

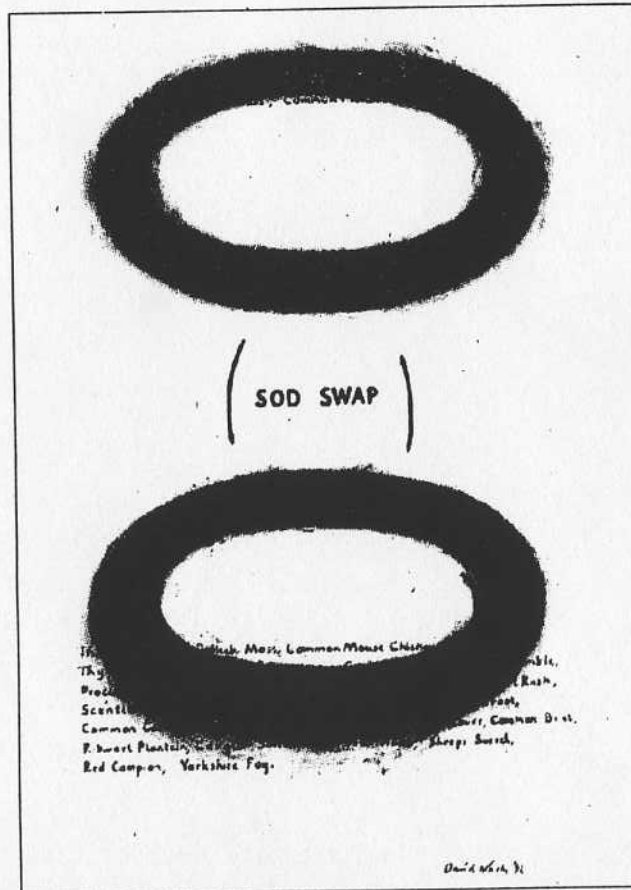
# ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

SECTION  
**G**  
SUNDAY  
NOVEMBER 5, 1995

## THE CITY, THE LAND, AND ART

EXHIBIT EXPLORES LINK  
(OR LACK THEREOF,  
IN CHRISTO'S CASE)

BETWEEN CULTURE AND NATURE



Stories by OWEN McNALLY  
*Courant Staff Writer*

**C**ornelia Parker, an English sculptor with a trigger-quick mind for high-caliber metaphors, has blasted lucky charms, jewelry, buttons and a salvo of other benign objects through the barrel of a Colt firearm to create artworks for "The Edge of Town," a major exhibition at the University of Hartford.

Parker, a rising young star on the London art scene, is a romantic iconoclast who has blown up and reconstructed a garden shed, steam-rolled silver pieces, squashed athletic trophies and flattened coins under trains. All of this violence from the soft-spoken, humorous artist has created works that explore polar opposites inherent in all things, the yin vs. yang, the benign vs. the malign, the

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# Joseloff show explores action of man, interaction with world

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superego vs. the id, the constructive vs. the destructive.

After the garden shed was blown to bits, Parker reconstructed its shards into an eerily beautiful shelter that is now part of the permanent collection of London's prestigious Tate Gallery. All Parker had to do to detonate the explosives was push a button: they had been wired by British military demolition experts.

"My objects experience a sort of cartoon death and, much like 'Road Runner,' always seem to pop right back to life, reconstituting themselves," Parker says.

In her most recent deconstructionist/reconstructionist work, for the São Paulo Biennial in Brazil, she shattered a coffin into splinters. Then she took the mutilated remains to a match factory and had them transformed into matches, creating a striking metaphor of life and death, destruction and rebirth, flame and fleeting moments.

"Every bit of that coffin had a life and death all its own," she says.

