



SURPRISINGLY NATURAL: THE NATURE OF THE BRONX



BRONX RIVER
ART CENTER

LEHMAN COLLEGE
ART GALLERY

WAVE HILL

2008

SURPRISINGLY
NATURAL: THE NATURE
OF THE BRONX



ESSAY

Leslie Day

CURATORIAL STATEMENTS

José Ruiz
Susan Hoeltzel
Jennifer McGregor

**BRONX RIVER ART CENTER
September 12–October 18, 2008**

Mac Carbonell and Luke Stettner
Jason Falchook
Bettina Johae
Holly Lynton
Laura Napier
Katherine Radke
Yumi Janairo Roth
Benjamin Swett

**LEHMAN COLLEGE ART GALLERY
September 9–December 15, 2008**

Daniel Hauben
Lawrence Lederman
Margaret Moulton
Travis Roozée
Robert Stephenson
Rebecca Swanson

**WAVE HILL
September 9–November 30, 2008**

Lawrence Beck
Steven Day
N.W. Gibbons
David Gillison and Robert Schneider
Todd Martin
Leah Oates
Christine Osinski
Patrick Perry
Eric Slayton
Ron Turner



SURPRISINGLY NATURAL grew out of a desire to explore the importance of nature as an essential element in the fabric of the borough, particularly when the urban landscape is rapidly changing through development and ecological restoration efforts. In planning this exhibition we realized that as venues for presenting art we all have distinct and ongoing relationships to the nature around us and have been active in the stewardship of our surroundings.

New York City offers many opportunities for iconic and recognizable views and vistas and not surprisingly Brooklyn and Manhattan have a greater pull for contemporary photographers than the Bronx. Indeed photography of the Bronx has focused on either its blight or vibrant street and family life. Many of the views presented here are known primarily to residents who frequent these places but all deserve to be better known.

As a curatorial team we reviewed submissions by artists and sought out others we thought might be interested in expanding their reach to the Bronx. We divided the group between the three venues and curated each show individually. This involved selecting from ongoing projects, guiding artists to places of interest, and helping others to develop new projects that engage the public. The catalogue and exhibition are far from encyclopedic, but introduce the wide range of environments celebrating both the struggle and symbiosis between nature and human activity.

We thank the National Endowment for the Arts for recognizing the importance of this topic and supporting the opportunity for us to work together. The project is a true collaboration where the sum of the three exhibitions is far more expansive than any one of us could realize individually. The *Surprisingly Natural* exhibition and catalogue would not be possible without the ingenious and intrepid efforts of the artists who have explored the borough and present it in a new light. Leslie Day's insightful essay frames the impressive efforts of the government, non-profit organizations, businesses, and community groups who work tirelessly to make the borough a greener, more livable place. Melanie Roberts' design efforts helped to create the lasting catalogue. Sincere gratitude to the curatorial team, Susan Hoeltzel and her staff Mary Ann Siano, Patricia Cazorla, Sember Weinman, and Ali Irizarry; José Ruiz and his staff Maritza Pacheco and Carla Byrd; and Wave Hill's Leigh Ross and Hannah Flack for embracing the project with vital enthusiasm.

This autumn there's no need to leave the city to experience the beauty of season, visit each show and stroll through the surprisingly natural parks and parkways that link us.

—JENNIFER MCGREGOR, Senior Curator, Wave Hill

CELEBRATING THE NATURE OF THE BRONX

In 1899 my grandmother left Romania at the age of 13 and moved to New York City's Lower East Side. Two years later her family moved from the tenements of the Lower East Side to the Bronx, which she told me was like moving to a garden. "It was so beautiful — trees, flowers, and parks everywhere!"

For over 100 years, the Bronx has certainly had its ups and downs. For decades a picture of a garden was the farthest from anyone's mind when conjuring up images of the Bronx. Yet lately that image is starting to once again be filled with visions of gardens, vast city parks filled with bird song, rivers and streams, deep woods and flowering meadows. An example of this rejuvenation can be seen on the Bronx River, which is now the home of an American beaver, an animal that, like the Bronx, once faced tremendous odds of ever thriving again.

The Bronx is built atop the oldest bedrock of New York City: Fordham gneiss. This light and dark banded rock was formed in the Earth over one billion years ago. Hornblend or biotite mica often gives color to the dark bands, and quartz and feldspar make up the light bands of minerals. Gneiss forms the ridge in Riverdale and the high rocky ridge in the Fordham, Tremont, and University Heights sections of the Bronx. Large outcrops of Fordham gneiss can be seen throughout Van Cortlandt Park and the New York Botanical Garden. These outcrops, worn and polished by glaciers, wind, and water, were once the tops of massive mountains. The gneiss ridges and, for most of their length, the Hudson, Harlem, the Bronx and East Rivers, all flow in a north-south direction. Due to these ridges, many of the great parks of the Bronx are on land that was too steep and rocky for easy development and were, thankfully, preserved as parks.

As the glaciers moved through the area over 17,000 years ago, they carried and deposited immense boulders, known as erratics, throughout the Bronx. One of those,

a massive granite boulder known as Split Rock, has a rich place in early American history. Another important erratic is the massive boulder that sits on the shore of Long Island Sound in Pelham Bay Park. Known as the Gray Mare, this boulder was sacred to the Siwanoy, a group of local Lenape Indians, who believed that the giant rock had been placed along the shore by their spiritual guardian.

Photos in *Surprisingly Natural* depict the wonderful changes taking place in the Bronx. With the Hudson River running along its western shores and the Harlem River and Long Island Sound lapping its southern and eastern shores, the Bronx has hundreds of community gardens, two major parks —Pelham Bay Park and Van Cortlandt Park — many smaller parks such as the Bronx River Park, Crotona Park and Riverdale Park, and two internationally renowned institutions that research and present the flora and fauna of the world: the Bronx Zoo, run by the Wildlife Conservation Society, and the New York Botanical Garden.

