DO NOT DESTROY

TREES ART AND JEWISH THOUGHT

AN EXHIBITION AND
THE DOROTHY SAXE INVITATIONAL

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This catalogue was published on the occasion of *Do Not Destroy: Trees, Art, and Jewish Thought*—An Exhibition and The Dorothy Saxe Invitational, on view at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, February 16 through May 28, 2012.

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Foreword and Acknowledgments

In a world of accelerating complexity and deepening environmental anxiety, the simple beauty of the tree maintains its hold on our imagination. As both Judaism and contemporary art re-evaluate their practices in light of changes in our landscape, the tree looms large as a source for communal, ethical, and aesthetic reflection.

Do Not Destroy: Trees, Art, and Jewish Thought is a three-part exploration of the theme of the tree in Jewish culture and contemporary art. The first is the continuation of a long-running series at the Contemporary Jewish Museum—the Dorothy Saxe Invitational—the seventh in the Museum's history and the second in its new building, following *New Works/Old Stories: 80 Artists at the Passover Table*, in 2009. Supporting living artists is among this institution's highest priorities, and the invitational offers the opportunity to fund new work and bring it to the attention of a large audience. More than fifty artists from across the United States were invited to create works inspired by the Jewish tree holiday Tu B'Shevat, making use of reclaimed wood. The response was extraordinary, and we thank these talented artists for generating images and objects that further our appreciation of the holiday and its universal message of environmentalism.

We are grateful to collector and longtime CJM trustee Dorothy Saxe, who understood the rich potential of the theme of this year's invitational at its inception, and whose family has so generously endowed the Dorothy Saxe Invitational Fund. With Mrs. Saxe's encouragement, the Museum expanded the scope of this year's exhibition to also include loans by a diverse roster of international artists who use the tree as a significant visual or conceptual element in their work. The Museum's board of trustees, led by president David M. Levine, wholeheartedly supported this multi-branched exhibition, which manifests another of the institution's primary goals—to promote a fuller understanding of the broad relevance of Jewish ideas through contemporary art and culture.

Serving in the capacity of interim director, I want to thank curator Dara Solomon, who brought together an exceptional group of local, national, and international artists, cleverly re-imagining the way the Museum building and the adjacent Jessie Square plaza could be used to showcase contemporary art. Curatorial associate Colleen Stockmann deserves thanks for expertly managing the exhibition's myriad details and spearheading the vision for this catalogue with the able support

of curatorial assistant Claire Frost. Director of exhibitions and registration Maren Jones and head preparator Josh Pieper ensured that the art was "planted" in the galleries to the artists' exacting specifications, and to the maximum benefit of Museum visitors. Writer-in-residence Daniel Schifrin helped guide the texts focusing on the Jewish experience, working in close partnership with director of education Fraidy Aber. Director of marketing and communications Daryl Carr and his team helped broadcast this project's importance to an ever-growing CJM audience. The Museum's development team, led by deputy director for development James G. Leventhal and institutional gifts manager Leah Tarlen, ensured that the exhibition had the support it needed to grow and flourish. Much credit for the project's original concept goes to Connie Wolf, director and CEO from 1999 until December 2011, who provided encouragement and guidance throughout the planning process. The project's ambitious scope is a tribute to her legacy at the Contemporary Jewish Museum.

This catalogue provides a broader understanding of both the art and the Jewish concepts featured in *Do Not Destroy*. Dara Solomon establishes the scope of the invitational, the broader exhibition, and the Jessie Square plaza commission in her introductory essay, while Jeremy Benstein, deputy director of the Abraham Joshua Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership in Tel Aviv, goes into further depth about the complex meanings of the tree in Jewish culture and tradition. Lastly, Mary Jane Jacob, professor of sculpture and executive director of exhibitions and exhibition studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, provides additional context to the show by introducing other contemporary artists whose work is informed by the form or symbolism of the tree. I am thankful to these authors for their informative and thought-provoking contributions to the project.

The exhibition and catalogue have benefited from the generous funding of many supporters. I first want to thank Dorothy Saxe and her late husband, George, for their leadership and vision in establishing the Dorothy Saxe Invitational Fund, as well as Dorothy's support above and beyond to make this exhibition possible. The Columbia Foundation stepped in early on in the project, and the Museum is especially grateful to the Jim Joseph Foundation for its leadership and dedication to innovation in Jewish education. Other generous supporters include an anonymous donor, Ruth and Alan Stein, Barbara and Howard Wollner, Marilyn Yolles Waldman and Murry Waldman, and the Consulate General of Israel to the Pacific Northwest. The Koret Foundation and the Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture are the lead supporters of the 2011/2012 exhibition season, and the essential investment of these two foundations make the Museum's work possible.

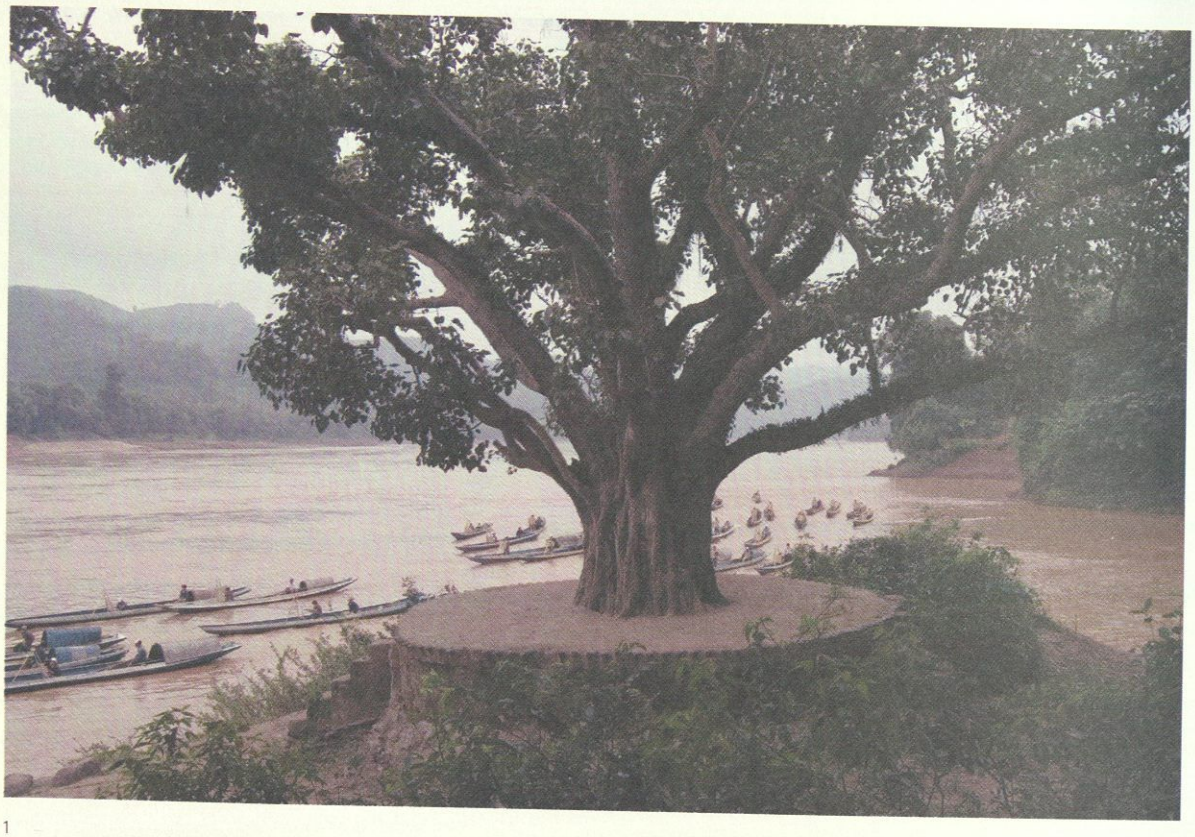
This publication would not have been possible without the critical support provided by Fred M. Levin and Nancy Livingston, The Shenson Foundation, in memory of Ben and A. Jess Shenson.

Of course, an exhibition ultimately succeeds based on the quality of the work on view. The Contemporary Jewish Museum is proud to spotlight a remarkable group of artists whose collective vision expands the boundaries of artistic practice; asks provocative questions about our relationship with nature; and offers new insights into an ever-evolving Jewish culture. The Museum is extremely grateful to the artists, their galleries, and the lenders, without whom this project would not have been possible.

Denise Childs, Chief Operating Officer

Dara Solomon

Introduction



1

Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba
The Ground, the Root, and the Air: The Passing of the Bodhi Tree
2007
Single-channel video projection

Trees are a ubiquitous yet complex presence in our daily lives. They are visual indicators of property boundaries, helping to define a home, a neighborhood, a region. Trees are also the designators of cities and towns: Cedar Rapids, Iowa; West Palm Beach, Florida; Poplar Plains, Kentucky; Oakland, California. They figure strongly in the individual imagination: there is that one tree that was a constant in your childhood—the stalwart presence on your front lawn, at the corner of your street, in your neighborhood park—predictably cycling through its seasons and perhaps watching and protecting you, as you grew alongside it. Trees provide shade, nourishment, and a source of wood for shelter and other necessities and amusements. Trees also mark time, documenting its passage by the accumulation of rings. While their roots connect them to the earth, trees' awesome verticality aligns them with a heavenly world beyond human reach. And yet, our behavior and actions ultimately determine their health, strength, and longevity.

And of course the tree is a potent symbol in many world cultures and religions. In Buddhism, the Bodhi tree represents the self and its journey toward enlightenment (fig. 1). Trees play important iconographic roles in Christianity: the story of the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12–14 and 11:20–25), for example, is interpreted to show Jesus's divinity, and the evergreen tree has been a dominant motif of Christmas, the celebration of Christ's birth, since the sixteenth century. Animistic beliefs are fundamental to Hinduism, and specific trees are venerated at particular times of year. Allah invokes various trees—olive, fig, date—in parables in the Koran. The tree is a particularly potent symbol in the Torah: it represents paradise, regeneration, shelter, the bounty of the earth, longevity, and is even a precursor to the coming of the Messiah. Trees are also linked in Jewish thought to a heavenly presence on earth. The Tree of Life and the upside-down Tree of Knowledge represent an important dualistic paradigm in Judaism: the Tree of Life symbolizes the Torah and the path to recuperating wholeness lost from eating from the Tree of Knowledge. The centrality of the tree in Jewish culture, particularly as it relates to the holiday of Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for the Trees, inspired this exhibition and its accompanying catalogue.

