

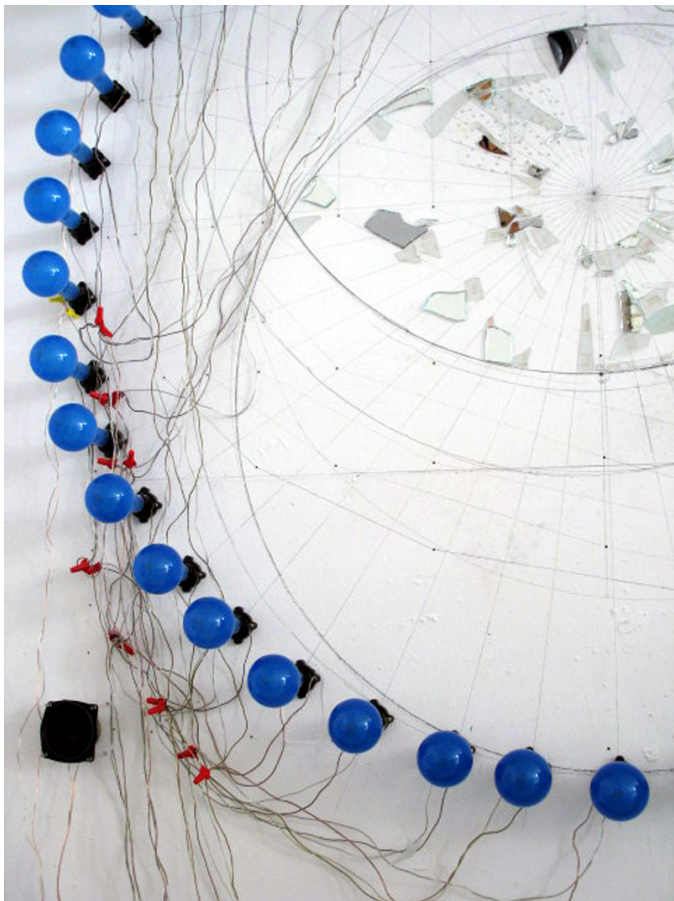
# Maryalice Johnston

The wall installation, *Narcissus*, was inspired by a box of cobalt blue photographic light bulbs that belonged to Robert Motherwell. When the bulbs were given to me, I did not know how I would use them, but I was thrilled by their beautiful blue color and unusually large size.

In preparation for this exhibition and an exhibition at artSTRAND, *Flashing Vanities and Other Follies* which opened on Friday, September 1, I begin working with a circular shape. The light bulbs and the idea of a large “vanity” came quickly to mind.

Based on the Greek myth “Echo and Narcissus,” *Narcissus* makes use of the square, circle, triangle and vesica piscis. Its companion piece, *Echo*, is on view at artSTRAND through September 20. The smaller works in both shows continue the use of the geometric elements found in the larger wall pieces.

Maryalice Johnston



*Narcissus* (detail)

**Maryalice Johnston** received a M.F.A. from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY, in 1982. She was a Fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center from 1986-1988. In 1997 she returned to live and work in Provincetown where she currently serves as the Visual Arts Program Coordinator at the Fine Arts Work Center. She participated in the The C-Scape Mapping Project, is a member of the Provincetown Cultural Council and The Provincetown Art Association and Museum. Her recent shows include – Loaded in Miami at Scope, Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, Miami, FL; Ietom Swodaem – Project at Meadows Motel, Room #8 (bathroom), Jay Critchley, The Compact, Provincetown, MA; “Passion: Love for Art” - Ice Project 01: Art in Truro, Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, Truro, MA; Wax Tile Project, The Schoolhouse Center, Provincetown, MA; restrooms and privacy, The Boston Center For The Arts, Boston, MA; Maryalice Johnston - New Work, The Koussevitzky Art Gallery, Berkshire Community College. Her work is represented by artSTRAND Gallery in Provincetown.



Provincetown  
Art Association  
and Museum

## Three Sculptors:

Barbara E. Cohen

Irèn Handschuh

Maryalice Johnston

curated by Marian Roth

September 8—November 5, 2006

Sculpture is about energy and space—it dares the viewer to draw near, to come into, to experience atmosphere. As an artist who works in two dimensions, I have always envied the sculptor, with her talent for creating meaning and beauty from pieces of inanimate matter.

