

# PRESS ADVISORY

EXHIBITION DATES: June 24 - October 31, 2006

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## Dwelling: Memory, Architecture & Place

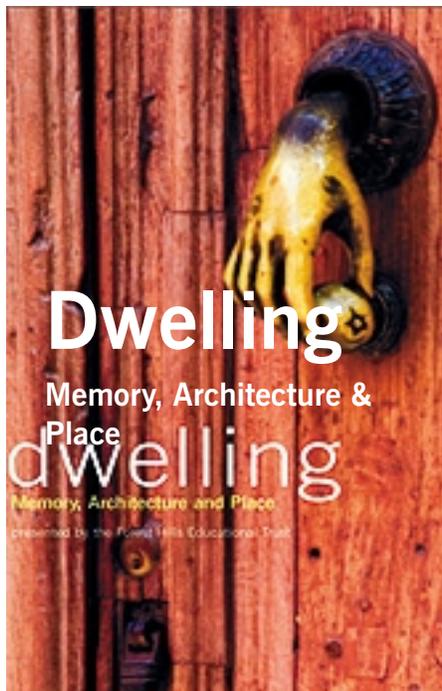
at historic Forest Hills Cemetery • June 24 - October 31, 2006

- A house made of gathered branches, overflowing with living sunflowers
- A flying carpet pieced together – like a giant jigsaw puzzle – from fragments of demolished homes
- A series of doorknockers, each with its own tone, inviting viewers to send a signal to another world
- A sound collage composed of music interlaced with collected words and phrases, accessed by visitors via cell phone or iPod

Historic Forest Hills Cemetery has become one of Boston's most tantalizing places to experience contemporary art. In this summer's outdoor exhibition, 15 artists respond to this grand landscape and its Victorian origins as the ultimate domestic space: a home for eternity. Many of the installations also explore the role of the cemetery as a place for remembrance, sentiment, and lingering reflection. "Dwelling" in this sense signifies an intangible state of mind, a form of contemplation that creates its own sense of place through memory and imagination. The result is a diverse site-specific exhibition with media ranging from sunflowers and growing vines to recorded sound.

### The Site

When it was founded in 1848, Forest Hills was one of America's first garden-style cemeteries, a radical contrast from the cramped graveyards squeezed into the centers of cities. More than a burial ground, Forest Hills was Boston's first public park: 250 acres of romantic landscape with rolling hills, winding paths, forested groves and majestic specimen trees. During the 19th century, people established family lots in this picturesque setting. Husbands and wives, parents and children, even, occasionally, good friends, were buried together; their granite enclosed lot provided the ultimate dwelling – a home for eternity.



In layout and architectural furnishings, these Victorian family lots mimic Boston's town houses and neighborhoods. Stairways lead to entrances flanked by urns or small yards. Familiar details from the parlor appear on monuments: the family bible, carved curtains, upholstery, and ornamental motifs, even faithful pets made of stone. For Victorians, the cemetery was not a spooky or even gloomy space. It was comforting and familiar, a place to display taste and status, and a destination for pleasant weekend outings.

Our own era has a very different relationship with death and burial. However, almost universally, visitors to Forest Hills are captivated by its beauty and serenity. Today we value another aspect of its original design. As a park and arboretum secluded from mundane and commercial life, Forest Hills offers a "place apart," a tranquil and evocative sanctuary that transforms our state of mind.

## The Exhibition Process and Jury

The Forest Hills Educational Trust was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support *Dwelling*, its 4th themed exhibition of contemporary art. The Trust issued a public call to artists to explore two aspects of the cemetery: its Victorian origin as a final home and its consequent architectural qualities, and its role as a sanctuary dedicated to reflection, memory and emotion. A jury of accomplished arts and design professionals selected 12 installation pieces by a total of 15 artists from over 200 proposals.

The jury consisted of: Robert Campbell, architecture critic for the *Boston Globe*; Pieranna Cavalchini, Curator of Contemporary Art for the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Carole Anne Meehan, Vita Brevis Director for the Institute of Contemporary Art; and Douglas Reed, landscape architect and principal of Reed Hilderbrand.

## Artists

Participating artists are: Michael Beatty and Mike Newby, Halsey Burgund, Jim Coates, Jay Cummings, Lesley Davison and Joan Goody, Adam Frelin, Christopher Frost, Robert Gilmore and Sarah Walker, Jason Middlebrook, Andrea Thompson, Nadya Volicer, and Amy Walsh. Some are based in Massachusetts and others are from out of state. See attached for descriptions of each installation.

## Events

The exhibition opens with a free public reception on Saturday, June 24, from 3 to 6 pm., featuring a performance of short pieces from *The Water Project*, a powerful blend of ritual, myth, visual art, and dance created by Michael Dowling (artist, director of Medicine Wheel) and Christine Bennett (artistic director, Christine Bennett Dance Co.). A walking tour with participating artists starts at 4 pm.

Related events continue throughout the exhibition, including a series of walking tours when participating artists join scholars of American social history and material culture – Anthony Sammarco, Dee Morris, Al Maze, and Forest Hills' Scholar-in-Residence Elise Ciregna. See attached schedule.

## Hours and location

The show remains open through October 31, 2006. Forest Hills Cemetery is open daily, 8:00 am to dusk. Admission is free. Exhibition brochures and a Family Activity Guide will be available at the map stand inside the Main Gate, and additional information will be available on the web site of the Forest Hills Educational Trust: [www.foresthillstrust.org](http://www.foresthillstrust.org). Forest Hills is accessible by public transportation; it is one block from the Orange Line Forest Hills T Station via the Tower Street shortcut. There is plenty of free parking.



Above: hillside view with a mausoleum, a miniature mansion made of stone. Below: a typical Victorian family lot surrounded by granite curbing.