Do Not Destroy: Trees, Art, and Jewish Thought explores the subject of the tree through the eyes of contemporary artists who enable us to see

the world in new ways and encourage us to find new meanings in age-old traditions. The first component of the three-part exhibition is a continuation of the Dorothy Saxe Invitational, in which artists from diverse backgrounds working in a wide range of media are invited to investigate Jewish ritual objects. These objects—the kiddush cup, the tzedakah box, the havdalah spice box, the seder plate, and, now, the tree—become portals to examine a rich history of aesthetic tradition and the evolution of religious and cultural practice. The second component probes the role of the tree in contemporary art more broadly by presenting loaned artwork by an international roster of artists for whom the tree has served as the subject of a discrete project or ongoing investigation. Finally, the Contemporary Jewish Museum commissioned Rebar, a San Francisco-based art and design studio, to create a temporary outdoor installation that activates the Jessie Square plaza, expanding the exhibition outside the museum walls (fig. 2).

2

Rebar
Nomadic Grove
Jessie Square, San Francisco
2012
Recycled lumber and trees

For the invitational, fifty-seven artists from across the nation were asked to create works incorporating reclaimed wood in response to the broad range of themes inspired by Tu B'Shevat. This minor Jewish holiday, which is characterized by mystical curiosities and ancient symbolism, is rich in visual, conceptual, and historical material. It is also ripe with twenty-first century global relevance, providing an opportunity to raise awareness for environmental concerns through tree planting celebrations and other community-based events that nurture the planet.

The meaning and significance of Tu B'Shevat, which literally translates to the fifteenth of the month of Shevat, has shifted throughout history. Originally, the holiday simply marked the time of year designated as the New Year for the Trees. The ancients established this anniversary for

the purpose of tithing—every year, one-tenth of the crop was given to the temple to support the priests and the poor. The anniversary also helped regulate the harvesting of fruit. Leviticus states, "When you enter the land and plant any tree for food, you shall regard its fruits as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden for you, not to be eaten. In the fourth year all its fruit shall be set aside for jubilation before the Lord, and only in the fifth year may you use its fruit—that its yield to you may be increased" (19:23–25). This holiday bound early Jewish law to the agricultural calendar and established the connection between human behavior and the earth's natural rhythms.

With the destruction of the Temple and the Jews' loss of a connection to the agricultural cycles of the land of Israel, Tu B'Shevat lay fallow. In the sixteenth century, however, the mystical kabbalist community in Tzvat (a small city in the northeast of current-day Israel) revived Judaism's tie

3

Photographer unknown
Planting a tree for Tu B'Shevat
c. 1950–1965

to nature, evoking the tree as an earthly symbol of God's presence. The kabbalists instituted a Tu B'Shevat seder, or "feast of fruits." This ceremonial meal celebrated the tree's life-giving properties, and the eating of its bounty was conceived as a *tikkun*, a way of healing or repairing the world.

The significance of the holiday shifted yet again with the advent of Zionism and a call for the return to the Land of Israel. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the tree became a symbol of Israel and a powerful instrument of nation-building, providing a way for Jews both in Israel and in the diaspora to participate in claiming the land. Indeed, Tu B'Shevat is a holiday that, in the American Jewish imagination in particular, conjures an image of young children planting trees in the Holy Land, fulfilling the idyllic and idealistic Zionist mitzvah (fig. 3).

4

Lynne Avadenka
K'etz (detail)
2011
Kiln-fired glass, fabric decal

Today, Tu B'Shevat is gaining momentum, particularly among the diverse Jewish communities of the Bay Area, being celebrated with environmental awareness activities and organized tree plantings. The Tu B'Shevat seder has become quite popular, with many people practicing this revived ritual in their homes or in larger community settings.

Invitational artists responded to the challenge of creating work inspired by the New Year for the Trees with a phenomenal variety of objects. Many explicitly referenced Jewish tradition, evoking Midrashic parables, Tu B'Shevat seder plates, and tree plantings in Israel. Lynne Avadenka's kiln-fired glass sculpture of a tree (fig. 4) incorporates an excerpt from the Book of Psalms that equates the tree with happiness, equanimity, and faith: "And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water that brings forth fruit in its season and whose leaf will not wither" (Ps. 1:3). Bay Area artist Lisa Congdon focused on the rich symbolism of the Tu B'Shevat seder, a vegan feast. Her work for the invitational is comprised of a patchwork of triangles made of reclaimed wood that represent the progression of the wine from white to red. In the center of the image, a green tree ripe with fruit and nuts signifies renewal. Beth Grossman's *Yearnings*, a painting on a large reclaimed wooden door, references the artist's relationship with Israel and the tree that was planted there, in her name, in the year of her birth. Other artists used the tree as a means of exploring more universal themes, such as environmentalism, transformation, nostalgia, and renewal. Gail Wight fashioned handmade paper—a delicate and ephemeral medium—upon which she created an image of a cross-section of a prehistoric tree. David Tomb's project pays homage to the Philippine Eagle, which is critically endangered due to long-term destruction of its natural habitat. Conceptual artist Paul Kos's red fir stump projects a shadow of the Sierras against the gallery wall, commenting on clear-cutting forests in these mountains.

Preservation of the natural environment has become a significant cultural movement and a highly politicized issue for today's world leaders. With the rise of environmentalism and a general cultural awareness of the need for a new approach to the land, Jewish organizations have responded as well. The title of this exhibition, *Do Not Destroy* (*Bal Tashchit* in Hebrew), is taken from a commandment in the Torah that forbids the wanton destruction of trees during wartime. This commandment, found in Deuteronomy (20:19), states:

> When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.

The Jewish concept of *bal tashchit* has been extended in contemporary eco-Judaism to encompass humanity's responsibility to shield all of nature from unnecessary harm.[1] Indeed, in recent decades there has been a trend toward connecting with one's faith through avenues of social action and justice known as *tikkun olam*, Hebrew for "repairing the world," also a kabbalistic precept. In particular, Jewish organizations are engaging young people who may have become disillusioned with traditional or institutional modes of Judaism. There is a concerted effort to integrate faith with concerns for nature, which has lead to a rethinking of what it means to be Jewish. In the twenty-first century, the concept of *tikkun olam* and environmentalism (considered broadly, not purely in the sense of the impact of human culture on the physical environment) share an ideal vision of the world. As environmental anthropologist Jeremy Benstein has asserted, just as Judaism "has well-articulated visions of an ideal world...so has environmentalism...it is not just a litany of past, present, and future disasters; it is also an attempt to dream of a better world and bring it to fruition."[2] Both Judaism and environmentalism encourage humans to consider a wide range of issues—pollution, poverty, public health, community well-being, democratic relationships, justice, and equality—in an attempt to make the earth a better place.

This ancient evidence of environmental protection, along with the rise of a distinctly Jewish environmental movement, inspired us to explore a parallel initiative within contemporary art practice. By creating works of art with the tree as a central motif, artists reference the real world while envisioning an alternative. In many cases, these works provide entry into their makers' visions of an idealized world—one of enchanted forests and

1—The Torah and oral law command the protection of the environment in quite modern, even progressive, terms. There are laws regarding resource conservation, species preservation, and pollution. The Torah also has many references to one's relationship to the earth. Genesis (2:15-17) states: "The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die.'"

2—Jeremy Benstein, *The Way into Judaism and the Environment* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006), 12–13. I am indebted to Benstein for his conceptualization of Jewish environmentalism.

5

6

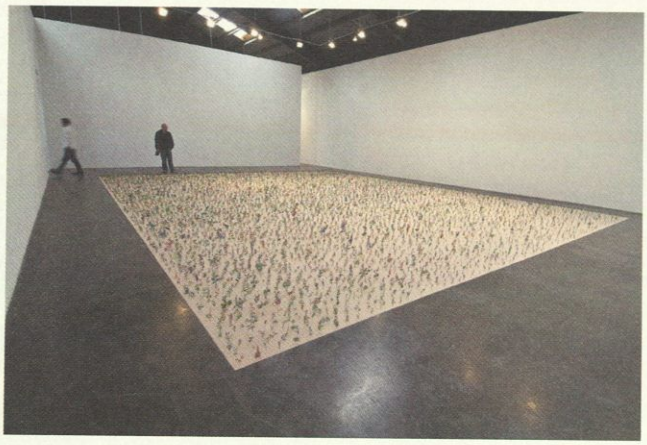
Joseph Beuys
7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)
1982–ongoing
Trees and columnar basalt stone
Dieter Schwerdtle / © documenta Archiv
© 2012 Joseph Beuys/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Natalie Jeremijenko
One Tree(s) (detail of saplings)
2004–ongoing
Genetically identical trees

whimsy, where the natural beauty of the tree is evaluated, deconstructed, and monumentalized. Other artists posit trees as storytellers, keepers of secrets, and proof of the impact of human behavior on the environment.

The earliest work in the loan component of this exhibition consists of documentation of Joseph Beuys's *7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)* (fig. 5), an urban renewal project in which the artist arranged for 7,000 trees to be planted in the Germany city of Kassel. This ambitious endeavor set the stage for later artists like Natalie Jeremijenko, who in 2004 engineered a group of cloned trees and planted them in different parts of San Francisco to examine the long-term effect of the different neighborhoods' environmental conditions on the trees' size and general health (fig. 6). And in Southern California, Kim Abeles combines satellite photography with model trees to create miniature landscapes that call attention to the absurdities of urban development in Los Angeles.

Other artists, less activist in their approach, create visceral and immersive aesthetic experiences. April Gornik's monumental landscape *Light in the Woods* (2011) depicts a dense forest of trees that embraces the viewer into its depths, while Claire Sherman's imposing painting *Night and Trees II* (2011) is unsettling in its ruggedness, indicating the precarious state of nature. Robert Wiens's *Butternut* (2008), a meticulously rendered, to-scale watercolor drawing of a fallen tree from his property, awes in its precision and sheer scale, similar to the experience of standing in front of a real tree. Marcel Odenbach's collage *You Can't See the Forest for the Trees* (2003), which depicts a birch forest in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the location of the largest Nazi concentration camp, is a meditation on the idea of trees as silent witnesses to history. The chestnut tree featured in Jason Lazarus's 2008 video projection filmed at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam was also a witness to history—specifically, to a young Jewish girl in hiding, writing to preserve her memory. Frank's tree, which has since fallen down, is preserved in Lazarus's video.



7

Zadok Ben-David
Blackfield
Installation at Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles, 2009
Painted stainless steel and sand

Zadok Ben-David's sprawling installation *Blackfield* (fig. 7) evokes the title of the exhibition—*Do Not Destroy*—in its disproportionate scale: the viewer hovers menacingly over a delightful but frail pygmy forest. Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's video *The Ground, the Root, and the Air: The Passing of the Bodhi Tree* (2007) (fig. 1) shows how a tree's spiritual power can emotionally affect the faithful. Yoko Ono's participatory *Wish Tree* also elicits belief from its subscribers, who are invited to write their wish on a paper tag and hang it on one of the tree's branches.

