

## **Tree/House**

**Beth Galston, Artist**

**1994-1996, Socrates Sculpture Park, NYC**

*Materials: Expanded metal, steel tubing, 4 birch trees*

*Dimensions: 18' H x 18' W x 18' L*

Built on-site at Socrates Sculpture Park, this sculpture creates an architectural enclosure in which to view and experience nature. *Tree/House* is a place to dream and imagine, where one can be up in the air at the level of the treetops, viewing the New York skyline from a new perspective.

In 1993, I was invited to exhibit at Socrates. Located on the Queens side of the East River, the park combines nature and the scrappy energy of New York City. It is a place where, in founder Mark di Suvero's words, "Artists help other artists."

I built several models at my studio in Boston and decided on *Tree/House*. After much planning, in the summer of 1994 I spent an intensive month at the park building this monumental sculpture. It was truly one of the most thrilling experiences in my artistic life. I'll never forget arriving at the park, the materials were delivered, and my adventure began.

I worked with Rollin Marquette, a student assistant from SUNY Albany. There was an outdoor concrete pad where we set up. I was at the chop saw, he was at the welder, and we figured things out as we went. We built an 18' W x 18' L expanded metal box within a box. I bought four birch trees from a local nursery. The plan was to lift up the box structure, transport it across the park, and set it on top of its columns. I got a preview one day, when Mark came by with his crane and said: "Do you want to see what it looks like when it's up?" So *Tree/House* first floated.

One of the primary goals for my sculptures is for people to become participants as they enter and move through them. The sculpture stayed up for two years—regrettably, it was not permanent. Neighborhood families and children, as seen in the photo gallery, climbed up the ladder and enjoyed spending time in this special place.