

**Opinion: Glass Grasses, Bronze Squashes, Everything looks great at LongHouse**

**By Robert Long**

Visit to LongHouse Reserve, with its 15 acres of gardens and dozens of outdoor sculptures, is always an adventure, but particularly so at this time of year, when new works have just been installed and others have been cunningly shifted about.

Everything looks great at LongHouse, whether it's massive and lumpy, like de Kooning's "Reclining Figure," gilded and ornamental, like St. Gaudens's "Diana," or cool and minimalistic, like Toshiko Takaezu's "Tree Man," a stoneware column. If you've been to the garden at the new Museum of Modern Art you have seen outdoor sculpture at its worst; at LongHouse, even minor art seems important, and the best work gains immeasurably.

About a dozen new pieces by as many artists are scattered about the lawns and allŽes. At the same time, an exhibit of 19 small bronze sculptures by Amy Goldman can be seen in a small indoor gallery.

Ms. Goldman, who grows heirloom vegetables at her garden in upstate New York, advocates the cultivation of endangered vegetable species. She has written a monograph on melons as well as a volume called "The Compleat Squash," which has fine color photos by Victor Schrager, some of which are also on view.

It was Mr. Schrager who suggested immortalizing the many kinds of squash Ms. Goldman raises by casting them, using the lost wax method. Seventeen varieties made their way to the Tallix Foundry in Beacon, N.Y., where everything from Leonardo da Vinci's horse to the Hofstra Lions has been cast, and have since been issued in bronze, in a range of patinas, in limited editions.

Despite the fact that the variety of shapes squash take is fascinating, from the crookneck to the pineapple to the varieties known as trombone, spaghetti, and Long Island flat, there's something inescapably kitschy

about casting a vegetable in bronze, as if it were a baby's shoes, and this little exhibit can't really shake the association.

In "Cobalt Reeds," on the other hand, a series of thin, cobalt blue glass rods that stand like spears in a sandy berm at the entrance to LongHouse, Dale Chihuly, having acknowledged the source of his inspiration, improvised on it, and the result is memorable art.

"Cobalt Reeds" has been at LongHouse for a few years, and it is fun to see it migrate from one place on the property to another. But the knockout of the present installation is "The Sea of the Ear-Rings," a brand-new steel sculpture by Takashi Sothan holds its own against Buckminster Fuller's three-story-high "Fly's Eye Dome," which has long occupied its own little meadow at the front of the property.

The Soga piece consists of a standing "O" and a horizontal "O," both in black steel; the latter ring is attached to the standing ring at a right angle, high overhead, and seems to float gently in the air, defying gravity.



New, too, is Roy Lichtenstein's "House II," a stylized facade of a Cape Cod house in fiberglass, painted in primary colors, about 15 feet wide and 8 feet high. Lichtenstein flattened perspective here, so the illusion of three dimensions comes and goes as you walk around the piece, and it looks downright bizarre as you approach it from some angles.

Because you discover her "Frozen Laces - Four" directly after seeing Lichtenstein's deadpan house, Louise Nevelson seems even more Baroque than usual. A black wall, in painted Corten steel, it is covered in symmetrical decorative patterns that resemble layers of lacework, and seems uncharacteristically benign.

The "Reclining Figure" of de Kooning, especially when seen at the far end of a swath of lawn, seems to have arisen directly out of French history painting; there's lots of torque on view, the suggestion of musculature,

twisting limbs. As in so much of de Kooning, though, there's a kind of comedy to all this upheaval. His sculpture has a Loony Tunes quality that is a result of the gross magnification - all the way up to 8 feet high and 10 feet wide, in this case - of sculptures shaped in clay with his own two hands.