

# Reality & subtext

## David Boyajian's work blends the tangible with the elusive

By Judy Birke

**WEST HAVEN** — Personal and reflective, David Boyajian's art defies easy categorization. "Nature Constructed, Sculpture and Drawings by David Boyajian," at the

**ART REVIEW**

University of New Haven's Seton Gallery through Jan. 21, is rife with unexpected and idiosyncratic combinations. These 27 pieces blend a tangible reality — architectural forms, flowers, portraits — with an elusive subtext that draws the viewer into an ambiguous world of reason and fantasy, person and place, the external and the internal.

By using a limited repertoire of subject matter and various recurring motifs, by juxtaposing elements from nature against those of industry and architecture, Boyajian achieves an effective, ever-shifting narrative that alludes to various states of being.

In groups of charcoal and pastel drawings, he traces the progression of ideas from initial concept to their final state. In "House Series," he complements the reductive shapes, minimal color and primitive figures, which establish an external architectural format, with smoke billowing from chimneys — a seeming reference to the humanity within.

In another series, "Flowers of the Mind," blossoms are ripe and ready to burst forth.

Both of those series culminate in "House Series VI (Flower House)," in which an enormous red bloom emerges from a chimney. Here the architectural elements take a smaller, more neutral position in a natural world that becomes more prominent.

Ironically, the drawings that reflect the path to the final idea are more

evocative than those that are more conclusive, suggesting, perhaps, that it's the journey that's of greater interest than the arrival.

The opposite is true in Boyajian's sculptural pieces.

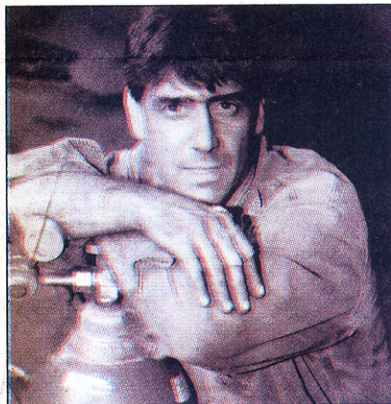
Here the conclusive works are more interesting than those that reveal their evolution.

In pieces like "House of Fire," "House of Wind" and "House of Water," Boyajian activates the surfaces, manipulates the light and integrates the architectural and organic forms into a finely tuned balance of aesthetic and emotion, configuration and concept.

That is not to say that nothing remains ambiguous here.

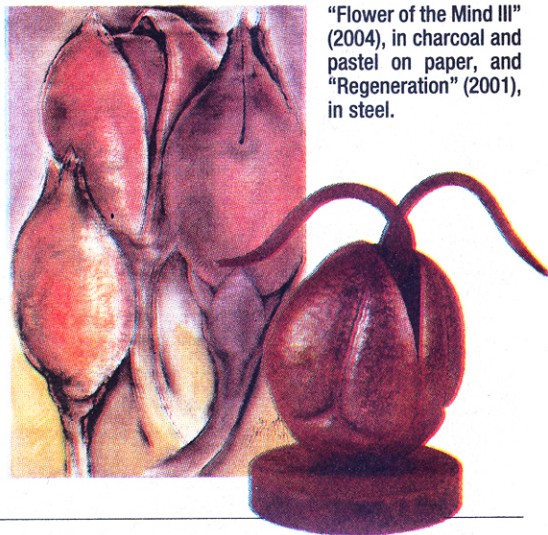
Despite their evolution into a seeming state of harmony, one piece includes an

interior staircase that goes nowhere, another doorways too high for easy admittance. These works still emit a quirky sense of enigmatic dialogue, leaving room for more than one interpretation.



David Boyajian

*Judy Birke of New Haven is a free-lance writer and art consultant.*



"Flower of the Mind III" (2004), in charcoal and pastel on paper, and "Regeneration" (2001), in steel.



"House of Wind" (2004) in oil stick on steel and limestone.