

# Sculpture

March 1999 Vol. 18 No. 2

ISSN 0167-6075

## Bridgehampton, NY

### Meryl Taradash

The Elaine Benson Gallery

As part of a benefit exhibition for The Nature Conservancy at The Elaine Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton, which featured the work of 13 artists that reflected the inspiration of the landscape, Meryl Taradash's installation "Wind Driven Sculptures" took itself out of this narrow category and expanded the notion of public art in balance with nature. While concerned with the engineering aspects of kinetic structures,

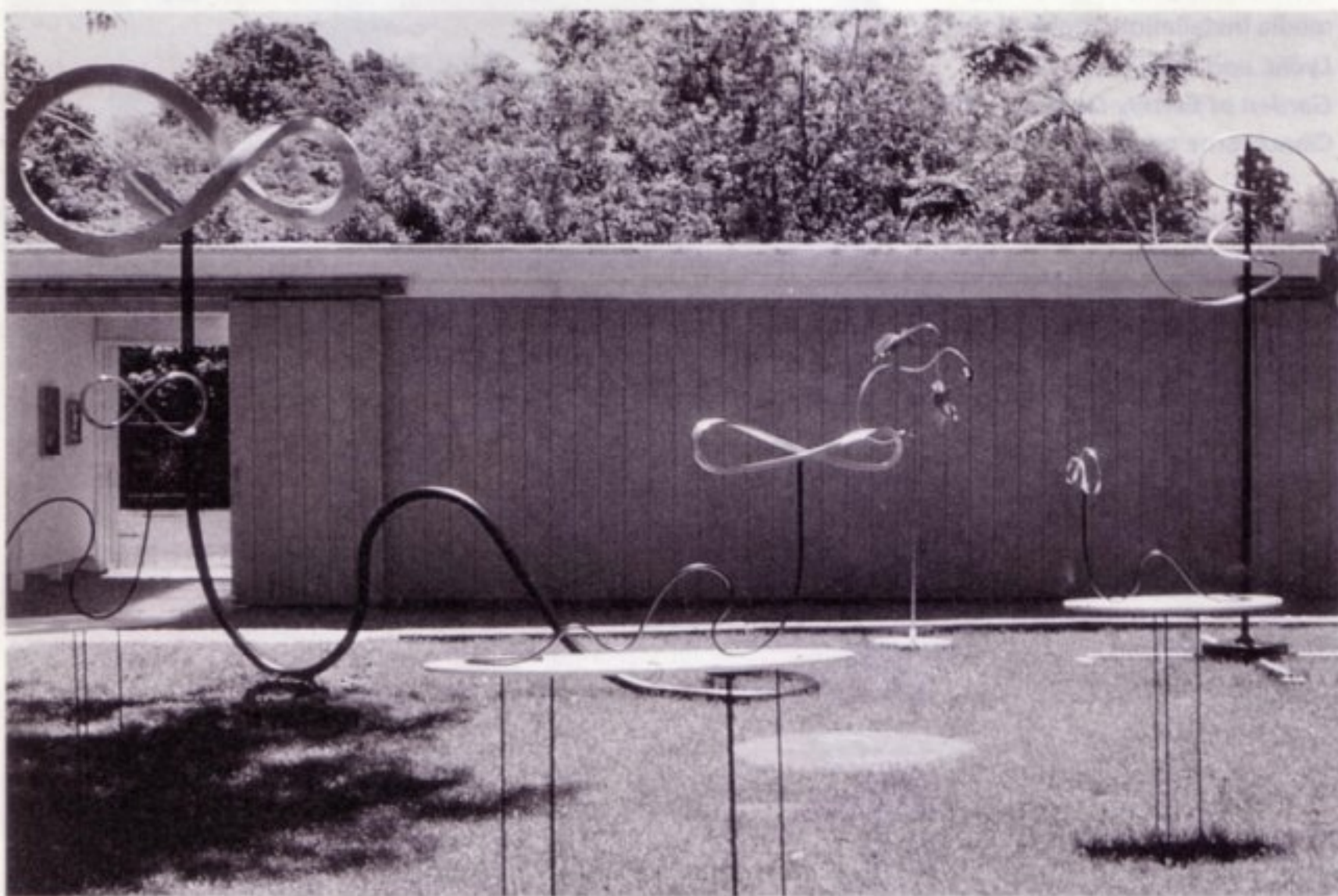
with the larger works were several smaller studies for *Getting There*. These pieces stood between four and six feet tall, and further explored the contour of the line, an aspect of sculptural design Taradash seems—to use a pun—drawn to.

Her installation confronted elements of scale, decorative aesthetic, inner and outer space, and multiple perspectives. Taradash uses wind and reflected light to marry organic life and modernity, and her playful shapes are reminiscent of Calder's mobiles or the

appearance of weightlessness, such as perspex, Taradash creates the illusion of delicacy through design and engineering techniques and the use of metals like aluminum. The light feeling of the pieces was created by the use of line and balance. The long winding stems or "bodies" of each piece have a curvaceous, sensual quality that suggests a figurative intention.

Taradash favors a public art that is unimposing, but also unintimidated by the landscape, as seen in previous exhibitions at the James A. Michener Art Museum in Pennsylvania, and the Art Museum of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Perhaps the most successful of these abstract, but somehow figurative, works is *The Caged Bird Dances*, an intricate, luminescent sculpture that brings to mind a flame, or a shedding flower. Taradash's exploration of movement and balance also expresses human emotion and natural harmony. —Erica-Lynn Gambino



Taradash's work also exhibited strong interplay with nature and the expression of subconscious emotion through the use of line.

Placed in a grassy courtyard surrounded by the former barn structures that make up the interior gallery spaces at the Benson gallery, Taradash's "Wind Driven Sculptures" were kinetic, linear works in brushed and painted aluminum, and ranged in size from small to monumental, with some as tall as 12 feet, and as long as 18 feet. In *Getting There*, a thin, curvaceous, snake-like stem held a figure-eight-shaped head that pivoted in the wind. Interspersed

### Meryl Taradash, view of "Wind Driven Sculptures" installation, 1998.

large-scale works of contemporary sculptor Peter Marbury. There is, in addition, evidence of the Constructivist desire to reduce the form to its abstract, geometric essentials.

The "Wind Driven Sculptures" also reflect the work of Naum Gabo, with their curves and spokes interacting to create a gentle rhythm, and solid elements delicately balanced by empty spaces. But, while Gabo searched for materials that would give the