Throughout the decades of the 1960's and 1970's, when the Bronx was ravaged by economic and social devastation, abandoned lots filled with garbage and wreckage dotted the borough. Community activists worked to reclaim these lots and turn them into community gardens. With the help of organizations like The Bronx Land Trust, Bronx Green-Up, the New York Botanical Garden, Wave Hill, and the Green Guerillas, community gardeners have learned how to turn a rubble-filled empty lot into a gorgeous, color-filled, sweet-smelling, shady garden. Working together to create these oases of peace and beauty helped the people of the Bronx come together to effect other positive changes that led to rebuilding entire communities.

2009 is the centennial of the Grand Concourse. Modeled after the Champs Elysées in Paris, The Grand Boulevard and Concourse was originally designed in the 1870's as a scenic pathway to connect Central Park to the great parks of the Bronx. Although this connection was not made, it does lead to the Mosholu Parkway, which links to Van Cortlandt Park, the New York Botanical Garden, Lehman College, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Bronx Zoo, Pelham Parkway and Pelham Bay Park. The revival of this historic boulevard is now part of the renaissance of the Bronx.

The waterways surrounding the Bronx are going through a revival as well. The Hudson has always been part of the life of the people of the Bronx who live near its shore. Looking at it every day gives us so much: beauty, peace, and a sense of wonder. 2009 is the Quadracentennial of Henry Hudson's maiden voyage up the river that would be named for him. Since the Clean Water Act of the 1970's, and the building of the North River Sewage Treatment Plant along the Westside

Highway in the 1990's, the River has become clean and healthy for our native fish. Sturgeon, striped bass, white perch and American shad are once again migrating into and out of the Hudson each year. New Yorkers can swim in its waters.

Community activists, institutions and agencies, including Lehman College, the New York City Parks Department, and the Bronx River Alliance, have worked for over 30 years to reclaim the beautiful Bronx River and turn it into an active recreation area, and an outdoor classroom for students from the Bronx River Art Center. The river is now home to an American beaver, an aquatic mammal that is on the Seal of the City of New York, but has not been seen in the city for over 200 years.

The beaver is not the only unexpected and magical animal living once again in the Bronx. Bees pollinate Bronx flowers in the Genesis Community Garden behind St. Augustine's Catholic Church, 167th Street and Franklin Avenue in the South Bronx. Beekeeper and St. Augustine choir director Roger Repohl not only tends his beehives, but also teaches children about the ecological relationship between flowering plants and pollinating animals. The taste of the bees' honey varies with the type of flower blooming in the Genesis Garden. In June the bees make honey from the heavenly-smelling linden tree flowers, and in July wild clover plants are the source of the sweet honey. The bees, Mr. Repohl, and the community garden provide local children and their families with beauty, knowledge, and delicious honey for food and for thought. He also leads beekeeping programs at Wave Hill.

Noted for its 28 acres of beautiful gardens, outstanding tree collection and spectacular views of the Hudson River and the Palisades, Wave Hill boasts a mansion that has been lived in by such historical figures as Teddy Roosevelt when he was a child, Mark Twain, and Arturo Toscanini. Now a public garden and cultural center, Wave Hill is a beloved place of peace and tranquility for many New Yorkers who enjoy the gardens and programs.

Another place to find amazing trees is the beautiful Woodlawn Cemetery at Webster Avenue and E. 233rd Street, a burial place for important American writers, musicians, actors, politicians, industrialists, and athletes such as Duke Ellington, Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, Robert Moses, Miles Davis, Irving Berlin, Gertrude Ederle, Herman Melville, Frank Winfield Woolworth, Joseph Pulitzer, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Woodlawn's grounds hold five of the city's "Great Trees": a weeping beech, silver linden, white pine, European cut leaf beech, and an umbrella pine. The New York Botanical Garden is known for its specimen trees, as is Van Cortlandt Park, where, along Broadway and 251st Street, you will see a line of large pin oaks near the border of the parade ground and the park. The trees of the Bronx support a wide diversity of wildlife, including a nesting

pair of Great Horned Owls who make the forest of Pelham Bay Park their home.

The people of the Bronx have a lot to celebrate this year. The natural world is doing surprisingly well in this large and diverse borough. Its rivers, sound, parks, community gardens and educational institutions provide all New Yorkers with beauty, knowledge and outdoor recreation. Swim in the Long Island Sound off Orchard Beach; canoe down the Bronx River; bird-watch in Crotona Park or butterfly-watch in Van Cortlandt Park. Hike through the woods of Pelham Bay Park and watch for the nesting pair of Great Horned Owls. Surprisingly natural, nature is happening all over the Bronx!

— LESLIE DAY

Leslie Day, author of Field Guide to the Natural World of New York City, is an environmental and life science educator at The Elisabeth Morrow School and an adjunct faculty member at Bank Street College of Education. She has a doctorate in science education from Teachers College Columbia University. Leslie and her husband live in a houseboat on the Hudson River in Manhattan.



N.W. GIBBONS
*MNRR over Muskrat
Cove, 2008*



TODD MARTIN
Two Trees Island, 2007

SURPRISINGLY NATURAL: BRONX RIVER ART CENTER



OUR EARTH IS AS NATURAL AS IT IS ARTIFICIAL. Contemporary debate about our existence stems from the struggle to consider this truth in our everyday lives. Is it possible to operate in one realm without losing the integrity of the other? Is it possible to enjoy the latter without feeling responsible for one's participation in the former?