In a departure from traditional landscape photography, both Charles LaBelle and Tal Shochat enhance the drama of the tree through artifice. LaBelle documents the lone trees that dot the resolutely urban environment of contemporary Los Angeles, illuminating them with a high-powered spotlight, while Shochat creates idealized images of bountiful fruit trees at the peak of ripeness that are devoid of any real context. Rodney Graham's photographs of inverted trees defy gravity, causing a disorienting rupture of reality. The sculptors in the exhibition—including Roxy Paine, Rona Pondick, Yuken Teruya, and Gabriela Albergaria—assume almost god-like powers, conjuring trees from their imaginations that delight with their supernatural physicality.

Taken together, the newly commissioned works, the selection of existing works, and the Jessie Square plaza project that constitute *Do Not Destroy: Trees, Art, and Jewish Thought* offer an opportunity to commune with trees through design, video, photography, sculpture, drawing, and painting—to be awed by their scale, their longevity, and their ability to encourage deeper thinking about history, the environment, and our place in the world. Through these works of art, we align ourselves with the ancient dictum of *Do Not Destroy*, a commandment not only to protect the trees but also to dream of a better world.

Figure 1
Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba
b. Japan 1968, based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
The Ground, the Root, and the Air: The Passing of the Bodhi Tree
2007
Single-channel projection
Running time: 14 min. 15 sec.
Edition of 6
Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York

Figure 2
Rebar
Nomadic Grove
Jessie Square, San Francisco
2012
Recycled lumber and trees
Variable dimensions
Courtesy Rebar

Figure 3
Photographer unknown
Planting a tree for Tu B'Shevat
c. 1950–1965
Courtesy Hashomer Hatzair Archives Yad Yaari

Figure 4
Lynne Avadenka
b. United States 1955, based in Huntington Woods, MI
K'etz (detail)
2011
Kiln-fired glass, fabric decal
78 x 15 in.
Photo: R. H. Hensleigh

Figure 5
Joseph Beuys
German, 1921–1986
7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)
1982–ongoing
Trees and columnar basalt stone
Variable dimensions
Dieter Schwerdtle/ © documenta Archiv
© 2012 Joseph Beuys/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Figure 6
Natalie Jeremijenko
b. Australia 1966, based in New York, NY
One Tree(s) (detail of saplings)
2004–ongoing
Genetically identical trees, installed on San Francisco streets
Photo: Jordan Geiger

Figure 7
Zadok Ben-David
b. Yemen 1949, based in London, UK
Blackfield (detail)
Installation at Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles, 2009
Painted stainless steel and sand
Variable dimensions
Courtesy the artist and Shoshana Wayne Gallery
Photo: Gene Ogami

Jeremy Benstein

From Roots to Fruits: The Life of Trees and the Tree of Life

יש תקווה לעץ—Yesh tikva la'etz—There is hope for a tree—
When it is cut, that it will sprout again,
That its tender shoots will not fail to come forth.
Though its root remains and grows old in the earth,
and its trunk lies dead in the dust;
The very scent of water will make it bloom, and send forth boughs, like a sapling.
But mortals languish and die, *adam* perishes. Where is he?
—Job 14:7–10[1]

In the Beginning—yes, *that* Beginning—there was one Garden, one couple, one rascally reptile, one pair of Trees, and one simple rule: look, don't touch. But even that was one rule too many. The Edenic duo picked from the protected species and they were summarily evicted from Paradise. If you're one of those tree huggers who thinks that trees are simply divine, all sacred xylem and holy phloem, remember this: that first divinely designated tree whose fruit was so irresistibly seductive was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good *and* Evil. Not one or the other, but both together: the sanctioned and the forbidden, the sacred and the profane, salvation and sin. And ever since, the tree has been what's known in semiotics as an ancipital symbol: like a two-headed axe, or a double-edged sword, it cuts both ways.

Of course, trees are great. We Jews love trees (or at least the idea of them): "Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai used to say: 'If you have a sapling in your hand, and someone says to you that the Messiah has come, complete the planting, and then go greet the Messiah.'"[2] Now there's a mitzvah you won't get to fulfill too often. But the idea behind it goes to the heart of how we think about trees. Trees are in it for the long haul. They provide, and therefore symbolize, long-term sustenance. They make us wait years for their fruit, and so they come to signify patience, perseverance, permanence. With their deep reach into the soil, they epitomize rootedness.[3] When protesters sing, "We shall not be moved," they take their cue from the prophetic image of the tree firmly planted by the waters, a metaphor for the steadfastness of God's love and care (Ps. 1:3, Jer. 17:8).

Trees give us many different physical, tangible things: basic foods like fruits and nuts; cool shade on a hot afternoon; sturdy support for hammocks and tree houses; and all the wood that panels our lives, from cradle to casket. But even more than what they give is simply that they give, freely and unstintingly. Abraham planted a tamarisk (אשל, *eshel*) in Be'er Sheva (Gen. 21:33), and the very name of the tree came to signify the grace and generosity of his legendary hospitality: Abraham would always lavish his guests with food, lodge them, and accompany them as they set off to complete their journey. The Hebrew word *eshel*, spelled 'aleph-shin-lamed, was later Midrashically understood as an acronym for these courtesies: ('achila–food, shtiyah–drink, levaya–accompaniment).[4]

But even more fruitful is trees' symbolic, metaphoric significance: they embody quiet grace and wisdom, flexibility and strength, long-term growth and commitment to future generations. They are both a focal

1—Translation the author's, based on Rabbi David Neiman's *The Book of Job* (Jerusalem: Massada Publishers, 1972), and the Jewish Publication Society's *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1980).

2—*Avot d'Rabbi Nathan*, 31b. Compare this attitude to that of the former United States secretary of the interior under Ronald Reagan, James Watt, who testified in favor of clear-cutting logging practices and against the protection of forests for future generations, saying: "My responsibility is to follow the Scriptures... I don't know how many generations we can count on before the Lord returns." Quoted in J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), xix. This of course is not a question of whether Judaism or Christianity is more environmentally sensitive or aware, but rather an eschatological debate about the nature of the Messianic era and the transition to it.

3—To be rooted like a tree can be problematic as well. French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari developed their well-known metaphor of the rhizome to promote a different kind of connectedness: decentered, less hierarchical and incarcerating, and explicitly anti-tree. They wrote, "We're tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicals. They've made us suffer too much. Nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots, adventitious growths and rhizomes." See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Continuum International, 2004), 15. Indeed, this sociopolitical point regarding the threats of rootedness is not too far from the other, more theological arguments regarding trees and their symbolism expanded upon in this essay. I am indebted to Dr. Annabel Herzog for this point.

4—Today, Israeli employees are reimbursed for *eshel* outlays, the term having been adopted to describe expense accounts that pay for food, drink, and lodging.

point for human activity and a home for animals and birds, and thus they engender and connote community. And sitting under one's vine and fig tree (1 Kings 5:5)—that's true peace.

So it's no wonder that when the Bible wants to present a central environmental torah, or teaching, it speaks of trees and our relationship to them. That teaching is called *bal tashchit*—not destroying (or wasting)—and it's a fundamental Jewish environmental value (see Deut. 20:19–20). Briefly put, the original context speaks of not cutting down fruit trees in order to win a war, a directive later expanded to include not destroying or wasting anything of value.[5] But while this principle is Halakah, or Jewish law, it's far from dry policy. The text itself is profound, nuanced, and evocative of several layers of truth, spiritual as well as ecological. It gives us a phrase that has echoed down through the generations to contemporary Israeli poetry and music: כי האדם עץ השדה, *ki ha'adam etz ha'sadeh*, literally: "for the human (is a) tree of the field."

Strikingly, it is only in its current incarnation in modern Hebrew poetry, in Natan Zach's canonic 1974 poem "Ki Ha'adam," that the similes flowing from this seminal phrase come to the fore: like the tree, the human stretches upward. We thirst, we grow, we can be cut down or burnt in the fire. Significantly, Zach's poem, with its focus on mortality and its melancholy musical setting by contemporary Israeli songwriter Shalom Hanoch, has become popularly associated with deaths and memorials, and for many Israelis it is connected to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the commemorations after the former prime minister was cut down in his prime.

But while the verse from Deuteronomy famously admits several readings, this anthropomorphic one isn't among them: the Torah here does not speak the poetic language of metaphoric similarity between trees and people. Instead, two other approaches come into play. This phrase comes to explain the mitzvah presented in the text. One interpretation is that our lives as human beings depend on trees—and therefore we should preserve them for our benefit. The second is an ethical-philosophical assertion that reads the four-word phrase *ki ha'adam etz ha'sadeh* as a rhetorical question: Are trees of the field human? Can they fight, protect themselves, run away? Answer: Of course not! There is a radical existential difference between trees and people, and we shouldn't cut them down, not simply because of our (long-term) needs, but because of their inherent innocence, and worth.

This second idea became the basis for a series of laws that in many cases extended the scope of the ruling, as well as the foundation for many striking rabbinic commentaries about the lives and deaths of trees. Rabbi Haninah states that his son Shibhat died only for having felled a fig tree before its time (BT *Bava Kamma* 91b). It is important to pause and dwell for a moment on the idea of a bereaved father ascribing the death of his son to divine punishment for cutting down a fruit tree. Likewise, a mystical

5—See Eilon Schwartz's masterful exploration of the text and its hermeneutic career, "*Bal Tashchit:* A Jewish Environmental Precept," *Environmental Ethics* 19 (1997): 355–74, reprinted in Martin Yaffe's *Judaism and Environmental Ethics* and Waskow's *Torah of the Earth;* and this author's discussion in *The Way into Judaism and the Environment,* chapter 3 (see *Further Reading*).

medieval Midrash evokes both the inner life of trees and the similarity between a person's death and the cutting down of a tree, a sentiment that contrasts starkly with economic reasoning, by which a tree's life is measured solely in terms of its worth in fruit or wood: "When people cut down the wood of a tree that yields fruit, its cry goes from one end of the world to the other, and the sound is inaudible...When the soul departs from the body, the cry goes forth from one end of the world to the other, and the sound is inaudible" (*Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, 34).[6] And the Talmudic tractate of *Pesachim* (50b) claims that one who cuts down good trees, even non-fruit-bearing ones that give shade or add beauty, will never see blessing in one's life.

Felling trees is also a metaphor for apostasy, such as that of Rabbi Elisha ben Abuya (known as Acher, "The Other"), who is said to have lost his faith and קיצץ בנטיעות, *kitzetz baneti'ot*—"chopped down the saplings" or "mutilated the shoots." Continuing the tree metaphors, Elisha is said to have done this after a metaphysical experience, or mystical encounter, known as "entering the *pardes*"—literally, the orchard (BT *Hagigah* 14b, JT *Hagigah* 2:1).[7] The *pardes* of rabbinic literature seems to have meant theosophical or mystical speculation, or some sort of ecstatic, epiphanic episode.

