

also expressed his ability to produce marvels of engineering and association. In this case, the double curve of its staggered contour suggested an architectural or topographical structure in motion. The occasional Lucite blocks amid the wooden ones lent translucency, their light-reflecting surfaces dramatically contrasting with the dark passages of the fissure and interstices. The mixing of different colors within a warm, natural palette reached a new high in the curvaceous *Passage 2*, which alternated closed courses of Australian red gum and other species of hard wood. Here, a curved wooden “dowel” linked a tall, standing component with a second one that met the wall at a slight incline. From the side, the work evoked water flowing downward from a smaller to a larger vessel, even as it played with our sense of gravity and balance.

Both shows revealed Sham as a master stacker, with a nimble mind and agile hand. In Buddhism, flow refers to an expanded state of consciousness, and the Reston installation conveyed this openness to change and transformation. An extended ritual, repeated but never quite the same, the collaboration acquired a spiritual dimension. Even more, the work inspired lasting joy. From mass-produced materials to individual expression, it celebrated the participation in something larger than oneself and the satisfaction of communal creation.

—Sarah Tanguy

BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON
“Material Terrain: A
Sculptural Exploration of
Landscape & Place”
Bellevue Arts Museum

The third floor of the 36,000-square-foot, Steven Holl-designed Bellevue Arts Museum proved a handsome site for “Material Terrain,” a traveling exhibition of works by 11 artists born in the U.S., China, Germany,

and Brazil. Curated by Carla Hanzal for International Arts & Artists, the survey examined large- and medium-scale abstract and representational sculpture made between 1988 and 2004. As such, it had a time-capsule look: no found objects, no video, no electronic parts, no installation art.

The oldest work in the show, Dennis Oppenheim’s *Digestion, Sculpture* (1988) has a legendary, widely published history. Two preserved deer corpses spout 20 acetylene flames from their antlers, but the pyrotechnic effects were only briefly visible during the opening due to strict fire regulations. Ursula von Rydingsvard’s huge permanent outdoor work at the Microsoft corporate headquarters in nearby Redmond was echoed here by two smaller works, *Hej-Duk* (2003) and *P’s and Q’s* (1999). Roughly carved pieces of stacked cedar planks, von Rydingsvard’s sculptures have taken on a signature look. With its 14 graduated steps, *Hej-Duk* seems closer to terrain than material.

Where von Rydingsvard’s art is blocky and volumetric, Michele Brody’s is delicate and ethereal, though still large in scale. The conical *Grass Skirt X (extra) Large* (2002) is illuminated from within and risks resembling a giant lampshade. It created a dialogue with another functional-appearing piece, *Fainting Couch* (2002) by Valeska Soares, a stainless steel daybed with a drawer containing highly fragrant lilies (they were replenished each week). Strongly reminiscent of a psychiatrist’s furnishings, *Fainting Couch* is a locale for sensory-inspired memories, but its material rejects interaction in favor of a strongly ambiguous presence.

Resident curator Stefano Catalani placed only two works outside, Wendy Ross’s *Andraecium III* (1998) and John Ruppert’s *Vessel* (2005). That said, the indoor installation proved how hospitable the eight-year-old building is for three-dimensional art after its \$800,000 makeover in 2005. Holl created an interesting building; it just proved to be

rather terrible for exhibiting art at the beginning. Using new movable walls that do not reach to the 23-foot-high ceilings, Catalani gave most of the artists their own megalocoves. This offered a surprising intimacy of encounter without anything seeming crowded.

A few of the artists, like Ross and Kendall Buster (*Parabiosis III*, 2004) create or supplant “place” by sheer dint of size. Others, like Donald Lipski (*Exquisite Copse, First Loop*, 2000), Ming Fay (*Money Tree*, 2004), Oppenheim, Ruppert (*Moon Gourds*, 1997–98), and Roxy Paine (*Dry Rot*, 2001), are more fixated on the interface between sculpture and nature, how sculpture can comment on or even emulate nature. With Oppenheim as one of the first proponents of Land Art, the connection between nature and culture (in his case, deer hunting) is also proposed as a clearer unifier than “landscape and place,” Hanzal’s curatorial umbrella. (*Sculpture* editor Glenn Harper addresses these issues and others in one of the two catalogue essays.)