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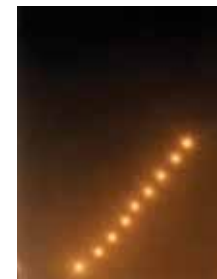
From the center of the bustling density of West Farms Square, sandwiched between Boston Road and E. 177th Street and anchored by the now-defunct Bronx Street, stems the curatorial perspective for this leg of the exhibition. An aerial view depicts a mutated co-existence between the natural and the artificial. Alongside a carwash, a bargain boutique, towering train tracks, and a cascade of highways, the Bronx River Art Center is right at home here, acting as a decoy and advocate for its pocket of nature.

The unique role of the Bronx River Art Center outlines the site-specific gesture and concept that drives the current exhibition. Over several months, the exhibiting artists have radiated from these coordinates like spokes. They have traversed throughout the rest of the borough, aware that their discoveries would ultimately be re-immersed in the original social and artistic temperature defining our community and organization.

The elliptical nature of the artists' physical and psychological adventures, many of them realized for the first time and specifically for this exhibition, is *Surprisingly Natural*. Many of the photographs could have been shot in countless, nature-bound towns throughout the U.S. What positions these works within the spectrum of contemporary art, versus documentary photography, is the feeling of not being completely alone or safe within nature. It is the sense of trespassing, the framing of the artist as uninvited and prohibited. It is also the reward of finding unexplored areas in frequently treaded natural spaces. The fieldwork conducted by these artists uncovered three notable methodologies.



**MAC CARBONELL
AND LUKE STETTNER**
740 East Gun Hill Road, 2008



JASON FALCHOOK
Untitled, 2008



BETTINA JOHAE
*borough edges, nyc - bx_0100
pelham bay park, the bronx,
2004*



HOLLY LYNTON
*St. Augustine Catholic Church
Rectory Garden, 2008*



LAURA NAPIER
*Maira demonstrates throwing
a seed bomb, 2008*

1. *Nature of the Bronx as Uncanny Territory* frames the overlap between nature, the individual, and the urban grid. The opposition between the intent and the use of nature imprints surreal moments of growth and decay and peculiar passages of time. From the awareness that arises from a setting sun captured with over twenty exposures to the sense of displacement relayed by an ominous sign reading “And You Are There,” Jason Falchook’s photographs mark the subtle physicality of being in nature with an acute patience and connection to its patterns.

Katherine Radke enters various dense woodlands and navigates through their mystery to uncover poetic glimpses of past human life and activity. Staying within the urban divide, Benjamin Swett’s images are consumed by nature’s imposition on concrete parameters. The artist searches frequently used sidewalks, street corners and highways for signs of unusually distinct, beautiful, and out-of-context moments where nature triumphs and gives luminance to the man-made.

2. *Nature of the Bronx as Improbable & Renegade Activity* highlights atypical practices led by concerns in nature, landscape, and ecology. Holly Lynton’s body of work locates the custom of traditional beekeeping in various parts of the borough. From the Bronx Zoo to the St. Augustine Catholic Church Rectory Garden, the project balances the history and progression of beekeeping from the rural sector to the city.

The unexpected nature of this renegade activity extends through Laura Napier’s project, *Bronx Guerrillas*, which is inspired by the practice of Guerrilla Gardening. According to Napier, this international, alternative movement, driven by covertly planting in fenced-off empty lots, cracks in sidewalks, and other unauthorized territories, operates with an ethos similar to graffiti art. Napier’s photographs of local guerrilla gardens, along with her own interventions around the Bronx River Art Center, turn the fragility of nature into activism.

3. *Nature of the Bronx as Pilgrimage & Destination* mediates between the journey and experience of finding nature and the artists’ discoveries upon arrival. With interdisciplinary,

collaborative and interventionist tactics, the artist becomes a guide critically promoting unknown paths and new destinations. Mac Carbonell and Luke Stettner invite photographers of any age and skill level to scout and shoot an obtuse intersection, as photographic subject, in Williamsbridge. 740 East Gun Hill Road transforms from a nameless address to a site that welcomes aspiring photographers and challenges them to find nature.

Moving exponentially out of the street corner, Bettina Johae weaves viewers through the entire silhouette of the Bronx in an enduring pursuit to outline the borough by photographing over 500 points of reference and interest along the way. Each of the images in the series *borough edges, nyc – the Bronx*, carries the viewer through the boundaries that define place but exist as extreme and distant frontiers. Issues of mapping and navigation are further explored by Yumi Janairo Roth whose *Meta Mapa: Bronx* offers a humorous and witty contemplation of memory and location. The artist’s interventions in West Farms Square position her as a lost wanderer, perhaps taking a wrong turn on the way to the zoo and operating only with a tourist-styled map. Asking passing strangers to point her in the right direction, her guiding map unfolds to be an image of a hand-drawn map on the palm of someone else’s hand, marking all of the nearby green spaces.

The subsequent confusion and disorientation imposed on the stranger, and now viewer, simulates a similar bewilderment still apparent when putting the words Bronx and Nature in the same sentence. Janairo Roth’s map symbolically leads us back to a specific point

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and to a factual model/organization that enables these seemingly disparate words to co-exist in the same sentence.

