

The News-Times

Sculpting Spaces

New Fairfield artist finds inspiration in nature

By **Brian Saxton**
THE NEWS-TIMES

FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 14, 2003

NEW FAIRFIELD — In the thin autumn mist hanging over the long, grassy slope, they stand like sentinels.

Some of the outsized steel sculptures mounted on elongated, delicate columns are 5 feet high. Others stretch up to 14 feet.

Their rich sienna color, the subtle handiwork of their creator, sculptor David Boyajian, harmonizes with the rural landscape.

Boyajian, 45, who is inspired by the elements of nature, says he has fashioned their shapes and forms to reflect the principles of nature's growth and expansion.

This Saturday and Sunday, Boyajian will share his art with the public at an open house in the home he and his family just bought on Milltown Road.

The outdoor sculptures dotting his "sculpture field" at the front of the 4-acre property are only part of the event that Boyajian and his wife, Carter, 41, are calling "Cornucopia 2003."

In addition to receiving tours of the property, visitors can see David Boyajian giving sculpture demonstrations in his studios. The larger barn includes Boyajian's metal fabrication shop as well as his wood and stone carving studio.

Inside a restored 3,000-square-foot gallery above, Boyajian will also exhibit some other works, including large-scale carved red oak sculptures, drawings and smaller steel and bronze pieces.

The Boyajians, along with their 10-year-old son, Gabriel, moved in only a few weeks ago from their home in Ridgefield after years of

searching for somewhere "to create, grow and exhibit."

"We had rented a small cottage in Ridgefield but needed something bigger," Carter Boyajian said this week. "Now we have 10,000 square feet of space."

Along with the "sculpture field," the property includes two adjoining barns with a studio, gallery and living quarters.

The property was formerly owned by Michael Nevelson, a local artist whose Russian-born mother, Louise, was also a celebrated sculptor.

"We enjoyed our eight years in Ridgefield, but we're now embarking on a new creative journey and want to forge strong bonds with our new community," David Boyajian said. "The natural beauty and abundance of the New Fairfield area represents a cornucopia of sustenance and hope for the future."

The Boyajians see opening their home to the public as a way of shaking hands with their new neighbors and introducing their work.

David Boyajian also plans to introduce metal sculpture workshops at his home this month.

"We've fallen in love with this town," he said. "We want to open our doors and let people in."

Boyajian's outdoor sculptures dramatically reflect the influence of nature on his work.

Some he calls "Cotyledons," the first single leaves, or pair of leaves, produced by the seed embryo of a flowering plant.

"They all become metaphors for growth and life as we see it," Boyajian said. "I see it as extracting components from nature, putting them into my work and then reintroducing them back into the landscape."

David Boyajian, born and raised in Connecticut, holds a master's degree in fine arts from the Maryland Institute's Rinehart School of Sculpture and studied at the prestigious Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine.

For the past 18 years, Boyajian has taught at the Silvermine School of Art in New Canaan, where he is senior sculpture instructor.

In addition to many publicly commissioned works, Boyajian's art has been exhibited at the United Nations in New York City, the Albright Knox Gallery in Buffalo, N.Y., and the National Academy in New York City.

One of his latest commissions was creating an aluminum sil-

houette of the late Justice Thurgood Marshall to be installed in a rotunda named for him in Bridgeport's Six to Six Magnet School. Marshall died in 1993 aged 83.

Boyajian's new home in New Fairfield will also showcase his wife's experience in dance theater.

Carter Boyajian, who was born in Philadelphia and grew up in the Boston area, pursued a career in dance, gymnastics, mime and visual art. The gallery at the family's new home will include her experimental dance studio.

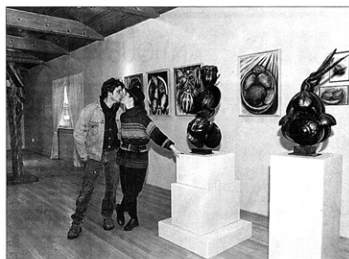
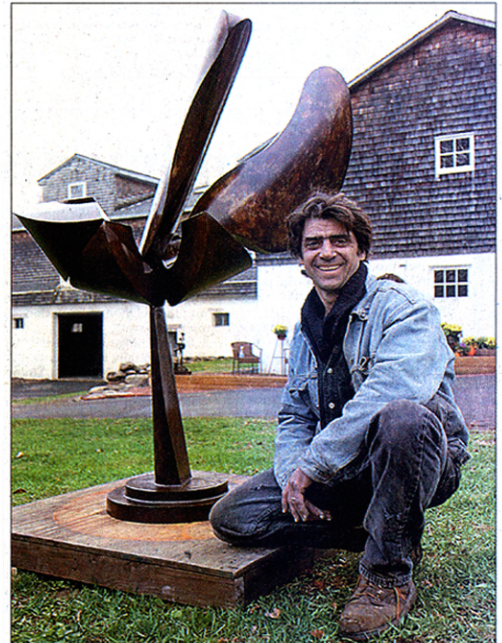
"This means we'll all have our own creative space," Carter Boyajian said.

"All" includes Gabriel Boyajian, now a sixth-grader at New Fairfield Middle School, who is already working on his own pieces of steel sculpture and even selling some of them.

"Sometimes I work with some of my father's scraps and then use my imagination to put it all together," he said. "I just like it."

The Boyajians' home at 3 Milltown Road is off Route 39. Open house this weekend, rain or shine, will be held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call (203) 746-6101.

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Artist David Boyajian and his wife Carter kiss in the gallery of their New Fairfield home.