Espace Sculpture

Jeane Fabb
...gently holding...

John K. Grande

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The next stage of Fabb's artwork involved placing a series of sticks (recycled from a nearby artist's Yurtwork) at a specific distance from the body-form of each participant, forming a sort of shadow image of each person. Christiane describes the process: "Jeane was carefully putting the sticks around me. Sometimes I felt that they were touching me. As I was lying there I perceived the world like a newborn baby."

Stick placement usually followed a discussion about one's feelings and relation to the land, be it Wales or other land that people came from to be there. This was unquestionably a woman's perspective on the land. Each person lay on a black cloth, and a cord traversing the territory ran under each person's body, thus connecting all participants. Fabb has successively used black cloth in previous events. Back in 1989 in the Laurentians, it symbolized the effects of acid rain on the environment. Since 1995, Fabb has featured black cloth in her Wilderness Women in Black actions and in performances to do with solidarity between women and the land. After the creation of their particular silhouette, the women left. Earth recycled from residue of a 160-foot earthen whale sculpture nearby was then piled to form a sort of shelter or windbreak. The earth walls were lined with a very thin layer of raw wool (a woman by the name of Nada had taught Fabb to card wool). When each woman returned, her place was built. The earthen shapes recalled the forms of mythical ships, or shelters, even a primordial past, or an ancient journey to a place devoid of anything contemporary. The overall atmosphere was reminiscent of Mother Earth Art pioneer Ana Mendieta's body art pieces, but the scale was larger and Fabb's initiative was a collective and collaborative one. On the last day, Sunday June 30th, all original participants except one took part in a perfor-

mance. Each woman lay in her open "enclosure" facing the sky and holding a chosen object symbolically over her womb (such as a stone, a crystal, a flower). Visitors to the hillside came in large numbers, curious about the event, occasionally touching or tripping on the red cord running under each participant and crossing the hillside. When this happened, all participants simultaneously felt the cord move—a universal connection was established between all participants and the earth. As Fabb states: "Throughout the three-day open event of performances and installations (over a thousand people came), I would often find people lying in my work, taking time out from all the intense social collective actions and performances. Each space had its own special intimacy, quiet, and energy." 6–

NOTES

2. Ibid.
4. Jeane Fabb: ...gently holding... Artist's book, np.
5. Ibid.