A few years ago, when a new wing to the Art Association was envisioned, I asked if I could curate an exhibition of three sculptors whose work always touched me deeply. All three assemble natural or everyday materials, all three love the challenge of filling space, and all three have important things to say. While I didn't mean to curate a show with political overtones, it has turned out that—each in her own way—these three artists have chosen to talk with us about the world.

**Barbara E. Cohen** works with a balsa-like material she found in Viet Nam. Over the last few years she has been obsessively cutting the cork-like pieces into slivers and chunks and gluing them together into the most peaceful and moving forms. Barbara's work speaks of grace. It comes from the softness of her soul. In a sea of noise, disharmony, and war, Barbara Cohen seeks to take us to a plane of harmony, showing us the power of the simple—repeated and molded—until it sings. She has taken the opportunity of this exhibition to create an eight foot circular form whose mass appears to have no mass, as it seems poised to fly away. It fills the room with light and magic.

**Irèn Handschuh's** most compelling sculpture always fills me with joy. She works with beautiful woods, with nuts and stems and seeds and pits, forming them magically into a nexus of beauty and power. Be they tiny or gigantic in scale, her kinetic pieces activate the space around them as if alive and connect to an almost biological inner sense of balance. For this exhibition she has created a piece that is daring in its intent, scale, and meaning. Begun as a statement about the lack of affordable studio space, she created a portable plein-air studio, which she means to be passed on to other artists to use. Oozing from the studio's every opening are her beautiful sculptural pieces. The work becomes a representation of the entire process of artistic creation, from the birthing in the studio to the culmination on the wall. Provocative and yet simple, her work always connects the viewer to the world—be it the natural world of materials and patterns of life forms or the civic society of humans.

I have loved **Maryalice Johnston's** work since I first saw it at the Fine Arts Work Center. Over the years I have watched her use wax, soap, string, nails, and glass, (actually just about anything)—always pushing her materials into magical forms and expressions—always using the simplest materials to probe deep into our consciousness. Seductive in its subtlety and simplicity, her message is always powerful. Most recently she has been building work that seems to just grow out of the wall it is hung on—stretching deep into the room with its tentacles of grace. Her work is always so “now,” so just perfect. She has begun using sound and lights, making more and more elaborate works. Often the viewer becomes a participant. The piece she has created for this exhibition speaks to us of the relationship between the self and the world, asks us to look, to see who we are and what we reflect. This challenge to self-examination and connection in its broadest meaning, is, from my point of view, the ultimate grace an artist can bring to us all.

Marian Roth, Curator

# Barbara E. Cohen

The cream-colored natural wood product I use for my sculpture I found in a market place in Hanoi during a trip to Viet Nam in 1996. The material, called Sesbania, is grown in Asian wetlands and comes to me by the thousands as a cube-like form used for corking bottles. The corks are gathered, sorted and arranged for cutting into a variety of different shapes and sizes. The small pieces of Sesbania are glued together to build larger constructions. The inconsistency and irregularity of the hand-cut pieces add to the vulnerability of the finished piece. "Grace" came about from the desire to create a piece of work that would fill a room and exude a sense of quiet. . . . a resting place. Each sliver is sliced thinly with a sharp knife and sprinkled into layers of the circle, glued and dried. There are memories and stories that go into the sculpture, but the form stands alone without definition and description.

Barbara E. Cohen



Grace

**Barbara E. Cohen** received her B.F.A. from Tufts University and the School of Museum of Fine Arts in Boston with earlier studies in art history at Oxford University. She has received numerous grants including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Artists Foundation Mass Fellowship Program, Polaroid Artist Support Program, Blanche E. Colman Award and grants from the Cambridge and Massachusetts Arts Councils. She received a colony residency to the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Barbara has exhibited her paintings and sculpture in numerous galleries and museums across the country. She is represented by the Kobalt Gallery and the Kennedy Studios in Provincetown MA and the Addison Art Gallery in Orleans, MA.

Barbara is the author of the book, *Dog in the Dunes: Revisited 2005* published by Charles Fields Publishing and *Dog in the Dunes 1998*, a series of painted photographs of her black Labrador, Gabe, set in the dunes of Cape Cod, published by Andrews McMeel. University Press of New England published *Provincetown East West*, a selection of her painted Polaroid landscapes of this small seaside town, in the spring of 2002. Her other books include, *Woman's Best Friend; A Celebration of Dogs and their Women 1996*, published by Little Brown and Company as well as, *Dogs and their Women 1989*, *Cats and their Women 1992*, and *Horses and their Women 1993*. Barbara lives and works in Provincetown and Manhattan and is currently working on a book of New York.

