



2003

Introduction to the *Lily: Loosely Seen: Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*

Curated by Nancy Azara

Woodstock/ Byrdcliffe Guild, Woodstock, NY

Curator's Statement

*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin.
(Matthew, 6:28) Thus, placing themselves within the hands of God, lilies are more finely
arrayed than even Solomon-in all his glory.*

I was delighted when Carla and Catherine invited me to curate this exhibition of outdoor sculpture, "The Lily: Loosely Seen" on the beautiful Byrdcliffe Grounds. In choosing the 20 sculptors in this exhibit, I had wanted to present a wide range of materials and visual concepts around the idea of the lily and the philosophy of Byrdcliffe. Some of the sculpture in this show was made especially for this exhibition, others were just "right" in some way with its "hand made-ness" or its "lily-like" beauty or its abstract arrangement of a garden. Donna Byars, in her work *Among Silence*, refers to the lily and the boat, both seen as life markers, each containing the promise of rebirth. Louise McCagg quotes the Bible about the beauty of the "lilies of the field," as she makes a path of cast aluminum faces, profiles scattered among a path of rocks and leaves or Nancy Steinson's (*The River*) reference to "gilding the lily," adorning something that is already perfect, "to

recreate perfection is an impossibility, but is there not a perfection in each of us that we catch glimpses of occasionally, however fleetingly, that calls to us from the lily?”

Don Porcaro (*Spirit Gate # 5*) refers to the lily as a receptacle of nourishment, a vessel for growth for other life forms and Cristina Biaggi (*Byrdcliffe Nest*) describes the Bowerbird who brings flowers including lilies in his beak to his prospective mate in an attempt to woo her. Jane Schneider (*And Still Growing...*) writes about the sacred lily symbol as a sexual image in “the self-fertilization of the virgin goddesses Juno and the Virgin Mary.” Sarah Draney (*Limed Gardens*) has made a symbolic garden with white ceramic leaves connected to the leaves of the lily and Lela Daw’s “*Where Lilies Grow*” traces the ghost of architectural remains, “hovering in the air under the trees, floating over where it might have been, ready for the lilies.” Jason Lujan’s “*Fragments of New York Indian Nations with Fleur de Lis*” connects with the theme in the name of Kateri Tekakwitha, an Indian woman of the Mohawk tribe, currently in the process of Catholic canonization, the “continuing usurpation of Native American culture,” and the need for unity among the Native communities of New York. Audrey Hemenway (*Fleur De Lis*) states, “In my piece at Byrdcliffe, I am trying to create the illusion of a much deeper field of lilies than can be measured with a ruler.”