XDESIGNGROUP 2006

OBJECTS IN SPACE COURSE
SPRING 2006
Ithaca, New York

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE FAIR
May 20 - 23, 2006
Jacob Javits Convention Center
New York City, New York
May 25, 2006

Three Cornell University architecture students, Brian Carli, 30; Justine Cheng, 21; and Peter Klassen-Landis, 24, exhibited a little of the old-fashioned youthful fair spirit with their prototype of a plywood chaise that rises from the floor, where it is framed by the sheet of plywood from which it was cut, like a design being born before one’s eyes. Asked where it would fit in the marketplace, Mr. Carli described it as a “fairly high-end chair,” with a price of more than $2,000. But first, of course, it has to be made sturdy enough to sit in.

TWO, three, four, five, ” said Nolen Niu, counting the thousands on what will be the probable retail price for Zero, the lipstick-red lounge chair he showed at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair in New York last weekend. “My target market is the younger, upcoming, new generation — the loft generation,” said Mr. Niu, a 31-year-old Los Angeles designer (nolen@nolenniu.com) who got his start with shoes and sunglasses, and is also working on a house for Joseph Hahn, the D.J. for the rap-rock band Linkin Park. “They have a little bit more disposable income. They want to get something that individualizes their space.” Mr. Niu, who was part of an exhibition of emerging talent sponsored by the fair and by the Bernhardt furniture company, typified a new attitude on display throughout the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York, where the fair was held from May 20 to 23. Like many other young designers there, he had clearly thought at least as hard about the financial side of his work as he had about the engineering or design. He has produced several chairs working with Los Angeles fabricators, but explained that the design was “factory ready” if a manufacturer showed an interest. (None did at the Javits center, though several people expressed a desire to buy the chairs, Mr. Niu said.) Certainly the fair did not offer the brave future of furnishings once promised by events like this.

There was a surfeit of perfectly acceptable, reasonably affordable, stylish if not stimulating goods on the floor — wares that seemed to please both the exhibitors (nearly 600 from 31 countries) and the more than 23,000 visitors. Aside from a few idiosyncratic pieces — sofas that seat up to 20 people, inflatable rec rooms, foam carpets that change color when exposed to heat — what was notable was a new pragmatism among young designers more interested in finding a way to prosper in an increasingly competitive design market than in making a statement. Talk of reinventing life at home, a
subject designers used to yammer your ears off about, has been replaced by conversations about how to find buyers for a $5,000 chair, or a manufacturer for a $50 lamp. A piece that held pride of place at the fair, the 50-year-old rosewood lounge chair by Charles and Ray Eames (several versions of which marked the anniversary in a display at the Herman Miller booth) pointed up, in its iconic status, how significant this change in the contemporary furniture market has been. In 1956, when the Eameses designed their chair, it stood out easily from the mass of traditional pieces from which it was making a clean, clear break. Even more recent pieces, like Marc Newson’s 1986 Lockheed Lounge, a prototype of which will be auctioned next month for a price that Sotheby’s in New York estimates at more than $800,000, have managed to become cultural touchstones.

But if a latter-day equivalent were introduced today, it might go unnoticed in the teeming contemporary furniture market that comprises West Elm, Ikea, Todd Oldham for La-Z-Boy, Thomas O’Brien for Target, and companies like Kartell, which show in Milan as well as in New York. Then there are new faces like Mr. Niu, trying to turn design school diplomas into careers.

Indeed, Mr. Niu and his colleagues are competing with the Eameses themselves, who are alive and well in the form of popular production pieces, along with scores of other midcentury designers, whose work is continually reissued for an enthusiastic new audience that doesn’t distinguish between modern and contemporary.

Then, too, there is the difficulty of getting a design produced. Emeco, a company with a best-selling aluminum chair designed for the United States Navy in 1944, has worked with Philippe Starck, Frank Gehry and other design celebrities to produce new models of its chair. But it doesn’t work with talented unknowns.