Installation view of “Material Terrain,” with works by (left to right) James Surls, Dennis Oppenheim, and Ming Fay, at the Bellevue Arts Museum.



With the flexible architectural envelope at Bellevue, "Material Terrain"'s outdoor sculpture component was not as evident as at other venues, like Laumeier Sculpture Park. However, the white cube setting offered a focus on objecthood, and this was to the sculptures' benefit. Seen indoors, aspects of texture, process, surface, volume, and mass came to the forefront with gratifying results. Near the end of its long journey through American museums and sculpture parks, the survey proved to be more about material than terrain, landscape, or place.

—Matthew Kangas

SEATTLE

Nobuhito Nishigawara Winston Wachter Fine Art

Ceramic sculptor Nobuhito Nishigawara was born in Nagoya, Japan, but has trained in clay at U.S. universities for the last 10 years. In his recent show, he presented a surreal world where tradition and modernity uneasily co-exist. This is a strange world, where there is no distinction among living things. An odd mixture of a human head and a limbless torso sits close to the ground like a caterpillar. A cartoon fantasy animal named "donkey" has a pair of stamped circle eyes, rabbit ears, and a piggish nose. Nishigawara erases the beauty and sumptuous colors often explored by contemporary ceramic artists and replaces them with a dark vision. His larger theme is the encounter of two cultures. Many figures are rendered in a single dark color, and the torsos are often made of a pair of inflated bulges like a peanut shell or gourd, retaining references to the vessel and the surface of a ceramic or iron kettle.

Taminzoku is an odd image that presents the co-existence of two cultures and sexes: a masked Asian woman and white man squat together back to back. The form suggests a fertility god, but one devoid



Nobuhito Nishigawara, *Kamen*, 2007. Clay, epoxy, and paint, 38.5 x 18 x 17 in.

of sexual connotation. The work becomes more interesting when a piece gains greater freedom in expression. *Kamen* (mask), which is supposed to "hide one's identity and reduce one's ability to see the original culture to which he belongs," according to Nishigawara, ironically lets the artist's creative nature take over and demonstrates the opposite.

The keen vision expressed by the simple eyes of the white mask and a small donkey on the head, like a third eye of a Buddha statue, represents the ability to see beyond the surroundings of the physical world. *Star*, in which an enlarged donkey faces a glorified photographic portrait on the opposite wall, shines with a mischievous humor.

Princess is the most complex and ambiguous piece, with many subtle references, including a Renaissance portrait of a woman and a self-depiction of the artist with a donkey on his lap. The image of the donkey has an industrialized aesthetic, borrowed from anime and pop art. The human figure, on the other hand, has a realistic facial depiction on a disproportionately large head. While many references open up the imagination, from Buddha heads to Greek statues, I came away with the impression that Nishigawara had come to an uneasy compromise with his life in America. In this work, I can see an artist challenging himself and along the way struggling with ideas that are not yet fully realized.

—Kazuko Nakane

LEEDS, U.K.

"Against Nature" and Ivor Abrahams

Henry Moore Institute

The sculptor's relationship to nature and the natural was at the heart of two recent exhibitions at the Henry Moore Institute. While "Against Nature: The hybrid forms of modern sculpture" examined the traumas of modernity, "By Leafy Ways: Early works by Ivor Abrahams" dealt with clichés of a quintessentially English subject, the garden. Both exhibitions were timely: in an age of major technological shifts and global instability, our desire to visualize fear creates a new interest in monsters. The recent remake of the 1933 classic *King Kong*, for instance, draws a direct line from our situation today back to the 1930s when the U.S. felt threatened by burgeoning communism.

"Against Nature" identified three moments of trauma: the beginning of Modernism around 1900, the psychologicalization of art in the 1920s, and the experiences of World War II. The earliest works in the show, Thomas Heine's *Angel* and