

Sculpture In a Landscape — Yorkshire Sculpture Park

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Sculpture In a Landscape – Yorkshire Sculpture Park

John K. GRANDE

With over 500 acres of lived-in landscape, Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) has developed in such a way that it attracts community. Education is among its main activities, often in collaboration with less known or emerging artists. Though the setting is largely rural, this is a rurality that has a lived-in feel. A place that combines sculpture with grazing sheep, YSP is a very special park for it addresses the issues of regionalism and a de-industrialized economy of northern England, and is equally a park with a chronology and history that has evolved over the years.

As a sculpture park, YSP is concerned with issues of nature, culture. Sculpture as a symbol of human interaction becomes the cross-over point. No better example can be found than Andy Goldsworthy's collaborations. Goldsworthy actually built a fully functional drywall stone enclosure in an open field at the park. Set right into this is a massive stone slab with its own "enclosure," just like the sheep that surround it! Visitors are invited to lie down on the slab, to

leave an impression on days when it drizzles or rains, so their own performance and ephemeral traces remain on the rock, but just for a while. And this Goldsworthy interaction follows several of Henry Moore's sculptures that have been set in the landscape, in open fields near the entrance to the park. Surrounded by sheep, some of Moore's *Upright Motifs* (No. 1-2-7, 1955-1956) recall ancient Celtic and Druidic stone assemblages. Native to the area, Moore was born in nearby Castleford. Also present is Yorkshire-born Barbara Hepworth's groundbreaking sculpture *Family of Man* (1970) with its collectivity of forms. Sited as it is at the YSP, it carries even more of a sense of continuity, incorporating aspects of human culture, of nature and a natural interaction of the two. This is reflected in many of the sculptors' works on site, almost as if this were the main theme for the ongoing curating of works at this northern English park.

Of course, a few sculptures contrast this vision of a nature-culture harmony, notably Joel Shapiro's *Untitled bronze* (1987), Mark di Suvero's steel *Nelly* (1986) and Jonathan Borofsky's oversized striding *Molecule Man 1 + 1 + 1* (1990) made of aluminium plate. Eduardo Paolozzi's sculptures are just

enigmatic, Mimo Paladino's magic, Isamu Noguchi's genial and sublime, while Elizabeth Frink's bronze figure and head studies seem strangely formal and dated. Antony Gormley's *One and Other* (2000) is not his best. When Anthony Caro decided to re-site his painted steel *Promenade* (1986) originally created for the Tuileries in Paris, it was with trepidation, for he had a fear of siting this sculpture, which is like a group of strolling pedestrians, in pure nature. As all brilliant allegories go, sculpturally speaking, Caro's work fits YSP fine as you promenade past *Prome-*

nade! Sophie Ryder's huge galvanized wire rabbit-eared humans are family fun, objects in a landscape that work like Claes Oldenberg's phenomenal Pop objects do.

Returning to the nature-culture interface, James Turrell's *Deer Shelter Skyspace* (2006) again references the agricultural history of this place, for his enclosure enables visitors to enter into what is nothing less than a mausoleum-like ancient Egyptian enclosure, having seating within. Looking up at dawn or dusk, the skies above, and clouds when they are there, make you experience the

Andy GOLDSWORTHY, *Outdoor Enclosure*, 2006. Photo: Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

BRIAN FELL, *Ha-Ha Bridge*, 2006. Photo: John K. GRANDE.



changeable weather from within, an enclosure of another kind. All about perception, *Deer Shelter* is immensely popular architecture cum art commission. In 2006 for the 30th anniversary of YSP, Andy Goldsworthy came back to create the wonderful *Hanging Trees*, Oxley Bank. Adapting an existing drystone wall to create a series of three box-like stone structures, Goldsworthy integrated the natural wood forms of actual trees into the undulating stone walls. Now aging, greying and decaying, the trees inside are more fascinating than when they were originally installed. Brian Fell's corten steel *Ha Ha Bridge* (2006) is a fully functional contemporary sculpture/object that recalls the "Ha Ha" exclamation made when a boundary was discovered...

A walk through YSP is like walking through a progression of sculpture periods. And while certain works adapt to the land, which actually has sheep grazing on the grounds, other sculptures seem artificially placed. However, Peter Randall-Page, some-



←
Henry MOORE,
Upright Motifs (No. 1-2-7),
 1955-1956. Yorkshire
 Sculpture Park.
 Photo: John K. GRANDE.