In later Jewish tradition (around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), *pardes* increasingly became understood as an acronym standing for the four different levels, or types, of textual exegesis: *peshat*, the simple or contextual meaning; *remez*, allegorical or typological interpretation; *derash*, Midrashic or homiletical reading; and sod, or "secret," the mystical layer. Thus the Hebrew word embedded in a wall in the lobby of the Contemporary Jewish Museum is one of the great tree images of Jewish tradition, symbolizing the many layers of the Torah, its interpretation, and application. Given the Jewish tradition's rich concern for and connection with trees, it makes sense that we have a holiday for them, a New Year all their own, which has its own multifaceted historical and spiritual symbolism.

But before turning to Tu B'Shevat, let's consider the other side of the story, for it's not all leafy boughs and juicy fruit. Trees have a dark side—and I'm not talking about that delicious late-afternoon shade. Like the great oak-like terebinth that enmeshed the flowing tresses of David's son Absalom, "suspending him between heaven and earth" (2 Sam. 18:9), trees can be a snare. Seemingly innocent, yet with a commanding, even majestic presence, they are dangerously alluring. In classical literature they stand by the side of the path and tempt the unwary traveler off the straight and true, into a world of dryads and tree sprites. When the rabbis warn of the seductions of idolatry, of distraction from God and God's Torah, they warn of the enticing beauty of a tree: "Rabbi Ya'akov says: 'One, who while walking along the way, reviewing his studies, breaks off from his study

6—Sixteenth-century Rabbi Jacob ben Isaac Ashkenazi, who authored the classic Yiddish work of Bible interpretation *Tze'enah u-Re'enah*, wrote similarly: "[The Torah compares humans to trees] because, like humans, trees have the power to grow. And as humans have children, so trees bear fruit. And when a human is hurt, cries of pain are heard throughout the world, so when a tree is chopped down, its cries are heard throughout the world."

7—From the Old Persian meaning "walled garden." There are Greek and Latin versions of this term as well, related to the English word "paradise."

and says, "How beautiful (*na'eh*) is that tree! How beautiful is that field!" Scripture regards him as if he has forfeited his soul'" (*Pirkei Avot*, 3:7). This is a very rich, evocative text, with an even richer tradition of commentary, but for our purposes here, suffice it to say that the teaching makes clear that an aesthetic appreciation of nature is a threat to Torah, and thus is spiritually perilous.[8] Lurking just below the surface is the specter of nature-worshipping paganism.

Tree worship is ridiculed in Isaiah's scathing parody of the idiocies of idolatry, where a man takes cedars and oaks, using part as fuel for the fire to warm himself and cook his dinner, and carving the rest into an idol to worship (Isa. 44:12–20). Moreover, in contrast to the previously quoted sources about the value of planting trees and the pain and violation of cutting them down, the Torah inveighs against using natural elements, including sacred trees, in pagan rituals and even commands their destruction: "You must destroy all the sites at which the nations...worshipped their gods...under any luxuriant tree. Tear down their altars, smash their pillars, put their sacred posts to the fire" (Deut. 12:2–3).

The physical and symbolic allure of trees is liable to lead astray those who, while perhaps beginning with good "green" intentions, slide down that slippery slope from appreciation to wonderment to druid-like deification and worship. Some religious traditionalists are wary of contemporary nature-appreciating environmentalism for its appearance of crypto-neo-paganism.

In response to these fears, there are several points to be made. The first is that in today's globalized, technology- and consumer-driven economy, the sacralization of trees is far from being the most threatening manifestation of idolatry. Contemporary materialism, acquisitiveness, and consumerism are not only more alarming and hazardous, they are arguably more idolatrous than preserving God's creation. Already in the Psalms (115:4), we are warned: "their idols are silver and gold..." Perhaps we are now in a position where we can learn from the nature-centered traditions of the world. As Orthodox Jewish scholar and theologian Michael Wyschogrod maintains:

> To be perfectly honest, I have long felt that the religion against which the prophets expounded so eloquently in the Hebrew Bible did not get a full hearing from them. I wonder whether the prophets gave a really fair representation of the point of view and theology of the worshipers of [the pagan gods] Baal and Ashteret...Perhaps it would have been better if the prophets had occasionally sat down with them and said, "Tell us how you see the world." Could there be some insights in what they taught which we need to learn? I am convinced there were; and even if we don't agree with much of what they believed, I think we would profit by better understanding their point of view.[9]

8—Considerations of space make it impossible to elaborate on this commentary here. See the author's "Nature vs. Torah," *Judaism* 44, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 146–70, reprinted in Waskow and in Yaffe.

9—Michael Wyschograd, "Judaism and the Sanctification of Nature," *Melton Journal* 24 (Spring 1991): 5, 7.

But perhaps we don't even have to go so far afield. Let us return to the orchards of the world and the *pardes* of Torah, and to the mystical text of the Zohar, where the fears of certain Talmudic sages are transmuted into an opportunity to make sacred connections between Torah and trees, and between the spiritual and the material: "Rabbi Shim'on, Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Abba, and Rabbi Yossi were sitting under the trees in the valley of the Sea of Ginnosar (Kinneret). Rabbi Shim'on said: 'How beautiful (*na'eh*) is the shade with which these trees protects us; Let us crown them with words of Torah!'" (*Zohar, Parashat Teruma*, 127a).

This brings us back to the holiday of Tu B'Shevat, an appropriate moment to crown trees with words of wisdom. This New Year for the Trees, however, wasn't always spiritual, or even ecological. In antiquity, Tu B'Shevat, the fifteenth of Shevat, was comparable to modern-day America's "Tu b'April"—a date relevant to the calculation of taxes. The exact middle of winter was chosen as the end of the arboreal fiscal year: tithes on fruit after this date belonged to the next year. So the Mishnah in tractate *Rosh Hashanah* labels it "the New Year of the trees." The Israelites didn't sweat over tax forms, though, worrying about getting a check to some priestly IRS. Economics and spirituality were more integrated: part of the fruitful bounty received from God via trees was "returned to God" via the priests and the Temple, while part was redistributed to care for the poor. After the Exile, with no trees of their own to tithe, the date's significance waned. Like a tree, the holiday remained dormant—blooming again over a millennium later.

Sixteenth-century kabbalists gave Tu B'Shevat a second efflorescence. They taught of the cosmic Tree of the *sefirot*, the divine emanations, conceived as the blueprint for the creation of the world and a map of the mind of God. The Tu B'Shevat seder was born of their innovative ritual creativity, and, like the Passover seder, centered on four cups of wine and symbolic foods. Here, though, the wine progresses from white to red, moving from quiescence to full flowering. And the foods eaten at this uniquely vegan Jewish feast are all fruits—from those with thick peels, symbolizing gross physicality, through pure, unprotected fruit, suggesting a more spiritual realm. The wines and fruits signify the four worlds or levels of creation and the soul, often labeled as the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

With the Zionist return to the Land of Israel, Tu B'Shevat was transformed yet again. In a new act of ritual creativity, Jewish schoolteachers in pre-state Palestine made Tu B'Shevat a day of tree planting, a festival of reforestation efforts, and a symbolic means of re-rooting and reconnecting to the land and landscape. Today, the thoroughly modern innovation of observing the holiday through tree planting, in person or by proxy, remains prevalent. Meanwhile, trees have tragically become political pawns in

national struggles over this land. The aggressive plantings and uprootings taking place on both sides underscores the visceral significance of actually rooting a tree in the soil, establishing an undeniable physical connection with the land.

In each of these separate conceptual approaches to the holiday, our relationship with the natural world can easily get out of whack: the economic can become merely utilitarian, and the spiritual, overly abstract, while the national risks degenerating into chauvinism. However, in celebrations of Tu B'Shevat, we can integrate the particular—the personal, fruit-giving tree of the Mishnah and the replanted national trees of Israel—with the universal: the life-giving global trees of the ecosphere and the Life-giving cosmic tree of kabbalah. In their Tu B'Shevat seder, the kabbalists aim to unite all the realms and worlds. We, too, can strive to integrate the four interlocking realms that define our relationship to life and land: economic, spiritual, national-political, and ecological. Each can—indeed, must—inform and help guide the others, together creating a healing, balanced, sustainable, and sustaining whole.

We shall conclude where we began, returning home to the Beginning. We spoke of the Tree of Knowledge that signified both Good and Evil, and the discernment between the two. Interestingly, while the Torah is filled with values and laws that help us distinguish between right and wrong, prescribed and proscribed, it is never compared or likened to that Tree, but only to the other one that stood in the first *pardes*. For, like the aboriginal human couple, there were two *ur*-Trees placed in the Garden. The other one was less bivalent or ancipital—it was simply the Tree of Life, *Etz Chayim*. And Adam and Eve's eviction from Eden was meant to prevent them from eating its fruit. Cherubs with a fiery sword were stationed at the entrance to the Garden to make sure that they (we) could never re-enter and partake (Gen. 3:24).

So why has the Torah been compared to that unapproachable tree? Here we find a startling connection. The only other place that cherub-angels appear in the entire Torah is in Exodus (25:18–22), where the people are commanded to fashion two gold cherubs and place them over the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle.[10] But no sword this time—just wings spread in a position of longing or embrace. And what are the cherubs guarding? That's right—the tablets of the Decalogue, i.e., the Torah. Thus, the two sources of Life, the Torah and the Tree, are linked profoundly and eternally. Yet, unlike the Tree in the Garden, the revealed words of the Torah are approachable, touchable, and taking hold of them becomes the way to fulfill life in this world: "She is a Tree of Life to those who grasp her, and whoever holds on to her is happy" (Prov. 3:18).

It is a very inspirational image, yet it would be wrong to end an essay about trees with a comment, evocative though it may be, about a book,

10—One could certainly draw a parallel between the Ark of the Covenant, transporting precious cargo and preserving everlasting life, with that other Ark, Noah's—charged with a similarly valued cargo and task. But that pun is only good for English speakers, since in Hebrew, the Ark of the Covenant is the *aron*, while Noah's Ark was the *teivah*. Now, coincidentally, *teivah* also means "word,"—so there's still a fruitful connection to be made between the physical and spiritual, between the word and the world.

even *the* Book. For too long we Jews have looked to the Book, to God's words, as a virtual reality, as some sort of stand-in for the real, created world—God's deeds, as it were. Contemporary Jewishly informed or inspired environmentalism is about reconnecting word and world, with both standing to gain from the renewed relationship. Torah will be connected to today's world and today's challenges, made compelling and relevant, fulfilling its destiny as a genuine *Etz Chayim*. And the environmental movement will profit from the wisdom of eternity, from profound teachings that have sustained a civilization over several millennia.

The bottom line of the Garden story is that we have a job to do—we have been put here לעבדה ולשמרה, *le'ovda uleshomra* (Gen. 2:15). *Le'ovda*, from *avoda*, is work or labor (including agricultural cultivation), and *leshomra*, from *shmira*, is guarding or protecting. So this couplet can be translated as "to work and to watch," or "to till and to tend," or even, "to serve and preserve." Cultivating the soil and worshipping God are the same word in Hebrew (*avoda*); indeed the English word "worship" derives from work, just as "cult" is the root of cultivate.[11] We are enjoined to do for the Garden what God does for or to us (*shmira*—protection), as in the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24: "*yevarechecha...veyishmerecha*, "May God bless you, and watch over you."

