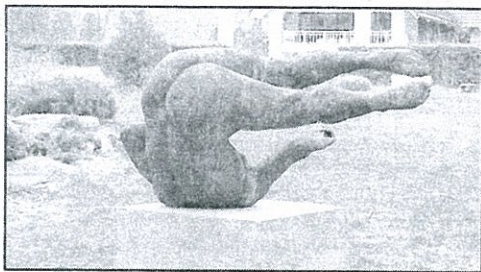


Art Commentary

by Marion Wolberg Weiss

'Rites of Spring' at LongHouse Reserve



Left, right: Sculpture by Eric Fischl



way that Fischl is reinforcing the recurring idea found in his figurative paintings about contradictory male-female relationships. Again, his sculpture seems alone in its environs, yet it's also surrounded by lush greenery.

"Rabdomante" by Magdalena Abakanowicz is another provocative piece, composed of two figures anchored to opposite sides of the pond. The aluminum

works seem like sentinels, keeping watch over not only the pond, but the entire Reserve. They are subtle, yet strong. We feel comforted by their presence.

The sculptures are on view for the entire season. Call 631-329-3568 for information and hours.

Ned Smyth's sculptures at the Salomon Gallery evoked for this critic a magical journey and the establishment of Joseph Campbell's mythical hero. Entering the grounds of the LongHouse Reserve becomes a similar experience for most visitors even if they've never heard of Campbell. No matter. Walking through the gardens and absorbing the sounds, sights, smells, textures (and perhaps even tastes) is unique to everyone: a journey that's subjective, spontaneous and sensual. Yet it's one that's ultimately shared with fellow travelers.

In a nutshell, experiencing the LongHouse Reserve makes us feel separate and at the same time feel we're part of a collective. Either way, we feel human.

The recently acquired sculptures at the LongHouse contribute greatly to this idea. They stand alone, surrounded by trees, flowers and water; they are true aesthetic entities establishing their own space. Even so, the works are part of a whole environment, amidst a seemingly glorious ecosystem. They are separate and an assemblage.

Consider "Battenkill," by Mia Westerlund Roosen, a concrete configuration that forms a circle. A stream of water finds its way around the curve, like a Roman aqueduct. Visitors can sit inside the shape, appreciating the sound of water as it swishes through the system.

There's movement all around as the birds sing and the wind blows. We feel open to the elements, yet we feel protected inside the sculpture.

George Rickey's "Two Open Rectangles Excentric V" also seems alive with motion as the wind whisks through two vertical forms atop a pole. The forms may move separately or together, proving a good example of aloneness versus togetherness, which predominates. The sculpture seems perfectly at ease standing in the middle of a delicate flower patch.

Gonzalo Fonseca's four pieces situated on the patio present a different atmosphere, although, again, they are individual works among the many couches and benches where visitors can relax. They are challenging sculptures as well. Composed of either Bardiglio marble or Roman/Persian travertine, the works are at once lyrical and awkward. Niches in the pieces hold delicate small balls or other geometric forms, yet the objects are placed in box-like shapes that appear almost "industrial." The lily pond in the background provides a mediation between the sculptures' oppositional elements.

Also on the patio is Johnny Swing's "The Quarter Lounge," a luxurious seat studded with silver coins that's an art object and a functional form. The lounge provides a counterbalance to Fonseca's "hard-edge" works as well.

Eric Fischl's "Tumbling Woman" is also a bit disconcerting. The female figure bears a strong resemblance to a man's athletic build with thick legs and huge hips. We wonder if the ambiguity is another