



# Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of a tree trunk's cross-section, showing concentric growth rings in shades of orange and brown. The rings are centered in the upper half of the image and expand outwards.

## *Reclamation* *Sculpting History*

# *Reclamation: Sculpting History*

This exhibition is a collaboration between Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. Based on our 2008 General Management Plan and 2010 Cultural Landscape Treatment Plan, Sagamore Hill has been undertaking an extensive rehabilitation of its cultural landscape to better represent the working farm environment that the Roosevelt family knew when they resided at the site between 1885 and 1948. We partnered with RISD who gathered select, non-historic wood, from trees removed to reclaim the historic fields. Students from various departments in the college utilized the wood and incorporated historical research on Sagamore Hill and the Roosevelt family based on their site visit and classroom inquiry, creating meaningful works of art. The result of the students' work is this exceptional exhibit which showcases how students have transformed the Sagamore Hill raw material into sculpture incorporating the Roosevelt Family story providing a compelling interpretation of the site.

Thomas E. Ross, Superintendent, Sagamore Hill National Historic Site

*Reclamation: Sculpting History* is an exhibit which features student work created as a result of the Witness Tree Project at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). The Witness Tree Project is a joint history seminar and furniture studio, in which students work with the wood of trees removed from national historic sites as a powerful means for evoking and studying America's past. This past year, the course featured trees from both the Sagamore Hill National Historic Site and the George Washington Birthplace National Monument. Students learned not only about the development of the American presidency but also explored the challenges of presidential memorialization in national parks, monuments, and libraries. The objects included in this exhibit, formed from pin oak, silver maple, and black cherry wood from Sagamore Hill and boxwood from the Washington site, were based on extensive historical research and study; that study was, in turn, deepened by the process of design and critique. The diverse objects--each representing a student's interpretation of Sagamore Hill, the American presidency, and Washington's and Roosevelt's love of nature--together show how design might enhance our understanding of American history.

Daniel Cavicchi, Associate Professor of American Studies  
Rhode Island School of Design



Rachael Rendely



Felicia Hung



Chuan Lui



Athena Lo

*This bench was created to be placed between the two cherry trees in front of Theodore Roosevelt's home. These two trees were given to Roosevelt by the Japanese to thank him for helping end the Russo-Japanese war. The bench is an "L" shape where the two parts are made of two different types of wood, cherry and maple. This was done to commemorate Roosevelt's act of bringing the two different countries together. Also the "L" shaped bench allows for a more intimate interaction between the people sitting on the bench.*  
-- *L' Bench, Felicia Hung*



Ben Kicic



(top) Ben Kicic  
(bottom) Athena Lo

*Their concentric form is a reference to the maple and oak trees removed from the site. They are cut in a variety of different ways, allowing the individual to peer inside. In doing so they are viewing the rings of growth; they are seeing the history, the story, the chronology of life that the tree has to offer.*  
-- Point to Point Sculptures,  
Elish Warlop



Andrew Sawyer



Elish Warlop



Ming-Yi Wong



Christopher Gent



Athena Lo



(top & bottom) Andrew Prioli



Brendan Keim



Brett Dunnam

*Intended for use on the nature path leading to the beach, these four walking sticks – one for each season – are meant to initiate thoughts about the influence an actual, untamed wilderness (rather than mere manicured parks in the urban cities) has on our spiritual well-being:  
-- Walking Sticks,  
Andrew Prioli*



Christopher Gent



Felicia Hung



Desmond DeLanty

*During Washington and Roosevelt's time there was nature all around them and no urgent need to protect the environment. Therefore people showed their love of nature through the control of it. This shelf shows man's manipulation of nature to create a look they want. The top of the shelf is flat and square to the sides, while the bottom of the shelf is rough and has the live edge on it. I wanted the controlled geometric top to look as if it is weighing down the more natural landscape that is created by the live edge.*

*-- Shelf, Felicia Hung*



(left and right) Andrew Prioli



Ben Kicic



Clara Zavani



Brett Dunnam

*This object is meant to be symbolic of Theodore Roosevelt's larger than life persona. It's meant to reference his idea of the strenuous life, with its size, and his love of nature and conservationism as branches at the headboard. It's also meant to be overly excessive with its size, to talk about how T.R.'s achievements and life at times seemed almost impossible and over the top.*

*--Tall Chair, Ben Kicic*



Athena Lo



Christopher Gent



Brendan Keim

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Rhode Island School of Design