— JOSÉ RUIZ, Gallery Director and Curator, Bronx River Art Center



KATHERINE RADKE
Bronx woods, 2008



YUMI JANAIRO ROTH
Meta Mapa: Bronx, 2008



BENJAMIN SWETT
*American Elm, Bruckner
Boulevard, August 2, 2001, 2001*



JASON FALCHOOK

Untitled (And You Are There), 2008

Archival inkjet print

11" x 14"

Riverdale

FAR LEFT:

MAC CARBONELL

AND

LUKE STETTNER

740 East Gun Hill Road, 2008

Photographic

installation

Dimensions variable

Williamsbridge



BETTINA JOHAE
borough edges,
nyc - bx_0180 pelham
bay park,
the bronx, 2004
Digital slide
Dimensions variable
Pelham Bay Park



HOLLY LYNTON
On Top of the World of
Birds, 2008
C-print
24" x 30"
Bronx Zoo



KATHERINE RADKE

Bronx River Park, 2008

C-print

15" x 15"

Bronx River Park

FAR LEFT:

LAURA NAPIER

Guerrilla garden,

seeded circa 2004-2006

by unknown, 2008

Archival photographic

inkjet print

6.5" x 10"

Mott Haven



BENJAMIN SWETT

Royal Paulownia, 7.5",

Hutchinson River.

May 8, 2002., 2002

Archival pigment print

17" x 18"

Hutchinson River

FAR LEFT:

YUMI JANAIRO ROTH

Meta Mapa: Bronx, 2008

Light jet print

36" x 24"

West Farms Square

SURPRISINGLY
NATURAL: LEHMAN
COLLEGE ART GALLERY



IT IS HARD NOT TO ROMANTICIZE THE BRONX. Bordered by historic waterways—the Hudson River, the Harlem River, the East River, the Long Island Sound, and bisected by the Bronx River—it is a borough of natural spaces. Though the Bronx is decidedly urban—the third most populated county in the United States—it contains the New York City’s largest remaining old-growth forest. Several islands are within its boundaries as well as dramatic exposures of bedrock and acres of marshlands. The terrain is full of quirky contradictions and unexpected juxtapositions. At every turn nature bumps up against the built environment—and this too is a part of the persona of the Bronx.

It is the physical Bronx that sets the stage for the photographers in *Surprisingly Natural*. Each struggles with what might seem at first an oxymoron—the conundrum of nature in the midst of the urban. In each photograph there is an awareness of the fragility of nature in the city and the delicate balance that allows them both to flourish.

A Riverdale resident for eight years, Rebecca Swanson photographs the Bronx with an acute awareness of light. *Train Station*, 2007, *Shorefront Park 1*, 2007, and *Shorefront Park 2*, 2007, depict the area around the Metro-North Spuyten Duyvil train station. The soft, filtered tones of the photographs suggest the paintings of the 19th-century Luminists. They are printed on metallic paper and framed with non-reflective Plexiglas, adding another dimension to the work. In *Train Station*, 2007, there is a hint of the railway in the foreground and in the graceful arch of the Henry Hudson Bridge overhead. Shot on Thanksgiving Day, the photograph’s morning mist and peachy light create a pastoral scene.

Robert Stephenson is interested in the transitional spaces of the City where nature abuts the built environment. Both persistent and fragile, nature is always pushing back. *Bronx Whitestone Bridge*, *Pugsley Creek Park*, 2008, offers a richly layered view of the east Bronx with a distant bridge, surrounding neighborhoods, and forested coastal plains. A broken cyclone fence marks a failed attempt to enforce a border and separate the domesticated from



REBECCA SWANSON
Train Station, November 22,
2007



ROBERT STEPHENSON
Flags, Pugsley Creek Park,
2008



TRAVIS ROOZÉE
View of the Hudson River from Palisade Avenue, 2008



LAWRENCE LEDERMAN
Winter in the North Bronx, 2008

the wild. In *Flags, In Pugsley Creek Park*, 2008, the marsh grasses and flags are a composition of warm colors and varied textures. The tides and winds have claimed them both.

Attracted to the city's overlooked corners, Travis Roozée finds panoramic scenes that read as vignettes with implied narratives. Humans, when included, are often small and dwarfed by their surroundings. In *Spuyten Duyvil*, 2008, a painter works *en plein air* inspired by the same landscape that Hudson River School painters sought out 150 years ago. In another, *View of the Hudson River from Palisade Avenue*, 2008, a slice of Hudson River barge traffic is framed by Villa Charlotte Bronte, apartment buildings on the escarpment not far from Spuyten Duyvil. *Bronx River*, 2007 offers a layered scene with multiple points of interest. As the river flows through West Farms, an elevated train passes overhead. The riverbank, with scattered stones and concrete blocks on one side and a levee buttressed with tires on the other, offers another kind of metaphor for the intersection of the urban and the natural.

Lawrence Lederman approaches nature with a sense of awe akin to the 19th-century notion of the sublime. Photographed on the grounds of the New York Botanical Garden, his work in this exhibition conveys the beauty and drama of nature, ever mindful of its fragility. *Bronx River, Bird's Eye View*, 2007 offers a keyhole view of the river and a simple forest, the latter made significant by its preservation as the last of New York City's native woodlands, a small 40-acre plot in the middle of the Bronx. In *Tiffany Glass, Weeping Katsura Tree*, 2007, a cascade of leaves fills the image, bringing to mind the blanket of foliage in Gustav Klimt's *The Park*, 1910. Lederman has recently photographed in the Italian Campagna region, following the locations where members of the Hudson River School painted on their European tours.

A California native intrigued by the forests of the Northeast, Margaret Moulton has produced a series of black and white photographs taken at Wave Hill and in Van Cortlandt Park. A departure from her earlier work, these abstract compositions capture the linear details of skeletal branches and thicket vines in winter. In *Bronx Tangle*, 2008, the sharp-focus tracery

of deciduous branches contrasts with the soft focus of distant trees, creating a tapestry of tones. *Untitled (Wave Hill Beech Shadow)*, 2007 depicts shadows cast on the trunk of a beech tree on the grounds of Wave Hill. The texture of the bark, with silhouetted leaf shapes, reads as a monochromatic watercolor. In another, *Untitled (Woven Weeds)*, 2007, an impenetrable tangle of vines wraps a tree form in a stranglehold. The shape underneath reads as a figure caught in an impossible trap.

