

sense of a metonym, but carries over into metaphorical speculation.

As with the other dozen or so sculptures that Ben-Haim has situated in the Robert Moses Sculpture Garden of Fordham University (near Lincoln Center), there is a human scale about these works, a flowing sensation, and a certain truth to the materials. One could say that Ben-Haim is within the Modernist tradition of sculpture. Yet his sense of the Modern is a searching one, a desire to find resolution in the most awkward circumstances.

My favorite sculpture in the Plaza is *LEVEL WITH ME, SENIOR*, 1997. There is a stainless steel component covered with wire mesh (a frequently used material in Ben-Haim's work) and an armature projecting to one side. The stainless steel armature resembles a level — the kind that is commonly used on a construction site. At the end of the level is a cast concrete book. *LEVEL WITH ME, SENIOR* has humor and intelligence. It is carefully conceived and constructed. It is provocative and charming.

*SPIKE HOLE*, 1989 is another work filled with a certain tension and contrast. Like most of Ben-Haim's sculpture, the orientation is a formal one. Yet the formalist aspect in his sculpture is not to be misunderstood as a decoration concept without significance. This poetic quality of *SPIKE HOLE* lingers beyond the steel wire mesh and the copper tubing. There is a certain protective shield about the work, a certain anger; there is an ominous quality about these forms, yet one that needs to assert itself, to stare out into the space around it, yet at the same time remain intact and enclosed. *ROARING BALLS*, 1993 has some of this as well. The metaphysical humor in Ben-Haim's form has a certain affinity with the painted constructions of Elizabeth Murray.

The exhibition is outside, and thus

allows these sculptures to confront and be challenged by the surrounding environment. One wonders what more sculpture would feel like taken from the white cube and placed in such a situation. Ben-Haim thinks beyond the gallery space, yet focuses the energy inward to the work itself.



## Zigi Ben-Haim

Robert Moses Sculpture Garden  
Fordham University through April 29  
BY ROBERT C. MORGAN

I HAVE FOLLOWED ZIGI BEN-HAIM's work as a sculptor for several years. His work has always impressed me with its sense of completion. There is a persistent romantic longing about his forms that somehow manages to find closure. Ben-Haim's work is not of a heroic scale. It is relatively modest. It is intellectually complex, but rarely obtrusive, and almost never cumbersome. There is a lyric quality in his stainless steel mesh piece, *THE FALL*, 1989 that reminds the viewer of its source. It is not a reminder in the