



Meg Blo

'Inside/Out' at City Gallery is primal, lively and appealing

By Judy Birke

ART REVIEW

NEW HAVEN — Running counter to the current vogue for sculpture characterized by an overall aura of cool irony and slick high-tech presentation, City Gallery is currently host to an intriguing sculptural installation, "Inside/Out," that is tactile, organic, messy and linked in form and content to the natural world.

One of the most striking aspects of this collaborative installation by Meg Bloom, Anne Culver and Connie Pfeiffer, is its physical presence. Primal and lively, the presentation stirs up the imagination and draws the viewer in. Contrasting but not contradictory, the differences in form, materials and style among the three artists reveal a kinship that is at once individually defined and harmoniously interactive.

Each artist explores a world that focuses on aspects of the natural process. Each appears to record the passage of time. Each is keenly interested in process and discovery.

Bloom's suspended stalagmite-like forms register with a primitive energy that suggests references to a cave-like terrain. Constructed of pigment-dyed fabric that has been worked in a variety of processes, the dense network of hanging forms, both diaphanous and opaque, crafted in a luminous tonal range of ochres, oranges, greens and burgundies, with irregular edges and variously textured surfaces and openings, conveys a tangible sense of nature's fluctuations.

The accumulated veils of varied lengths and passages seem to take on a life of their own, registering subtle shifts of atmosphere and mood that take the viewer back and forth to a place that is at once ephemeral, in that it appears to still be in the process of taking form, and eternal, suggesting a landscape that has

- **Title:** "Inside/Out: An Installation"
- **Where:** City Gallery, 994 State St., New Haven
- **When:** Through June 25; 1-4 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, or by appointment
- **Admission:** Free
- **Info:** (203) 782-2489

been permanently frozen in tin and place.

Culver's body of work enhances the sensation of passed time and the natural process, also suggesting activity that has been altered by age. Odd biomorphic shapes made of clay, lie scatter on the floor like found objects. These, however, appear, linked to the human body, the unsettling fleshy pinks and surreal rounded forms perhaps addressing issues of mortality and decay.

Pfeiffer's suspended forms, elements of which are at times adhered to a wall or the floor, possess a timeless balance between past and present. Mac of netting, wire, twigs and glass these delicate, lyrical forms appear like contemporary artifacts that speak to the past. Spiritual in narrative, they attain a talismanic status, a modern equivalent of primitive fetishes stirring up rituals and relics of past cultures, while their present day shadows play across the gallery walls, tinged with a sense of their own mysteries.

Seen as a whole, the installation resonates with both the eye and the mind, the viewer pondering not only the look but the aura it evokes. One is left with an appealing sense of dialogue panorama of call and response as it were, between the internal and the external, the tangible and the intangible, the concealed and the discovered.

Judy Birke of New Haven is a freelance writer and art consultant.