

Recasting Nature

Beth Galston, Artist

2000, Boston Sculptors at Chapel Gallery, West Newton, MA

Materials: Leaves, seed pods, rose petals, urethane resin

Dimensions: variable

Recasting Nature, an installation of sculptures made of natural materials and resin, explores relationships between the natural and manmade worlds. I collected leaves, acorn caps, seed pods, branches and roses. They were preserved by drying, making castings of their shapes or embedding them in translucent resin. The sculptures are made of repeating elements manipulated by twisting, stringing, stacking, coiling, drilling, revealing my working process.

Some of the sculptures suggest thickets, tangles or tree trunks. Others are architectural forms such as a corridor of icicle-like rose stems or a wall of resin “bricks,” smooth on one side with ragged layers of partially exposed leaves on the other side. Each unit within a sculpture is slightly different, creating surfaces rich in texture and color.

Much like a scientist, I break things down into parts to isolate and examine them. In *Anatomy of a Rose*, for example, rose leaves, petals, thorns and stamens are preserved in tiny cubes of resin and stacked together to suggest new meanings and poetic juxtapositions. As an ensemble, the sculptures interact with the light and soaring space of the gallery to create a luminous, walk-through environment exploring the fragility and beauty of nature.