



Floyd Elzinga, *Unzip The Earth*, 2013.  
Metal and brick, 15 x 120 x 504 in.

network of walking trails. Both flood and drought have had their say since then, but the garden as a site for sculptural work has persevered.

Until recently, passersby on a major county road bordering the garden could glimpse a seemingly chaotic heap of logs, painted a startlingly intense blue, sitting atop a nearby hill. *Tanglewood*, by prominent Canadian sculptor Shayne Dark, became a bit of a landmark, and though it's gone now, a number of other works by Dark still grace the grounds.

The presence of a landmark isn't as necessary as it once was. According to Moulton, the sculpture garden had more than 25,000 visitors last year. The winery and restaurant on the far side of the spacious parking lot certainly help to attract people, leading them in to experience something otherwise unexpected. The surprises now start right in front of the gallery with Canadian sculptor Susan Valyi's *Hamilton Beach*, a dynamic figure of a striding man assembled from bits and pieces of recycled appliances and automobile license plates. It beckons people into the gallery, and from there, the beauty of the garden and the magic of what it contains take over.

Dark's abstraction and Valyi's representational figuration stake out the sculpture garden's aesthetic poles. Floyd Elzinga's *Unzip The Earth*, an enormous zipper installed directly into the ground, rests halfway unzipped, cleaving neat lawn from raw earth—something like a Claes Oldenburg work with a pointed environmental message. Elzinga's other works

## Oeno Gallery's Sculpture Garden at Huff Estates

by Gil McElroy

Prince Edward County is a roughly wedge-shaped chunk of Ontario that juts well out from the north shore of Lake Ontario (technically it's an island, cut off from the mainland by a 19th-century canal). In the 18th century, it became home to a large number of United Empire Loyalists, who fled northward following the American Revolution to restart their lives as farmers; their efforts transformed the region into an agricultural base, which it has largely remained. Since the county is surrounded by water, its climate differs somewhat from that of mainland Ontario and, in combination with limestone-rich soil, lends itself to what the French call *terroir*—the unique envi-

ronmental blend of ingredients that makes for very good wine.

Since the millennium, vineyards (more than 40 now and still counting) have increasingly dominated in Prince Edward County, producing a number of highly regarded wines. And with the vineyards have come gourmet restaurants, a huge bump in tourism, and most recently, a designation by *Time* magazine as one of the top 10 best places to visit in the world in 2015, which should turn that huge bump into something more akin to a mountain.

These transformations have created the perfect context and audience for a sculpture garden, as recognized by Huff Estates, a large winery that opened in 2004 and has since grown

to include a restaurant, an upscale inn, and in 2009, the Oeno Gallery, a commercial gallery owned and curated by Carlyn Moulton. Though the gallery deals in everything from prints and painting to ceramics and blown glass, sculpture has come to occupy a central place in its offerings. With the opening of Oeno Gallery's Sculpture Garden at Huff Estates, a rotating selection of three-dimensional art has taken over the outdoors as well. Two years after opening Oeno, Moulton hired a landscape designer to redevelop a 3.5-acre parcel of land behind the gallery as a sculpture garden, planting new trees, shrubs, and plants, forming a lake, and creating an extensive





include enormous steel pinecones (some of which, like *Firecone*, can be set ablaze, heating the metal to incandescence) and giant vertical leaves that visually refract the unique landscape in this part of Canada.

Also on the representational end of the spectrum are a number of pieces by P. Roch Smith, who explores the iconic figure of G.I. Joe. In *As I Came Upon a Clearing*, a collection of Giacometti-like bronzes portray the toy soldier with wildly extended arms and legs of a decidedly arboreal ilk. And in the "Flight Pattern" series, Smith gives him wings, mounting each figure on a tall, wooden plinth, wings/arms fully outstretched, vying for the sky.

But it's not all figuration and overt representation. Ania Biczysko's *Cumulus III* was originally sited in the garden, but it has since been relocated to an enormous elevated patio that extends away from the Brutalist concrete architecture of the Huff Estates winery and restaurant. A tangled snarl of variously sized stainless steel coils sits

atop a tripod like a crazy bird nest, or the titular cloud. Moulton says that, when the work catches the evening sun at its new site, it appears as if it is on fire.

For the last three years, Colm MacCool's *Extinction* has quietly and enigmatically risen from the ground, a sleek, aerodynamically tapered structure of weathered wood almost like a dorsal fin of something subterranean cutting through the surface of the earth. Unlike Elzinga's *Unzip The Earth*, MacCool's *Extinction* leaves no wake, no trace of its passage. It just emerges elegantly and with little fanfare from the earth and grass, seemingly subdued, but absolutely ripe with possibility.

Though there is a yearly turnover of work at the Oeno Gallery's Sculpture Garden at Huff Estates (and all works are for sale), *Extinction* will likely be there for a while yet. Moulton's curatorial vision for the site is constantly evolving; summer 2015 will see new works and new artists. Like the trees, shrubs, and perennials

that trace their way around the garden's comma-shaped pathways, sculpture is meant to become an integral part of the evolving landscape of Prince Edward County.

Left: Colm MacCool, *Extinction*, 2012. Wood, 240 x 72 x 108 in. Above: Ania Biczysko, *Cumulus III*. Stainless steel, 156 x 60 x 60 in. Below: Susan Valyi, *Hamilton Beach*, 2014. Mixed media, metal, and cement, 72 x 72 x 37 in.

