

# THE NEW YORK ART EXPERIENCE

The New York art experience is rife with the unexpected. Contemporary art does not keep its distance behind velvet ropes and ornate gilded frames. It reaches out into your world both metaphorically and actually.

The only workable "ism" to label the last dozen or so years of art activity in New York is Pluralism. Artists have stretched the boundaries of art practice to their limits, exploring and exploiting every art and non-art form they could find. Houses, temples, rocks, boats and trees were reborn as sculpted art objects.

These have been years of exciting developments in art, and this exhibition is meant to give you a small but piquant taste of the wide diversity of fascinating viewer-engaging art that has been created.

These fourteen artists all pursue their own dreams or demons. Robert Stackhouse is obsessed with boats - ghost boats, skeleton boats, dream boats; Donna Dennis is equally fascinated by ordinary buildings - summer cabins, rooming houses, row houses - which she builds to large playhouse scale.

Mary Frank inhabits a timeless, mythic world of sundials, wild horses and female goddesses, while Livio Saganic dwells imaginatively among the troglodytes in the caves of his native Yugoslavia, recreating them abstractly in slate. Daniel Sinclair's stone steles seem as weathered and worn as the ancient monuments that inspired them, but Sherman Drexler's painted

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rocks and bits of urban detritus recall prehistoric cave paintings without looking anything like them. Robert Lobe, on the other hand, deliberately takes the imprint of nature for his aluminum rocks and trees to transform them into art.

All of the other artists are more abstract, but their work is replete with extra-formal implication and meaning.

Budd Hopkins' painting "Mahler's Castle" concerns both music and architecture; it also carries somewhat religious overtones because of the stained-glass look of its glowing compartmentalized color. Fritz Bultman's "Garden at Nightfall" conveys a sensation of luxuriant plant growth, fragrant night air, and looming shapes unrecognizable in the dark, while Jay Coogan's giant-sized, bulbous, black form seems organic, flame-like, and vaguely menacing. The weighted muscularity of Harmony Hammond's fabric-bound structure is a mute reminder of art's power to convey invisible energies through form alone.

Gerry Griffin's "Star Trap" snakes through space like a species of spiritcatcher grasping at the ineffable. He intends you to move through it imaginatively as you are meant to do with George Sugarman's trellis-like openwork matrix of painted metal, a scale model version of a work intended for people's actual passage. Stephen Antonakos also concerns himself with the intangible, on canvas as well as in the pink glow of its neon "frame".

These artists share a profound commitment and concern for the content of art, whether it is abstract or representational. Often it is necessary to take a little time to fit these newer images into one's mental picture frame to recognize how much the art they have created has changed the way we see the world around us.

April Kingsley  
New York  
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Curator Carola van den Houten

Guest Curator April Kingsley

- Stephen Antonakos **A Pink Neon With a Pink Painting** 1983. Acrylic, canvas, wood and neon, 43" x 42". Courtesy of the artist
- Fritz Bultman **Garden at Nightfall II** 1976. Bronze, brass iron base 72" x 36" x 26½". Courtesy of the artist.
- Jay Coogan **Untitled** 1984. Concrete over polystyrene, 12" x 4" x 1". Courtesy Monique Knowlton Gallery.
- Donna Dennis **Tourist Cabin Porch** 1976. Mixed media, 78½" x 82" x 26½". Courtesy of Holly Solomon Gallery.
- Sherman Drexler **Untitled** Acrylic on rock, stone and cement, 5' x 15" x 30". Courtesy of the artist.
- Mary Frank **Sundial** 1983. Bronze, 45" x 18" x 1'. Courtesy of Zabriskie Gallery.
- Gerry Griffin **Star Trap** 1980. Birch, cane and fiber, 18" x 16" x 144". Courtesy of the artist.
- Harmony Hammond **In Her Absence** 1981. Cloth, wood, foam latex rubber, gesso acrylic and rhoplex, 33" x 85". Courtesy of the artist.
- Budd Hopkins **Mahler's Castle** 1972. Oil on canvas, 98" x 140". Courtesy of the artist.
- Robert Lobe **Appalachian** 1983. Aluminum, 70½" x 70½" x 46½". Courtesy of the Willard Gallery.
- Livio Saganic **Trogle I** 1981. Slate, 61" x 40" x 11". Courtesy of the artist.
- Daniel Sinclair **Stele** 1982. Marble and wood, 117" x 18" x 18". Courtesy of the artist.
- Robert Stackhouse **Herevolutions** 1982. Painted wood, 24'4" x 36". Courtesy of Max Hutchinson Gallery.
- George Sugarman **Promenade** 1983-84. Painted aluminum, 4½' x 5' x 4'. Courtesy Robert Miller Gallery.