



**Art:** *Opus 40*

**Site:** Bluestone quarry

**Place:** High Woods, Eastern  
Catskills

**Location:** Saugerties, NY

**Artist:** Harvey Fite



opus40.org Susan Manocha

Starting out with the premise that this is a site-specific work – in fact, so much so that only the native materials on-site were used in its construction – it has a kind of inevitability, a “mere” shuffling and repositioning of the natural local stone that previously had been mined and removed. And, considering the challenge, it is a marvel, besides being a lifetime of work – nearly forty years of effort.

The other special thing is that you have to experience and explore the site, rather than just view it: walk it, discover it, get lost in it. The complexity, the variation, the references to ancient monumental works, the consistency of and commitment to a vision, the obsessiveness of the artist – all come together in this practically sacred place. It is an incredible spot that is in and of the landforms that surround it, other possibly bluestone-filled mountains: this one changed, the others not. The grouping creates a stage set of theater in the round, man’s work performing for the watchful untouched peaks. Its scale is unimaginable, and, yet, the encircling mountains put its comparative size into perspective. What an inspiration the sight of them every day must have been.

Starting with constructing outdoor pedestals for his stone sculptures, then linking them with a series of ramps and stairways, and eventually abandoning the functional for the meaningful singular vision as an all-or-nothing exercise of complete focus – this man Fite was as changed by the mountain as it was by his hand. Visiting and investigating his work and his mind is a journey, maybe even a pilgrimage; a walking of a 3-dimensional labyrinth like you have never known.

**Impact:**

- Context/contrast
  - Scale
- Experiential
- Integration in setting
  - Form
- Primal/spiritual

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

**View Date:** September 2007