Parker is one of 20 artists from the United States, Great Britain and Canada represented in "The Edge of Town," which opens Thursday and runs through Jan. 15 at the Hartford Art School's Joseloff Gal-

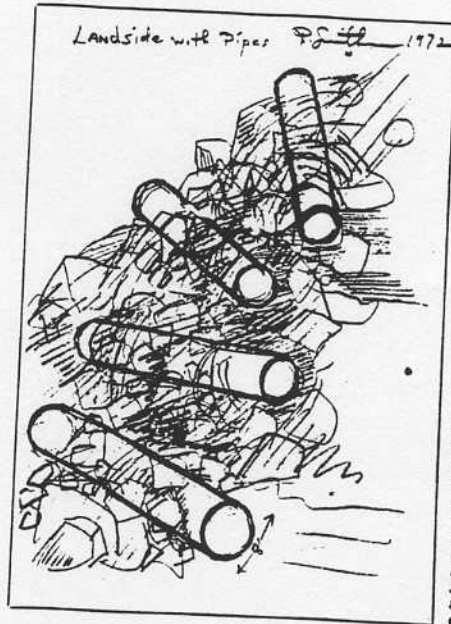
lery at the University of Hartford. The show features site installations, photography, drawings, sculptures and videos.

Using the show's title as a springboard, artists touch on such themes as the connection between art, the town, the city and the rural area in between; the use of land and natural objects as art materials; the role of public art; concerns for the environment and the state of society; celebrations of nature; and reflections on the bond between nature, culture and history.

Parker says her piece, done with the assistance of Colt's Manufacturing Co., relates to the show's theme through the historic role the Colt .45 played in the development of the American West.

"When I knew I was coming to Hartford, I had to do something with Colt and the gun. I did research and even fired a gun for the first time in my life, a .45 magnum. I shot 12 bullets and was totally terrified and almost wrenched my arm off," she says.

Exhibition organizer Zina Davis, director of the Joseloff, and co-curator Bob Chaplin, an English artist who now lives in Connecticut, have packed the gallery with works by such artists as Christo; Hamish Fulton and Richard Long, whose landscape images are inspired by their



■ "Landside With Pipes" is a 1972 working drawing of an unrealized project by the late Robert Smithson. It is part of "The Edge of Town" exhibit Thursday through Jan. 15 at the Hartford Art School's Joseloff Gallery at the University of Hartford.

walks in the countryside: Nicholas Sinclair, chronicler of decaying and transformed man-made areas; the late Robert Smithson, pioneering earth sculptor; and Stephen Willats, who studied a no-man's-land in West London, a low-income housing project where youths were addicted to glue-sniffing.

Just outside the gallery, British sculptor Chris Drury, by trimming, bending and weaving pliable branches, has constructed a giant shelter you can walk into. Drury is also noted for baskets made with natural materials. His shelters, which exude a primitive back-to-nature ambience, are much like giant upended baskets, vessels ready to be launched on a psychological journey to the past.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles, whose work has glorified New York's garbage collectors and celebrated the ecological and symbolic import of the Big Apple's refuse dumps, is represented by a ceremonial arch made from municipal workers' gloves, including 40 pairs from Hartford. Karen McCoy has set up ear trumpets tethered to boulders

so you can tune in to the sound of the currents of the Park River running through the U of H campus.

Meg Webster, a New York artist, has created a community garden with the participation of youngsters from Hartford's Hooker School. And for the gallery's indoor extravaganza, Webster has made a verdant, sensuous bed of moss that viewers will be sorely tempted to lie on, or at least touch.

"It's about man's connection to nature, to love, safety and tenderness," she says. "A symbol of mating. Wishing to be lain upon, it evokes desire."

"The Edge of Town" runs from Thursday through Jan. 15 at the Hartford Art School's Joseloff Gallery, at the University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford. There will be an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday at the gallery. Gallery hours: Tuesday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Information: 768-4090.

## Artists to present lectures, forum

Three free lectures and a symposium will be held in connection with "The Edge of Town," the second annual International Distinguished Artists Symposium and Exhibition planned by the Hartford Art School and the Joseloff Gallery at the University of Hartford, 200 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford.

### Lectures

• Monday, 2 p.m. — Christo and Jeanne-Claude present a slide lecture in the Lincoln Theatre on their experience in wrapping the Reichstag.

• Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. — British artist Hamish Fulton speaks in the Wilde Auditorium.

• Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. — Irving Sandler, historian, author and critic, speaks in the Wilde Auditorium.

### Symposium

Stephen Bann, a professor of modern cultural studies at the University of Kent in England, moderates a symposium on the themes of the exhibition Thursday at 11:30 a.m. in the Lincoln Theatre. Panelists will include Bob Chaplin, John Weber, Roger Palmer, Cornelia Parker, Chris Drury, Alan Sonfist, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Meg Webster and Hamish Fulton.

— OWEN McNALLY