

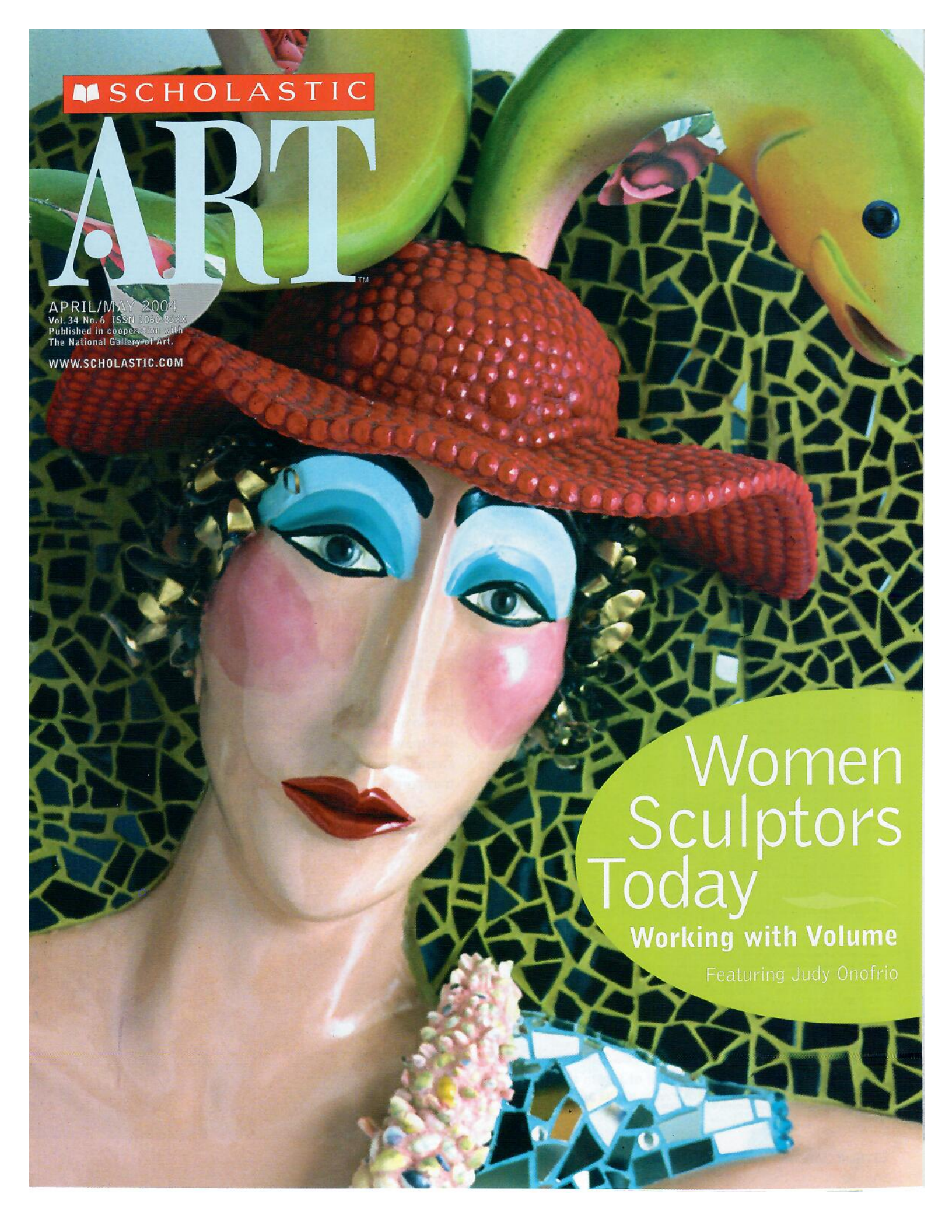


SCHOLASTIC

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Women Sculptors Today

Working with Volume

Featuring Judy Onofrio



COVER Judy Onofrio, 1939. *Mermaid on a Sofa* (detail), 2003, mixed media wall piece. 79 x 95 x 22 1/2 in. ©Judy Onofrio

Maurice R. Robinson, founder of Scholastic Inc., 1895-1982

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SCULPTURE FOR THE PEOPLE

“Artists don’t want their work buried in museums. They prefer alternative spaces, like the street, the subway, or abandoned buildings.”
—Helen Escobedo

When you think of public sculpture, what images come to mind? Do you picture bronze figures on horseback, ornate fountains, columns with statues of famous leaders on top? The reasons for creating works of public sculpture have not changed over the years. They are still made to memorialize the dead, to commemorate heroic deeds, and to enhance architecture or the environment. But, as you’ll see in this issue, the public sculptures being created today—many of them by women—have a new look.