# Irèn Handschuh



## The Movable Studio

"My aim is to raise public consciousness to the extraordinary need for affordable workspace for artists."

**ART TRANSFORMS.** Not only in the literal sense of the plastic and aesthetic transformation of materials, but, more importantly, in its transformational impact for the artist, the viewer, and sometimes, as with "The Movable Studio," the community at large.

Like so many others, Irèn Handschuh (a Wellfleet resident since 1989) is an artist deeply affected by the escalating crisis in affordable housing and artist workspace in our community. Its recurrent consequences are the loss of actual art making and the artists! The loss has been – and remains – incalculable.

"The paucity of work space on the Outer Cape affects me in many very real and personal ways, the most obvious being the lack of studio space and lack of artist housing. AND, all my friends are leaving town and I'm hurting, personally and artistically; my companeras are leaving town," says Handschuh. "I'm having a reaction. I'm having a visceral reaction, and I'm angry. Thus, my goal is to transform the energy into this statement that makes me laugh. I'm sublimating my fury into something that makes me and my friends laugh. I think it's very important to make social commentary with a punch of laughter. That reaches me much better than raw anger. It's like a great ambassador."

In this installation sculpture, my aim is to raise public consciousness to the extraordinary need for affordable workspace for artists by designing and constructing "The Movable Studio". It is a structure on wheels, a fusion of a hauling apparatus with nautical components that creates an enclosed work space. Windows provide light, ventilation and a field of view of about 280 degrees. It is economical, compact, weather resistant and mobile, with "all terrain" capability. It can be moved by hand or hitched to a vehicle; and, it has an unstealable view."

*The Movable Studio* is crammed with Handschuh's unique constructions in a sort of visual double entendre: illustrating both the bursting energy and productivity of the artistic impulse, at the same time thwarted and cramped by the lack of adequate workspace: "... a sense of busting out at the seams because you don't have the appropriate space as an artist to create."

Handschuh refers to this as her "community project," paralleling her own (economically necessary) peripatetic and minimalist lifestyle. During the summer season, Handschuh lives in her trailer in a local campground and therefore, all life's necessities are compacted (including rent). Then like the legions of others without secure housing, Handschuh moves each fall into a winter residence. "I call it 'the hobo studio'" for the itinerant artist who "picks their view, or intention."

*The Movable Studio* represents a long tradition of artists who value their work not just as "art for art's sake," but as a means of engagement with the world – from Kathe Kollwitz and other German Expressionists, to sculptor Louise Bourgeois, and our own Jay Critchley ("Septic Summer Rentals), and so many others before and after. Handschuh's wish for her community: "This is my political statement, now a performance. Use it. Borrow it."

Eileen Kennedy, Provincetown, August, 2006

Born and educated in Paris, **Irèn Handschuh** (b. 1951) emigrated to the United States in 1971 where she began working in a women's carpentry collective. In the 1980's she worked in general construction, cabinet and furniture making in the Boston area, Cape Cod and the Islands. She studied architectural drafting at the Boston Architectural Center, and began working as a sculptor in the late 1980's, moving away from the high precision of fine woodworking – what she refers to as "the tyranny of the 64th's of an inch" – to the freedom of working organically, even primitively, in the tradition of Art Brut and Art Modeste. Utilizing the simplest of natural elements (wood, stones, sticks, bones, pits, etc.) in her mobiles and stables, Handschuh treats movement as an artistic element. Wind is a cathartic, even whimsical force, ultimately representing the sheer mutability of life. Like the Swiss sculptor Jean Tinguely – whose Dadaist works have influenced Handschuh – believed, "Everything transforms itself, everything modifies itself ceaselessly." Handschuh's works demonstrate her complete command of the formal elements of balance, mobility and rotation. As sculptor Paul Bowen will attest, "Iren taught me everything I know about wood and wind." Her philosophical sensibility is based in ironic, even punlike, metaphoric humor: "If the human experience had a pit, what would it be?" – is the pulse of her work. Her capacity for inventive wordplay – "cheapicity" of materials – reflects her innate and prolific ability to rethink, and re-see the simplest natural elements. Handschuh works them together into constructions that are aesthetically elegant and conceptually interesting – and often spiced with an absurdist sense of humor, Handschuh's very unique je ne sais quoi.

