

Dumbarton Oaks Announces New Contemporary Art Project:

Patrick Dougherty Improvises an Installation of Woven Saplings

September 22, 2010 through Spring 2011

WASHINGTON, DC - Dumbarton Oaks announces a new contemporary art installation by sculptor Patrick Dougherty opening with an Artist's Talk on Tuesday, September 21, 2010 at 5:30 pm. The artist began the installation of a woven-branch sculpture in the Gardens on September 1st and will continue work through September 21st. The public is invited to view the installation process during this time between the hours of 2-5 pm daily (closed on Mondays). The completed sculpture will be on view to the public beginning on September 22, 2010 from 2-6pm daily (closed on Mondays). The sculpture will remain on display through the fall, winter, and spring until it becomes naturally weathered and unable to maintain stability, then it will be disassembled.

Dougherty's project for Dumbarton Oaks is being created and installed in the Ellipse, one of the most familiar features of the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens. Originally designed by landscape architect Beatrix Farrand during the 1920s and surrounded by a sprawling boxwood hedge, the Ellipse was transformed by architect Alden Hopkins in 1956 by the removal of the boxwood and the addition of a double row of pleached hornbeams. Responding both to the monumentality and the static quality of this aerial hedge, Dougherty is adding a series of what he describes as "running figures," or twisted architectural elements, that rise into the hedge and pursue each other actively and gracefully around the Ellipse. Dougherty is using maple, hornbeam, and other saplings harvested from a state forest in Virginia, where such saplings are routinely harvested and discarded to promote the growth of oaks in the forest.

Combining his carpentry skills with his love of nature, Patrick Dougherty began to learn about primitive techniques of building and to experiment with tree saplings as construction material. Beginning about 1980 with small works fashioned in his backyard, he quickly moved from single pieces on conventional pedestals to monumental site-specific installations that require sticks by the truckload. To date he has built over two hundred such massive sculptures all over the world. His work is the subject of a new monograph entitled *Stickwork*, published by Princeton Architectural Press (August 2010 release).

His home base is a handmade house of log in Chapel Hill, NC where he lives with his wife Linda and son Sam. The artist's website is <http://stickwork.net/>.

This installation was organized by the Garden and Landscape Studies program at Dumbarton Oaks. It is the second in a series of contemporary art installations at Dumbarton Oaks organized by John Beardsley, Director of Garden and Landscape Studies, in cooperation with Garden Director Gail Griffin and her staff, following the first installation by artist Charles Simonds in 2009. This series is intended to provide fresh interpretations and experiences of the Gardens and art collections of Dumbarton Oaks.

Special Events

Docent-led Garden tours are offered to the public Tuesday through Saturday at 2:10pm. Private group tours of the Museum and Gardens are available by advance arrangement by calling (202) 339-6409.