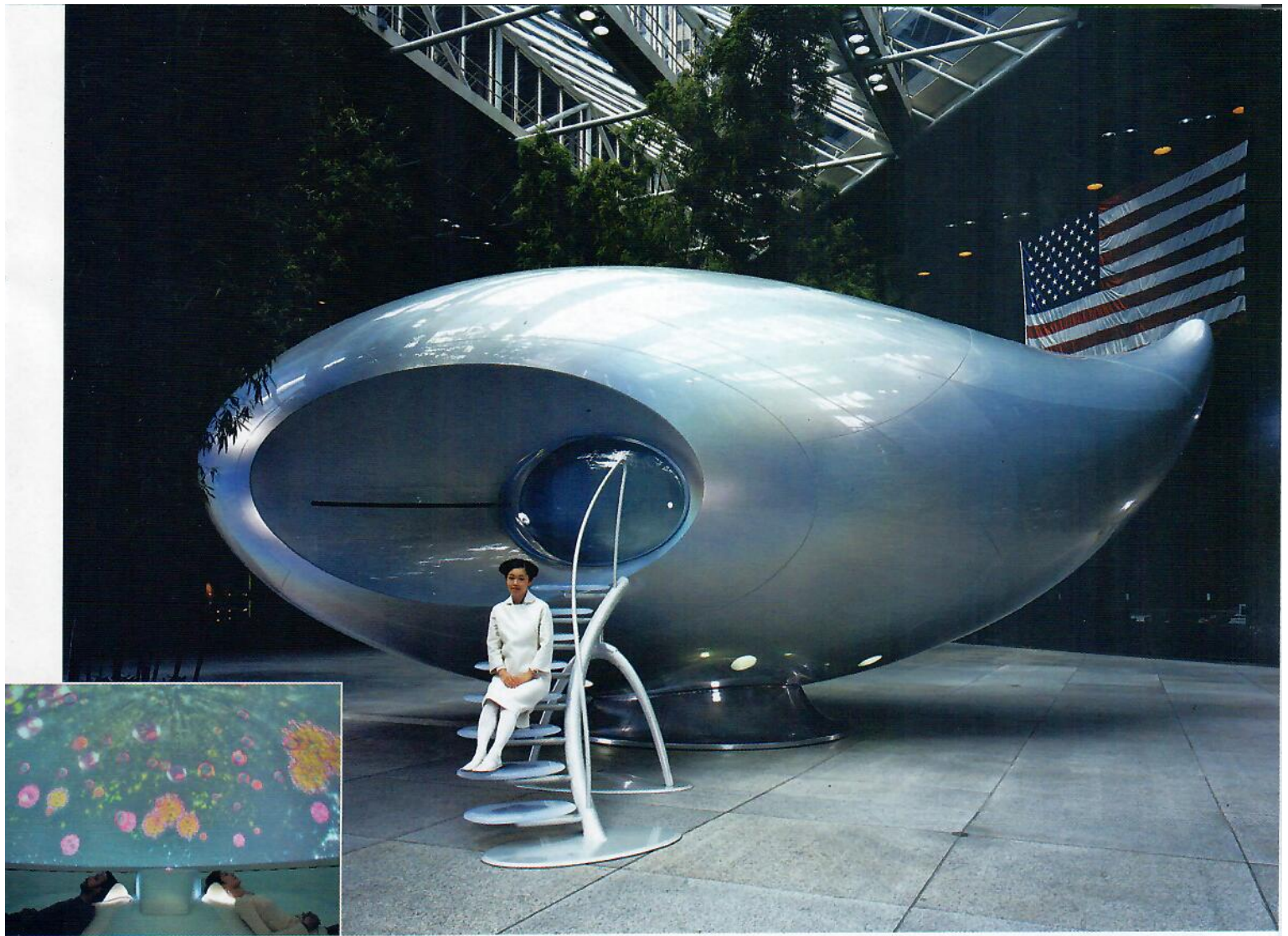
Artist Judy Onofrio (Ono-FREE-oh) creates her large, complex sculptures (cover and below) in order to share her vision of the world with others. A fanatical collector of objects since she was a child, the artist **models** and **constructs** her larger-than-life sculptures, then covers them with discarded found objects. Her sculpted images tell stories, both narrative and symbolic, while the small surface objects bring their own associations to the work.

Mexican sculptor Helen Escobedo feels that sculpture should not be hidden away in museums but should be seen by as many people as possible. And, public sculpture should not be decorative; it needs to send a social or political message. In densely populated Mexico City, where Escobedo lives, the air quality is among the worst in the world. **Constructed from found objects**—bicycle and taxi parts—*Bici-vocho* (below, right) comments on this situation. Painted the same shade of green as the Mexico City public transportation system, this vehicle is also equipped with a

► **“Through my art, I construct a world of memory, humor, and stories. Best of all, I live in that world and invite others in.”**
—Judy Onofrio

Judy Onofrio in her studio, 2003.
Photo ©Rik Sferra 2003.





▲ **“Wave UFO is an attempt to transcend cultural differences and national borders through positive and creative evolution.” — Mariko Mori**

Mariko Mori, b 1967. *Wave UFO*, 2002. Fiberglass, computer graphics, video projections
34 x 17 x 14 feet. Photos: Public Art Fund, NYC, NY (2)

periscope for seeing over traffic and an oxygen tank.

Japanese installation artist Mariko Mori has created a traveling, **interactive** public sculpture in order to, as she puts it, “link technology and spirituality.” Shaped like a huge shimmering drop of water, the **convex** fiberglass shell of *Wave UFO* (above) appears to hover a few feet above the ground. The **graduated, flat planes** of its curved staircase guide visitors, three at a time, to the work’s **concave** entrance. Inside (see inset, above), the visitors recline in seats while an interactive biofeedback loop projects their brainwaves on the capsule’s dome screen. The visitors “fly” through a landscape whose peaks and valleys are caused by the brainwaves stimulated by their own act of watching. Their “voyage” connects them to each other and to the world at large. Drawing on the Buddhist concept that all life is interconnected, *Wave UFO* unites actual individual experience with the artist’s vision of a cosmic dreamworld.



▲ **“My work is meant to live for a limited period of time. I create it in the space where it is to be used.”**
— Helen Escobedo

Helen Escobedo, *Bicycle-taxi*, House of World Cultures. ©Helen Escobedo

IN MEMORY OF . . .

“During its brief life, *House* stood alone on the street as a symbol of survival and a monument to all the people who had ever lived in it.” —Rachel Whiteread



Many public works of art honor leaders or memorialize those who have died in war or performed heroic acts. British artist Rachel Whiteread's *House* (left) briefly served as a memorial to those who had once lived in a poor London neighborhood during World War II (1939-1945).

