



Art: *Giant Trowel II*

Site: Broad lawn

Place: Donald M. Kendall Sculpture Park,
PepsiCo

Location: Purchase, NY

Artist: Claes Oldenburg & Coosje Van
Bruggen

There is something about these artists' out-of-scale works that always seems completely out-of-place and yet perfectly at home. In this instance, a trowel sticking into the garden appears just as it should. The trowel is gigantic but so is the garden, a huge corporate campus, and the trees beyond start to appear as dwarf shrubs in relation to the artwork, turning it all topsy-turvy – a single object affecting the setting, and vice versa. Therein exists a balance of scale, and the resulting effect is a distortion of reality.

The artists love to mess with your mind, forcing everything of nonimportance into monumental stature with a surreality of "Through the Looking Glass" reflections on art and life. There is also the sense that this is a giant sundial as it shadows its way around the lawn at various times of day, an ancient time-telling tool in the shape of a timeless but timed-to-the-seasons tool. Not very different, either, from a giant cake server, serving up a slice of the earth to each of us, along with the cautionary ramifications of that expectation. After all, the trowel is stabbing the earth, its most lethal point hidden below ground level. The concepts are simple, the forms are exaggerated but simple, and yet, the layers and complexities of references and meanings and shared experiences are as inscribed in such works as any mirror of culture can be. This giant trowel, like most of the artists' oeuvre, is so purposefully placed, so companionable with its setting, that it enhances the experience of place just as the place informs and contributes to the combined effect. Such a masterful pairing is both literal and spiritual, and so very necessary.



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Impact:

- Space-defining
- Scale
- Primal/spiritual
- Literal but appropriate
- Integrated in setting

Art-to-Site Rating: High

View Date: July 2007



Sculpturehead

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