

LIFE & ARTS

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The big show

Columbia Museum of Art
not large enough to contain
eye-popping sculpture exhibition

By JEFFREY DAY
jday@thestate.com

MOST EXHIBITIONS AT THE Columbia Museum of Art call for the fine-fingered touch of hanging a picture perfectly.

The next one calls for a crane and a forklift.

"Material Terrain: A Sculptural Exploration of Landscape and Place," which opens at the end of the week, is made up of 26 sculptures, the biggest one topping out at 25 feet tall.

Others pieces are made of growing grass and water, tree limbs tied in knots, a scattering of cast aluminum pieces inspired by giant pumpkins and a steel fainting couch.

"It's a great opportunity to do something a little cutting edge," museum curator Todd Herman said.

"Material Terrain" was organized by International Arts and Artists, which provides shows to many museums.

Most of the artworks will be inside, but seven of the biggest are being placed on the plaza in front of the downtown museum.

"This is the first contemporary sculpture show we've had," museum director Karen Brosius said. "These are things that are quite different than what you'd normally see here. I think it will amuse and bemuse



INSIDE

A close-up look at some of the sculptures in "Material Terrain." Also, other places to see outdoor sculptures in and near Columbia. **E3**

SEE BIG PAGE E3



Material Terrain | A look at some of the works



Dennis Oppenheim began his career as a pioneering conceptual and land artist.

In the 1990s, he began creating sculptures that were big as houses — and literally were houses: houses on wheels, houses resting on their roofs, houses stacked on one another.

His work in "Material Terrain," "Digestion" (above) from 1988, takes the form of two deer made of cast fiberglass. They've been connected to a propane tank and spout flames from their oversized antlers.

The piece refers to how all creatures use energy.



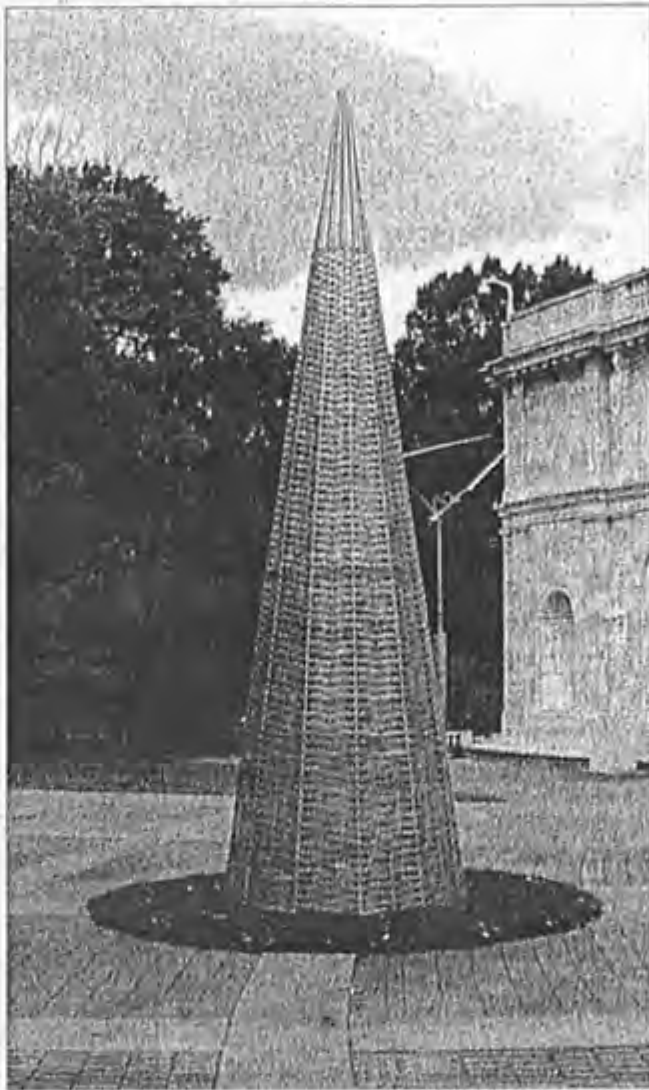
Like Donald Lipski, John Ruppert was inspired by a plant: in his case, a 700-pound pumpkin. When he asked the people who grew the pumpkin if he could make a cast of it, they told him to hurry because they were going to feed it to their sheep.

Ruppert was partially interested in the giant pumpkin because it was the result of hybridization — a man-made "improvement" on nature. "It's been engineered almost to the point of collapse," he said in an audio tour of the exhibition.