Daniel Hauben is best known for his paintings of Bronx street scenes with their rich sampling of neighborhood buildings and people. His work in *Surprisingly Natural*, the first photographs he has exhibited, is part of a series begun on a snowy evening's walk from Fort Independence Avenue to the Grand Concourse in 1991. All four photographs are taken in or adjacent to the Sholem Aleichem Houses. In *Tree and Fire Escape in Snow* everything is coated in a blue frosting and there is an unearthly glow in the sky. At the intersection of Giles Place and Sedgwick Avenue, traffic lights radiate color and warmth. The urban environment is transformed and silenced.

Surprisingly Natural offers an opportunity to see the Bronx from many perspectives. It gives the viewer a chance to consider the overlooked corners of neighborhoods or to just pause and look again at the extraordinary beauty of the Bronx.

— SUSAN HOELTZEL, Director, Lehman College Art Gallery



MARGARET MOULTON
Untitled (Woven Weeds), 2007



DANIEL HAUBEN
Tree and Fire Escape in Snow, 1991



DANIEL HAUBEN

Traffic Lights in Snow,
1991
Archival pigment print
11.5" x 17"
Printed by Judy Lane
Giles Place and
Sedgwick Avenue



LAWRENCE LEDERMAN

Falls, Bronx River Fall,
2007
Inkjet print
30" x 45"
New York Botanical
Garden



**MARGARET
MOULTON**
Bronx Tangle, 2008
Gelatin silver print
19.5" x 19.5"
Van Cortlandt Park



TRAVIS ROOZÉE
*Julius Richman
Memorial Park*, 2008
Digital C-print
18" x 18"
Tremont



ROBERT STEPHENSON
Bronx Whitestone Bridge, Pugsley Creek Park, 2008
Digital C-print
20" x 24"
Pugsley Creek Park

RIGHT:
REBECCA SWANSON
Shorefront Park 2, November 22, 2007 (Thanksgiving morning)
Digital C-print
16" x 24"
Spuyten Duyvil



SURPRISINGLY NATURAL: WAVE HILL



FIRST-TIME VISITORS TO WAVE HILL are always surprised that such a beautiful treasure exists in the Bronx, reflecting on the eye-opening transition from the dense urban cityscape to the estate neighborhood of Riverdale. The *Surprisingly Natural* images on view at Wave Hill offer a counterpoint to our cultivated landscape while reaffirming the variety of surprisingly beautiful places in the Bronx. These photographs are the result of extensive exploration on the part of the artists, many of whom have complementary practices and interests. Throughout, these images underscore a contemporary interest in uncovering the overlooked and seeking out the beauty in the shadows.

For his *Thicket* series, Lawrence Beck, a Riverdale resident for many years, photographed the dense undergrowth in nearby Riverdale Park, Van Cortlandt Park, and the area along the Henry Hudson Parkway. These large black and white photographs convey immense walls of unchecked growth. The all-over approach to the composition is reminiscent of abstract expressionist painting. In recent years, intensive clearing of sections of Riverdale Park by Wave Hill's Forest Project Summer Collaborative interns has eradicated some of the invasive vines from the park, but it is a never-ending endeavor.

For this exhibition Steven Day explored Crotona Park and Memorial Park in the heart of the Bronx. He took photographs in April prior to the burst of spring, juxtaposing daily life and recreation with the unexpected proximity of nature. Here he forefronts what might be considered "taken for granted" nature with buildings as the backdrop. Day has produced other series that have focused on overlooked architecture, such as the Bridge Apartments built on top of the New England Thruway (I-95) overlooking the George Washington Bridge, and an abandoned hospital on Central Park West.

Over the past year N.W. Gibbons has been photographing the Bronx River as part of his *River Series* that follows the course of a river from its source to its mouth. Using the antique tintype process, he searches out isolated pockets where there is clearly a push and



LAWRENCE BECK
Thicket XXI, 2005



STEVEN DAY
Memorial Park (trees-project)
Bronx, 2008



**DAVID GILLISON
AND BOB SCHNEIDER**
*Train Station Van Cortlandt
Park*, 2008



TODD MARTIN
Twin Island, Pelham Bay Park, 2007



LEAH OATES
Van Cortlandt 4, 2008



CHRISTINE OSINSKI
Couple in Hammock, Hunter Island, 2003

pull between the urban and the natural. The technique gives the image a historic quality, but clearly these are images of the contemporary river.

Lehman College professors David Gillison (Art) and Robert Schneider (Mathematics and Computer Science) have been working as a team to create panoramic photographs that are inspired by the Hudson River School of painting. With High Dynamic Range (HDR) imaging techniques they use computer technology to combine multiple images of the same scene, maximizing pixels and image quality by eliminating some of the contrast and filling in the darker areas with information. For this exhibition they have captured a view of Spuyten Duyvil from Manhattan and an abandoned train station in Van Cortlandt Park.

Todd Martin is an architect who regularly explores the outer reaches of the city. His forays into Pelham Bay Park capture the rugged shoreline. He also sought out Split Rock, a geological boulder caught between the intersection of the Hutchinson River Parkway and I-95. According to legend, the site served as a lookout for Indians, and was near the home of Anne Hutchinson, who, along with her family, was killed during the brutal Indian Wars.

