

# Arts & LEISURE

MUSKOKAN SECOND SECTION

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2000



**Muskoka Arts & Crafts Inc.**  
where art happens!

**The King, The Fish & I**  
an exhibition of recent work by potter, Johnathan Bullock  
Chapel Gallery - October 18- November 11

**Christmas Show & Sale**  
35 festive artists selling hand made work  
that is perfect for gift giving  
November 17-19  
Bracebridge Centennial Centre - 111 Wellington Street

www.muskokaartsandcrafts.com  
The Chapel Gallery is closed until October 17

## A gallery where nature is part of the art

MARtha ARMSTRONG

What at first appears to be a meandering road through a rural autumn forest reveals itself as a path with many surpris-

ing both randomly eroded and deliberate-aced, trickle down a steep slope. A mound of red cars rises out of the ground. The shapes of

dancing skeletons lie etched in the Precambrian Shield.

The Tree Museum is a gallery without walls, where the natural world and the history of the land are as much a part of the art as the human-made forms themselves. To move these works would be to destroy them or render them meaningless.

Located on 200 acres of forested land beside Ryde Lake in Gravenhurst, the

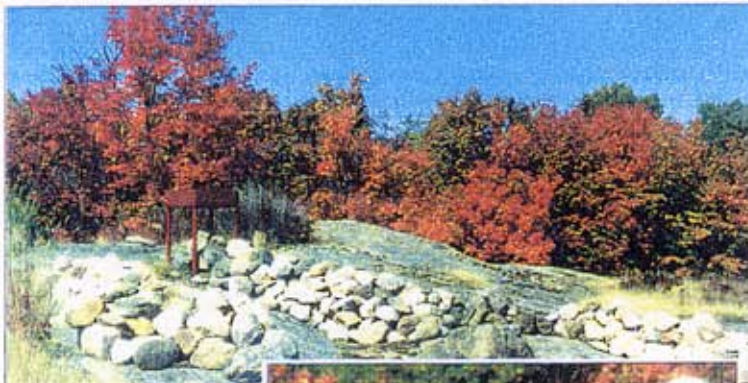
museum grows each year, as do its group of artists, The Tree Museum Collective.

"The whole idea of this place is to create a space that's totally natural, with art that uses the environment around it," says Tree Museum curator E.J. Lightman. "It's a very exciting project. There's nothing of its kind in Canada."

The Tree Museum Collective began exhibiting in 1998, with the works of Anne O'Callaghan, Tim Whiten and Badanna Zack. In 1999, O'Callaghan and Whiten continued to add to the gallery, along with artists Lynn Campbell, Gwen MacGregor and Robert Wiens. This year, Jocelyne Belcourt Salem, Francis LeBouthillier and Dieter Hastenteufel are the new exhibiting artists. Whiten has also added another new work.

Site-specific installation art is the term the collective uses to describe the works, meaning that the work is arranged to take full advantage of a specific space. The shape of a hill, the position of trees and the property's history of settlement may all become part of the work.

Some of the artists have also tried to use materials from the site in their art. In Badanna Zack's *A Mound of Cars*, the artist



**RELIC OF MEMORY 1.** Anne O'Callaghan's piece suggests both randomness, as rocks from an old fence follow a watercourse down a slope, and human influence. The steel box at the top signifies the human tendency to contain the natural world.

collected wrecks of cars lying around the property and piled them on top of each other. A trip to a junkyard yielded a few more wrecks to add to the work. Dirt and plants were piled over and around to reveal a cross section of crushed cars in the process of being reclaimed by nature.

One of its meanings is about "how we buy objects and discard them when they're no longer useful to us," says Zack, a Toronto-based artist who has exhibited throughout Canada, Europe and the United States.

For *Log II*, Picton artist Robert Wiens collected



**ARTIST TOUR.** Anne O'Callaghan leads a group of visitors on a tour of The Tree Museum.

thousands of twigs from the forest near the shores of Ryde Lake and wove them together to resemble a large, fallen tree. From a distance, the log appears as a chunk of the

natural world when, in fact, nature's raw material is transformed into the order of culture.

As with Zack's work, *Log II* transforms over

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**RELIC OF MEMORY 2.** Jocelyne Belcourt Salem's installation consists of a series of metal plates attached to trees throughout a portion of the forest. Each plate is inscribed with words about the site's flora, fauna or human history. The plates glimmer when the sun catches them just right.

Photos by Martha Armstrong