

The true subject of Wingren's sculpture is a clarity of form that resists being named or labeled. For him, seeing is a kind of deliberate forgetting in which one drops references in the act of pure awareness. The viewer is offered a glimpse of materials refined into essence—a language of rock, wood, motion, and stillness. What Noguchi said of his work serves as an equally apt description of Wingren's sculpture: "These sculptures abet an infinitude of silence."

—Elizabeth Marglin

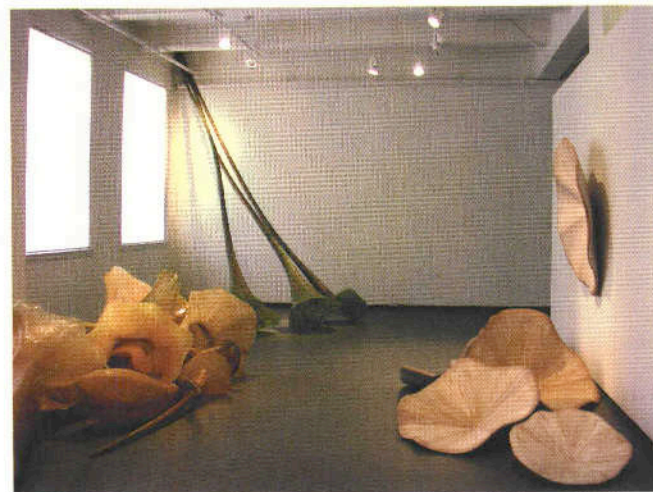
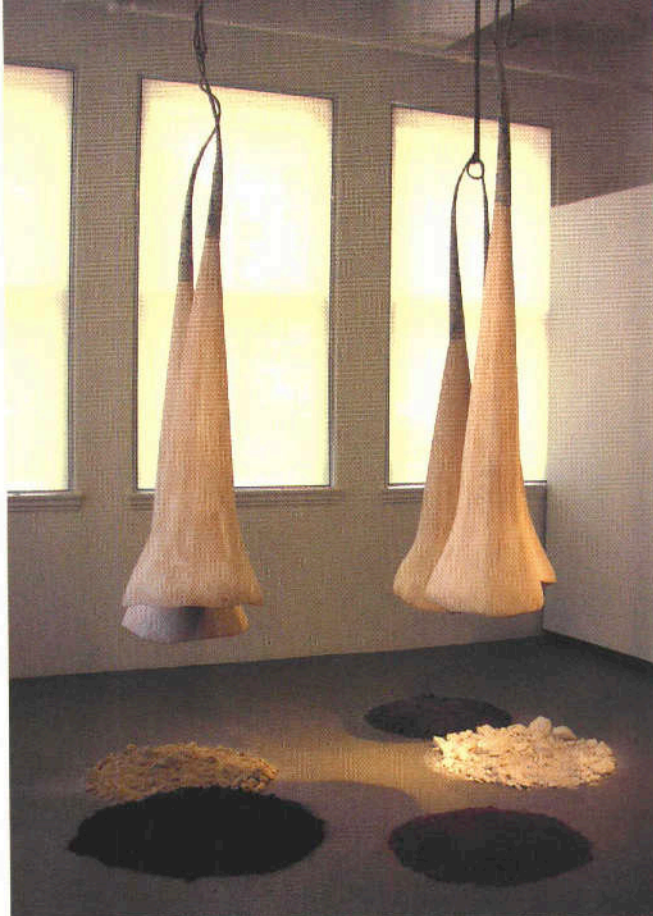
#### Jacksonville, FL

#### Michael Murrell

Jacksonville Museum of Modern Art

Five works by Georgia-based artist Michael Murrell were included in the loosely curated exhibition "Activating Space: Sculpture as Environment." The most arresting, *Terre*, is a cluster of eight-foot-tall inverted datura blossoms suspended from the ceiling. Constructed of spruce, the work's wood grain is heightened by an applied whitewash, evocative of a leaf-type pattern. The trumpet blossoms, which taper from three-foot opening to thumb-sized tendril, evaporate into a small winding forged steel connector. The patinated white connector creates a gracefully woven transition from the wood to the thickly knotted sailing ropes that suspend the work. The weightless sculpture hovers over five mounds of soil that appear to have slowly trickled down from the blossom forms above. The soil piles, similar in width to the flowers, introduce natural color into the exhibition—color that results from the distinctly different geographic origins of the soil: brown dirt, red dirt, black dirt, chalk (limestone calcite), and sand.

*Five Cones*, a similar work with a different effect, is a cluster of datura blossoms formed with epoxy resin. Suspended from the ceiling with monofilament, *Five Cones* hovers slightly above eye



level. The cluster of five inverted flowers tapers to an abrupt end. Unlike *Terre*, there is no interaction between floor and ceiling: *Five Cones* is a suspended gathering of organic forms with a trickle of applied color on the flesh-toned resin.

The organic shapes of datura, lotus, and other flowers permit Murrell to manipulate materials to great effect. Known for its dangerous hallucinogenic properties, the datura is a night-flowering roadside plant used in Native

American ceremonies and by shamans. This information, while not overtly present in the work, helps to extend Murrell's metaphorical exploration. The flowers function as metaphors, the datura in particular alluding to transformative powers, and the piles of soils reference the human relationship with locale and natural environment. *Terre* creates a dance of intertwined figures through its five inverted blossoms, two paired sets and one single blossom. The three-dimensional

Top: Michael Murrell, *Terre*, 2000. Spruce, forged steel, and soils, installation view. Bottom: Michael Murrell, installation view, with (left) *Lotus*, 1989.

movements as you walk around the paired blossoms, as well as the collection of soil that reflects a variety of geographies, are mesmerizing, although here they were hampered by a tight installation. Working within the tradition of organic abstraction, Murrell's sculpture evokes Martin Puryear's exquisite craft as well as Georgia O'Keeffe's revision of the natural world.

Murrell walks some fine lines in this exhibition, and some steps are more successful than others. His use of large-scale Seussian shapes implies a playful environment, although this does not seem his intent. The fragile and flesh-like quality of epoxy resin should lend itself to his work, but the surfaces in *Five Cones* lack the lavish care and craft evident in the wood sculpture. Spruce works such as *Lotus* (1989) clearly exhibit Murrell's talent and his struggle to convey meaning through organic abstraction. However, when Murrell brings together a work like *Terre*, the material, exquisite craft, and poetic resonance create a powerful statement about the human condition and our environment.

—Julia Morrisroe

#### Chicago

#### Barry Tinsley

Thomas McCormick Gallery  
When he makes slide presentations, Barry Tinsley often shows his first big painted construction made from plywood and Masonite. "All I have done was in that piece," he says. "The thread is there. Parts expand and contract." Tinsley's recent solo exhibition embodied his lifelong themes and strategies. He assembles and welds flat steel shapes into portal-like forms. Elements of his sculptures may be off-kilter to create visual interest and ten-

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