

## SHARP LINES AND MYSTIC SHADOWS: The Vision of Two Physicists

Cultural Center of Cape Cod  
307 Old Main Street  
South Yarmouth

Through July 29

In this evocative and intellectually engaging exhibition, scientific investigation and aesthetic interpretation merge. This joint exhibition of the sculptural works of Fielding Brown and the photographic prints of Paul Wainwright offers up abstracted realities that invite analysis and contemplation.



*Bicycle Wreck* by Fielding Brown



*Inside History* by Paul Wainwright



*Vines Entwined* by Fielding Brown

Brown holds a PhD in experimental physics from Princeton University and has been creating sculptures in wood and multimedia since his retirement from Williams College six years ago. Wainwright, who holds a PhD in experimental physics from Yale University and was a research scientist at Bell Telephone Laboratories, began creating photographs more than 40 years ago as a way to connect to others. Less than two years ago the artists met through the Cambridge Art Association. Recognizing their shared backgrounds and the complementary nature of their work they began discussions about a joint exhibition.

"An artist thinks like a scientist," said Brown, "in that what is most important for both is curiosity and the ability to foresee and imagine the yet unseen. To me the most important attribute of a scientist is curiosity. What is it that is hiding from human view, and how can he or she set out to find it?" Brown's works, which pulse with energy, are

constructions of lines and curves which originate as a set of mathematical equations plotted on the computer and then transformed into three dimensional objects using wood, metal and string in which science, art, mathematics and technology merge. "What matters is visual pattern and symmetries that are created and broken," noted Brown. "Parallax between lines within a sculpture leads to changing patterns as one moves about. Of the many possible patterns that I create, I choose only those that I find appealing and at the same time buildable."

Brown creates his curved sculptures by laminating thin strips of wood, paper, fiberglass, plastic or sheet metal, a technique that exploits the elasticity and flexible properties of the materials. These laminations are then wrapped onto a form that replicates the computer image. Dacron kite string set within imbedded eyelets adds tension to some of Brown's works. A compelling exhibition,

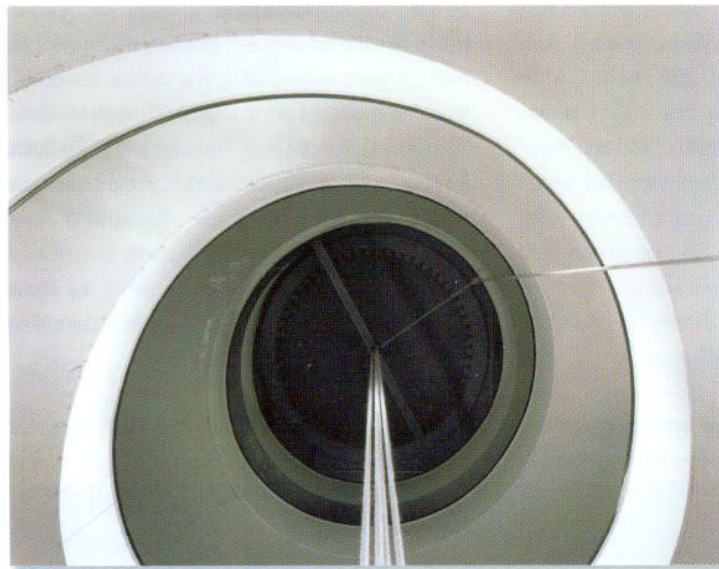
in which the equations are also on display, Brown's work represents the intellectualization of form and in spite of its mathematical component, its organic result.

Wainwright's photographs, which recall the stark and evocative prints of Minor White, are enveloped in quiet mystery. Like Brown, Wainwright also explores the fluid and flexible nature of line in his staircase portraits and his images tend towards abstraction, a departure from his early literal depictions of the landscape. Dimly lit passageways, soaring chimneys, gnarled doors and church pews become powerful visual metaphors. Surface texture, particularly those taken at Highlands Center, the former Cold War air force station in North Truro, provides an opportunity for microscopic examination.

Intrigued by abandoned buildings - what Wainwright terms "empty spaces" - and New



*Stair Railing, Boot Cotton Mill, Lowell by Paul Wainwright*



*Spiral Stairs, Springfield Armory by Paul Wainwright*

England meeting houses, he is able to explore the interrelationship between lines, forms and contrasting shadows thus creating secondary realities for his subjects. Wainwright has been inspired by the 19th century diaries of his grandfather, contemplating that "while much about life has changed, the human aspects, such as the lives of the people who built and used these places are not much different from you and me."

Wainwright works with a 4x5 view camera which requires "careful thought and preparation in the field before the film is exposed," an approach made even more critical as typically only one negative is produced. An extended darkroom process enhances the interpretation. "I love working with traditional media because you have to slow down and think...photography is a process of creation – a process of adding my own interpretation to the scene."

*Britt Beedenbender*