



June 1, 2008

Sculpture exhibits brighten WNC gardens

Paul Clark

The N.C. Arboretum is full of soft shapes — trees, wildflowers, winding paths. Through October, it's also full of the harder lines and edges of garden sculpture, one of two such exhibits in Asheville right now. Public sculpture has been getting more attention in Asheville.

The RiverSculpture Festival at French Broad River Park beginning in September will, for the third consecutive year, expose strollers, dog walkers and other park visitors to work by Southeastern sculptors. Pritchard Park, downtown, recently received the Harry McDaniel's commissioned piece "Deco Gecko." Renovations to Pack Square Park, scheduled to open next year, will include sculpture by Asheville artists Hoss Haley and Randy Shull.

'Kaleidoscope'

The juried works in "Kaleidoscope," the arboretum's third outdoor sculpture show since 2000, have been assembled to reflect the changing nature of the natural world there, said co-curator Clara Curtis. "It describes something about the land and the way the landscape changes," said Curtis, the arboretum's director for design. "Just as the kaleidoscope — a favorite childhood toy — offers a changeable scene when looking through the mirrored tube, outdoor sculpture can change the view of a landscape by its presence and our position in relation to the piece.

"As our mountain environment changes climatically, socially and physically, so too must individuals adapt to change," she added. "This exhibit employs sculpture as our inspiration."

The 10 featured artists are from North Carolina and have received national and international recognition. Grace Cathey's work has been displayed at the U.S. Botanical Gardens. Jim Gallucci designed a piece for the 9-11 Sculpture Project using steel from the World Trade Center.

Held every four years and this year featuring 10 artists, the arboretum's exhibit has integrated 13 new and existing sculptures into created garden landscapes, putting public art into public space.

"Kaleidoscope" is one of several opportunities to enjoy art at the arboretum. There is an art walk that tours the arboretum's permanent outdoor and indoor collection, as well as a rotating quilt exhibit presented by the Asheville Quilt Guild. There are also two nature-themed exhibits: "Silent Beauty: A View of the Changing Seasons," featuring the photography of Cynthia Walker; and "Our Precious Land: Visions and Scenes of North Carolina" with paintings by Luke Allsbrook.

'Sculpture in the Garden'

In another show, Grovewood Gallery, the historic artist colony behind Grove Park Inn, is holding its first invitational outdoor sculpture exhibition beginning Saturday.

"Sculpture for the Garden," in an easily walkable garden beside the gallery, will feature the works of 15

nationally recognized artists, with sculptures (all for sale) ranging from small, playful pieces suitable for the home and garden to works for public spaces and corporate settings. You can meet many of the artists on Saturday.

“Groewood Gallery has a beautiful setting, and we have some space to take advantage of our outdoors,” gallery general manager Sherry Masters said. “People enjoy sitting outside and looking at the sculpture we have, so we wanted something new for them to see.”

Having sculpture in the garden is “a way to incorporate for people their taste in art,” Masters said. “It’s an extension of who people are and what they like.”
