



**Art:** *Valley Orbs*

**Site:** Rolling farmland

**Place:** The Fields Sculpture Park

**Location:** Ghent, NY

**Artist:** John Ruppert



art.umd.edu

Context is so key here to the success of this work – not that the orbs can't stand alone, but they are so integral to their setting at this location, it is hard to imagine them elsewhere. Built of a metal mesh, a smaller chain link of either aluminum or steel and with a stem, an armature pole "inflating" and supporting them, these oversized shapes (14' x 12') are scattered about the landscape in herd array. Because they are in a former grazing field, there is the sense that they are native to this environment despite the manmade industrial materials. Their shapes aren't quite industrial, more organic and amorphous, yet see-through, and the sunlight makes interesting shadows through them – somewhat like anemones or translucent jellyfish, buoyant in their milieu. On the other hand, they are familiarly formed as spools of string or yarn, with the crisscrossing lines of the metal having the same texture as the spun material, in a strange juxtaposition of scale and placement, creating a tension between the objects and their site. But the connect, as opposed to the disconnect, is that they are some post-industrial hay stacks or tumbleweeds. Their insubstantiality is more akin to the latter, but their necessary pairing suggests hay mounds. They are so appropriately placed among the rolling terrain that surely a tractor created them, just as is evidenced with real grass on other rolling farmland nearby. These bucolic, living things are the stuff of man coexisting with nature as an ensemble.

**Impact:**

- Context/contrast
  - Scale
- Integrated in setting
  - Texture
  - Color
  - Minimal

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

**View Date:** September 2007



*Sculpturehead*

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