"The development cost of a new product can be $500,000 to $1 million," said Daniel Fogelson, Emeco’s vice president for sales and marketing, standing before a fleet of aluminum chairs at the fair. “You can’t risk it on kids.”

For those who have struck out on their own, like the Minneapolis design firm Blu Dot (bludot.com), the risks are acute. Blu Dot first appeared at the New York furniture fair in 1997, and has managed to succeed and return each year since largely on the basis of practicalities like efficient shipping and attractive pricing. Though it doesn’t manufacture its own products, it designs them to anticipate ways in which manufacturing costs can be kept down, and the products themselves are easy to pack and ship.

"We’re the only ones left standing," said John Christakos, one of Blu Dot’s three founders, of the designers who received major media attention in 1997, making a nervous joke.

But Mr. Fogelson of Emeco, whose 25-year experience in retailing design spans the history of the furniture fair, which started in 1989, said that he thought a new emphasis on professionalism was strengthening the hand of today’s new designers.
“Young companies like Blu Dot look like real companies,” he said. “And the kids showing here are aiming at that.” Mr. Fogelson added that, unlike the fresh-out-of-school hopefuls whose unproduceable art-student or craftlike output was once typical at the fair, “They're aiming at a completely different level than they were 10 years ago.”

And Adrienne McNicholas, a consultant who works with designers on the business aspects of product development and introduction, said she sees the tide shifting among younger designers, from “wanting to be a rock star to knowing they’ll have a reliable, viable business.”

This focus on viability may have drained some of the creative spirit out of their work, but it has also contributed to what may be the most promising aspect of contemporary design right now, its widespread concern with accessibility, and with finding innovative ways to achieve it.

North South Project (northsouthproject.com), a Canadian exhibitor, produced elegant, affordable furniture by pairing manufacturers in developing countries, like Peter Mabeo, 35, and Otsele Mabeo, 30, in Botswana, with its designer, Patty Johnson, 46, in Toronto. The Mabeos, who are married, own their company. Ms. Johnson worked side by side with them, developing her designs more as a collaboration with the manufacturers than as a job to be outsourced to them. The Mabeos, in turn, were able to help the designer incorporate a higher level of craft and finish into the design.

New designers like Kouichi Okamoto, 27, who showed an accordion of paper that unfolds, like a party ornament, into a lamp base (kyouei-ltd.co.jp), or Michelle Butler, 32, of Isolyn, who creates magnetized felt flowers and panels as a kind of wallpaper you can play with, are doing what designers do best: using ordinary materials to create interesting products without extraordinary costs involved (isolyn.com).

Ideas are cheap. Matthew Kroeker, 29, designed Splinter, a funny and likable pair of teak chairs that share a jagged edge that can be interlocked to produce a bench, or pulled back apart. Mr. Kroeker called it “a metaphor for a bad-marriage day.” Divorce as design; settee as quick settlement. Because of the cost of North American teak (Mr. Kroeker is based in Winnipeg, matthewkroeker.com), the chair, if produced, would likely cost more than $1,000. The prototype cost $1,800. But because the concept is strong, the designer is considering using other materials, including recycled plastics. As of yesterday, no one had made Mr. Kroeker any offers to pick up the design.

Shawn Sinyork, 34, and Eskil Tomozy, 37, of Emesu (“use me” backward; useme@emesu.com) in San Francisco, had a belt-leather beanbag lounge chair and ottoman with them — a Birkenstock for the body and, with its suede good looks, an upscale update of a downscale favorite. Though they hope a retail price would be no more than $1,800, the prototype cost $3,000 to make. At the fair, Emesu said, it was approached by several manufacturers interested in producing the lounge.

Terhi Tuominen, a Finnish designer, brought Blackbird, a metal-mesh chair she showed in Milan, which has the simple unexpected silhouette of strong fashion. Blackbird is also structurally uncomplicated and would be easy to manufacture (terhi.tuominen@uiah.fi).

