



Sculptors to Watch

CHRISTINE TEMIN

JUNE AHRENS CONNECTICUT

The little house is covered in shards of mirrors that reflect its surroundings. Depending on the weather and the time of day, the house varies from an exercise in camouflage to an almost magnetic beacon.

This is Connecticut artist June Ahrens's *Our Shrinking World*, which debuted at Chesterwood, in Stockbridge, last year and is now on loan to the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield, where it sits outside.

Ahrens works with mirrors and glass, among other materials. Mirrors, she believes, throw viewers back on themselves, making them think not only about their own existence, but also about other people who may appear in the reflections, and the landscape that appears around them. It's her way of questioning the world as a whole.

Her installations are often collaborative in one way or another, and occasionally involve a

surprising degree of intimacy. For *The Pillow Project*, she succeeded in enlisting various friends to let her tape that twilight time between wake and sleep. They were dressed in their pajamas. One volunteer slept with her cat; one couple slept curled up like spoons. The resulting videos, five of them running simultaneously, are shown sandwiched between towers of used pillows.

Her newest installation will be huge, a wall piece twenty-five-foot long and nine-foot high. It's made of used Perrier bottles, which have a greenish tinge. Color is an unusual presence in her work, but one that increasingly interest her. Her process is laborious. She soaks the labels off the bottles, makes sure they're dry, and then breaks the bottles to bits.



June Ahrens, *Today's Tomorrow* (detail), 2007, fiberglass, filters, iron stakes, felt, 62".

To check on where you can see Ahrens's work, go to www.juneahrens.com.

ANDY MOERLEIN NEW HAMPSHIRE

Feathers, rocks, seeds, plaster, cement, and fiberglass. These are among the materials used by New Hampshire artist Andy Moerlein, a self-confessed materials junkie. He's even created snow sculptures that go far beyond the usual three-lumped guy with a carrot for a nose. Moerlein's snow piece *The Celestial Elephant*, made in collaboration with Donna Dodson, is a chiseled, pure beast, a nod to the legend that the mother of Buddha dreamed of a white elephant on the eve of giving birth.

The way that nature affects shapes, for instance, what wind does to a tree, is fascinating for Moerlein to explore. One of his pieces, *A Boat for an Impossible Journey*, at Gallery Ehva in Provincetown this summer, is made of twigs and branches. The effect is of a small craft trying to fly upward, like the funerary boats of the Vikings or the ancient Egyptians.

A version of Moerlein's *Listening for Lightning* appears in the current temporary

public art installation at the Constellation Center in Cambridge. It's an exaggerated ensemble of vertical branches that look like they've been frizzled by the air around them.

Moerlein will also participate in this year's fifteenth-anniversary celebration of "Waterfire," in Providence, Rhode Island.

To find out more, check out andymoerlein.blogspot.



Andy Moerlein, *Stilled* (detail), 2009, wood, ceramic birds, fiberglass.