

The Cotyledons Of Sculptor David Boyajian

By Louis J. Slovinsky

RIDGEFIELD, CONN. — This fall, David Boyajian will introduce a cycle of sculptures that may seem familiar to the Connecticut artist's patrons, yet are bound to surprise and delight all in their exploration of new abstract forms and nature-inspired gestures.

For the past decade Boyajian has invested a wealth of technical experience and aesthetic judgment in making the mid- to outsized steel pieces of his "Bud & Seed" series. Capturing the energy of exploding buds atop graceful stalks, like freeze frames in time-lapse photography, "Bud & Seed" invited the viewer to reconsider organic forms abstracted to their essence.

Now, in an oblique, evolutionary step forward, Boyajian demands even more of us with the new steel pieces he calls "Cotyledons" (pronounced kot l eed' unz). That is the botanical nomenclature for the first tiny leaves on a newly developed plant emerging from the seed embryo. Magnified in scale, the Cotyledons aspire to portray process: the moment when photosynthesis begins.

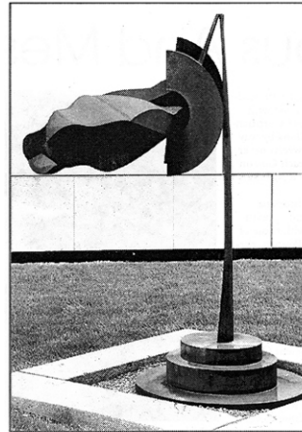
Rearing in rural northern Connecticut, Boyajian, 45, sought the solace of local woodlands. There he mentally banked the imagery from nature that has paid artistic dividends throughout his professional career. He received his BA from Alfred University, his MFA from Maryland Institute's Rinehard School of Sculpture, and further studied at the distinguished Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

Working in a variety of scales and materials, Boyajian deconstructs seed forms and looks for "volumes, edges, transitional points, movements from one shape into another." He was taken with the germination of amaryllis bulbs and winged maple seeds, not so much as to record, with accuracy, their pleasing planes and intricate interconnections, as to invent three-dimensional riffs, in steel, on their power and transitional beauty.

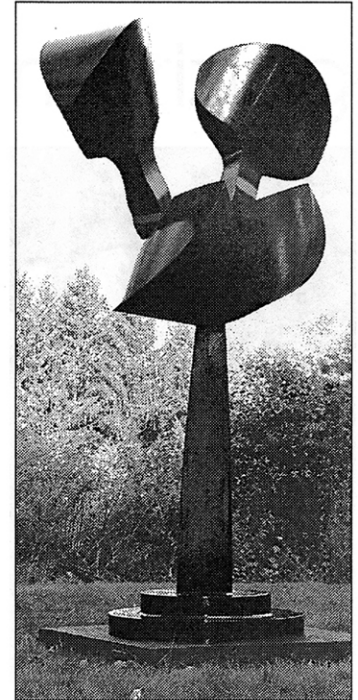
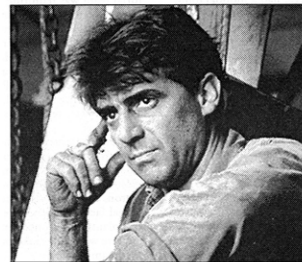
These forms became the "Bud & Seed" series and were exhibited to critical approval at Fordham University at Lincoln Center and, appropriately, at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, the renowned biological research institution run by Nobel Laureate James D. Watson, co-discoverer of DNA. In 2000, Boyajian was awarded the Sidney Simon Sculpture Award at the National Academy Museum's 175th annual exhibition.

Part of maturing involves paring down to that which is truly necessary. So it is with Boyajian's art. His new Cotyledons, substantial in mass but spare in line and plane, are elemental forms — literally life-aborning. He has created a half-dozen Cotyledons thus far, ranging from two-foot-tall indoor pieces to ten-foot exterior sculptures, all mounted onto tapered columns. They are sealed to enhance their deep chestnut hues and can endure in any climate.

For those who would like to view the new works, as well as 40-plus other sculptures and drawings, the Cotyledons will have their first public exposure at an annual exhibition and sale at Boyajian's home studio and sculpture garden in Ridgefield. It will take place November 9-11, over the long Veterans' Day weekend. The show is called "David Boyajian, Inside Out." The exhibition is at 462 North Salem Road (Route 116). For details, 203-431-6636 or log onto www.davidboyajian.com.



"Folded Bud Form II," 1998, steel, seven by three by three feet.



"Cotyledon IV," 2002, steel, nine by four by three feet.



"Cotyledon VI," 2002, steel, 36 by 34 by 12 inches.