Built as a temporary public sculpture, *House* drew huge crowds and newspaper headlines when it was created in the 1990s. Using the last remaining home to be torn down in a London urban renewal area as a mold, the artist cast her enormous sculpture by filling its wooden frame with concrete. When the wood was pulled away, the empty or **negative space** within became a familiar, but strangely distorted **positive form**. Windows bulged outward, **convex** doorknobs became **concave** hollows, stairways rose inwards. *House* became so popular that when its three-month life span was over, police had to remove protesters before it could be bulldozed into the ground.

One of the best-known public sculptures in the U.S. was created by a 21-year-old architectural student. In 1981, Asian-American artist Maya Lin won a competition to design a

◀“All public sculpture has a political dimension. You can't make a cast of a house in a poor area of London and not be political.”

—Rachel Whiteread

Rachel Whiteread b. 1963. *House*, October 1993—January 1994. Bow, East End, London. ©Jon Bradley/Rex Features.



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▲“Memorials are not about death. They are really about sharing a history, so that we don’t forget it and so we can improve upon it.”—Maya Lin

Maya Lin, b. 1959. *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, 1980-82. Constitution Gardens, National Mall, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of the National Parks Service.

Inset Photo Of Wall: ©Richard Hamilton Smith/Corbis

memorial to honor the soldiers who died in the Vietnam War (1965-1973). Simple in form, the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (above) is complex in concept. Its unbroken 245 foot-long sunken wall cuts into the Washington Mall like a sharp, angular gash. Written on the wall (detail) are the names of every soldier who died in the war. To reinforce the real meaning of death, the wall has been built six feet below the surface of the earth. In order to read the names, the viewer must descend into the space of the dead. The sheer number of names, each carved into the polished black granite in angular lettering, has a numbing effect. This relentless repetition emphasizes the work’s message—that each individual is important and that the cost of war is human life.

Many of African-American artist Alison Saar’s works such as *Topsy Turvy* (right) serve to remind viewers of a painful past. This large, carved wooden figure is based on a kind of doll popular during the 19th century. One head was white. When the doll was turned upside down, the skirt would flip revealing a black doll. Saar’s nearly life-size doll

stands on the ceiling. A critical comment on racism, the scale of this doll makes its figure seem more like a real person who can be hurt by stereotypes and abuse. The shadow is part of the sculpture. It reflects the artist’s position, “floating between two worlds.” Salvaged, used materials such as the tights and skirt blend folk-art traditions and contemporary urban life.

►“My works are explorations of my personal experiences as a mixed-race woman.”
 —Alison Saar

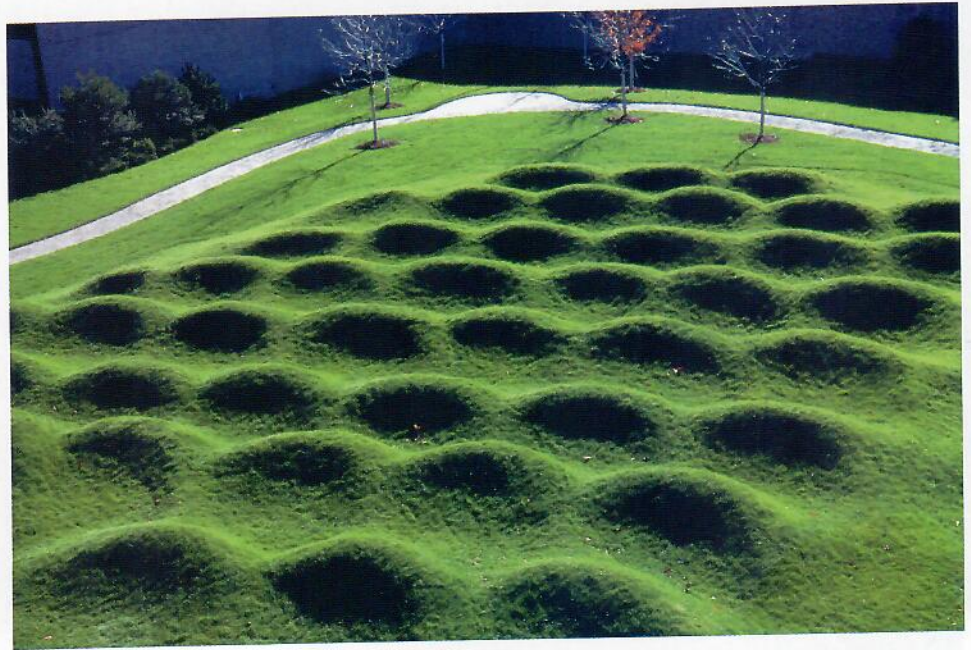
Alison Saar, b. 1956. *Topsy Turvy*, 1999. Wood painted red and black with plaster, metal, and cloth. Courtesy of Jan Baum Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.



CELEBRATING NATURE

“I work with the landscape, and I hope that the object and the land are equal parts.” — Maya Lin

Many works of public sculpture are created to exist in or be part of the natural environment. Some not only interact with nature, they link architecture with its surroundings. Maya Lin’s *The Wave Field* (near right) is located next to and has become part of the College of Engineering at the University of Michigan. Made of soil covered with grass, *Wave Field*’s curving repeat patterns, falling and rising five or six feet, suggest waves of water, air currents, radio, or light waves. Each set of curves blends into the next.



Viewers can **interact** with the work—walk across it, sit on the hills, find shelter in the valleys. Seen from the windows of surrounding buildings, the work’s perfect **symmetry** (the composition is exactly the same on both sides), the **contrasting textures** of the windblown grass, the **convex** and **concave** shapes, and the **movement** caused by sun and shadow push aside the boundaries between art and nature.

