

especially his slim figures, which recall Giacometti's works. Made from massive steel bars—the bar is split at both ends, arms and legs created by bending the steel—these figures have gained Schaller international attention in the U.S. and Canada. This was his first solo exhibition in his home country. In addition to sculptures, the show included new drawings made with iron dust, graphite, carbon, and pure sulfur.

—Marc Wellman

## KOBE CITY, JAPAN

**Tatsuo Kawaguchi**

**Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art and Nagoya City Art Museum**

Tatsuo Kawaguchi is not your typical Japanese brand-name export to the global art market. Early in his career, he joined the I group, which was formed in 1965. That same year, the group constructed a deep hole and closed it during an exhibition at the Gifu Independent Show, several years before a member of Mono-ha, Nobuo Sekine, constructed his famous earth column. Kawaguchi is concerned with relationships, particularly between the visible and the invisible, beginning with energy and expanding into many other phenomena such as time and space, aesthetics, and life and death. *Relation—Energy* (1972) transmits electricity through diverse objects scattered about a room. *Relation—Electric Current/Time of Seeds, Time of Fossils* (2007) explores the same concept, but here the visitor doesn't have to worry about being shocked.

Kawaguchi enlarges the scope of his investigations in his later work. *Relation—Water Sitting on Chairs* (1998) features two facing chairs, each holding a multi-chambered yellow vessel on its seat. Both vessels and chairs are coated with beeswax. A lotus seed coated in copper is placed on a copper leaf floating in the water-filled vessel, and a single string connects the seed with the ceiling high above. The installation

seems humble, yet it is sacred and humanistic at the same time. In the catalogue of his recent exhibition, Kawaguchi talks about another striking piece, *Relation—Floating Lotus Boat* (2007), as the art of future and hope. The boat, which can carry a couple of passengers, is filled with lead-encased lotus pods and rides high in the air like a boat journeying to another land. A stream of lead lotus pods and their cast shadows lining the four walls surround the boat like humming music. Kawaguchi himself has taken a singular path above the din, singing in a mature voice of his own.

—Kazuko Nakane

## ROME

**Giuseppe Penone**

**Académie de France à Rome**

Perched like a crown on the cap of the Pincian Hill, the Villa Medici casts its silent shadow down and westward over ancient Rome. The Académie de France à Rome, Rome's French Academy, has been located here since the end of the 19th century, when Napoleon appropriated the majestic 16th-century construction. The academy's most recent show, simply titled "Giuseppe Penone," showcased recent works by the artist, from 2000 to the present.

The architectural refinements of the villa, though apparently opposed to Penone's roots in Arte Povera, offered an unexpectedly diverse array of environments, including dim dungeons, extensive hallways, sprawling courtyards, and open-air enclaves. The show opened in what remains of the villa's ancient Roman cistern, where beads of condensation slowly drip from the ceiling. Large cast bronze sheets of tree bark curled on the floor like enormous fallen leaves in *The Space of Sculpture (Skin of Cedar)* (2001). In the center of the space, between large, obstructive cement pillars, stood a rudimentary form constructed of leather draped over bronze tree branches. The cis-

**Top: Giuseppe Penone, *The Space of Sculpture (Skin of Cedar)*, 2001. Bronze and leather, detail of installation.**

**Bottom: Giuseppe Penone, *Idee di pietra*, 2004–07. Bronze, steel, stone, and live oak, 1270 x 550 x 500 cm.**

tern installation embodied the essence of Penone's work: an amalgamation of art and nature, merging past and present.

A well-worn path through a sprawling arched hall, fitted with a gradually rising, cobblestone walkway that once doubled as a horse ramp, facilitated the grand procession of Penone's *Pelle di Foglie Sguardo Incrociato (Skin of Leaves, 2005)*, which revisits his 2000 "Skin of Leaves" series. Initially this installation drew unabashedly Italian associations: the bronze branches and leaves climbed their way up a thoroughfare constructed with the clarity of Renaissance reason past high windows looking out toward the Villa Borghese, home of Bernini's Baroque masterpiece, *Apollo and Daphne*.

Themes of imitation and nature, permanence, and ethereality continued throughout the exhibition. One piece, in a dimly lit hallway, consisted of a line of potted shrubs partially concealing a series of cast tree limbs—this time in glass. The shrubs, unfortunate victims of a parasite, were slowly withering and dying.

*Idee di pietra* (2004–07), in contrast, used the serene Roman gardens as an effective natural backdrop for the bleakness of a cast bronze tree, burdened with seven gray boulders. Standing almost 13 meters high and flanked by a fake shrub, this stoic form first seemed to blend into its surroundings. As the title implies, the boulders themselves are out of reach, leaving one to wonder if they are bronze or stone. Within this simple possibility lies the wealth of complex potential that Penone's sculptures have consistently conveyed.

Penone's recent sculptural installations are a breath of fresh air remi-



niscient of Arte Povera's beginnings. They found a sympathetic and evocative home in the villa, drawing on and contrasting with its historical settings.

—Joli Reichel

*This review was the winner of the RPP Just Get Published! project at the Tyler School of Art in Rome. More information is available at <www.rpprojects.eu>.*