



**Art:** *Ghost House*

**Site:** Exterior Landscape

**Place:** The Glass House

**Location:** New Canaan, CT

**Artist:** Philip Johnson



[www.arcspace.com](http://www.arcspace.com), michael moran

Probably a fun exercise for the architect, but one of his most powerful statements, it sits modestly on this otherwise grand estate: simple, transparent, unlikely, in a juxtaposition of the natural and the manmade, and, yet, a work in the process of being reclaimed by nature. It is often the small gesture that packs a wallop. An outline of steel in a cluster of trees – trees the color of steel – it is there and not there, and aptly named Ghost House. The structure's design pays homage to other architects, but it mostly pays homage to houseness and architecture itself. And it goes beyond that, as it is more of a sculpture than a building, but with reference to shelter, as its skeletal form is sheltered by the surrounding woods, which once provided timber for building other shelters. In that sense, it is a memorial. The resonances are there, also the contrast of the history, as it sits upon its aged foundation, with its modernism, shown in its choice of material: chain link. It is really a house divided, with a gap down its middle allowing for a view through and beyond, as the surrounding trees similarly provide. Seemingly a vestige of a greenhouse, glass long since gone, there is a sadness about its feeling of abandonment and fading glory. The strength of the structure is a shared one with its setting, an inextricable connection of the two, and the implications of their dynamic dialogue and mutual benefit.

**Impact:**

- Context/contrast
  - Iconic
- Primal/spiritual
  - Referential
  - Sculptural

**Art-to-Site Rating:** High

**View Date:** July 2008



*Sculpturehead*

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