Tree/House (above, right), by American sculptor Beth Galston is part of an outdoor sculpture park located just outside of New York City. Using wire mesh and metal tubing, the artist has constructed this **interactive** sculpture around four young birch trees. The **organic curves** of the trees will grow around and mesh with the **geometric angles** of the metal frame. The multilayered sculpture is an architectural enclosure in which to experience nature. As the artist puts it: “*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.”

Nancy Holt’s public sculptures are also built outdoors. But they stand alone, usually in remote, out-of-the-way places. They emerge directly from the environment, and are connected to the geography and history of each site. *Sun Tunnels* (below, right) is located in the middle of the Utah desert. The work combines elements of contemporary

installation sculpture and those of an ancient solar observatory. In order to make hard-to-see astronomical events visible to the naked eye, *Sun Tunnels*’s four giant concrete tunnels are placed **diagonally** to each other in a large X shape. In this way they are able to frame sunrise and sunset on the shortest and longest day (called the solstice) of winter and summer. Holes drilled in the pipes are designed to isolate and project certain groups of stars onto the dark inside walls.

► **“I like my works to surround and enclose viewers while drawing their attention outward through layers of openings and tunnels.”**
— Nancy Holt

Nancy Holt b. 1938. *Sun Tunnels*, 1973-76
Lucin, UT. 4 concrete tubes, each 18 feet long and 9 feet in diameter. ©Nancy Holt/Licensed by Vaga, New York, NY

▲ **“*The Wave Field* reveals the connectedness of art to landscape, and landscape as art.”**

— Maya Lin

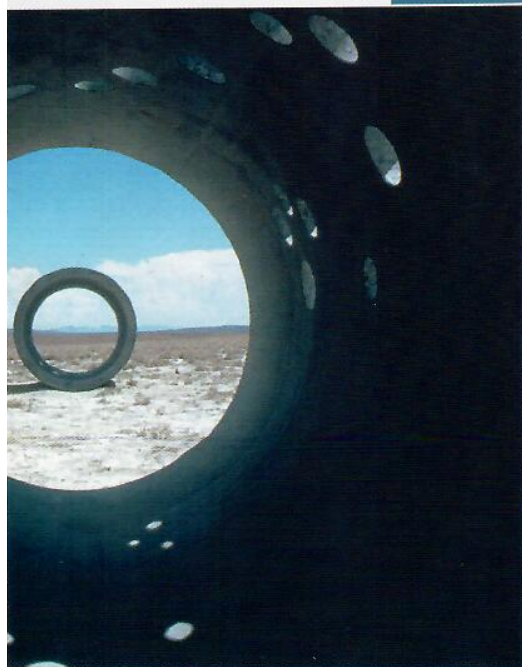
Maya Lin b. 1959. *The Wave Field*, 1995. 90 x 90 feet. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Photo: Tim Thayer.





▲“My pieces create a sense of place, a moment of magic or transformation.” — Beth Galston

Beth Galston b 1959. *Tree/House*, 1994. Expanded metal, steel tubing, 4 birch trees, 18 x 18 x 18 feet, Socrates Sculpture Park, NY, NY. ©Beth Galston



HOOKED

**BY JUDY
ONOFRIO**

“I have been a fanatic collector of objects all my life—ceaselessly stockpiling junk, images, and ideas. Now my art, my environment, and my life have come together and merged into one.”

—Judy Onofrio



Judy Onofrio b. 1939.
Hooked 1999. Mixed
Media 93 x 35 x 36 in.
Sherry Leedy
Contemporary Art,
Kansas City, MO.
© Judy Onofrio.

