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"My mission is to help people create beautiful living spaces that blur the lines between indoors and outdoors."

LongHouse Reserve



On a recent trip to New York I visited [LongHouse Reserve](#) in East Hampton Township's great North Woods. A merging of art and nature, it's a wonderful place to gather ideas for using sculpture in the garden.

When you visit the gardens at LongHouse it is clear that art plays an important role in the experience. As you enter into each of the garden spaces you find yourself examining the art before you. The spaces are generous and give the visitor a thoughtful, but playful exchange between manmade art and the art of nature.

I met with Elizabeth Lear, Chair of the LongHouse Reserve Garden Committee, about how sculpture is integrated into the landscape.

Allen: Elizabeth this dome is just fantastic.

Elizabeth: I'm glad that you appreciate it. This is Fly's Eye dome, the geodesic dome, which was an idea in the 20th century for domestic housing. But, here at Longhouse it is really a sculptural object and I think that what it accomplishes is if you were to frame the view using a circular frame.



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Allen: Like a camera lens?

Elizabeth: Like a camera lens it calls attention to the wider landscape beyond.

Allen: Yes, you move around you see little framed pictures all the way. And I love the way the shadows create these shapes and forms on the ground.

Elizabeth: It is very playful.



You know as a garden designer I find that placing sculpture in the landscape whether it is large or small can be tricky business. Elizabeth went on to tell me that with this being a circular space the scale of the sculpture was very important to the landscape. A circular object like this allows a designer to engage in repetitive thinking. This

sculpture of a double black circle positioned a few yards beyond the dome also repeats this theme. In other areas of this garden in which sculptures are sited in the landscape vertical elements are introduced, but still using the design technique of repetition. Here at Longhouse they haven't just placed art in the garden, but the garden itself has become art.

Obviously the scale and size of this garden requires the talent and dedication of many talented people to get a better understanding of the layout of the garden let's step over here and have a visit with Marla Gagnum, a member of the LongHouse Reserve Garden Committee.

Allen: So Marla how did this idea of the Longhouse gardens come about?

Marla: Jack originally owned RoundHouse, which was next door here and this property was all a part of that. He decided to develop this one and build LongHouse as opposed to RoundHouse. In the beginning it was virtually undeveloped in terms of the gardens. Before Jack built LongHouse he built the red allee with the cedar posts and the red azaleas and berberas and all those plants that do their thing at different seasons of the year. Then he also did the earth works, which is the amphitheater. The first time I ever

came here was when LongHouse was just a construction site. The house itself was framed and you could see basically what it was going to look like, but around it was just mounds of sand, which eventually became the sand dunes out in front. I didn't have any idea that Jack was going to have such a marvelous inspiration for using all that sand.

Allen: When you look from the house out into the garden there are elements in the landscape that help extend the architecture of the building out into the garden.

Marla: Well, for example, the long hedge here from the house frames this whole area with the pond, frogs and all the lotus. It's a strong horizontal line and that helps pull the whole thing together in this area of the garden. There are so many different areas to this garden.

Allen: And it is divided into a series of garden rooms really sort of I guess garden experiences.

Marla: Exactly.

Allen: Are there certain areas of this garden that have become favorites of yours over the years?

Marla: This part right here is one of my most favorite. It's open; it's lovely with the boulder sculptures down at the end. Then if you look this way you have the lotus pond, which is spectacular when the lotus are all in bloom with millions of frogs over there.

Allen: Yes, it feels very tranquil here. You know Marla I have to say that LongHouse Reserve has to be one of my favorite American gardens. There is always something happening here.

Marla: Right, well every year several artists have exhibitions here and some of the pieces stay for a long time and others float on out to other exhibitions. But the Dale Chihuly, for example, has been here, well his first exhibition here was probably 10 years ago.





Allen: Those pieces really illuminate those spaces.

Marla: I know, cobalt blue with the light shining through it is as if the light comes from within. And this year there are other new additions to the garden. There is a sculpture garden and in the sculpture garden the pieces change, but this year there is some wonderful ethereal bells over there that you will have to have a look at those.

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