She has exhibited her works in galleries in Wellfleet, Provincetown, Nantucket, New York and Japan. Handschuh is represented by the Berta Walker Gallery, 208 Bradford Street in Provincetown. At the conclusion of the PAAM exhibition, "The Movable Studio" will be moved to the Berta Walker Gallery, where local artists may make arrangements with Irèn Handschuh to borrow it.



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## Three Sculptors:

*Barbara E. Cohen*

*Irèn Handschuh*

*Maryalice Johnston*

*curated by Marian Roth*

*September 8—November 5, 2006*

### Artworks by **Barbara E. Cohen**

*courtesy of Kobalt Gallery, Kennedy Studios and Addison Art Gallery*

*The Board, 2003-2004*

sesbania (2,401 hand-cut pieces)

33 x 33 x 1"

*The Tower, 2004*

sesbania (8,113 hand-cut pieces)

48 x 12 x 12"

*Three Balls, 2004-2006*

sesbania (thousands of hand-cut pieces)

Small

Medium

Large

*Tiles, 2006*

sesbania

6 x 6 x 1"

*7 Cubes, 2004-2005*

sesbania (thousands of hand-cut pieces)

54 x 120 x 12"

*Grace, 2006*

sesbania (thousands of hand cut pieces)

96 x 96 x 5"

### Artworks by **Irèn Handschuh**

*courtesy of Berta Walker Gallery*

*Nutssutra, 2004*

acorns, cherry cigar box, paint

*Rethink Atomic II, 2003*

amra pod, wood

*Galaxy 01*

chestnut, olive, oak, lilac, peach, and cherry woods

*The Movable Studio (with an Unstealable View), 2006*

Please speak with the artist if interested in buying individual elements composing The Movable Studio.

*Présages, 2001*

wood, paint

### Artworks by **Maryalice Johnston**

*courtesy of artSTRAND Gallery*

*Narcissus, 2006*

mixed media, dimensions variable

*Vesica Piscis Study I, 2006*

mixed media, dimensions variable

*Maine Bucket, 2006*

mixed media, dimensions variable

*Pod Girl, 2006*

mixed media, 17 x 9 x 9"

*Most of the artworks in this exhibition are available for purchase.  
Please inquire in the Museum Store.*

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## Three Sculptors: PRICELIST

*Barbara E. Cohen*

*Irèn Handschuh*

*Maryalice Johnston*

*curated by Marian Roth*

*September 8—November 5, 2006*

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*courtesy of Kobalt Gallery, Kennedy Studios and Addison Art Gallery*

*The Board, 2003-2004*

sesbania (2,401 hand-cut pieces)

33 x 33 x 1"

\$9,000.

*The Tower, 2004*

sesbania (8,113 hand-cut pieces)

48 x 12 x 12"

\$10,000.

*Three Balls, 2004-2006*

sesbania (thousands of hand-cut pieces)

Small \$1500

Medium \$3,000.

Large \$6,000.

*Tiles, 2006*

sesbania

6 x 6 x 1"

\$400. ea

*7 Cubes, 2004-2005*

sesbania (thousands of hand-cut pieces)

54 x 120 x 12"

\$18,000.

*Grace, 2006*

sesbania (thousands of hand cut pieces)

96 x 96 x 5"

\$30,000.

### Artworks by **Irèn Handschuh**

*courtesy of Berta Walker Gallery*

*Nutssutra, 2004*

acorns, cherry cigar box, paint

\$1300.

*Rethink Atomic II, 2003*

amra pod, wood

\$1800.

*Galaxy 01*

chestnut, olive, oak, lilac, peach, and cherry woods

\$3500.

*The Movable Studio (with an Unstealable View), 2006*

Please speak with the artist if interested in buying

individual elements composing The Movable Studio.

*Présages, 2001*

wood, paint

\$2500.

### Artworks by **Maryalice Johnston**

*courtesy of artSTRAND Gallery*

*Narcissus, 2006*

mixed media, dimensions variable

\$6500.

*Vesica Piscis Study I, 2006*

mixed media, dimensions variable

\$1200.

*Maine Bucket, 2006*

mixed media, dimensions variable

\$2500.

*Pod Girl, 2006*

mixed media, 17 x 9 x 9"

\$550.

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