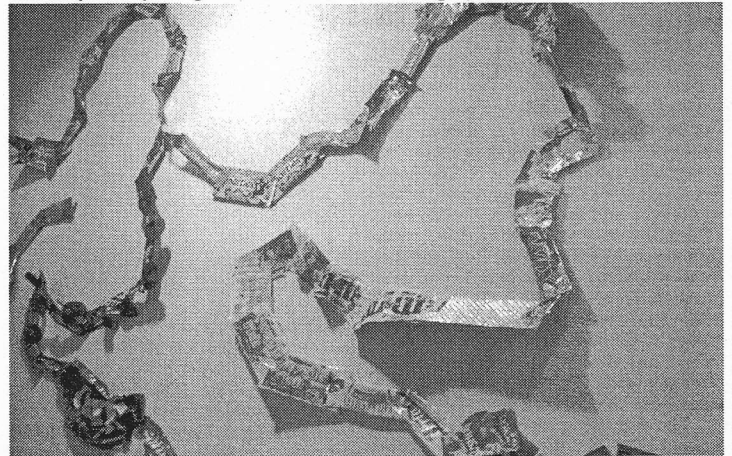
The piece is a representation of Galston's childhood memories of a field near her home. Like all her exhibitions, this takes up the entire space, creating an environment for people where people can be in. The translucent seedpods casts sway like flowers in a field as one walks through it. The blue lights with the curves of the platforms suggest clouds floating around in the atmosphere, or maybe trees over shadowing a pond. What ever one make of it s/he is still struck by the juxtaposition of nature with technology. But the juxtaposition does not end there.

This exhibition, placed in one of the busiest part of this community, forces one to pause. The stillness of the electronic field transports one to a futuristic country side. There, bathed in blue light, the observer walks slowly through the exhibition, perhaps, cherishing the stillness of the moment before getting tossed back into the hectic Groton world. "I hope you come back again," the nodding stalks seem to intimate to the back of its admirer.

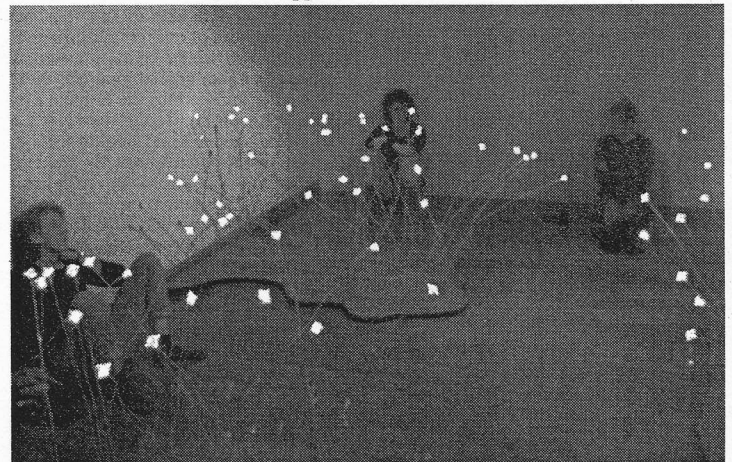
Beth Galston was chosen as this year's Mudge Fellow by the Gallery Director, Beth Van Gelder through recommendations. During her residency week, Galston will be working with a group of students to produce an exhibition in the dinning hall. Since she works with the transformation installation/environmental art, the finished product would be a walk in gallery of morphed food containers that had been collected over the weeks.



An array of recycled goods combine to form a display of art. (C.Wu)



A swirl of color-coordinated wrappers. (J. Chang)



The artist and others are enthralled by the "Luminous Garden." (C.Wu)



Empty containers will transform to artists' supplies. (J. Chang)