

Jan 79 Recent Sculpture

Richard Wiltshire
7th – 16th

Janet Hedges
18th – 26th

Bampton Arts Centre

Oxfordshire

Open 10.30 – 5.00 Tues, Thurs, Fri, Saturday
2.30 – 4.30 Sunday.

1) CRASHED SPACESHIP

This environment attempts to "reconstruct" the aftermath of an imaginary event - the crash of a spacecraft upon a primitive world.

The cosmonaut has subsequently died and has been deified by the local inhabitants who, in order to fix and define the phenomena of the crash and the extra terrestrial in their minds have recreated the situation as they themselves, with limited frames of reference perceived it.

The dual concerns of this piece of work are:

- i) The plight of the cosmonaut, alone, unable to return, more symbolically an intelligence lost in the void.
- ii) The failure of the primitives to comprehend the realistic principles of the event.

This latter, in essence, is the misinterpretation of a culture by another because of the chronological incompatibility of those two cultures. In this case the primitives have transformed science into magic and a being from an advanced technological age into a supernatural figure simply because, for them, the frames of reference needed to assess the situation accurately do not yet exist as the two races are at such different stages of development. With time the primitives would probably attain a level of technological achievement comparable to the space-traveller's race but at the time of the crash they have no concept of vehicular travel even and therefore can only interpret the cosmonaut's craft as a magic house.

PROCESS PIECES

In each of these pieces of work a natural substance is refined or transformed by actions contained within a frame work or apparatus.

In the case of "Cider Presses" the crude, rather distasteful apple pulp is changed into a liquid, pure and desirable. This liquid is all the more desirable because although plainly visible is unattainable (the juice is corked and bottled) - only the scent escapes.

The inherent smells and the stains produced are important elements within the sculpture.

Also working alongside this pre-occupation with the processes of change involving organic substances is the need to classify, collate and label. This gives the work a "scientific" feel but one borrowed more from Alchemy than from present day Medicine or Chemistry.

All the pieces operate as machines following their own internal logic and although each produces a recognisable substance the purpose of the stuff is deliberately ambiguous - e.g. cider is recognised in the presses but appears in such small quantity that its use as an alcoholic drink is denied.

This ambiguity reoccurs in the largest piece, an environment entitled "Dispensary", the nature of which is vague and amorphous. It does not function as a laboratory, kitchen or greenhouse but rather a combination of all three, where potions herbs and elixers are produced and combined for constructive or malevolent ends. In some cases the same substance can, depending upon dosage, act as cure or poison.

2) OUT IN THE COLD

The sledge and the tent represent two opposing poles: one can be thought of as being mobile, the other static.

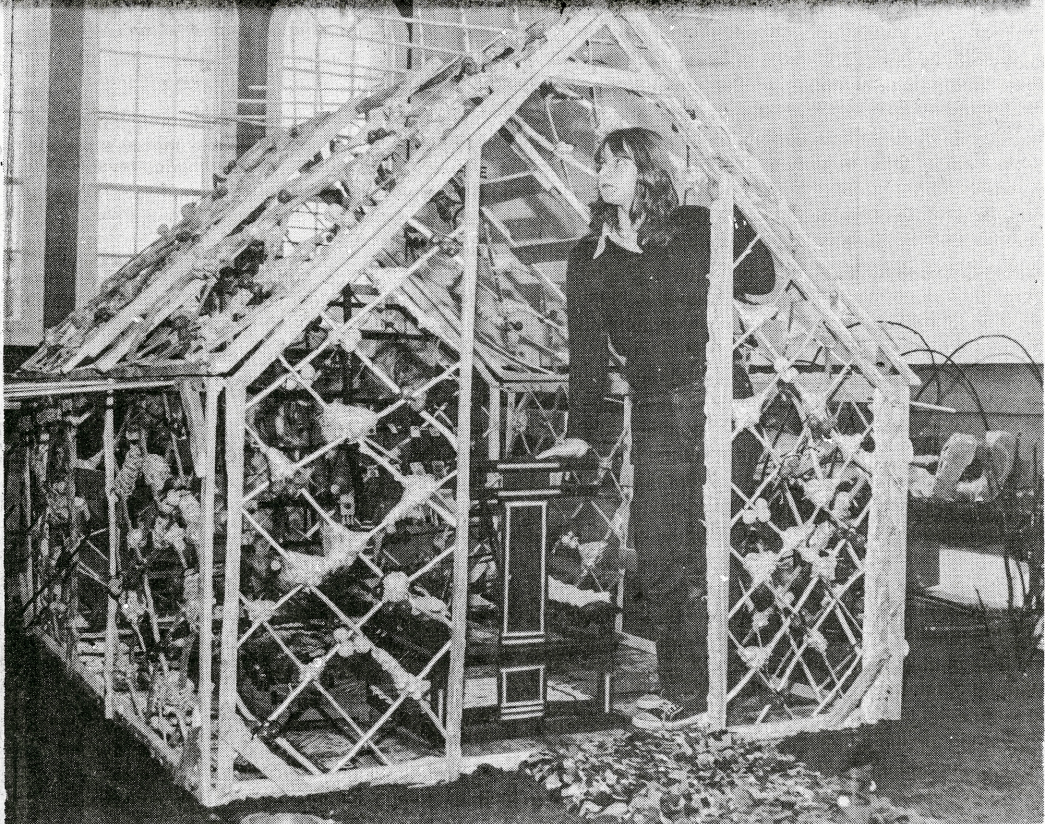
The relationship between the two is such that each of the pair depends upon the other for its own survival: the tent is carried to safe locations by the sledge which is propelled over the ice by the wind, the tent provides shelter when the wind drops or becomes too strong a force to exploit.

Seperately the two constitute differing responses to the same prevailing adversity - the sledge utilises the forces directed against it to provide itself with a motivating, directional force while the tent constitutes a withdrawl, a sanctuary from these same conditions. Each of the two is equally self destructive; one races headlong to its destruction, the other vegetates and finally collapses upon itself. However, together they strike a balance necessary for the survival of both in a hostile environment, each giving and taking in its turn.

A symbiotic relationship out in the cold.

Richard Wiltshire Jan. '79.

You're wrong, you know



You may think this is a greenhouse. But you'd be wrong. It is, in fact, sculptor Richard Wiltshire's interpretation of a crashed spaceship. It is one of the items at an exhibition of his work at Bampton Arts Centre. The exhibition ended on Tuesday.

and was followed by a display of work by his wife, Janet Hedges (pictured here). They studied fine art at Sunderland Polytechnic and do most of their work in their garden at Long Hanborough.

Exhibition 19