Mimo PALADINO,
Porta d'Oriente, 2005.
 Yorkshire Sculpture Park.
 Photo: John K. GRANDE.



←
James TURRELL,
Deer Shelter Skyspace, 2007.
 Yorkshire Sculpture Park.
 Photo: John K. GRANDE.

times referred to as a geological sculptor, has been carving stone for decades, and his best works capture nature's patterning, rendering the forms he creates into archetypes.

Best known for his early collaboration on *New Milestones* with Common Ground (1986-87), and for the *Eden Project* in Devon, a granite seed cone forming the central focus of a building, Randall-Page's YSP show of some 50 pieces, closing as David Nash's show was being setting up, captured the essence of his nature-based aesthetic. Design drawn from nature and rendered into atypical ultraforms, *Fructus and Corpus* (2009), both two metres high and 13 tons in weight, draw on fruit and coil forms, but evolve from them. Another Randall-Page piece in the gallery has dramatic white bubble-pack-like surfaces. Enigmatic as sculpture, Randall-Page's sculptures are models, constructs, and several of



Andy GOLDSWORTHY, *Hanging Trees*, 2006. Photo: Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

the best work well sited on the grassy somewhat formal lawn areas next to the exhibition hall. Some granite pieces fair less well as the carved linear stone surface patterns are visually hard to read when competing with the colour of the stone.

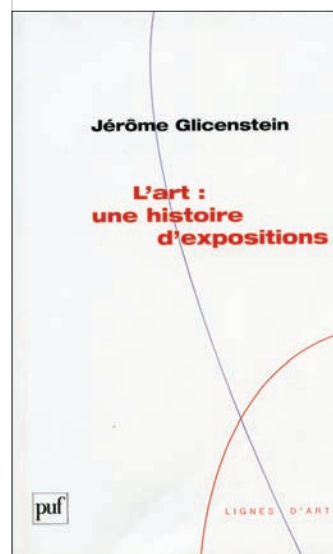
David Nash, whose early work was set in Wales, has brought the whole nature culture theme full circle. This show just opening will be one of the rare opportunities to see a full range of Nash's large and mid-size sculptures. A cast metal sculpture, less common for Nash, presents geometrical forms—cube, cylinder, and sphere—and addresses formal concerns that recall Cézanne. Something of an anomaly in the contemporary art world, Nash lives in a rural

setting, and exhibits throughout the world, while celebrating nature's place in our lives. His *Millennium Dome* of living oak trees is amongst his best-known living sculptures. Using the language of wood and the qualities inherent to the way a tree grows, but equally contrasting straight line geometries or serial themes, David Nash has achieved a dialogue with nature that is part of a long British tradition in art, whether the artists be Samuel Palmer, John Constable, Ivon Hitchens and so on. The works on view in all the galleries and outdoors are evidence of Nash's understanding of how to work wood in space. Likewise it is the imperfection, the rough edges, and the informal play with the material that awaken a sense of play. Nash's sculptures heighten our sense of connectedness to nature in an age of digital, data-based web communication and televisual entertainment that segregates us from nature. Nash's art is pure and unadulterated nature. Pure and simple, the forms are sculptural in and of themselves, but echo archaic, universal proto-historical pan-cultural themes. Charred wood pieces on view at Longside bring a sense of the elemental to his sculpture, a primordial energy, with their charcoal black dark contrasts and simple sphere and tower shapes.

Nash's *Red Column* (2009-2010) is a series of rough-hewn tall circular forms, all made from California red cedar. Though some purists may criticize Nash for importing his wood, rather than using discarded and recycled wood from the UK, Nash believes it is not truly an issue. The work stands majestic, and even totemic in an open sloping field at the YSP.

