Written by Steve Banks
Wednesday, 24 May 2006 00:20

Internationally renowned “sculptor” Roy Staab will be making an appearance and giving a lecture at the Mode Gallery in downtown Davenport on Saturday, May 27, at 6 p.m. Staab’s appearance is in conjunction with a two-week exhibit of his work at Mode.

Staab has broadened the definition of what a sculptor is by making stunning, site-inspired environmental pieces. Natural forces ensure that his works are quickly reclaimed by the environment, and therefore you are much more likely to see the photographic documentation of a Roy Staab sculpture than one of his actual physical sculptures.

Staab has an impressive résumé spanning 30 years, with more than 15 awards and grants, including 1996 National Endowment for the Arts Japan Fellowship and the 1992 Pollack/Krasner Grant. His work can be found in the collections of the Musée National d’Art Modern in Paris and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and he has exhibited in New York, Quebec, Chicago, Japan, Finland, Italy, France, and throughout his native Wisconsin.

An example of a Staab piece is an enigmatic structure of sticks, reeds, and wood arcing back on itself, resting horizontally over the placid water. It is constructed from nearby natural components to make a site-specific ephemeral sculpture. This transient man-made piece, *Tong ued Mandala*
, has a strange and alluring harmony with the surrounding natural environment. Although the piece will slowly be reclaimed by the elements, it is not a relationship of conflict but one that celebrates the cycle of creation.

Staab is only here for two weeks before he is off to Korea and Japan for a year, where he will create several recently commissioned pieces. His work has drawn comparisons to the English artists Andy Goldsworthy and David Nash. Peter Applebome, in a July 2004 *New York Times* article, referred to Staab as “something of a Johnny Appleseed of Environmental Art.”

Unlike many sculptors who create durable work in the studio and then send it to various locations to be shown, Staab’s work is made at a specific location with predominately local natural materials to create an intentionally impermanent work that has a connection to that specific area. His exhibit at Mode will feature several photographs of some of his past works – for most of his pieces, the photographic document is all that remains – and a multimedia piece.

Mode Art Gallery is located at 228 West Third Street in Davenport.