Producing new work for this exhibition took Leah Oates to Van Cortlandt Park and Pelham Bay Park. In these sprawling and ecologically diverse parks she seeks out the interstices where nature thrives alongside human intervention and activity. Presented as light boxes, her images capture views that reveal the beauty to be discovered by the intrepid explorer. As in her earlier *Transitory Spaces* series, she is concerned with overlooked and abandoned areas.

Since 1998, Christine Osinski's New York *Archipelago* project has taken her to New York's 38 small islands and island communities. Her photographs celebrate both the persistence of nature, when she captures the ancient boulders deposited during the last ice age, and the life that takes place in the midst of a natural setting. The project reopens a view to the city as an archipelago, or collection of islands, that was the early sailors' first impression

of the region. By exploring each island, the project also describes how these borderline areas have become cemeteries, warehouses for the sick, and dumping grounds for toxic waste.

Patrick Perry has lived and taught high school in the Bronx for the last two years. His endless meanderings through the borough resulted in the 2007 project entitled *Devour*. In this series of photographs, nature's power overcomes the rude human obstacles set in its way. *Gorge* depicts the long-term struggle between a tree and a chain link fence in which the force of the tree's growth ultimately overcomes the fence. By turning his lens to commonplace incidents discovered in parks throughout the borough, Perry frames nature in a heroic light.

Eric Slayton is a field biologist and artist who combines both of these interests in projects that concern the way that nature is presented institutionally and absorbed by the public. These photographs are from a new series, *Why Birds*, that explores people who are passionate about birds. He portrays Bronx enthusiasts — a bird watcher on the Bronx River, an ornithologist who studies owls in Pelham Bay Park, and a zookeeper who works with flamingos at the Bronx Zoo. A previous project, *Zooborhood*, explored the way that the Bronx community's view of nature is shaped by the urban-based zoo in its midst.

Ron Terner is a longtime resident of City Island who runs the Focal Point Gallery. Through decades and seasons he has documented this historic seaport community as it moves into the 21st century. His photographs evoke the island and the people who have been shaped by this unique location, tucked away in a corner of New York.

Surprisingly Natural presents an intriguing range of photographic techniques from 19th-century tintypes to 21st-century HDR imaging. We hope that it will inspire visitors to contemplate the nature in their neighborhood with a fresh eye and optimism.

— JENNIFER MCGREGOR, Senior Curator, Wave Hill



PATRICK PERRY
Gorge-Van Cortlandt Park, 2007



RON TERNER
City Island Bridge - From the Air, 1979



ERIC SLAYTON
Yvetta, American Flamingo Holding, Bronx Zoo, 2008



STEVEN DAY

Crotona Park (baseball field) Bronx, 2008

Edition of 3

C-print

26.75" x 26.5"

Crotona Park

FAR LEFT:

LAWRENCE BECK

Thicket XXV, 2004

Edition of 5

Selineum toned silver

gelatin print

52" x 41"

Van Cortlandt Park



N.W. GIBBONS
Muskrat Cove, 2008
Tintype
11" x 14"
Bronx River



**DAVID GILLISON
AND ROBERT
SCHNEIDER**
Spuyten Duyvil, 2008
Panoramic HDR
Imaging inkjet print
36" x 90"
Spuyten Duyvil



TODD MARTIN

Split Rock, Looking

West, 2007

C-print

9" x 12"

Pelham Bay Park



LEAH OATES

Van Cortlandt 1, 2008

Light box

20" x 30" x 2"

Van Cortlandt Park



PATRICK PERRY

Demolish - Pelham Bay

Park, 2007

C-print

7" x 5"

Pelham Bay Park

FAR LEFT:

CHRISTINE OSINSKI

Prehistoric Rock

with Man, East

Nonations, 2000

Inkjet print

16" x 20"

East Nonations Island



RON TERNER

Dive, 1975

Giclee on paper

13" x 19"

Nievens Dock, City
Island

FAR LEFT:

ERIC SLAYTON

Trudy, Saw-whet Owl

Research Project,

Pelham Bay Park, 2007

C-print mounted

on aluminum

18" x 20"

Pelham Bay Park

BRONX RIVER ART CENTER

MAC CARBONELL AND LUKE STETTNER

740 East Gun Hill Road, 2008
Photographic installation
Dimensions variable

JASON FALCHOOK

Untitled, 2008
Archival inkjet print
8" x 10"

Untitled, 2008
Archival inkjet print
10" x 8"

Untitled, 2008
Digital C-print
24" x 20"

Untitled, 2008
Digital C-print
30" x 40"

Untitled (7 Suns), 2008
Archival inkjet print
11" x 14"

Untitled (20 Suns), 2008
Archival inkjet print
11" x 14"

Untitled (And You Are There),
2008
Archival inkjet print
11" x 14"

BETTINA JOHAE

*borough edges, nyc – the
Bronx*, 2004-07
Single channel digital slide
show and mapping
Dimensions variable

HOLLY LYNTON

African Bee Eaters, Bronx Zoo,
2008
C-print
24" x 30"

Drew Gardens, 2008
C-print
24" x 30"

On Top of the World of Birds,
2008
C-print
24" x 30"

*St. Augustine Catholic Church
Rectorry Garden*, 2008
C-print
24" x 30"

LAURA NAPIER

Bronx Guerrillas, 2008
Archival photographic inkjet
prints and on-site installation
Dimensions variable

KATHERINE RADKE

Bronx River Park, 2008
C-print
15" x 15"

Bronx woods, 2008
C-print
15" x 15"

Chicken, 2008
C-print
11" x 14"

Collection, 2008
C-print
11" x 14"

Tree, 2008
C-print
11" x 14"

YUMI JANAIRÓ ROTH

*Meta Mapa: Bronx (MTA
Employee)*, 2008
Archival inkjet print
24" x 36"