**ABOUT THE CORNELL COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS**

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SPACE FROZEN IN A MOMENT: HANDS ON COURSE TAKES STUDENT DESIGNS FROM CONCEPT TO INTERNATIONAL FAIR

May 25, 2006

Before this course I didn’t know a thing about welding. Now I’ve learned two different types of welding,” said exuberant architecture student Rebecca Southworth as she sawed, sparks flying, at a steel angle iron in the Sculpture Foundry. “A neat experience,” agreed fifth-year student Pete Kluss-Klassen-Landis as his drill bored into a plank of walnut.

Cornell may be known for its world-famous architects, from Richard Meier to Rem Koolhaas. But industrial design? That’s for the Rhode Island School of Design and the Pratt Institute.

But in the 2006 academic year, the Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA) and its director, Milton Curry, associate professor of architecture, launched the university’s first industrial design program with 10 undergraduates taking designs beyond conception and sketchpad and actually building something.

Last weekend their efforts went on display in Manhattan’s Javits Center as part of the International Contemporary Furniture Fair, one of the world’s largest furniture trade shows. In a tiny booth measuring just 10 feet by 10 feet by 8 feet high, the Cornell architecture students, under the banner of the CCA Xdesigngroup, presented their ideas to buyers from Milan to Melbourne. Their booth was a setting of curved laminate and wood chairs, of right-angled steel lighting, of a silicone rubber screen, of a walnut storage wall – of “space frozen in a moment of transformation,” as Andrea Simitch, associate professor of architecture, put it.
The idea of the course – the first in a five-year program – which Simitch co-curated with professor of sculpture Roberto Bertoia, was to give Cornell students an understanding of what it takes to work as a group and build full scale from the designs they conceive. “They now understand,” said Simitch, “how ideas can be located within a particular material and just how long it takes to build something.” Senior Brian Carli, who helped man the booth, enthusiastically agreed. He and two other students, Justine Cheng and Klassen-Landis, worked as a group on a chair made of poplar veneer designed to follow the contours of the back. “Our idea was to make the chair appear as if it has risen from a strip peeling off the floor,” he said. That, said Curry, is the essence of the designed objects: “A process of inscription, from line to plane to multiple planes.” In concrete terms, that means a floor pattern made up of two-dimensional birch plywood strips, seeming to sponsor a three-dimensional space.

And what has been learned from the experience? “This makes them better designers by teaching them to manage materials and process and to collaborate on ideas,” said Bertoia. And, as Curry noted, in today’s design marketplace, which is all about mixing low-tech with high-tech manufacturing processes, knowing how to take an idea from conception to finished product is a big advantage.
CORNELL STUDENTS EXHIBIT CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS AT 2006 INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE FAIR, MAY 20 - 23, IN NEW YORK CITY

May 24, 2006
Ithaca, New York

A team of 10 Cornell students: Mariela Alvarez, Brian Carli, Justine Cheung, Amy D’Onofrio, Nathan Friedman, Hugh Hayden, Pete Klassen-Landis, Spencer Lapp, Rebecca Southworth, and Rich Tong — known as ‘X designgroup’ — will showcase their original furniture at the 2006 International Contemporary Furniture Fair May 20–23 in New York City's Jacob Javits Convention Hall.

The furniture was designed as part of the first year of the CCA’s 5 Years/50 Designers Initiative — for the next 5 years, 50 student designers will produce work for the ICFF show and possibly the Milan Furniture Fair, 2006–2010. Co-curated this year by Cornell professors Roberto Bertoia, sculpture, and Andrea Simitch, architecture, the work is exhibition-quality and is constructed at Cornell facilities with the Curators’ insights and experience as a guide. The CCA booth featured five different pieces of “furniture as infrastructure for living,” The pieces interact in a dynamic and fluid way, forming intimate spaces. The initiative engages the contemporary processes of production in industrial design, furniture, and exhibition/installation design. The forms and modes of production — sketch models, small mock-ups, full-scale mock-ups, and material testing — are engaged throughout the semester during the critical transformation from prototype to finished product.