But from what, exactly, are we meant to protect the Garden? The main threat to the Garden, and by extension, the world, is precisely the other half of the *le'ovda uleshomra* dyad—the cultivation, the human work. The mission is to labor, to produce—but at the same time to preserve, to guard, to be vigilant that the work doesn't get out of hand. It must remain, in a word, sustainable. Indeed, perhaps the best translation of the biblical phrase *le'ovda uleshomra* is "sustainable development." Working the land is crucial for human flourishing—but guarding the earth is the critical complement. In our struggle for the earth's fruits, we sow the seeds of our own, and the world's, destruction—unless we temper our toil with responsibility and concern for posterity.

As *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah* (7:13) so presciently relates, this job of guardin' the Garden may be the biggest challenge we face: "When the Holy One of Blessing created the first *adam* [man/human in English], God took them and warned them about all the trees in the Garden of Eden, saying: 'See My works, see how beautiful and perfect they are, and all I created—I created for you. Beware lest you spoil and destroy My world, for if you will spoil it, there is no one to repair it after you.'"

11—See also Genesis Rabbah 16:5 for explicit Midrashic connections.

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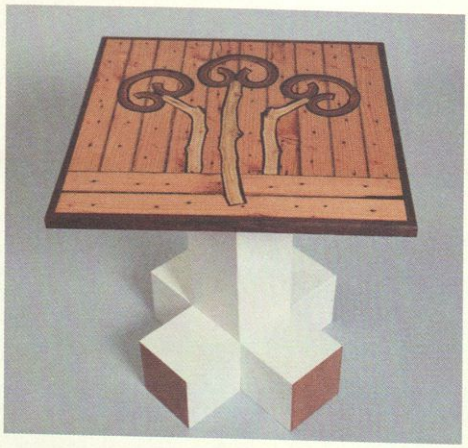
THE DOROTHY SAXE INVITATIONAL

INVITATIONAL TEXTS
WRITTEN BY COLLEEN STOCKMANN



Garry Knox Bennett

Untitled
Salvaged Douglas fir, firewood bark, twigs, Rosewood, paint

Bennett's functional table with elaborate tree form inlay brings new purpose to discarded lumber.

Terry Berlier

Reclaimed Time
Salvaged wood

Berlier made *Reclaimed Time* while an artist-in-residence at Recology San Francisco, which provides the city with refuse collection, recycling, compost, and disposal services. This cross-section of a tree made from various reclaimed woods creates a fractured sense of time and acts as a reminder of the environmental impact of deforestation.

Mary Jane Jacob

The Tree Gives

Trees are *Ur*-metaphors. They stand for life in all of its many forms, perhaps most tellingly our own. We branch out, take root and can be uprooted, have offshoots and create rhizomes. Humans, like trees, have limbs, and sometimes we are caught out on one. At other times we are unable to see the forest for the trees.

The Giving Tree (1964), a short children's tale by Shel Silverstein, is such a parable of life told through the relationship of a tree and a boy, nature and human nature. The tree, as a caring "friend," offers the boy a place to play, food to eat, and shade; when he needs something the tree cannot directly provide, she bears fruit for him to sell. As the boy grows, her branches furnish the means to build a house, her trunk a boat to travel the world. And finally, when the tree is just a stump and the boy an old man, after times of closeness and distance, the two reunite and are content to be together. Both will pass. Others will take their place.

As Silverstein's story demonstrates, trees always have something to give; like a ritual sacrifice in which all parts of the animal are eaten, nothing is wasted. Each offering has a purpose. Even a stump is something of use. However, *The Giving Tree* teaches not only the value of a tree, but also the need to respect the earth's gifts. Our interactions with nature can only be truly healthy and satisfying if we understand our fundamental interconnectedness with it. If we, as readers, feel guilt or displeasure at the boy's (our) seemingly self-centered relationship with the natural world, then Silverstein's book is this lesson (re) learned.[1]

Planting trees is one way we can give back to nature, repaying the tree and honoring it, and in these times goes far to repair the world. That is the story told by the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam*. As aligned with the observance of Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for the Trees, the act of tree planting is an expression of environmental concern and an acknowledgment that our actions have consequences for others and for the world. This sense of environmental stewardship is not exclusive to Judaism; Buddhism's spiritual tenets of interdependence and universal kinship similarly lead to respect for and protection of the earth.[2] The work of Buddhist environmentalists focuses on "the concepts of *karma* and rebirth (*samsara*) [that] integrate the existential sense of a shared common condition of all sentient life forms with the moral nature of the Buddhist cosmology," as Buddhism scholar Donald K. Swearer

1—Many scholars perceive the tree's selflessness as destructive, likening it to the co-dependent aspects of parenting, particularly maternalism. See "The Giving Tree: A Symposium," *First Things* 49 (January 1995): 22–45, http://www.firstthings.com/article/2008/08/002-the-giving-tree-a-symposium-43 (accessed December 7, 2011). However, contributor Timothy P. Jackson characterizes the boy's needs as uses, not misuses. For another well-reasoned assessment, see Lisa Rowe Fraustino, "At the Core of *The Giving Tree*'s Signifying Apples," in *Food for Thought*, ed. Annette M. Magid (Newcastle, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008): 284–305. My thanks to research assistant Morgan Walsh, who at the outset suggested *The Giving Tree* as a tale of symbiosis between nature and humans.

2—For an exploration of the complex relationship between the cultural and natural worlds, see Vijaya Nagarajan, "Rituals of Embedded Ecologies: Drawing *Kolams*, Marrying Trees, and Generating Auspiciousness," in *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, ed. Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker (Cambridge, MA: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2000), 454. A passage from the Hindu scripture the *Matsya Purana* recalls another mother-son parable that speaks to the vital, life-giving role of trees: "The goddess Parvati planted a sapling of the Asoka tree and took care of it...The divine beings and sages came and told her: 'what do you achieve by rearing trees like sons?' Parvati replied: 'one tree is equal to ten sons. This is my standard and I will protect the universe to safeguard it.'" Quoted in Vasudha Narayanan, "Water, Wood, and Wisdom: Ecological Perspectives from the Hindu Traditions," in Religion and Ecology: Can the Climate Change? *Daedalus* 130, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 179–206, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027723 (accessed December 7, 2011).

1

Magdalena Abakanowicz
Katarsis
1985
Thirty-three bronze figures
© Magdalena Abakanowicz, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York

has written.[3] Thinking back to Silverstein's tree, in many South Asian cultures "it is believed that trees have an enormous capacity to absorb suffering, since they have an abundance of auspiciousness, goodwill, and generosity," according to Vijaya Nagarajan, a professor of South Asian religions.[4] And though it suffers, the tree survives.

Given the conceptual richness of the human-tree metaphor and its spiritual ties, it is not surprising that the theme of the tree has proved a fertile subject for many visual artists, especially in this era of growing ecological consciousness. Sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz has employed the tree time and again in her art as she plumbs the drama of human existence. She is drawn to the peculiar, even unexpected, similarities between trees and humans, both structural (head or crown of leaves atop a trunk punctuated by limbs) and temporal (long-living beings that adapt to change as part of a growth cycle).

The tree as survivor is a theme for Abakanowicz, who has personally endured half a century of foreign occupations in her native Poland. Her trees are strong and determined, like the artist. In childhood, the forest was a place of protection and retreat for her, a refuge where she could experience nature in the full: "Without a thought I became one with the murmurs of the time of day and with this movement, stillness, growth, decay. There I belonged... Sitting up in a tree between the leaves, I felt secure."[5] This all changed in 1939, when the Germans invaded her family's estate on the outskirts of Warsaw.

The deep connection between human nature and that of trees found poignant expression in Abakanowicz's *Katarsis* (1985) (fig. 1), a series of thirty-three hollow, sinuous trunks, hybrid humans/trees. Created for the Gori Collection's Fattoria di Celle, near Pistoia, Italy, the artist rejected the lush romantic garden of this Tuscan villa's sculpture park, instead seeking out the stark landscape of an olive grove as the home for these

3—Donald K. Swearer, "Principles and Poetry, Places and Stories: The Recourse of Buddhist Ecology," Daedalus 130, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 227.

4—Nagarajan, "Rituals of Embedded Ecologies," 459.

5—Magdalena Abakanowicz, *Fate and Art: Monologue* (Milan: Skira, 2008), 12–13.

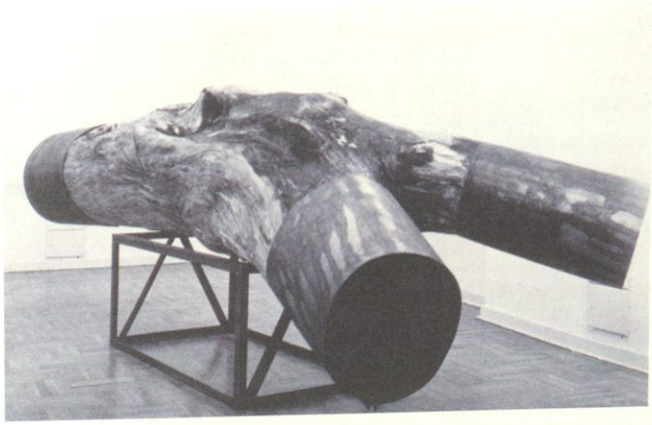
6—This work was also Abakanowicz's first major permanent outdoor installation. It led to an expansion of her practice and resulted in what she would call "Spaces for Contemplation," including *Negev* (1987, Israel Museum, Jerusalem); *Space of Dragon* (1988, Olympic Park, Seoul); *Space of Becalmed Beings* (1993, Hiroshima City Museum); and *Agora* (2006, Grant Park, Chicago). Abakanowicz writes of the group of figures of *Agora*: "[H]uman bodies begin to resemble tree trunks. Rows of headless torsos become a forest. Their wrinkled skin of iron has the thickness and texture of bark. Wood itself suddenly unveils its own secret, muscle-like appearance." Correspondence with the author, October 4, 2006.

7—In Michael Brenson, *Magdalena Abakanowicz: War Games* (New York: The Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S.1 Museum, 1993), 5.

8—Abakanowicz, *Fate and Art*, 152.

9—Brenson, *Magdalena Abakanowicz: War Games*, 11, 20.

10—Abakanowicz, *Fate and Art*, 152.



2

Magdalena Abakanowicz
War Games, Great Ursa
1987
Wood and steel
© Magdalena Abakanowicz, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York

towering bronze forms.[6] This powerful work about survival and transformation is perfectly in tune with its setting, where gnarled olive trees bear witness to unfathomable histories, and return each season to offer sustenance.

