

Art in the Hirsch Library

On View in the Alice Pratt Brown Garden

Robert Lobe
American, born 1945
Culver's Gap
1982
Hammered aluminum
Bequest of Edward R. Broida
2007.610

At first glance, Robert Lobe's sculptures look like rocks and trees that have been magically transformed into metal. In fact, however, they are the deliberate result of a process of selection and composition. Lobe employs both natural and man-made materials, rendering their once recognizable forms strange and incongruous. "Nature is my toy box," Lobe has claimed. "It is fantastic and full of surprises. These manifestations of tactile geometry wait to be harvested, not as metal pelts, the empty chambers of ghostly spirits, but as human architectures and physical relationships which bear the marks of time."

Lobe begins by choosing rocks, boulders, trees, and tree limbs from the woods, which he either relocates to his studio or works with on site. After he settles on an object, he covers it with a sheet of aluminum. He hammers the aluminum until it conforms to the shape of the object underneath, thereby producing a copy of the original in which minute variations of surface and texture are recorded. After removing the aluminum, Lobe welds or rivets the object to others like it in order to create an assemblage of forms that suggest, rather than directly represent, the natural environment.