CCA hosted a reception and launch party celebrating the work of ‘X’ at 5–7pm on May 21, at 50 West 17th Street, with media, prominent and young alumni, and designers in attendance. Having this furniture featured at our own booth at the ICFF is a distinct honor as it demonstrates CCA’s and Cornell University’s commitment to offering artists and designers a forum to take conceptual design to the next — tangible — level.
CORNELL STUDENTS EXHIBIT THEIR CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS THIS WEEKEND AT NEW YORK CITY’S 2006 INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY FURNITURE FAIR

May 17, 2006

ITHACA, N.Y. -- A team of 10 Cornell University students - calling themselves 'X designgroup' - will showcase their original furniture at the 2006 International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) Saturday through Tuesday, May 20-23 in New York City's Jacob Javits Convention Hall. The ICFF is often billed as "the global design community's mecca."

As part of their CornellPublic Program, the Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA) will sponsor the ICFF booth featuring the students' work. The CCA also will host a reception and launch party celebrating the work of X designgroup, 5-7 p.m. Sunday, May 21, at 50 West 17th St. Members of the media are invited to attend.

The CCA booth at the furniture fair will feature three lighting pieces - two in steel, two chairs in wood laminate, and one credenza/bureau made with walnut boards. Together, the pieces represent a contemporary interpretation of urban living - adaptable and intimate, sensual and abstract, said Milton Curry, CCA director.

"Having this furniture featured at our own booth at the ICFF is a distinct honor as it demonstrates CCA's and Cornell University's commitment to offering artists and designers a forum to take conceptual design to the next - tangible - level," said Curry.

The Cornell Council for the Arts' CornellPublic Program supports the production of art, interdisciplinary creativity, and is an advocate for interdisciplinary, collaborative, and experimental artistic forms that require special sponsorship and resources. This year's launch of the X designgroup collection is the first year of the CCA's "5 Years/50 Designers Initiative 2006-2010," which will bring 50 emerging designers from Cornell to ICFF in New York and potentially, Milan. Co-curated this year by Cornell professors Roberto Bertoia, sculpture, and Andrea Simitch, architecture, the work is exhibition-quality and is constructed at Cornell facilities with the curators' insights and experience as a guide.

Editors' note: Journalists can view Cornell student's work at Booth #1846 at the ICFF.

MEDIA RELEASE

Released by Cornell Chronicle
By Nicola Pytell
PATRICK T. DOUGHERTY / CCA INSTALLATION ARTIST 2006

HALF A DOZEN OF THE OTHER

September 1 - 21, 2006
Sheldon Court, Collegetown
Ithaca, New York
ART OF STICKS DOCUMENTARY CREATES GLOBAL INTERNET BUZZ

March 1, 2007
Ithaca, NY

In the ever-expanding multimedia world, two Cornell students — Giorgio Piccoli ’07 and Gabriel Long ’09 — have found their niche. Thanks to the growing popularity of viewer-created content, the duo has been able to globally broadcast their documentary, The Art of Sticks, on Current TV.

Piccoli and Long decided to create a short documentary about Patrick Dougherty’s stick artwork, one piece of which is currently being displayed across the street from Collegetown Bagels. “We were interested because the topic seemed fairly straightforward and simple,” said Long, who was formerly a Sun staff member. “It’s a unique art form, and we were intrigued from the outset.”

With Long directing and Piccoli producing, they wrapped up filming in October. In early November, the pair — working under the name Pi House Productions — submitted this “pod” to www.current.tv, where it was viewed and voted upon by Current members and staff. It rose quickly through the ranks, reaching fifth on the top 10 list at one point. It was bought within a week by Current TV and has been airing globally since Jan. 10. This is their second video to be globally broadcasted through this corporation.

Among the many online video-broadcasting sites, Piccoli and Long picked this one in particular. By submitting to the website, they were able to be aired on the actual television program and seen in 26 million homes around the world. “Current TV is a news station for the younger generation. It’s aimed at viewers between the ages of 18 and 35,” said Piccoli. “You often find that news is depersonalized, but here people are telling stories that they actually care about. This is a channel where my voice can be heard. You can’t contribute to CNN.”