With her *War Games* cycle (1987–95) (fig. 2), Abakanowicz addressed the inner life of the tree. She wrote in 1989: "Suddenly I discovered inside an old trunk its core as if a spine entwined by channels of juices and nerves."[7] This series made use of felled trees that the artist had found two years prior along the roadside in Poland's Mazury Lake district. Crooked, old, and hollowed by disease, the branchless trunks had been neglected and abandoned at the end of life, much like Silverstein's Giving Tree. Yet to Abakanowicz, they were "huge bodies, muscular, wounded but full of strength and personality."[8] Michael Brenson, curator of an exhibition of *War Games* at P.S.1, describes this series as "thumping, forbidding statements about the bottomless cruelty and destructiveness of which human beings are capable," but posits that they are also "hymns to the equally unlimited human capacity for enchantment and renewal."[9] While for the artist some of these trunks evoked "amputated limbs in gestures of pain or protest," others appeared "erotic, with large spread legs, early naturalistic, nearly to female."[10] Here Abakanowicz saw the unlimited imagination of nature.

The cultivation of life on this planet—human and nature—needs continual attention, and a concern for repairing the world has always been the impetus for Abakanowicz's work. Recognizing that the physical spaces of our daily lives offer great potential for raising awareness and enacting change, in 1991 she proposed a new form of urban, green habitation. This development came in the form of an ambitious proposal to revitalize La Défense, a business district in central Paris. Like the Giving Tree, the artist's "arboreal architecture" was intended to "remind us that the tree is our friend: that it gives shade and oxygen, bears fruit, shelters birds and animals,

11—See *Magdalena Abakanowicz: Arboreal Architecture, Bois de Nanterre—Vertical Green* (New York: Marlborough Gallery, 1992), 17. The artist's design was not implemented.

12—Joanna Inglot, *The Figurative Sculpture of Magdalena Abakanowicz: Bodies, Environments, and Myths* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 114.

13—For a discussion of her travels to and impressions of Australia, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia, see Abakanowicz, *Fate and Art*, 105–9.

14—David Adams, "Joseph Beuys: Pioneer of a Radical Ecology," *Art Journal* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 30.

3

Joseph Beuys
7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)
1982–ongoing
Trees and columnar basalt stone
Dieter Schwerdtle/© documenta Archiv
© 2012 Joseph Beuys/
Artists Rights Society (ARS),
New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

and makes climate hospitable to all."[11] The tree was the metaphor for Abakanowicz's vision of an ecological architecture: spreading, branchlike, from sturdy columnar high-rise trunks, enveloped with trellised vertical gardens that provided oxygen, with wind turbines and solar collectors, and, in the roots, transit and parking.

As art historian Joanna Inglot writes, Abakanowicz "has searched for a language of symbols and rituals that can heal the past and communicate across diverse cultures, and she has expressed this message forcefully by depicting the human body in a cyclical interaction with history, nature, and the earth."[12] Hence it is not surprising that this artist been called a shaman. In fact, Abakanowicz has met with spiritual healers in her extensive travels, and she knows and admires the power objects of other cultures.[13] The tree was a power object for another artist-as-shaman, Joseph Beuys, whose ecologically minded initiatives were an attempt to mend humankind's broken relationship with nature. For Beuys, like Abakanowicz, materiality had meaning—actual, historical, symbolic, and metaphorical. In his use of organic materials such as fat and felt, he sought to locate art's healing power. Beuys also found trees to be deeply resonant: "In the wind that blows their leaves he sensed the essence of suffering human beings, as trees, too, are sufferers," writes art historian David Adams.[14] In a work like *Snowfall* (1965), made of three pine trunks tucked under several layers of cut felt, Beuys spoke of the degradation of the earth, pointing to the gift of a clean, white substance made toxic by pollutants, while recalling snow's beauty and utility as an insulator from cold and sound.

Beuys engaged in various forms of social, political, and environmental

activism. He ran for the German parliament in 1976 and in 1979 for the European Parliament under the German Green Party, which he had helped found earlier that year. But he believed "that a well-ordered idea of ecology and professionalism can stem only from art." Art actions could both impress and communicate, could be means of teaching and enacting change. Thus this artist/shaman sought followers in an ecological crusade. Using a tree metaphor, he asserted, "The socio-ecological approach begins...with a concept of freedom and creativity involving social totality, and establishes for the first time socio-ecological work whereby environmental damage is eliminated from the roots."[15] In his first environmental art action, *Overcome Party Dictatorship Now* (1971), Beuys led protesters in a demonstration against deforestation in Germany, sweeping the forest floor and painting white crosses and rings on trees destined to be cut down.

The most prominent of Beuys's eco-actions was *7000 Eichen* (*7000 Oaks*) (fig. 3), begun in 1982 at the major international art exhibition Documenta 7 with the planting of the first of seven thousand trees in and around the German city of Kassel. Beuys wrote of this ambitious revitalization project, "I think the tree is an element of regeneration...The oak is especially so because it is a slow growing tree with a kind of really solid heartwood. It has always been a form of sculpture, a symbol for this planet."[16] He felt that the symbolic new beginning manifest in this massive tree-planting initiative required a time-honored monumental marker, so he paired each oak, which would grow and change over time, with a rigid, static basalt column. Undertaken when concern was mounting about the effects of acid precipitation on German forests, the project was a worldwide call to raise ecological consciousness.

With *7000 Eichen*, Beuys planted new trees as a visual and symbolic expression of the importance of ecological stewardship. American artist Mark Dion takes a different approach to raising environmental consciousness, using the fallen tree as an image of regeneration. Dion's installations-as-fieldwork transform the processes and material findings of science into fine art, shedding new light on what we see and experience in the world around us. Speaking about *Vivarium* (2002), a 22-foot-long log on display in a greenhouse at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut, he explained that he "thought it would be interesting to imagine an exhibit about nature that wasn't about a thing in a way but about a process—a process that is often excluded from [museum] environments...As a society we are wary of natural processes and reluctant to deal with questions of age and death and things like that, which are part of natural processes and which we are inescapably tied to."[17] The organic concepts of transformation, dissolution, and regeneration explored in Dion's work remind us that even for the Giving Tree, change is inescapable, and that from death new life springs.

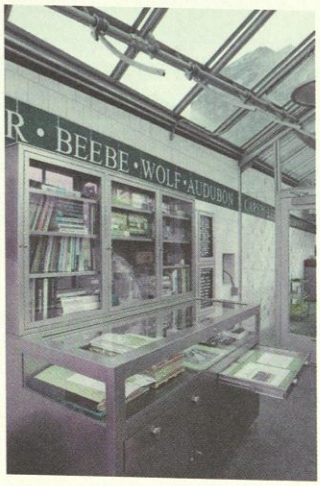
15—Beuys, quoted in Adams, "Joseph Beuys: Pioneer of a Radical Ecology," 28, 30.

16—Beuys, quoted in Lynne Cooke, "Joseph Beuys—7000 Oaks Introduction," http://www.diaart.org/sites/page/51/1295 (accessed November 24, 2011). The oak is an ancient Germanic symbol of strength and endurance, and since the nineteenth century it has been a national symbol of Germany.

17—Dion, quoted in Joanna Marsh, "A Conversation with Mark Dion," *American Art* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 47–48.

Mark Dion
Neukom Vivarium (interior views)
Design approved 2004, completed 2006
Western hemlock in a greenhouse, living plants

4



5

This story is told again by Dion's 150-year-old, 60-foot-long hemlock nurse log, *Neukom Vivarium* (2006) (figs. 4–5), at the Olympic Sculpture Park site of the Seattle Art Museum. The glass pavilion that houses the log merges the identities of art museum and natural history museum. Viewers are encouraged to analyze, study, and document what they see using microscopes and magnifying glasses supplied by the artist as part of the installation. Dion gives us an intimate view of ongoing cycles of decay and rebirth in this self-contained ecosystem, in which a dead tree provides shelter and sustenance for a multitude of other life forms. He creates a palpable lesson in the diversity of ecological communities, while potentially provoking a stance on protecting them.

The power of nature's regenerative processes is also the subject of Seattle-based artist Buster Simpson's *Host Analog* (1991), located on the grounds of the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. Simpson planted Douglas fir, hemlock, and western red cedar inside an 80-foot-long Douglas fir nurse log, creating an evolving outdoor laboratory. Unlike Dion's *Neukom Vivarium*, however, which is tended as a specimen in a climate-controlled environment under the careful watch of museum conservators, *Host Analog* will eventually become part of the earth upon which it lies. Simpson demonstrates the ultimate force of entropy, while Dion meditates on the generative potential of science and learning. Yet both artists urge a greater recognition and appreciation of the living world around us.

Los Angeles artist Charles Ray brought a tree back to life in his 2007 sculpture *Hinoki* (fig. 6). On a drive up California's central coast, a fallen tree sunken deep into a meadow caught his attention. Ray thought to preserve this massive, decaying hulk as a work of art. And indeed, his sculpture is the very essence of tree-ness. Formed from a mold made of the original trunk and carved by Japanese master woodworker Yuboku Mukoyoshi and his apprentices, this work is a full-size replica of the rotting original in Japanese cypress (*hinoki*). As Ray explains:

18—Artist's statement, Art Institute of Chicago.

19—Andrew Blum, "The Peace Maker," *Metropolis* (August/September 2005), http://www.metropolismag.com/story/20050725/the-peace-maker (accessed November 24, 2011).

6

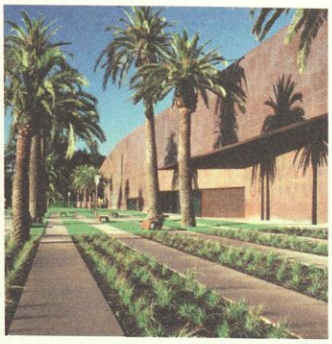
Charles Ray
Hinoki
2007
Japanese cyprus

> I was drawn to the woodworkers because of their tradition of copying work that is beyond restoration. In Japan, when an old temple or Buddha can no longer be maintained, it is remade. I visited Japan often and had a difficult time bringing this work to completion and allowing it to go out into the world. When I asked Mr. Mukoyoshi about the wood and how it would behave over time, he told me that the wood would be fine for four hundred years and then it would go into a crisis; after two hundred years of splitting and cracking, it would go into slow decline for another four hundred years. I realized then that the wood, like the original log, had a life of its own, and I was finally able to let my project go and hopefully breathe life into the world that surrounds it.[18]

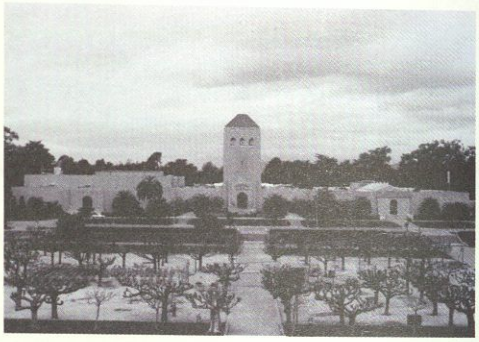
Taking his cue from Japanese tradition, Ray embraced regeneration in the form of reproduction, creating something anew from the old. However, he acknowledges that this object, too, shall ultimately pass, as it is part of the enduring cycles of nature.

