

# Fresh visions abound in LAND/ART exhibits

By **WESLEY PULKKA**  
For the Journal

Three exhibits in two downtown galleries showcase the heightened state of contemporary land-based art and launch the six-month LAND/ART project in Albuquerque.

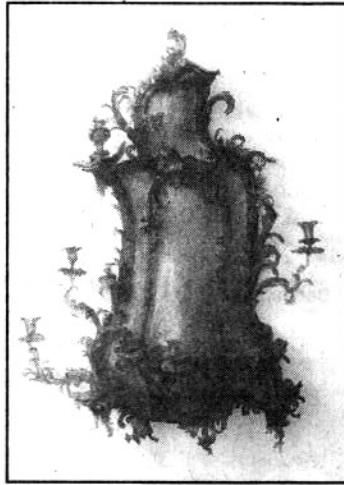
"Air Cube + A Global Perspective," with six artists, and "Earthworks," new paintings by Matthew McConville, at the Richard Levy Gallery, and "Here and There: Seeing New Ground" at 516 ARTS embrace the cross-cultural history of landscape painting, environmentalism and art in general. The shows also offer a fresh international angle of vision.

Landscape painter Paul Cezanne discovered along with the ancient Greeks the inherent geometry within natural forms. The study of Cezanne's explorations led Picasso and Braque to discover/invent/appropriate cubism.

A mere 50 or so years later David Smith, Donald Judd, Larry Bell and many others revisited the humble cube as an art form.

Thus enters Ben Delevoye's "Air Cube 2009" that creates a context for a defined cubic unit of space measuring 20 by 20 by 20 inches. The piece consists of a pure white, 81-inch-tall square column with a 20-inch gap that is lit from within.

In a stroke Delevoye has aligned himself with Malevich's 1919 supremacism painting titled "White on



**"Mutton Dressed as Lamb" by Timothy Horn is inspired by natural plant forms while making new use of rubber molding compounds.**

## REVIEW

White," and since Delevoye did not build the piece on display he places himself in the Duchamp camp of ready-made art, albeit a bit of a stretch.

Katie Holten offers "Old News (Ghost Forrest)" and "29 Globes" made of newspaper-based papier mâché to remind us that we grind up millions of perfectly good trees to make paper pulp for the printed word. Of course recycling mitigates a lot of the impact, but we may want to look at alternative sources for paper.

Part of the charm of Holten's work is its reminiscence of the stage sets for school plays and classroom geography projects made by school children.



**"Camellia Countessa" by Nicole Dextras, though made with plants and flowers, has the look of an 18th-century European court painting.**

There's a bunch of cool stuff in this show, including Christine Weir's graphite renderings of aerial views of river systems and Nicole Dextras' clothes made from real flowers and plants. Her stunningly baroque "Camellia Countessa" has the look of an 18th-century European court painting.

The gallery's Project Room houses Matthew McConville's "Earthworks," a nine-painting series inspired by the early American Hudson River School. McConville is an excellent draftsman and colorist who combines history, contemporary environmental concerns with a sense of political irony.

His view of the Statue of Liberty in the mouth of the Hudson, titled "Liberty Without Fraternity or Equality," speaks to the distance traveled by our democracy and the distance we have yet to go.

Reclamation is the theme of McConville's "Robert

## If you go

**WHAT:** Two inaugural LAND/ART shows, "Air Cube + A Global Perspective" with Lisa K. Blatt, Ben Delevoye, Nicole Dextras, Diagram, Katie Holten and Christine Weir, and "Earthworks" by Matthew McConville

**WHEN:** Through Aug. 28. Hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays and Monday by appointment. Call 766-9888

**WHERE:** Richard Levy Gallery, 514 Central SW

**HOW MUCH:** Free

**WHAT:** An inaugural LAND/ART show "Here and There: Seeing New Ground" with Norman Akers, Laurie Anderson, Leticia Bajuyo, Alfred Clah, Cheryl Dietz, Karl Hofmann, Katie Holten, Timothy Horn, David Nakabayashi, Rachael Nez, Pipo Nguyen-duy, Shelly Niro, Lordy Rodriguez, Peter Seward, Leah Siegel and John Wenger

**WHEN:** Through July 11. Hours are noon-5 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Call 242-1445

**WHERE:** 516 ARTS, 516 Central SW

**HOW MUCH:** Free

Smithson's Floating Island," depicted as a tree-covered barge. The image reminds us of the heroic efforts to remove years of polluted sludge from the Hudson River inspired in large part by the efforts of

folk singer Pete Seeger.

Overall both of these shows offer world-class glimpses of what artists are doing and how they think about our fragile planet.

But while you're in the neighborhood, check out 516 ARTS. Director Suzanne Sbarge and many others have launched the LAND/ART Project with the ambitious 16-artist "Here and There: Seeing New Ground" exhibition.

The show includes a film by genius Laurie Anderson titled "Hidden Inside Mountains" that probes the artificial nature of reality, and a tornado made from Hula Hoops by Leticia Bajuyo. In "137.5 Degrees," Katie Holten turned a series of crocheted works done while riding the New York subway into a giant interwoven wall mural. The piece beautifully compresses time and space combined with craftsmanship.

Timothy Horn creates wildly baroque sculpture of candelabras cast in transparent rubber. His "Silk Purse (Sows Ear)" and "Mutton Dressed as Lamb" are two of my favorite pieces in the show.

Peter Seward shows off his skills as an illustrator with his "Stealth Towers," a revisitation of the Hudson River School. This show is way too good to miss and has already launched Albuquerque as a national arts destination through recognition in major arts publications.