They interviewed Dougherty in late September on the last day the artist was at Cornell. The Art of Sticks affords viewers an intimate look into Dougherty’s techniques, as well as his motives and inspiration. “I’ve been building things my whole life,” Dougherty said in the video.

In terms of the medium, many were confused at his choice to use saplings and branches instead of a more conventional material.
“Initially I started out with clay, but I couldn’t build big things with it,” said Dougherty. So he turned to sticks. “I like the immediacy of this material: you can shape it easily, you can mark it easily, but with saplings, you can also build really large objects, and you can do it really quickly within a large urban space. I’m using this material for the line qualities; these are kind of like large drawings, and so, I’m just using sticks for that [linear] quality,” explained Dougherty in the video.

The intimate interview with the artist is paired with scenes of him constructing a sculpture. The shots of him actually building the pieces were filmed at Brown University by Tyler Henry, according to Piccoli, since the pieces at Cornell were entirely completed by that point.

The interview with Dougherty itself was conducted at the Cornell site. In the documentary, there are shots of CTB and members of the Ithaca community experiencing the artwork. In one memorable segment, there are two children playing tag inside the hollow sculptures.

“No one could have been sure about the project’s success at its outset. “There’s always resistance, because in the drama of building, people don’t know what you’re doing. So they say, ‘What’s going on here, doesn’t that belong at the dump?’ Slowly but surely as time goes on, and you’re concocting an illusion from these sticks and directing a kind of feeling and a view, people become much more interested in it,” Dougherty said.

Despite achieving national acclaim for his prolific pieces, Dougherty is an extremely down-to-earth guy, according to Paid Advertisements Piccoli, Long and Curry.

“He doesn’t have any presumptions of grandeur,” Long said. Dougherty’s humble nature was solidified in his last line of the documentary: “I let art history take care of itself; I try to work everyday as an artist.”
MEDIA RELEASE

Released by the Ithaca Times
By Arthur Whitman

FORCE OF NATURE

October 11, 2006
Ithaca, NY

In Collegetown, nestled in between Cornell’s Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts and Sheldon Court (a grad student dorm), North Carolina sculptor Patrick Dougherty has realized “Half a Dozen of the Other,” one of his signature tree branch installations. Six woven twisting towers form a V-shape, pointing away from the street. Each is supported by a living tree. The trees poke in and out, acting as rigid counterparts to the towers’ fluid dance-like movement. From some angles the sculptures appear as domes, from others like frayed rope. The construction process - obscured from public view by scaffolding - took three weeks to complete, culminating in a Sept. 21 unveiling. The artist employed volunteers from Cornell and the larger Ithaca community. Numerous locally grown trees have been stripped of leaves and woven together. Branches large and small make for a rich, varied texture.

The most immediate sensation invoked by “Half” is a feeling of playfulness and childlike fantasy. Indeed, on a nice day, individuals of all ages can be seen wandering in and out of these building-like sculptures, looking up and down. Irregularly placed, curving, tare-like windows and doors add to the playhouse atmosphere. Nevertheless, a more careful look belies the apparent spontaneity and casualness of the arrangement. “Half” does much more than simply fill a small, somewhat ungainly plaza space. Rather, it does what the best public sculpture often does, provoking reflections on the structure and character of the surrounding, a good spot to get some distance lies right beyond it.

An alleyway at an odd angle (right beside polygonal Sheldon Court) and some stairs leads up to a small park, likely unused by all except Cornell theater folk gone out for cigarette breaks. Being above the tower bases and in front of the V-tip, its as close to an ideal vantage point as you’re going to get (Colstreet, is also a good spot, but public art should be free of charge).

Sitting there, one could go on and on finding visual connections and metaphors - planned or otherwise. For example, you could note the way the way the two prongs of the “V” (actually more like a pointed Gothic archway) echo the curving “S” of Oak Avenue as it juts into College Ave. The towers themselves resemble human heads or limbs. They appear as if frozen in motion, graceful but also dangerously crowded, as if they are about to slam into each other.