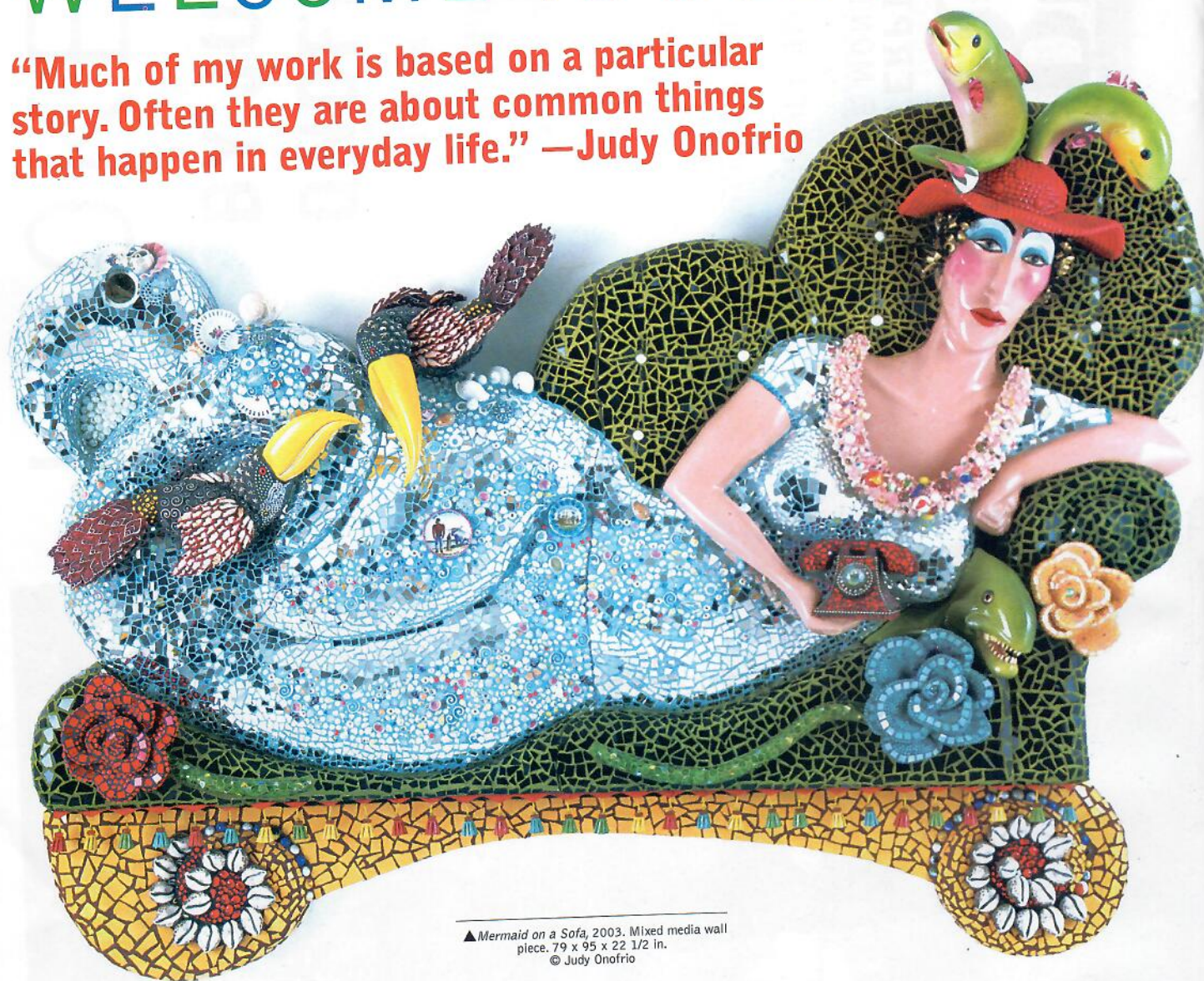
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WETGOWELO
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WELCOME TO JUDYLAND

“Much of my work is based on a particular story. Often they are about common things that happen in everyday life.” —Judy Onofrio



▲ *Mermaid on a Sofa*, 2003. Mixed media wall piece. 79 x 95 x 22 1/2 in.
© Judy Onofrio

Minnesota sculptor Judy Onofrio credits her success to a member of her family. “As a child, my mentor and role model was my great-aunt Trude, an ‘outsider artist’ who worked her entire life outside the accepted mainstream of the art world. She followed a personal vision that drove her to make art until she died at the age of 90.”

Following in this tradition, Onofrio makes fantastic and unique public sculptures which include installations, wall hangings, and performance art. And she makes all these pieces from the found objects she has been collecting for the past 30 years. Born in New London, Connecticut, in 1939, Onofrio is the daughter of an admiral in the U.S. Navy. During the artist’s childhood, her father traveled throughout the world, always returning with rare treasures

from exotic locations. Scouring the beach near her home for shells, sea creatures, and colored glass, young Judy added more items to her growing collections.

In 1968, Onofrio moved to Rochester, Minnesota, taught art, and began exhibiting her mixed-media works. In the late 1980s, she started to incorporate her treasures into larger pieces of sculpture. She did freestanding works such as *Hooked* (pages 8-9), large wall pieces such as *Mermaid on the Sofa* (above), and huge architectural constructions like *I Just Play for Fun* (above, center), an archway for a sculpture park in St. Louis. The artist describes how she creates her pieces: “I begin by searching, stockpiling, and sorting images, objects and ideas. First I build the architecture to house a narrative. The central figures are created primarily of wood. Men,



▲“It is my hope that this work will invite people to enjoy the feeling of celebration presented by a garden archway.” —Judy Onofrio

I Just Play for Fun, 1995. Mixed media, concrete, glass, resin, ferrous metal, shell, plastic, mirror. 189 x 156 in. Laumeier Sculpture Park, St. Louis, MO. ©Judy Onofrio.

As *Hooked*, are related to her childhood experiences—the sea, the water, and the treasures brought home by the Admiral. As the focal point of this stylized work, the artist has depicted herself struggling with a large fish. Both fish and woman are encircled by the organic curves of an enormous, jewel-encrusted hook attached to the fish’s mouth. A slim pedestal supports an entire underwater world—fish, woman, shells, lobsters, and mermaids. The objects that form the mosaiclike surface texture vary in size, color, shape, and material—bottle caps become fish scales, marbles are eyes, paperweights turn into flowers, shells are magic lanterns.

Even though it is utterly fantastic looking, this work is based on a real story. Onofrio says, “While on vacation one summer, I was asked by a friend to go fishing in his canoe. As we left, everyone—my husband included—laughed at us and said all we were going to catch was mosquitoes. Armed with that challenge we took off and I caught a huge bass, a Northern, and a few pan-fish. My friend never caught one. Returning to the cabin, every-

women, birds, fish and animals assume characters engaged in various relationships. The addition of found objects adds to the meaning of the work.”

Many of her pieces, such

►“My home (Judyland) in Minnesota is a place to celebrate, to plan, and to create new spaces and new ideas.” —Judy Onofrio

Judy Onofrio in her studio with her sculpture *Hold on Honey*. ©Judy Onofrio.



body was out expecting to give us a good kidding. Victoriously, I lifted my catch. *Hooked* is about a feeling of personal triumph. What this meant was that I could accomplish anything I decided to do.”

▲“In my work, familiar objects are transformed into a new context.” —Judy Onofrio

Fish Wish, 1997. Mixed Media 39 x 25 x 12 in. Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalla, Missouri Collection; Dr. Harold F. Daum, Gift of: Dr. Harold F. Daum. ©Judy Onofrio.