Above: "Three Aluminum Pumpkins" from 2004.

James Surls puts the human body, although in an abbreviated form, into the landscape. He has created his own symbolic language — flowers, knives, eyes — that are arranged in a manner that suggests something natural.

"Me, the Flower and the Pistol" (on E1 and below, from 2000), addresses the interaction between men and women.



Inspired by natural forms, Wendy Ross makes her sculptures of material most often connected to industry: steel. But she handles the steel tenderly; it's welded together in delicate shapes or woven into an intimate pattern.

Above is "Andraechium III" from 1998. Ross' sculptures "reflect the microscopic regularity and repetition of living, organic structure, expanded to a monumental scale and reinscribed into nature," wrote Glenn Harper, editor of *Sculpture* magazine.

Many years ago, Donald Lipski saw a magnificent banyan tree that seemed to be a natural, but complex, sculpture. He took that idea and began making resin sculptures that look like natural wood but are twisted into remarkable forms. At right: "Exquisite Corpse" (First Loop), 2000. His sculpture "blurs the boundary between the tree found in nature and the sculptural object," wrote Carla Hanzal, exhibition curator.



IF YOU GO

Material Terrain:
A Sculptural Exploration
of Landscape and Place

WHERE: Columbia
Museum of Art, at Main
and Hampton streets

WHEN: Friday through
Aug. 26

COST: \$5 for adults,
\$2 for students; free on
Saturdays and always
free for museum
members

INFORMATION:
(803) 799-2810 or
Columbiainmuseum.org

Related events:

- "Sculptors at Storm King," film, 11 a.m. July 13 and Aug. 25
- "Henry Moore," film, 7 p.m. July 14 and Aug. 9
- Exhibition tour and wine tasting, 6:30 p.m. July 30
- "Andy Goldsworthy: Rivers and Tides," film, 2 p.m. July 28 and Aug. 11

Take a cell phone tour

Usually being on the cell phone in a museum is a no-no, but not now.

You can take an audio tour of "Material Terrain" through your phone. Those who want to listen will be charged only for the minutes used.

The number to call for the tour is (803) 799-2834. And you can leave a message at the end.

The tour also can be downloaded onto iPods and MP3 players.

Both are free for the museum.

Opening reception:

Carla Hanzal, curator of "Material Terrain," will speak at 8:30 p.m. Thursday during the opening reception.

This reception is a little different. It runs from 8:15 p.m. — two hours later than most. It's free for museum members. Admission is \$25 for nonmembers, or \$15 if you're 30 or younger.

BIG

FROM PAGE E1

people. The scale is so much larger than anything else most of our visitors have experienced."

And it's a new experience for the museum installing such a show. Two employees have been trained to drive a forklift, but the really heavy lifting is being donated by Blanchard Machinery.

"This is a far more complex installation than we've ever done," Ecosius said. "It could take four to five hours just to unload one truck, and there are five trucks."

The best-known artist is Dennis Oppenheim, whose works have been shown at the Museum of Modern Art, the Tate Gallery and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The biggest piece, "Andraecium III," is a giant woven steel cone by Wendy Ross.

China-born Ming Fay's sculptures are made of paper, foam and wire and are displayed hanging

from ceilings and trees.

John Ruppert was inspired by a giant pumpkin he saw at a fair and recreated it several times in cast aluminum.

The large rough wood sculptures by Ursula von Rydingsvard are probably the heaviest works in the show.

"Fainting Couch" by Valeska Soares is the opposite of rough: It's a stainless steel couch with an open drawer filled with fragrant lilies.

The artists are from throughout the United States, although several were born abroad (Japan, Brazil, Germany) and range in age from 40 to nearly 70.

"Material Terrain" is on a three-year tour, making stops at 11 institutions from California to Florida. And at each place, it's a different show.

"One of the more interesting aspects is that where the works are placed radically changes how the sculpture looks," said Carla Benzal, who curated the exhibition and is contemporary art curator at the Mint Museum of Art

in Charlotte. (The Mint is not on the tour; it has restrictions on outdoor sculptures.)

Such a long tour with so many stops is unusual — especially for a show like this that poses many installation challenges.

"It was a big risk for Arts and Artists and the institutions," Benzal said. "It's not just a show of paintings you can hang on the wall."

The Columbia museum took this opportunity to install additional security cameras outside, at a cost of around \$5,000.

When the exhibition was at the University of Arizona early last year, one of the artworks was vandalized — rolled into the street and destroyed.