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The Schwartz Center is perhaps the piece’s most obvious point of reference - and departure. The “V” echoes the building’s triangular front window, softening it and flipping it around. The towers echo the Schwartz Center’s own large, central tower and pointed roof. Arches and circles appear everywhere. Of course, the sculptures make both the Schwartz and Sheldon look stiff and uptight.

Return visits bring increased familiarity and better understanding of these and other relationships.

Fortunately, “Half a Dozen of the Other” will remain in Collegetown for a year. It will be interesting to see how its appearance and feel is altered by the changing of the seasons and perhaps a changing urban context.

Also worth further reflection is the way in which “Half” plays with our customary ideas about the place of nature in a man-made environment. There is considerable ambiguity and irony here. Naturally growing trees act (and look) like architectural supports. The towers, despite being the work of considerable (and evident) forethought and physical labor, seem more alive and organic than anything around, natural or otherwise. Dougherty’s sculpture is both a welcome addition to the neighborhood and one of the most exciting and thought-provoking works of visual art on display in Ithaca right now.

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HALF A DOZEN OF THE OTHER: OUTDOOR ART INSTALLATION TRANSFORMS FORGOTTEN PLAZA

September 28, 2006
Ithaca, NY

The sculptures -- made from hundreds of saplings and branches stripped of their leaves -- grew slowly over three weeks, winding around six trees in a barely noticed plaza between the Schwartz Center and Sheldon Court in Collegetown.

Artist Patrick Dougherty, with assistance from several Cornell students and Ithaca residents, wove the saplings into an outdoor arboreal art installation that opened to the public Sept. 21. Visitors stepped into the hollow, elongated and twisted igloos and peered out of them at each other.

Dougherty and his assistants waited until the installation was complete before deciding on the title: "Half a Dozen of the Other."

Several other whimsical names were considered, including "Oddballs," "Just Plain Uncivilized" and "Sextuplets," Dougherty said.

The aim of the installation, he said, was to transform the space and allow people to interact with the sculptures and to see the public space in a completely new way. "The day that it's finished, when you get your scaffolding down ... people come flooding into it and enjoy it. It's really nice," Dougherty said.

"This is the most important piece of contemporary public art that's commissioned, that's site specific and that's temporary, in my period here as a student or as a faculty member, which is basically 20 of the last 27 years," said Milton Curry, associate professor of architecture and director of the Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA). "[It shows] how temporary, site-specific art can change your perceptions of a place."

"The work was well executed, [especially considering] its relationship with the site as a critical venue, where Cornell begins to engage in some dynamic dialogue with the city," said project curator Amaechi Okigbo.
a CCA member and associate professor of landscape architecture. "One of the unique things, too, is that despite the fact that this particular intersection is one of the most urban of areas in the city of Ithaca, it is also a confluence of cultural exchange. I couldn’t think of a more appropriate site where public art begins to manifest itself, not only outside, but also within the Schwartz Center as a venue for artistic and creative discourse."

The installation will stay up for a year. "Maybe this will be the start of having a number of different uses of this space ... where people are challenged to use this space and present other kinds of ideas," Dougherty said.

He is the first of five artists to participate in CCA’s "5 Years/5 Contemporary Installations" program. The project is sponsored by CCA, http://www.arts.cornell.edu/cca, with support from the Department of Theatre, Film and Dance, Hilton Garden Inn and Stella’s Cafe/Olivia Restaurant.

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A SCULPTURE GROWS IN COLLEGETOWN

September 6, 2006
Ithaca, NY

One doesn’t expect to happen upon a contemporary art installation made entirely of tree saplings in Collegetown, but that is part of artist Patrick Dougherty’s vision. “It’s nice to have a first-strike capability with your work, in the sense that people are kind of shocked that it’s in that space,” says Dougherty, an artist-in-residence at Cornell until Sept. 21. “I try to blend the site, the sculpture and people’s imagination.”

Since Sept. 1 Dougherty has been erecting arboreal art on a triangular plaza in front of the Sheldon Court residence hall with the assistance of Cornell students and Ithaca residents. The College Avenue site is at the border of the Cornell campus and Collegetown, and this, too, was intentional.

