

## BOSTON

Laura Evans

### Boston Sculptors Gallery

Laura Evans is best known for her bronze versions of brown paper lunch bags—crinkles, folds, and all. Real lunch bags are meant to be disposable ephemera. Evans's bronzes will last for the ages. They're comical. Tucked in a bookcase indoors or sitting on the grass outside, they sometimes make people giggle.

While still engaged with the lunch bags, Evans moved on to tree branches in her recent show, "The Aching Web." These antic constructions had a presence even before you entered the gallery. One of them started on the floor of the large room, struggled to climb over a railing, and ended up on a shelf just below the big windows looking onto the street. It was easy for passersby to see, and perhaps some were lured inside. Through the door and up a short flight of stairs, a fuse box was temporarily adorned with a bundle of tiny twigs that could be read as an alternate form of power.

Only one of the works, *Achieving Balance*, was bronze. Like the other pieces, this one is abstract, so it can be placed upright or on its side, with different effects. All of the other works were made of tree branches that Evans found after storms. Maple, cherry, walnut, and other woods are disguised by a coat of Aqua-Resin that turns them pale gray, a neutral tone that emphasizes their intricate shapes. There weren't any thick trunks, just rela-

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tively delicate branches of various widths that gave a lacy, though tangled, effect. The joints, made of Apoxie Sculpt, look like insect dens. Evans painted the walls of the gallery a dark gray, and the sculptures, a few dangling from the ceiling on barely visible strands of monofilament, cast eerie shadows.

The lighting, some of which stayed on at night so people could see the works from the street, was theatrical. If this installation had featured a soundtrack, a good choice would have been Gounod's "Funeral March of a Marionette." Evans's works definitely have a performative aspect. It's easy to imagine a dancer moving among them, reacting to them.

The branches bend, stretch, and hover, and air currents in the room allowed some to move gently. A large opening in one floor piece allowed viewers to see through to the others. As you moved around the room, the composition of the installation changed, though there was always a quasi-comical aspect to the works. They seemed to leer, ready to jab or even tickle you. The show's title, "The Aching Web," didn't seem to match its often humorous spirit. No matter. Evans created a delightful setting that spurred the imagination.

—Christine Temin

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