*Meta Mapa: Bronx (Subway
Platform)*, 2008
Archival inkjet print
24" x 36"

*Meta Mapa: Bronx-takeaway
map (chicken coop)*, 2008
Edition of 80
Plexiglas, color laser print
11.5" x 17.5"

*Meta Mapa: Bronx-takeaway
map (river, zoo, community
garden)*, 2008
Edition of 80
Plexiglas, color laser print
11.5" x 17.5"

*Meta Mapa: Bronx-takeaway
map (Williamsbridge Oval
Park, Van Cortlandt Park)*, 2008
Edition of 80
Plexiglas, color laser print
11.5" x 17.5"

BENJAMIN SWETT

*American Elm, Bruckner
Boulevard, August 2, 2001*,
2001
Archival pigment print
17" x 18"

*Royal Paulownia, 7.5",
Hutchinson River,
May 8, 2002, 2002*
Archival pigment print
17" x 18"

*Twin Island from Hunter
Island, Pelham Bay Park,
October 17, 2002, 2002*
Archival pigment print
17" x 18"

LEHMAN COLLEGE

DANIEL HAUBEN

Sholem Aleichem Gate, 1991
Archival pigment print
11.5" x 17"

Snowy Trees and Fence, 1991
Archival pigment print
11.5" x 17"

Traffic Lights in Snow, 1991
Archival pigment print
11.5" x 17"

*Tree and Fire Escape
in Snow*, 1991
Archival pigment print
17" x 11.5"

LAWRENCE LEDERMAN

Bronx River, Bird's Eye View,
2007
Inkjet print
23" x 36"

*Day Break Flowering
Cherry, Bronx*, 2007
Inkjet print
30" x 45"

Falls, Bronx River, 2007
Inkjet print
30" x 45"

Falls, Bronx River, Fall, 2007
Inkjet print
30" x 45"

*Tiffany Glass, Weeping Katsura
Tree*, 2007
Inkjet print
28" x 30"

Winter in the North Bronx,
2008
Inkjet print
30" x 39"

MARGARET MOULTON

Bronx Tangle, 2008
Gelatin silver print
19.5" x 19.5"

Untitled (Beech Twig), 2008
Gelatin silver print
19.5" x 19.5"

*Untitled (Wave Hill Beech
Shadow)*, 2003
Gelatin silver print
19.5" x 19.5"

Untitled (Woven Weeds), 2007
Gelatin silver print
19.5" x 19.5"

TRAVIS ROOZÉE

Bronx River, 2007
Digital C-print
18" x 18"

East 188th Street, 2008
Digital C-print
18" x 18"

*Julius Richman Memorial
Park*, 2008
Digital C-print
18" x 18"

Mosholu Golf Course, 2008
Digital C-print
18" x 18"

Spuyten Duyvil, 2008
Digital C-print
29.5" x 29.5"

St. Mary's Park, 2008
Digital C-print
18" x 18"

*View of the Hudson River
from Palisade Avenue*, 2008
Digital C-print
18" x 18"

ROBERT STEPHENSON

*Bronx Whitestone Bridge,
Pugsley Creek Park, 2008*
Digital C-print
20" x 24"

*Flags, Pugsley Creek Park,
2008*
Digital C-print
20" x 24"

Untitled, Harding Park, 2008
Digital C-print
20" x 24"

*Untitled 4, Van Cortlandt
Park, 2007*
Digital C-print
30" x 40"

Van Cortlandt, 2008
Digital C-print
20" x 40"

REBECCA SWANSON

*Shorefront Park 1,
November 22, 2007*
(Thanksgiving morning)
Digital C-print
16" x 24"

*Shorefront Park 2,
November 22, 2007*
(Thanksgiving morning)
Digital C-print
16" x 24"

*Train Station,
November 22, 2007*
(Thanksgiving morning)
Digital C-print
16" x 24"

Rudebeck 2, 2007
Digital C-print
16" x 24"

Wetlands, 2007
Digital C-print
16" x 24"

WAVE HILL**LAWRENCE BECK**

Thicket XXI, 2005
Edition of 5
Selenium toned silver
gelatin print
52" x 41"
Courtesy of Sonnabend
Gallery, New York, NY

Thicket XXV, 2004
Edition of 5
Selenium toned silver
gelatin print
52" x 41"
Courtesy of Sonnabend
Gallery, New York, NY

STEVEN DAY

*Crotona Park (bags)
Bronx, 2008*
Edition of 3
C-print
26.75" x 26.5"

*Crotona Park (baseball
field) Bronx, 2008*
Edition of 3
C-print
26.75" x 26.5"

*Crotona Park (trees/project)
Bronx, 2008*
Edition of 3
C-print
26.75" x 26.5"

*Memorial Park (kids)
Bronx, 2008*
Edition of 3
C-print
26.75" x 26.5"

N.W. GIBBONS

Bronx Meadow, 2008
Tintype
3 panels, 11" x 42"

Bronx River at Olinville, 2008
Tintype
4 panels, 11" x 56"

Duncombe East, 2008
Tintype
2 panels, 11" x 28"

*MNRR over Muskrat Cove,
2008*
Tintype
11" x 14"

Muskrat Cove, 2008
Tintype
11" x 14"

Olinville Meadow, 2008
Tintype
3 panels, 11" x 42"

**DAVID GILLISON AND
ROBERT SCHNEIDER**

Spuytten Duyvil, 2008
Panoramic HDR Imaging
inkjet print
36" x 90" approximate

*Train Station Van Cortlandt
Park, 2008*
Panoramic HDR Imaging
inkjet print
36" x 76" approximate