Although inspired by a specific incident, many of Onofrio’s works can also have other meanings. The underwater creatures and sea flowers in *Hooked* may refer to the biblical Garden of Eden. The twisting composition of closed and open shapes suggests the dynamic movement of wrestling forms. As the artist says, “I am interested in adding layers of information and ambiguity. Lots of times asking more questions than giving answers.”



SCULPTURAL EXPRES

Alyssa Smith, 18, and a senior at Northwest Cabarrus High School in Concord, North Carolina, believes in the power of observation. Before she created her award-winning portrait, *Sylvia* (right), Alyssa spent hours watching her classmates interact. “By watching, I learned how to draw the muscles under a person’s face. I learned the way a person’s eyes look when they’re reacting to something,” Alyssa says. “I saw nuances I would have missed otherwise, which I was able to use in my work.”

Creating portraits that use facial details to convey a range of expressions are one of Alyssa’s favorite artistic pursuits. But her real passion is architecture. After she graduates from high school, Alyssa would like to major in architecture and interior design. “As an architect, I want to create a comfortable space that also reflects a person’s character.” Whatever the creative task, Alyssa will always rely on her observations. “I love being able to show through my art what I see in the environment around me,” she says. “It’s what I do best.”

How did you first get involved in art?

From the time I was born, my mother surrounded me with colorful books. As soon as I could hold a marker, I started drawing what I saw.

How did you come to do this award-winning sculpture?

It was an assignment during my sophomore year. We had to do an open-ended sculpture project. The year before, I made a small sculpture of an older man, and I wanted to do a sculpture of an older woman to go with it. But I didn’t know how to go about it. My art teacher suggested I make the woman life-size to create a bigger challenge.

How did you get your idea?

I looked through photos of older family members—grandparents, great-uncles and aunts. To see how muscles and wrinkles look in real life, I observed the faces of older people. I did sketches that contained elements of many faces. I also drew people in a number of different poses. During a class critique, everyone was drawn to a sketch of a girl look-

ing out over her shoulder. They loved the smile. It looks like she knows something we don’t, and she’s just laughing about it.

How did you go about creating your sculpture?

I created it in two parts using earthenware clay. I made the first part—the skull and neck—out of clay coils. The coils had to be very thin so the clay wouldn’t explode in the kiln when it was fired. I built the neck and head in stages, finally adding the face. It took two weeks to finish this part.

What did you do next?

I also used coils to make the body and shoulders. But every time I tried to attach the head, it kept falling through the body. It was horrible. I tried working with slab clay, but the same thing happened. I got very frustrated. One teacher suggested adding crossbars to strengthen the base. So I put strips of slab together and let them harden. Then I placed the crossbars inside the chest to support the weight above. Thankfully, that worked.

What did you do after that?

Once the head was attached, I started to sculpt the features—the teeth, collarbone, muscles, and the wrinkles in her face. Then, I wet



ALYSSA SMITH

“*Sylvia* is so large, and she has so much personality. It’s weird, I catch myself calling her “she.” It’s just a sculpture, but she looks so real I just can’t help myself.”

SIONS

the piece down and attached wet clay for the lips, the nose, and the ears. I let it dry completely, then put it in the kiln. I would have used glaze, but there were no good flesh tones. So, I used acrylic paint. I sprayed the sculpture with clear acrylic artist's medium so the paint would stick. Finding a good flesh tone was difficult. She kept looking gray or purple. Once I found a color I liked, I painted the entire piece. Then I painted the rosy cheeks, the makeup on her eyes, and a few moles just to give her more character.

Why did you use real objects as part of your sculpture?