What makes these sculptures work as a collection at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park is the way they address nature through their respective sitings. In so doing they do not date, for the living Yorkshire landscape keeps them alive whatever the weather, adding to the aesthetic, capturing the cachet and bringing us, the public, into it all, as *flâneurs* or *promeneurs*, hikers or slow-moving contemplatives simply having a picnic in the fields and hills. <—

John K. GRANDE's *Dialogues in Diversity: Art from Marginal to Mainstream* was published by Pari Publishing (Italy) in 2007. His most recent books include *The Landscape Changes* (Propect/Gaspereau Press, 2009) and *Bob Verschueren – Lifelines* (Pori, Finland, 2010). www.grandescritique.com



Jérôme GLICENSTEIN. *L'art : une histoire d'exposition*, Paris, Éd. Les Presses Universitaires de France, coll. Lignes d'art, 2009. 258 p.

Artiste et théoricien de l'art, Jérôme Glicenstein nous propose dans cet ouvrage une belle réflexion sur ce que veut dire exposer une œuvre d'art. Pour aborder cette réflexion, il examine différentes perspectives—esthétique, idéologique et méthodologique—qu'une histoire de l'exposition peut soulever. Selon l'auteur, exposer des œuvres, c'est donner à voir, c'est présenter à un public une idée que l'on se fait de l'art et de ce qu'il doit nous révéler. Par conséquent, il n'y a pas de neutralité en matière de muséographie. Le musée idéal n'existe pas.

En effet, l'exposition est une fiction. Grâce à une mise en relation d'objets, de textes, d'explications, etc., l'exposition communique toujours aux visiteurs une façon de voir l'art. De ce fait, l'exposition incite à la discussion, voire à la confrontation. Elle s'adresse nécessairement à un public. Et ce public est différent selon le contexte ou les époques. À cet égard, la documentation de l'auteur est fort instructive. Pour chacun des quatre chapitres, il présente avec clarté les diverses positions des historiens de l'art ou des philosophes qui se sont intéressés aux questions relatives à la muséographie, à la scénographie et au commissariat. Pour ce qui est du commissariat, l'auteur réfère aux exemples typiques d'auteurs d'exposition (ex. : H. Szee-mann) qui ont, à la fin du XX^e siècle, remis en question la notion de création lorsqu'il s'agit de mettre en œuvre une exposition dans le contexte de l'art contemporain.

Enfin, Glicenstein souhaite une alternative à l'idée traditionnelle d'histoire de l'art. Jusqu'ici, les théoriciens de l'art se sont principalement intéressés aux objets de l'art et à ceux

qui les produisent, mais trop peu souvent à leurs présentations dans l'espace public. Ainsi, une histoire de l'exposition demeure à faire. Cette histoire nécessite cependant une «réévaluation du discours esthétique». Or, cette réévaluation concerne davantage la culture que l'art en tant que tel. C'est que, de toute évidence, cette histoire est du côté de la réception des œuvres. Et de ce que cette réception donne à penser en tant que médiation à partir de laquelle l'art sera considéré au sein de la société.

André-Louis PARÉ

LIVRES REÇUS

Lignes, © Musée de Lachine 2010, 24 pages.

Le catalogue accompagnait l'exposition présentée au Musée de Lachine, du 31 mars au 28 novembre 2010, dans le cadre de l'événement «Mont-réal, Ville de verre», qui regroupait les artistes Patrick Beaulieu, Linda Covit, Susan Edgerly, Lisette Lemieux et Catherine Widgery. «La commissaire Pascale Beaudet, écrit Marc Pitre, le directeur du Musée, a été invitée à examiner le riche inventaire de la collection et à sélectionner les éléments pertinents qui s'y trouvaient en lien avec la thématique. Son projet d'exposition a l'intérêt de mettre en lumière des artefacts et des volets «archéologie» et «histoire» et d'y inscrire également des pratiques actuelles en arts visuels.»



Gilbert Poissant. *Le jeu du collectionneur*. © Materia, Gilbert Poissant, Pascale Beaudet, Québec 2010. 64 pages. www.centremateria.com

Abondamment et magnifiquement illustré, ce catalogue bilingue—réalisé en partenariat avec les Éditions Varia—accompagnait l'exposition tenue au centre Materia, du 10 septembre au 31 octobre 2010. «Composé de plus de 1800 pièces, écrit la commissaire Pascale Beaudet, *Le jeu du collectionneur* est une œuvre-bilan, un inventaire personnel du monde, dont l'idée a surgi en 2005. Il recèle des éléments autobiographiques, une forme particulière de «petit récit» (par opposition au