TODD MARTIN

*Split Rock, Looking North,
2007*
C-print
6.75" x 18"

*Split Rock, Looking South,
2007*
C-print
5.5" x 18"

*Split Rock, Looking
Southwest, 2007*
C-print
6" x 18"

*Split Rock, Looking
Southwest towards
Co-op City, 2007*
C-print
4.75" x 18"

*Split Rock, Looking West,
2007*
C-print
9" x 12"

*Twin Island, Pelham
Bay Park, 2007*
C-print
9" x 12"

Two Trees Island, 2007
C-print
5.25" x 18"

*Two Trees Island, Looking
South, 2007*
C-print
12" x 9"

LEAH OATES

*New York Botanical Garden
1, 2008*
Light box
12" x 18" x 2"

*New York Botanical Garden
2, 2008*
Light box
12" x 18" x 2"

Van Cortlandt 1, 2008
Light box
20" x 30" x 2"

Van Cortlandt 2, 2008
Light box
20" x 30" x 2"

Van Cortlandt 4, 2008
Light box
12" x 18" x 2"

CHRISTINE OSINSKI

*Couple in Hammock,
Hunter Island, 2003*
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

Hog Island, 2000
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

*House with Vegetation,
City Island, 2003*
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

*Landscape and Burial Site,
Hart Island, 2000*
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

Landscape, Hart Island, 2001
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

*Prehistoric Rock with
Man, East Nonations, 2000*
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

*Ruins and Trees,
Hart Island, 2000*
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

*Young Man with Gloves and
Net, Hunter Island, 2003*
Inkjet print
16" x 20"

PATRICK PERRY

Assimilate – Wave Hill, 2007

C-print
7" x 5"

Demolish – Pelham Bay Park,

2007
C-print
7" x 5"

Engulf – Crotona Park, 2007

C-print
7" x 5"

Gorge – Van Cortlandt Park,

2007
C-print
7" x 5"

Swallow – Riverdale Park,

2007
C-print
7" x 5"

ERIC SLAYTON

Bob, Bronx River, 2008

C-print mounted on
aluminum
18" x 20"

Trudy, Saw-whet Owl Research

Project, Pelham Bay Park,
2007
C-print mounted on
aluminum
18" x 20"

Yvetta, American Flamingo

Holding, Bronx Zoo, 2008
C-print mounted on
aluminum
18" x 20"

RON TERNER

Barbara's Yard, 1985

Giclee print
13" x 19"

City Island Bridge – From the

Air, 1978
Giclee print
13" x 19"

Dive, 1975

Giclee print
13" x 19"

Fordham Street, 2002

Giclee print
13" x 19"

Snowy Day, 1986

Giclee print
13" x 19"

Under Nevens Dock, 1985

Giclee print
13" x 19"

*All images are courtesy
of the artists unless
otherwise stated.*

**EXHIBITION-RELATED PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

**Fridays, September 12, 19, 26,
October 17, 24, 31, 10am–1pm**

ART WORKSHOP:**NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY
SERIES**

Benjamin Swett teaches creative
techniques through outdoor
shooting assignments at Wave Hill.
*6-session fee: \$105 Member;
\$135 Non-member. Single session
fee: \$20 Member; \$30 Non-member.
Registration required; call
718.549.3200 x305. Meets at
Wave Hill.*

**Saturday, Sunday,
October 4, 5, 3:30pm**
PHOTOGRAPHER TALKS

Exhibiting artists talk about their
approaches to photographing in
the borough. *Meets at Wave Hill.*

Thursday, October 16, 12:15–1:30

Artists from the exhibition will
talk about their work as part
of the City and the Humanities
Series. *Free of charge. Meets at
Lehman College Art Gallery.*

Saturday, October 18, 11am–3pm
**ART AND NATURE TROLLEY TOUR:
THE NATURE OF THE BRONX**

The Bronx Culture Trolley transports
participants from Wave Hill to Lehman
College Art Gallery and the Bronx River Art
Center, to meet artists and curators. Stop
at Van Cortlandt Park, where naturalist and
author Leslie Day highlights the diversity
of the borough's natural landscape. *Limited
registration. \$25 Member; \$35 Non-member.
Registration required; call 718.549.3200
x305. Meets at Wave Hill.*

EXHIBITION TOURS AT WAVE HILL

Thursdays, 12pm | Saturdays, 2:15pm



BRONX RIVER ART CENTER

1087 East Tremont Ave.
Bronx, NY 10460
718.589.5819
www.bronxriverart.org

Bronx River Art Center is a multi-arts organization located in a 16,000 square foot, four-story warehouse building that houses Exhibition, Artist Studio and Education Programs. Issues in contemporary art and the social interests of an intercultural community form the foundation of the Exhibitions Program, which offers artists and curators a nexus to present challenging and provocative ideas to a broad range of constituents.



LEHMAN COLLEGE ART GALLERY

Bedford Park Blvd. West
Bronx, NY 10468-1589
718.960.8731
www.lehman.edu/gallery

Lehman College Art Gallery is a center for contemporary visual arts and arts education housed in a building designed by the renowned architect Marcel Breuer. The gallery is located on the tree-lined campus of Lehman College, City University of New York.



WAVE HILL

675 West 252nd St.
Bronx, NY 10471
718.549.3200
www.wavehill.org

A 28-acre public garden and cultural center overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill's mission is to celebrate the artistry and legacy of its gardens and landscapes, to preserve its magnificent views, and to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts.

COVER, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:

KATHERINE RADKE,
Bronx woods, 2008

LAWRENCE BECK,
Thicket XXV, 2004

MARGARET MOULTON,
Untitled (Wave Hill Beech Shadow), 2003

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