“Art disciplines our minds and sharpens our perceptual consciousness,” says Milton Curry, associate professor architecture and director of the Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA). “Public art forces us to interact with ‘otherness,’ something that is out of the ordinary. How this particular construction will transform the space of Collegetown will be quite interesting and unexpected.”

Since 1982 Dougherty has created more than 200 installations in the United States, Europe and Asia, each entirely composed of tree saplings. His works evoke giant birds’ nests, igloos, urns, pueblos, writhing cornucopia, wreathes or primordial huts straining against gusts of wind. Depending on sky and setting, they soothe or disturb, enchant or befuddle.

“Patrick’s site-specific work is part of an extensive effort to reimagine the threshold of Collegetown, where Cornell begins to project itself into the city of Ithaca,” says project curator Amaechi Okigbo, a CCA member and the associate professor of landscape architecture who brought Dougherty to campus in 2005 to lecture. “He is dealing with issues of urban spatial environment and temporality.”

Dougherty is the first of five artists to participate in CCA’s “5 Years/5 Contemporary Installations” program. As part of his three-week residence, Dougherty will offer an informal master class Sept. 16. A documentary crew is filming...

Dougherty uses sustainable, natural materials and constructs his work in full public view. All of the raw materials for his Ithaca sculpture will be harvested locally; a portion will come from the Cornell Plantations. He says his work "provokes an interest in all things natural, the sense of the woods and some sense of our existence in prehistory, when we used sticks as one of our major material sources.

"Introducing wit and whimsy into an artistic work -- weaving it into an already conceptual/nonfigurative work -- is very tricky," says Curry, who notes that Dougherty's approach runs counter to fashions in contemporary art. "I think of Patrick and only a handful of other artists who can pull this off, including Andy Goldsworthy."

Dougherty's piece will progress from thumbnail sketches and considerations of how it functions in the available space to its impact and scale. "I'm planning to use the trees at the site as a foil to build something in and around," he explains. "People are concerned about loss of species, and I think that my work provokes associations with nature, drawing, making line patterns that are interesting and provocative. The sheer beauty of what you can do with these sticks is amazing."

MEDIA RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

ARTIST PATRICK DOUGHERTY BEGINS 3-WEEK RESIDENCE AND ORIGINAL OUTDOOR INSTALLATION IN ITHACA, NEW YORK

September 1, 2006
Ithaca, New York

The CCA is pleased to welcome artist/sculptor Patrick Dougherty to Ithaca for a 3-week residency as the first artist in the CCA’s 5 Years / 5 Contemporary Installations for Ithaca, New York 20061010. Dougherty will be completing a site-specific sculptural work comprised of locally harvested maple saplings that will reside at the Sheldon Court Plaza in Collegetown, and will open for a year-long period to public view on September 21, 2006.

We engaged Patrick Dougherty because of the “sustainable/all-natural” material quality of his work, and for the extremely public nature of his production technique—he typically engages volunteers and communicates directly with the public as he is constructing his piece. Patrick Dougherty is an artist of international repute and has produced over 200 installations. He was most recently acknowledged in the May 2006 issue of Metropolis for an interior installation at the headquarters of advertising conglomerate Wieden and Kennedy—one of his few permanent installations. Project Curator Amaechi Okigbo, a CCA member and associate professor of landscape architecture, states “Patrick’s site-specific work is part of an extensive effort to re-imagine the threshold of Collegetown, where Cornell begins to project itself into the city of Ithaca. He is dealing with issues of urban spatial environment and temporality.” Unlike an exhibition that may be installed in a museum for two months, the Cornell community will have the opportunity to engage this work over the course of four seasons, so that the piece has become the subject of a public discourse on the need for more viable public space in Collegetown, and more importantly a focus on the quality of art that can become part of the public realm.

