LEE BOROSON
Art New England
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Lee Boroson—**Pleasure Grounds**, parachute silk and electric blowers, 1998–1999, courtesy of Genovese/Sullivan Gallery.

Genovese/Sullivan Gallery/Boston

Lee Boroson: Pleasure Grounds

Lee Boroson's installation of inflated vinyl disks conjure up a whole host of associations—from Monet's water lilies to Claes Oldenburg's soft sculptures to Carl Andre's floor pieces—while remaining distinctive and slyly up to date. The forms, made from tubing, mechanical pumps, and stitched parachute material, occupy the gallery like an infestation of kudzu or some other overly fecund plant. With their dangling tubes and softly geometric forms, they prompt an uncomfortable feeling of uncontrolled growth. Another association that came to mind was of some cellular organelle grown to monstrous proportions.

Mixed in with the floor-hugging forms are a couple of large white forms floating overhead like limp clouds. Standing beneath one of these is a decidedly claustrophobic experience, as if one were about to be enveloped in a clammy embrace.

Boroson does not make explicit references to nature in his forms. The green and white materials are more synthetic than natural, and the shapes, while possessing a mushroom's sponginess, are clearly manufactured. The pumps make a persistent hissing noise in the gallery that sounds like a pressurized airplane cabin—not exactly the chirring of crickets. The lack of overt reference is a strength, however, giving this installation a formal elegance and rigor. Like Oldenburg's soft sculptures, the reference to nature and the body comes through the inherent contradiction of the mechanical and the yielding. A final association conjured by the tubes and pumps might be to the life-support systems of a hospital's intensive care unit, those frightening mechanical marvels that sustain the injured flesh. It is a measure of Boroson's vision that he is able to draw on so much with such simple and straightforward means.

—*Miles Unger*