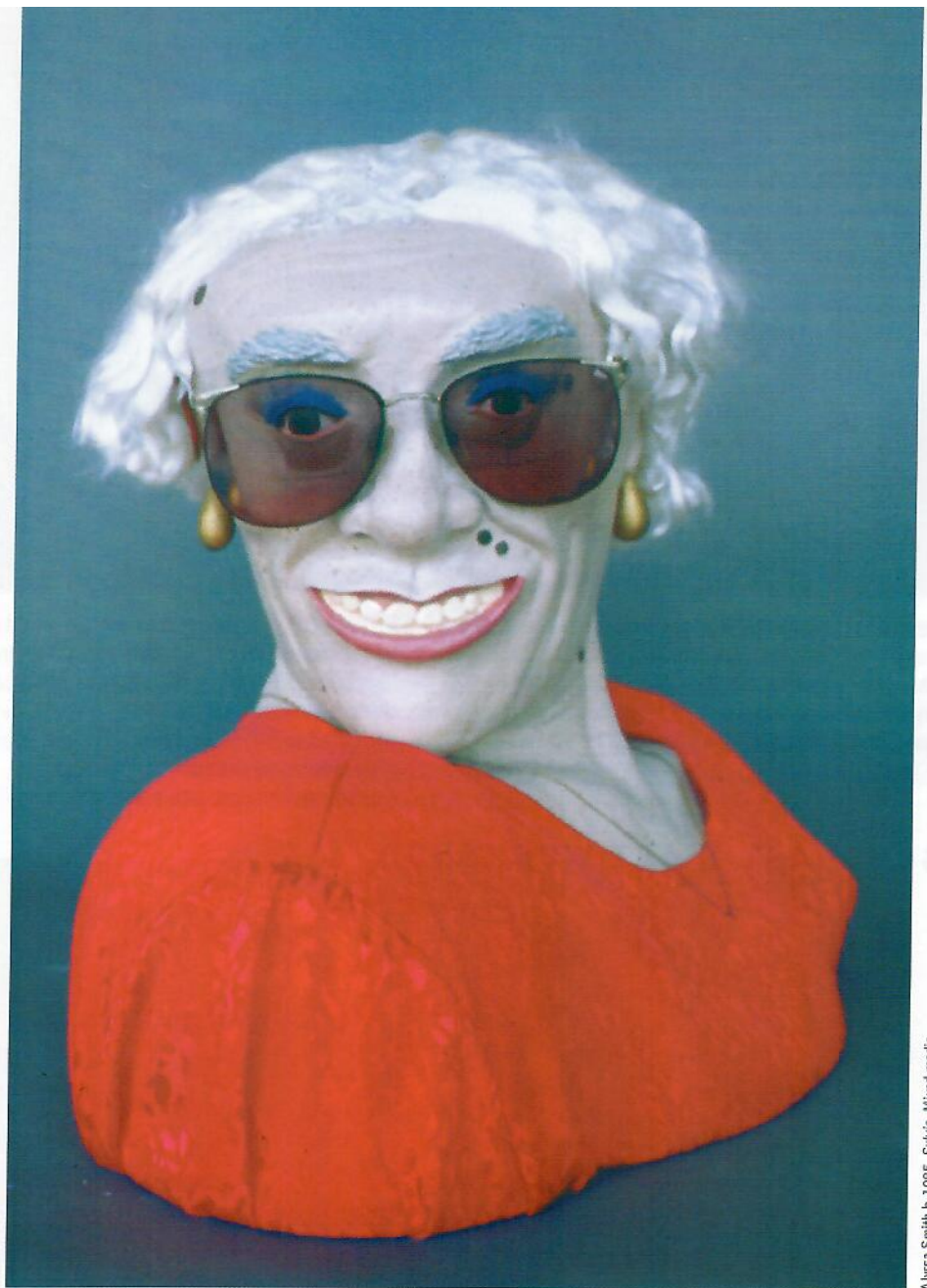
I wanted to make the portrait as life-like and out of the ordinary as possible. I got white doll's hair from an art-supply store, glued it on her head, and then cut it so it looked just right. The shirt belonged to my grandma and so did the glasses. They were the perfect addition. The red color drove home the portrait's personality and accentuated her lips. Most people smile at the shirt, but the glasses really get people to laugh. They're trifocals. I didn't even know they made trifocals, and shaded ones at that!

Does your sculpture have a title?

Yes, I named her *Sylvia*. I was really trying to find a name that went with my other male sculpture. He's called *Harold*. I was just going through all these womens' names in my head, and Sylvia stuck.

Were you satisfied when you were done?

I was. The other sculptures I made before were much smaller and more cartoonish. *Sylvia* is so large, and she has so much personality. It's weird, I catch myself calling her "she." It's just a sculpture, but she looks so real I just can't help myself. But I don't think my grandmothers were so happy. The piece ended up looking like a combination of the two of them. They kept saying, "that's my hair, those are my



Alyssa Smith b. 1985. *Sylvia*. Mixed media.

eyes, and that's my smile!" They felt she looked so ugly. That was a while ago. I hope I've been forgiven by now.

What advice do you have for other aspiring artists like yourself?

You have to be passionate about whatever you do. Without passion, this world can be too sobering. It's very difficult to make something of quality if you don't care about it to begin with. If you really care about what you're doing, you can be creative. You also won't be afraid to break the rules, because you're doing it to make something you love.

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www.scholastic.com/artandwriting



Jessica's sculpture seems to grow out of its round base. The work's form has a dual function. Its **cone-like shape** serves as the body of a figure topped by an **incongruous** duck's head. The **enclosed, concave space** inside contains a smaller ducklike figure.



Brittany has created her own fantasy world by combining flowers, a figure, and a tree-like shape. The variety of **textures**—**sharp, thin, thick, artificial, natural**—contrast with the tree's **organic curves**. The green glow created by the surface decoration **transforms** the base into a grassy carpet.



A variety of **contrasting scales** (large head, small truck) and the **juxtaposition of incongruous** objects characterizes Heather's sculpture. The **transformation** of wheels into arms adds to the work's strange quality. The large base not only supports the sculpture but also has become a very important component.

SCHOLASTIC ART WORKSHOP

TRANSFORMING FOUND OBJECTS

Use ordinary objects to create an inventive and unique sculpture

MATERIALS

- Phillips and slotted hand screwdrivers
- Slip-joint pliers
- Long nose (Needle-nose) pliers
- Wire cutters
- Coping saw
- Hot-glue gun (40-80 watt, operating temp. 380-385°) and glue sticks
- Safety glasses
- Variety of 3-D found objects: mechanical, toy, jewelry, and natural (organic)
- Variety of colored surface embellishments: glitter, sprinkles, neon microglitter, transparent beadies mini marbles, fine colored sand, sawdust, foam shapes, acrylic pom poms, tinsel stems, paper clips, wiggle eyes, paper mosaic squares, crushed pebbles, acrylic gems
- Variety of 2-D imagery (for use on flat surfaces)
- Primary/secondary tempera or Blickrylic paint
- Small soft brushes to apply glue and paint
- Large and small Chinet paper plates
- Elmer's Glue-All
- Spray-Ment solvent adhesive
- Aerosol disinfectant

