



Art: *Red Army*

Site: Exterior open meadow

Place: Kentuck Knob

Location: Chalk Hill, PA

Artist: Ray Smith



flickr.com, willstotter

Appearing as if the field is ablaze, these red silhouette figures are positioned like geometrically planted rows of corn. Gesticulating like an army of air puppets, only shorter and flatter, their power is in their numbers. It is hard to discern whether they are surrendering or performing a perfectly in-synch line dance at the Cotton Club. In this case, it is not the volume or scale that holds your attention – it is the mass production of multiples. You can walk among them, as in a forest of cartoon saguaros, but it is the mob mentality that wipes the smile off your face. It is fitting, given the faded glory of Soviet might, that the paint is peeling from their surfaces, and that they are almost entirely surface. Looking at them on approach is pretty awe-inspiring, but standing among them gives a bit of the feel of the frightening power of political rallies, faceless crowds whose identities are subsumed in unified thinking and acting. Although this piece was not created for this site, it works well here. In its open, flat, farmlike field, it looks like a synthetic crop – in other words, perfectly natural. Politics aside, its relationship to the sunlight is the best part: the light moving across the figures reacts on the red paint, causing a reaction of color changes, turning some figures orange, others dark red, some even brown – a new world order. And the shadows cast on the cut-outs and on the ground make for an ever-changing effect that enlivens the whole as the two interact. This, aside from how the red/green play on your retina.

Impact:

- Minimal yet multiple
 - Color
 - Interactive
 - Referential
- Positive/negative space defined
 - Integrated in setting

Art-to-Site Rating: High

View Date: August 2007



Sculpturehead

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