

# ARTnews

## Alice Adams

LEHMAN COLLEGE ART GALLERY

This show, best seen as a teaching one, traced Adams's projects through drawings, photographs, maquettes, notes, installations, and even materials, such as piles of bricks. Though an uneven gathering of objects and images documenting realized and unrealized projects, it offered a generous glimpse into Adams's thinking and planning processes.

A painter and weaver who, in the mid-1960s, made

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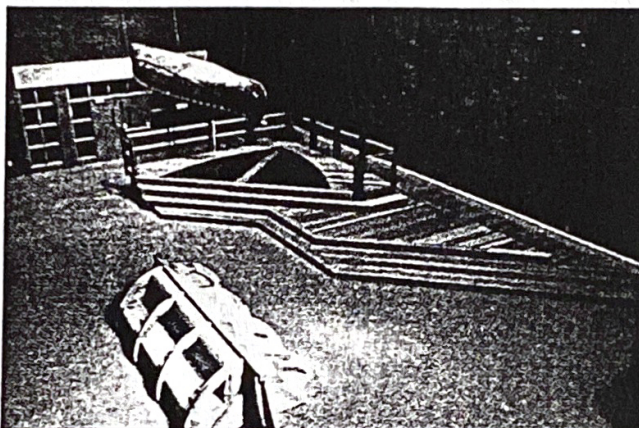
freestanding weavings out of anything weavable. Adams moved from tapestry to sculpture in the late 1970s, to site-specific installations in 1984, and then to public projects. Besides showing images of early work, the show documented the artist's public spaces in Philadelphia, Seattle, New York, Denver, and St. Louis.

The 1977 installation *Adams' House*—a house frame and door frame—stands for the artist's own childhood house, all houses, and a house to be completed by the viewer's experience or imagination. In her public projects she collaborates not only with architects, landscape designers, and craftspeople, but also with the site, its history, and those who will use it. Adams's intriguing landscape sculpture *The Roundabout* (1992), designed for Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, is an updated reference to Jefferson's own Monticello, with serpentine walls for seating. The project's circularity is contradicted by a triangular pool and radial lines that relate the design to the surrounding city. Sometimes these relations smack a bit confusingly of post-modernism.

The stools in *African Garden* (1993) in Brooklyn, based on traditional African forms, also allude to Eames via Brancusi. And at Denver International Airport in 1994, Adams made a tepee-like structure and employed bright tubes of glass and argon gas to reference the bead and quill work of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes.

Adams is most effective visually when working in a minimalist esthetic, but her expansive engagement of other traditions, materials, and shapes is conceptually satisfying.

—Barbara A. MacAdam



Alice Adams,  
*The River*, 1993,  
installation at the  
Riverview Hospital  
for Children and  
Youth, Middleton,  
Connecticut. Lehman  
College Art Gallery.