In addition to Dougherty’s sculpture, he will be engaging volunteers in the early process of harvesting natural saplings in Ithaca; participating in a masterclass with interested members of the Ithaca community and students on September 16; and will be participating in a closed panel discussion on the future of the arts at Cornell on October 26 where filmmaker Peter Carroll will also screen a 6-minute documentary on the making of Dougherty’s Cornell sculpture.

ABOUT THE CORNELL COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

The Cornell Council for the Arts (CCA) — composed of representation from 12 university departments/units affiliated with the arts at Cornell University — supports the production of art, interdisciplinary creativity, and the synthesis between the University, Ithaca, and global locations. CCA is an Advocate for interdisciplinary, collaborative, and experimental artistic forms that require special sponsorship and resources.

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MEDIA RELEASE

ARTIST PATRICK DOUGHERTY PRESENTS LECTURE + MASTERCLASS
LECTURE: PRIMITIVE WAYS IN AN ACCELERATED WORLD

November 2, 2005
Ithaca, New York

Patrick Dougherty, internationally renowned installation artist, presented a lecture on his work – Primitive Ways in an Accelerated World - at Cornell University's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, on November 1, 2005. Earlier in the day, Dougherty held a masterclass at the Hartell Gallery in Sibley Hall.

Mr. Dougherty was born in Oklahoma in 1945 and received a B.A. in English from the University of North Carolina in 1967 and an M.A. from the University of Iowa in 1969. In 1975, after a brief stint as a hospital administrator he returned to Chapel Hill, North Carolina to study sculpture and art history. Today, Patrick Dougherty is the most influential sculptor working in North Carolina and unquestionably one of the most original sculptors in America. Since the early 1980’s, his work has received numerous national and distinguished international awards: such as the North Carolina Artist Fellowship Award (1986, 1989, and 1990), Henry Moore Foundation Fellowship (1993), National Endowment for the Arts Japan-U.S. Creative Arts Fellowship, Washington, DC (1991), Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant / Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York (1994), Artist in Residency, National Endowment for the Arts / Washington, DC (1994); and Southern Arts Federation / Rome Prize (1995 and 1996).

His work blurs the distinction between architecture, landscape and sculpture and defies categorization. Dougherty’s projects are informative adventures that result in perfect acts of architecture and spatial engagement. The act of deforming and transforming natural objects gives rise to new identities and spatial constructs — gestures of symbolic/elastic architecture, spatial grounding, juxtaposition, and dislocation — which serve as contraptions for understanding space. These elastic gestures offer new ideas to the spatial imagination and the growing theoretical discourse in contemporary landscape architecture. How elastic are the mediums of art, architecture, and landscape in the frame of the creative mind? How far can we push ideas of conceptual and psychological space in these mediums? What are the implications of the temporal and ephemeral gestures in these mediums?

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Dougherty’s work expands the territory of discussion and brings new and original insight to the equation of spatiality or spatial notations, materiality, and axiomatic graffito and structures in art, architecture and landscape both real and digital. Dougherty’s body of work exhibits individual sensibility, stylistic consistency, and a complexity grounded in spontaneous imagination. His site-specific sculptures encompass architecture and landscape architecture — engaging unique conditions associated with interior and exterior spatial environments - horticulture, and structural engineering. The large-scale sculptures such as Whim Wham (Laumeier Sculpture Park, 1992), Crossing Over (American Craft Museum, 1996), Full Court Press (Munson-William-Proctor Arts Institute Museum of Art, 2001) and Na Hale O Waiawi (The Contemporary Museum/ Honolulu, 2003) are fluid expressions of notation lines in space, resulting in a threshold where architecture, art and landscape merge, producing a sculptural hybrid folly constructed with large branches and woven maple and willow saplings.

In each project installation, Dougherty has sought to embrace its creative potential while intellectually and architecturally investigating its conceptual, material, spatial and cultural implications. The maple saplings act as metaphors for fluid fractals or splines as in Peter Eisenman’s computer rendering for the Staten Island Institute for Arts and Sciences and the curve trace for the Aronoff Center for Design and Art, University of Cincinnati. As in Richard Serra’s work, the reference to contextualism is generated by vacillating waves, overlaps and torques.

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