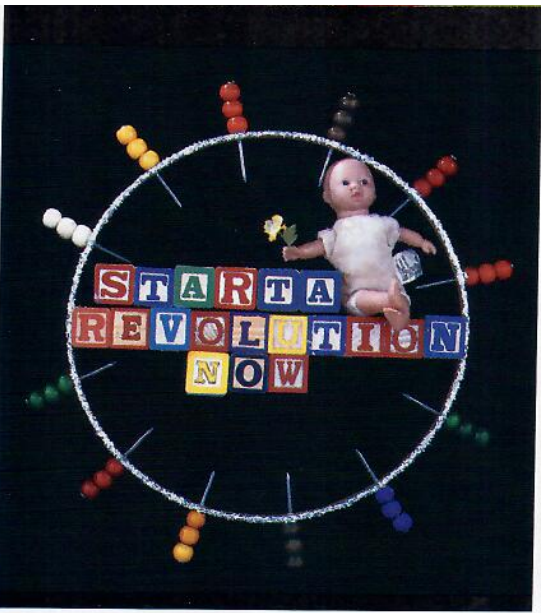
Judy Onofrio, Alison Saar, Helen Escobedo, and some of the other artists featured in this issue create large public sculptures by assembling various found objects. Onofrio uses many of the items she has collected to tell fantastic stories and add to the content of her work.

In this workshop, you'll build a fantastic sculpture using found objects. You'll then decorate your work with a variety of surface textures and materials.

STEP 1 Several weeks before beginning the assignment, start collecting small found objects (action figures, toy trucks, jewelry, maps, dolls, mirrors, shells, colored glass, buttons, ribbons, game pieces, pipe cleaners, artificial flowers, etc.) Develop a method for storing and locating objects.

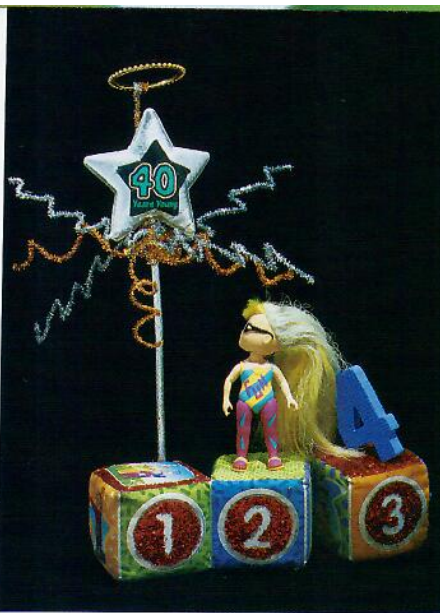
STEP 2 Select a theme, message, story, concept, or subject. Your sculpture can be free-standing or a wall relief. Collect possible objects to include in your sculpture. The sculpture needs a base that can support an arch or columns to **frame** the work's focal point. Arrange and rearrange objects; do not glue pieces together until satisfied

CASEY TIESMAN



Your sculpture can be a flat wall hanging like Casey's. His *bas-relief* (flat but with objects projecting slightly) contains a message spelled out by **geometric shapes enclosed within a linear circle**. **Negative spaces** work with **positive shapes** to form a unit. Pushpins point to the work's **focal point**—the hand with the flower.

WILL S. SEDIG



Most of these sculptures are **self-contained**, forming a single **closed unit**. Will's **open sculpture** integrates objects and background. The base's **solid geometric shapes** contrast with the **organic figure**, the work's **primary focal point**. Jagged **linear elements** point to the sculpture's **secondary focal point**, the star and its message.

ERIC M. DEBOER



The **repetition of organic curves** gives **unity** to Eric's sculpture. The use of the **primary colors** red, blue, and yellow reinforces the power of the work's **primary focal point**, the Superman action figure.



SOME HELPFUL HINTS

REMEMBER: Arrange and rearrange your objects, but don't glue anything together until you are sure your composition is final.

with your sculpture. You can use Elmer's Glue-All, spray adhesive, hot glue, tacks, staples, nails, screws, or any combination.

STEP 3 After your work is assembled, consider what kind of surface embellishment you might wish to add. It can be used to **unify** the piece, to add **texture**, **contrast**, emphasize the **focal point**, and/or provide a **surface pattern**. Limiting the number and areas of surface embellishment and color can help to achieve unity.

Prepared by Ned J. Nesti, Jr., Morrison Junior High School, Morrison, Ill., Assisted by Nicholas Bonneur, art instructor, Walter Reed Elementary, Chicago, Ill. and Charlie Dubnik, painter.

CAUTION: Make sure you know how to operate a hot-glue gun before you try using it!



FINALLY: Remember to be selective when applying any surface decoration.



SCULPTURAL FORMS

What techniques have these artists used to create their large public sculptures?

Most works done by the sculptors featured in this issue were constructed on an enormous scale. But the methods and principles of design the artists used could apply to work of any size.

Below are details of some of the pieces that appear in the magazine. Next to each of the descriptions, sculptural techniques, titles, and names listed write the letter of the image (or images) that seems most appropriate.

- ___ 1. Organic curves
- ___ 2. Negative space
- ___ 3. Maya Lin
- ___ 4. Found objects
- ___ 5. Focal point
- ___ 6. Sun and shadow
- ___ 7. Mariko Mori
- ___ 8. Cast
- ___ 9. *Sun Tunnels*
- ___ 10. Convex forms
- ___ 11. Beth Galston
- ___ 12. Angular gash
- ___ 13. Judy Onofrio
- ___ 14. *Wave UFO*
- ___ 15. Symmetry
- ___ 16. Rachel Whiteread
- ___ 17. Interactive
- ___ 18. *Tree House*
- ___ 19. Positive form
- ___ 20. Concrete
- ___ 21. Solar Observatory
- ___ 22. Concave form
- ___ 23. *Hooked*
- ___ 24. Mold
- ___ 25. Nancy Holt
- ___ 26. *The Wave Field*
- ___ 27. *House*
- ___ 28. Surface texture
- ___ 29. Repeat patterns
- ___ 30. Memorial

