



Art: *Plantoir*

Site: Naturalistic hillock

Place: Frederik Meijer Sculpture Park

Location: Grand Rapids, MI

Artist: Claes Oldenburg & Coosje Van Bruggen



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Once again, this artist team has managed to find perfect placement for their work. This is another Sculpturehead mention of their garden tools (see “Giant Trowel II”); each is slightly different and so, too, is each site. In this pairing, color plays a role: the object is all painted up, cartoonish, clownlike – perhaps a “dig” at how lightly we approach the alteration of the landscape. Or maybe it is saying something about painting-up the dead for burial (could be a stretch, but it comes to mind). The vibrant color is an interesting contrast between the unnatural implement and the natural environment. It

is totemic, perched on a hillside like an Easter Island statue, surveying the site, and its proportions are almost figurative – like the pope, arms raised, in full regalia. As with so many works by this artist pair, there are very literal connections going on with this tool in the garden, but there are so many other larger, more abstract notions of scale and the commonplace as iconic form. The gesture is grand, the object is simple, but the possibilities for thought-provocation are open-ended. Of the many installations of theirs I have seen, I find more to think about in terms of the relationship of these artists’ work to sites in nature than when they are placed in city plazas.

Impact:

- Context/contrast
- Scale
- Conceptual
- Humorous
- Color
- Minimal

Art-to-Site Rating: High

View Date: June 2010



Sculpturehead

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