Finally, the enduring tree appears in the work of Walter Hood, an Oakland-based landscape designer of poetic public places. Of course, Hood nearly always engages actual trees—they are a major part of his "media"—but in his 2005 plan for the de Young Museum in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park (fig. 7), the tree comes into play as symbolic object and living form at once. Hood's humanistic approach to landscape springs from his deeply felt consideration of how people utilize space and what they care about. As critic Andrew Blum writes, Hood "has insisted that landscape architecture be held accountable for the publicness of the spaces it creates."[19] Hood keenly and sensitively observes the things people naturally do in an environment and the uses to which they put their surroundings.

The particular nature of the museum as public space made the de Young commission unusual for Hood. His landscape became the bridge between the human-made art treasures inside the museum and the



7



8

natural treasure that constitutes the park surrounding it.[20] Hood's design notably includes a group of trees that was given to the museum in 1894 (fig. 8), when it served as the Fine Arts Building for the California Midwinter International Exposition.[21] These are exotic specimens—Canary Island palm, Chilean wine palm, Mediterranean palm, and Dracaena palm—which over time came to be seen as part of the natural landscape of the park.[22] They became engrained in the public memory and image of the site, so that, although not native, they were as much of this place as Beuys's oaks were of Kassel, Germany. Preserving these trees as part of the plan for the museum's new Herzog & de Meuron building was not so much an act of ecological preservation as it was an acknowledgment of the intimate relationship between local citizens and their environment. Hood's responsiveness to this historic landscape element was a thoughtful recognition of the integral role the palms play in the life of the museum and its surrounds. Curiously, Hood recounts that when the palms were put back in the ground, some visitors thought they were recent additions to the space. "One began to see the artifice of these trees in this place," he explained. In fact, one saw them anew, as if for the first time. As Hood says, "This is how it is with nature. We don't always know where we are."[23]

Art, however, can tell us that. It can make us aware of where we are and, maybe more importantly, where we ought to be.

20—Hood himself does not recognize this distinction between various types of public spaces. He has said: "[M]y approach is essentially the same, whether it's a park for homeless people or the de Young Museum." See "Landscape Architecture 101: Walter Hood," *Dwell* (April 2006): 186.

21—The palms are part of Hood's overall five-acre program for the de Young, which includes a Fern Court and Eucalyptus Court, as well as the Barbro Osher Sculpture Garden and Children's Garden. In addition to the palms, the other original elements of the historic de Young that Hood reincorporated were the Pool of Enchantment, sphinx sculptures, and numerous ferns and redwoods.

22—Landscape architecture historian Laura J. Lawson reminds us, "In truth, of course, the city is as 'natural' as the garden—both express the relationships people have with natural systems that shape their habitat—but the need to juxtapose nature and the city is deeply embedded in American culture." See Lawson, *City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005): 289.

23—Interview with the author, October 15, 2011.

Walter Hood
Landscape renovation for de Young Museum
2004

Historic M. H. de Young Memorial Museum (detail)
c. 1920s

Figure 1
Magdalena Abakanowicz
b. Poland 1930,
based in Warsaw, Poland
Katarsis
1985
Thirty-three bronze figures
Approx. 106.3 x 39.4 x 19.7 in. each
© Magdalena Abakanowicz, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York

Figure 2
Magdalena Abakanowicz
b. Poland 1930,
based in Warsaw, Poland
War Games, Great Ursa
1987
Wood and steel
66.9 x 196.9 x 74.8
© Magdalena Abakanowicz, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York

Figure 3
Joseph Beuys
German, 1921–1986
7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)
1982–ongoing
Trees and columnar basalt stone
Variable dimensions
Dieter Schwerdtle/
© documenta Archiv
© 2012 Joseph Beuys/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Figures 4 + 5
Mark Dion
b. United States 1961,
based in New York, NY
Neukom Vivarium
(interior views)
Design approved 2004, completed 2006
Western hemlock in a greenhouse, living plants
960 in. long
Accession number: 2007.1
Seattle Art Museum, Gift of Sally and William Neukom, American Express Company, Seattle Garden Club, Mark Torrance Foundation and Committee of 33, in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum
© Mark Dion
Photo: Paul Macapia

Figure 6
Charles Ray
b. United States 1953,
based in Los Angeles, CA
Hinoki
2007
Japanese cyprus
Two elements: 68 x 300 x 92 in., and 25 x 168 x 82 in.
Installation view: Regen Projects II, Los Angeles
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles
© Charles Ray
Photo: Joshua White

Figure 7
Walter Hood
b. United States 1958,
based in Oakland, CA
Landscape renovation for de Young Museum
2004
Courtesy of Hood Designs

Figure 8
Historic M. H. de Young Memorial Museum
c. 1920s
Courtesy the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Dimensions given as height x width x depth. Works are made in 2011 and courtesy of the artist unless otherwise noted.

THE DOROTHY SAXE INVITATIONAL

Gale Antokal
b. United States 1951, based in Berkeley, CA
Rebirth
Chalk, flour, and wood ash on paper, framed; box with burnt remains of tree roots
32 x 24 in.
Courtesy of Patricia Sweetow Gallery, San Francisco
Page 28

Tor Archer
b. United States 1958, based in San Francisco, CA
Tree of Life, Curbside Copy
Salvaged building materials and furniture, limestone
57 x 27 x 27 in.
Page 28

Lynne Avadenka
b. United States 1955, based in Huntington Woods, MI
K'etz
Kiln-fired glass, fabric decal
78 x 15 in.
Page 29

Helène Aylon
b. United States 1931, based in New York, NY
Hagar and the Tree That Was Not There
Engraved glass, linen napkin
Dimensions variable
Page 29

John Bankston
b. United States 1963, based in San Francisco, CA
Ancestor Tree
Ceramic, acrylic, wood
13 x 10 ⅝ x 9 in.
Courtesy the artist and Rena Bransten Gallery with special thanks to the Dennis Gallagher Residency Program
Page 29

Luke Bartels
b. United States 1974, based in San Francisco, CA
The Wood Standard
California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*)
14 x 24 x 24 in.
Page 30

Bennett Bean
b. United States 1941, based in Blairstown, NJ
One Tree
Pear wood, clay, paint, metal, gold
29 x 24 x 13 in.
Page 31

Yves Behar
b. Switzerland 1967, based in San Francisco, CA
Alef of Life
Bay laurel
14 x 14 x 3 in.
Page 31

Garry Knox Bennett
b. United States 1934, based in Oakland, CA
Untitled
Salvaged Douglas fir, firewood bark, twigs, Rosewood, paint
22 ½ x 21 x 21 in.
Page 32

Terry Berlier
b. United States 1972, based in Oakland, CA
Reclaimed Time
Salvaged wood
24 in. diam., 1 ½ in. d.
Page 32

Harriete Estel Berman
b. United States 1952, based in San Mateo, CA
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Assiyah, Yetzirah, Beriyah
Post-consumer recycled tin cans, rivets, screws, Plexiglas
24 in. diam.
Page 33

Jeff Canham
b. United States 1974, based in San Francisco, CA
Untitled
Enamel on salvaged wood panels
27 ½ x 20 in.
Page 33

Lisa Congdon
b. United States 1968, based in San Francisco, CA
Connected
Reclaimed wood, gouache
18 ½ x 11 in.
Page 34

Creative Science Project
Johanna Bresnick
b. United States 1973, based in New Haven, CT
Michael Cloud Hirschfeld
b. United States 1975, based in New Haven, CT
Low Povera: Meditation on Emptiness (with the sound of its own making)
Handmade composite wood, audio, mixed media
20 x 17 x 14 in.
Page 35

Topher Delaney
b. United States 1948, based in San Francisco, CA
Kika Probst
b. Brazil 1981, based in San Francisco, CA
Aimee Inouye
b. United States 1988, based in San Francisco, CA
Splitting the Nature of Prayer Cycles
Wood, paper, steel
44 x 20 in.
Courtesy the artists and Seam Studio
Page 35

Richard Deutsch
b. United States 1953, based in Davenport, CA
Wings of Thought
Wood (fallen oak tree)
26 x 42 x 10 in.
Page 35

Paul Discoe
b. United States 1942, based in Oakland, CA
Cube
Monterey cypress
18 x 15 x 15 in.
Courtesy Joinery Structures
Page 36

Josh Duthie
b. United States 1978, based in San Francisco, CA
Plywood Chair
Reclaimed wood
36 x 24 x 24 in.
Page 36

Lauren Elder
b. United States 1946, based in Oakland, CA
Highrise for Blue Orchard Bees
Reclaimed almond and cedar wood, used agricultural machinery, baling wire, glass, artificial flowers
90 x 24 in.
Fabrication by Richard Kittle
Page 37

David Ellsworth
b. United States 1944, based in Quakertown, PA
Kedem Bowl
Tulip poplar
12 ½ x 15 ½ x 6 ½ in.
Page 37

Tamar Ettun
b. Israel 1982, based in Brooklyn, NY
Common Ground
Photographic print
20 x 16 in.
Page 38

James Gouldthorpe
b. United States 1965, based in Richmond, CA
Arbor Home, from the series *Impractical Birdhouses*
Branches from backyard, wooden cabinet, paper, ink
64 x 43 in.
Page 38

Beth Grossman
b. United States 1958, based in Brisbane, CA
Yearnings
Pyrography, watercolor, and ink on reclaimed wood panel
43 x 20 ½ x 1 ½ in.
Page 39

Grace Hawthorne
b. United States 1969, based in Mill Valley, CA
Fait du bois
Driftwood, paper
41 x 24 in.
Page 39

Danny Hess
b. United States 1975, based in San Francisco, CA
Pequod
Salvaged wood
108 x 10 x 8 in.
Page 40

Tobi Kahn
b. United States 1952, based in Long Island City, NY
YLANH
Wood, paint
24 x 24 in.
Courtesy the artist, © Tobi Kahn
Page 40

Lisa Kokin
b. United States 1954, based in El Sobrante, CA
Fauxliage: No Birds Sing
Thread, wire, page fragments from *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson
70 x 24 x 8 in.
Courtesy the artist and Seager Gray Gallery, Mill Valley, CA
Page 41

Paul Kos
b. United States 1942, based in San Francisco, CA
Sierra Nevada Crest (over a clear cut)
Red fir stump, light fixture, light bulb
Variable dimensions
Courtesy the artist and Gallery Paule Anglim
Page 42

Naomie Kremer
b. Israel 1953, based in Oakland, CA
Slice of Life
Cross-section slices of a fallen tree, video projector, DVD player
78 x 24 in.
Page 42