Benzal's second-floor office overlooks the plaza at Main and Hampton streets, so she'll have a constant view of the installation.

"It will be fun to watch people interacting with the sculptures," she said.

Reach Dedy at (803) 771-8518.

Never too far from sculptures

PUBLIC SCULPTURES

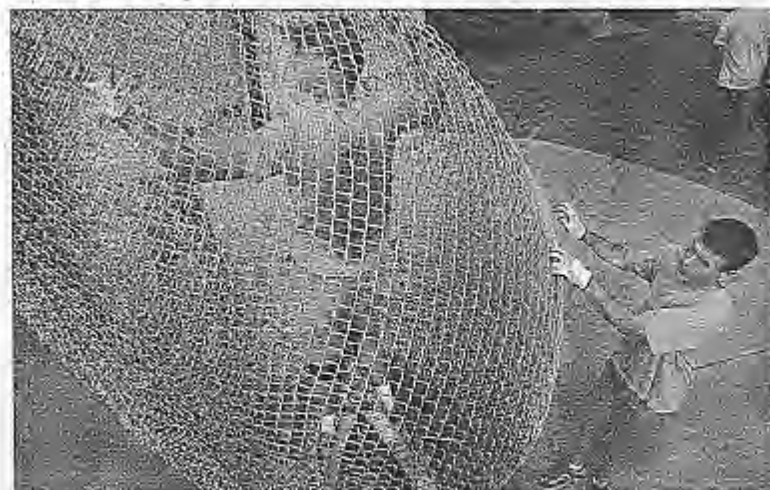
The Columbia Museum of Art isn't the only place to see outdoor sculpture around the city.



SCULPTURES

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Upright Motive No. 8 | 4 Busted Plug | 8 Finlay statue |
| 2 Homage to Abbott Suger | 5 Kawasaki-saurus | 9 Jubileus |
| 3 Neverbust | 6 Fryar topiaries | 10 Passages |
| | 7 Herb Parker sculpture | 11 The Brick Sculpture |

THE STATE



Local artist Jim Arndt, left, and museum employee Mike Dwyer help install "Vessel," by sculptor John Ruppert. It is one of seven exhibition pieces on the museum plaza.

IF YOU'RE ON THE Columbia Museum of Art plaza looking at "Material Terrain" sculptures, you don't have to go far to see some of the city's permanent public sculptures.

The museum has two works there all the time: "Upright Motive No. 8," a 1966 bronze sculpture by Henry Moore, and "Homage to Abbott Suger," a 1994 steel and screen piece by Nade Haley.

Just across the street, artist Blue Sky's "Neverbust" is a 25-foot-long chain connecting the Rising High and Sylvan Brothers buildings.

Blue Sky is the best-represented artist in public places around town.

His mural "Tunnel Vision" has been a city landmark for 25 years. It's on the back wall of the AgFirst Farm Credit Bank near Taylor and Marion streets. On the same block is his "Busted Plug," a 39-foot steel fire hydrant that spouts water. "Kawasaki-saurus," another Blue Sky creation, is behind South Carolina Bank and Trust on Senate Street, between Huger and Pulaski streets.

In front of the State Museum are several trees and shrubs shaped by topiary artist Paul Fryar. Also there is a cave-like construction by Herb Parker.

For several years, the Cultural Council of Richland and Lexington Counties commissioned public artworks. Among these:

- A bronze statue of the late Kirkman Finlay, Columbia's former-mayor, in Finlay Park.
- "Jubileus," at the Bank of America on Main Street.
- "Passages," at the Richland County Judicial Center on Main Street.
- "The Brick Sculpture," at the

Richland County administration building at Hampton and Harden streets.

Farther afield, the S.C. Botanical Garden in Clemson contains about a dozen sculptures made by artists from around the world. All created their art from materials found on site.

For information and images, go to www.clemson.edu/acbg.

Pearl Fryar's home in Bishopville is surrounded by topiary sculptures he has created during the past 20 years.

To get there, take I-20 east

to exit 116. Head toward Bishopville. Less than a mile from the interstate, take a left on Broad Acres Road. Fryar's garden is at 145 Broad Acres Road.

Brookgreen Gardens, near Litchfield Beach, contains hundreds of sculpture of people and animals. It was created by Archer Huntington and Anna Hyatt Huntington, a sculptor, in the 1920s.

Among the important artists represented are Paul Manship, Carl Milles and Henry Cowles Jr. Go to brookgreen.org or call (800) 849-1931.

—Jeffrey Dedy