Daniel Libeskind
b. Poland 1946, based in New York, NY
THE END: A FAUX ORBIT
Plywood, yellow sign paint, black water-base paint
31 7/16 x 42 3/8 x ½ in.
Page 42

Deborah Lozier
b. United States 1961, based in Oakland, CA
Hand-me-down
Found wood, Norwegian vintage silver and silver plate, sterling silver
Largest dim.: 8 x 2 x 5/8 in.
Smallest dim.: 2 ½ x ¾ x 3/8 in.
Courtesy the artist and Velvet da Vinci, San Francisco
Page 43

Ron Lutsko
b. United States 1952, based in Lafayette, CA
Modern: Traditions
Wood, bronze, used galvanized irrigation pipe, concrete
36 x 24 in.
Page 44

Liz Mamorsky
b. United States 1938, based in San Francisco, CA
Shoetree Totem
Wood, metal
29 x 11 x 9 in.
Page 44

Jane Martin
b. United States 1970, based in San Francisco, CA
millin hadetin attikin
Wood, metal
49 x 21 x 4 in.
Fabrication by Yaron Milgrom
Page 44

Matthew McCaslin
b. United States 1957, based in Brooklyn, NY
Country Grid
Wooden door, porcelain light fixture
24 x 24 x 6 in.
Courtesy Gering & Lopez Gallery
Page 45

Tucker Nichols
b. United States 1970, based in Mill Valley, CA
Untitled (mo1131)
2012
Mixed media
Variable dimensions
Courtesy the artist and Gallery 16, San Francisco

Pictured in catalogue:
Drawing for *Untitled (mo1131)*
2011
Gouache and pen on paper
12 x 9 in.
Courtesy the artist and Gallery 16, San Francisco
Page 45

Josh Owen
b. United States 1970, based in Rochester, NY
Marked
Circa WWII timber cutoff (Douglas fir)
10 x 8 x 16 in.
Page 46

Lucy Puls
b. United States 1955, based in Berkeley, CA
Untitled
Archival inkjet print, wood panel, fir lath
12 x 12 x 2 ¼ in.
Page 46

Amy Klein Reichert
b. United States 1959, based in Chicago, IL
Man is a Tree of the Field
Urban forest reclaimed elmwood, gold leaf, brass, glass
2 ¼ x 22 x 21 in.
Page 47

Galya Rosenfeld
b. United States 1977, based in Tel-Aviv, Israel
Tree Glasses
Beech wood, borosilicate (Pyrex) glass
Largest dim.: 13 ¾ x 2 ¾ in.
Page 47

Elliot Ross
b. United States 1947, based in San Francisco, CA
The Trees #1
Photograph
17 x 21 in.
Courtesy the artist and LUX Photo Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands; and Davis Orton Gallery, Hudson, New York
Page 48

Ellen Rothenberg
b. United States 1949, based in Chicago, IL
2 trees: what will be planted?
Gardening spade, gardening fork, wooden rack, burlap bag, recycled poplar rack, photographs
96 x 24 x 4 ¾ in.
Page 48

Yoshitomo Saito
b. Japan 1958, based in Denver, CO
Aspen Roots for Tu B'Shevat
Bronze
10 ½ x 16 x 13 in.
Courtesy the artist and Haines Gallery
Page 49

Kay Sekimachi
b. United States 1926, based in Berkeley, CA
Three Trees: Chestnut, Mulberry, Walnut
Discarded *Chestnut Bowl* by Bob Stocksdale (1913–2003), Japanese handmade mulberry paper, wallpaper paste, scrap walnut base
4 ¾ x 18 x 6 ½ in.
Page 49

Nancy Selvin
b. United States 1943, based in Berkeley, CA
Still Life: Tu B'Shevat
Wooden washboard from Granada, plumb bob, gold leaf, graphite
20 x 12 x 5 in.
Page 50

Cass Calder Smith
b. United States 1961, based in San Francisco, CA
Elements
Camphor, apple, walnut, pistachio, pecan, nutmeg, and cherry wood; blue steel, brass, copper, and stainless steel
2 ½ x 24 x 4 ½ in.
Fabrication by Lawrence Gansey
Page 50

Harley Swedler
b. Canada 1962, based in Woodbury, NY
L'arbre d'amour
LCD monitor, 720 HD video, original audio
18 x 24 x 6 in.
Page 50

David Tomb
b. United States 1961, based in San Francisco, CA
Great Philippine Eagle
Oil on unidentified wood
48 x 24 in.
Page 51

Merav Tzur
b. Israel 1967, based in Oakland, CA
Grafted Arboreus sabius, or a failed attempt to propagate the Tree of Knowledge
Scrap wood, video
53 x 23 x 24 in.
Page 52

Ursula von Rydingsvard
b. Germany 1942, based in Brooklyn, NY
Split Lip II
Black paint on cedar
19 x 3 ½ x 6 in.
Courtesy Galerie Lelong
Page 52

Lawrence Weiner
b. United States 1942, based in New York, NY
ALL THE STARS IN THE SKY SHOW THE SAME FACE
Mixed media on reclaimed wood panel
12 x 9 ⅜ in.
Page 53

Allan Wexler
b. United States 1949, based in New York, NY
Study for Tree-house (Study for the Groin Vault)
Tree branch, museum board
23 ½ x 17 x 7 ½ in.
Page 53

Gail Wight
b. United States 1960, based in Berkeley, CA
Forests in the Age of Fishes
Handmade paper composed of pine shavings and cotton rag, burned
18 x 18 in.
Courtesy of Patricia Sweetow Gallery
Page 54

David Wiseman
b. United States 1981, based in Pasadena, CA
Branch Candlesticks
Bronze, stainless steel, porcelain
Candlestick 1:
24 x 9 x 6 in.
Candlestick 2:
20 x 8 x 6 in.
Page 54

EXHIBITION

Kim Abeles
b. United States 1952, based in Los Angeles, CA
Enchanted Forest (and City Hall)
2011
Archival print, model trees
67 x 12 x 12 in.
Photo: Ken Marchionno
Page 60

Gabriela Albergaria
b. Portugal 1965, based in Brooklyn, NY
Untitled
2012
Site-specific work with local felled trees
Variable dimensions
Photo: Marc Domage
Page 61

Zadok Ben-David
b. Yemen 1949, based in London, UK
Blackfield
2012
Painted stainless steel and sand
Variable dimensions

Pictured in catalogue:
Blackfield (details)
2007–2009
Painted stainless steel and sand
Courtesy the artist and Shoshana Wayne Gallery
Photos: Gene Ogami and Rana Begum
Page 62

Joseph Beuys
German, 1921–1986
7000 Eichen (7000 Oaks)
1982–ongoing
Trees and columnar basalt stone
Variable dimensions
Dieter Schwerdtle/ © documenta Archiv © 2012 Joseph Beuys/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn
Page 63

April Gornik
b. United States 1953, based in Sag Harbor, NY
Light in the Woods
2011
Oil on linen
72 x 108 in.
Sydney and Walda Besthoff Collection
Photo: Courtesy the artist and Danese
Page 64

Rodney Graham
b. Canada 1949, based in Vancouver, British Columbia
Welsh Oaks #2
1998
Gelatin silver print
49 ½ x 37 ½ in.
Private Collection
Photo: Courtesy of Donald Young Gallery, Chicago
Page 65

Natalie Jeremijenko
b. Australia 1966, based in New York, NY
Documentation of *One Tree(s)*
2004–ongoing
Multiple pairs of genetically identical trees
Variable dimensions
Photo: Jordan Geiger
Page 66

Charles LaBelle
b. United States 1964, based in Hong Kong
Illuminated Trees #9, #11
2000
Color photographs
38 x 30 in.
Collection of Patte Loper
Page 67

Jason Lazarus
b. United States 1975, based in Chicago, IL
The top of the tree gazed upon by Anne Frank while in hiding (Amsterdam, 2008)
2008
Single-channel video
Running time: 15 min. 40 sec.
Courtesy the artist and Andrew Rafacz Gallery, Chicago
Page 68

Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba
b. Japan 1968, based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
The Ground, the Root, and the Air: The Passing of the Bodhi Tree
2007
Single-channel projection
Running time: 14 min. 15 sec.
Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York
Page 69

Marcel Odenbach
b. Germany 1953, based in Cologne, Germany
You Can't See the Forest for the Trees
2003
Cut-and-pasted printed paper, cut-and-pasted colored paper, ink, and pencil on two pieces of paper
85 ¾ x 117 ¾ in.
The Museum of Modern Art, The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection Gift
Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/ Licensed by SCALA/ Art Resource, NY | © 2011 © 2012 Marcel Odenbach/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn
Page 70

Yoko Ono
b. Japan 1933, based in New York, NY
Wish Tree installation view from "FLY," Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China
2009
Trees, paper tags, pens, and the public
Variable dimensions
Photo: Connor Monahan © Yoko Ono
Page 71

Roxy Paine
b. United States 1966, based in New York, NY
Model for Palimpsest
2004
Stainless steel
Tree: 37 ½ x 30 ½ x 27 in.
Base: 12 x 12 in.
Collection of Charles J. Betlach II
Photo: © Roxy Paine/ Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York/Shanghai
Page 72

Rona Pondick
b. United States 1952, based in New York, NY
Head in Tree
2006–2008
Stainless steel
105 x 48 x 37 in.
Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York
Photo: Courtesy Sonnabend and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris/Salzburg
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Claire Sherman
b. United States 1981, based New York, NY
Night and Trees II
2011
Oil on canvas
6 x 5 ft.
Collection of Michael and Sasha Zolik, Courtesy of Kavi Gupta Chicago/Berlin
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Tal Shochat
b. Israel 1974, based in Tel Aviv, Israel
Afarsek (Peach), *Shaked* (Almond), *Tapuach* (Apple), *Rimon* (Pomegranate), *Afarsemon* (Persimmon)
2011
C-Prints
16 ½ x 17 in.
Collection of Gary B. Sokol
Photo: Courtesy of Andrea Meislin Gallery, New York
Page 75

Yuken Teruya
b. Japan 1973, based in New York, NY
cut down my trunk and make a boat so that you can sail away No. 2
2008
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein
10 x 9 ½ x 8 in.
Courtesy the artist and Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
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Notice—Forest (Kimura Camera paper bag)
2002
Kimura Camera paper bag
3 ¼ x 4 ¾ x 9 in.
Courtesy the artist and Shoshana Wayne Gallery

Pictured in catalogue:
Notice—Forest
2003
Paul Smith bag
2 ½ x 7 ½ x 10 ½ in.
Photo: Courtesy the artist and Shoshana Wayne Gallery
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Robert Wiens
b. Canada 1953, based in Picton, ON, Canada
Butternut
2008
Watercolor on paper
8 ½ x 28 ft.
Courtesy of Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto, Canada
Photo: Cheryl O'Brien

Log
1992
Carved wood, oil paint
48 ⅞ x 67 x 23 ¼ in.
Courtesy of Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto, Canada
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