



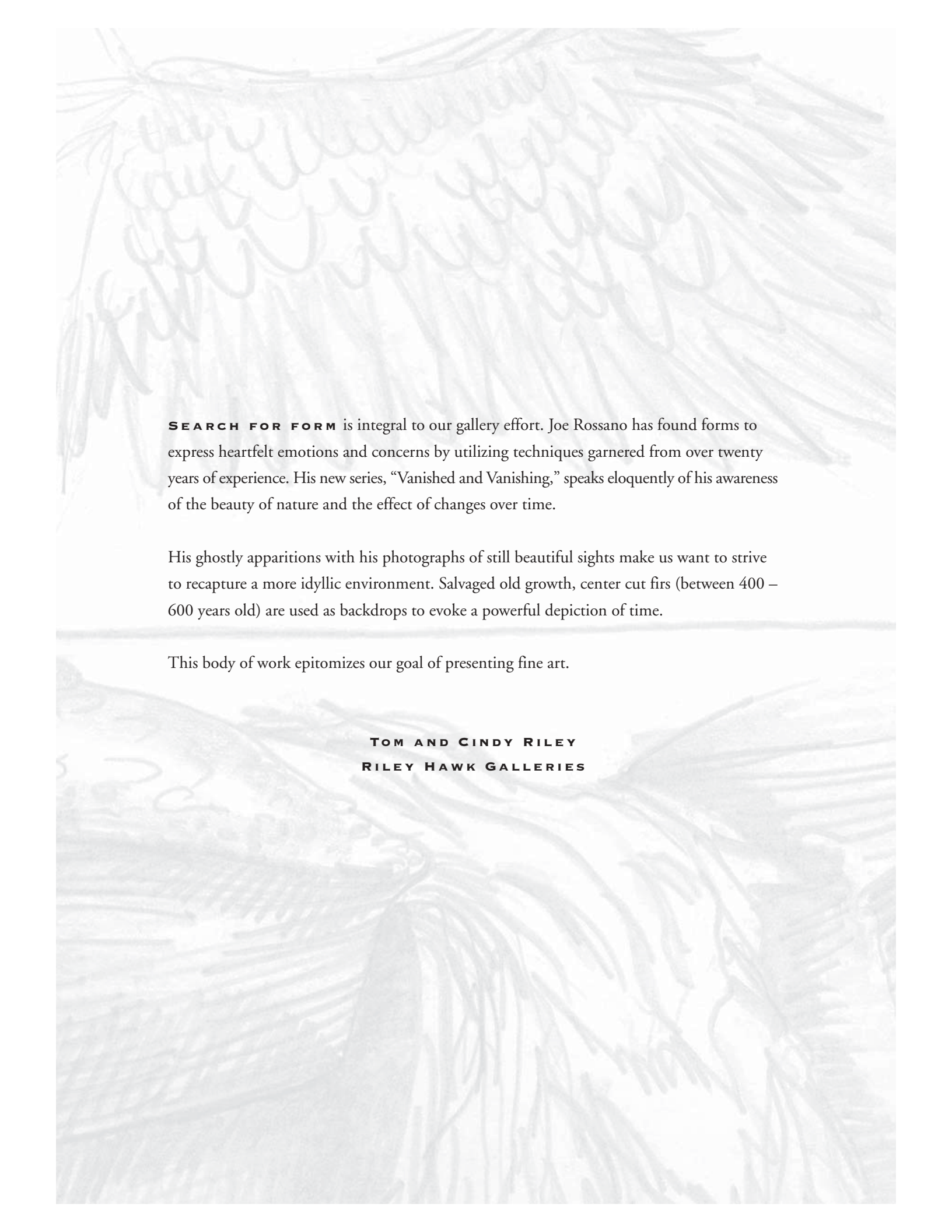
JOSEPH ROSSANO

VANISHED AND VANISHING

*Riley Hawk Galleries*

CLEVELAND COLUMBUS SEATTLE





**SEARCH FOR FORM** is integral to our gallery effort. Joe Rossano has found forms to express heartfelt emotions and concerns by utilizing techniques garnered from over twenty years of experience. His new series, “Vanished and Vanishing,” speaks eloquently of his awareness of the beauty of nature and the effect of changes over time.

His ghostly apparitions with his photographs of still beautiful sights make us want to strive to recapture a more idyllic environment. Salvaged old growth, center cut firs (between 400 – 600 years old) are used as backdrops to evoke a powerful depiction of time.

This body of work epitomizes our goal of presenting fine art.

**TOM AND CINDY RILEY**  
**RILEY HAWK GALLERIES**



**MEMORIES OF SPRINGTIME**, Sculpted glass, photograph, center-cut Douglas Fir,  
26 x 33 x 4.5 inches

## INTRODUCTION

PAUL ROBERTS

**IN HIS NEW WORK**, artist Joseph Rossano offers us haunting fragments of a vanishing world. His pieces range in subject from endangered wild salmon to the beautiful yet fading customs of beekeeping and water witching, continuing the deeply personal examination of nature that began more than 30 years ago during childhood visits to his uncle's farm in the Catskill Mountains. There, Rossano immersed himself not only in the natural world of plants and creatures but in our old ways of interacting with that world.

Rossano's naturalistic education quickly took on a more formal tone. He earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Louisiana State, studied at Pilchuck Glass School in rural Washington State, then stayed on as apprentice to artist William Morris. Rossano spent seven years working with Dale Chihuly and became manager of Chihuly's famous hot shop, overseeing such glassblowing projects as Chihuly Over Venice. In 1997, at age 23, Rossano left to pursue his own art and develop a relationship with Waterford Crystal in Ireland, for which he now serves as artistic coordinator.

Yet, even as his artistic and professional development progressed, Rossano never lost that early connection to the natural world. Indeed, the affinity only grew stronger in the Pacific Northwest, with its temperate rainforests and world-class steelhead trout rivers. When Rossano was not in his studio, he immersed himself in the outdoors, becoming an avid fly fisherman and even learning the age-old arts of fly tying and bamboo-rod making from the very masters who had set the standards in these rapidly waning traditions.

Rossano's current artwork has been shaped by these extraordinary relationships. His new pieces in particular reflect a desire to keep returning to the iconography of the natural world, to the creatures themselves as well as to the customs through which humans have interacted with that world. As such, Rossano's sculpture functions on two levels: as personal touchstones for his own relationship with nature and as markers for the irrevocable changes wrought upon nature by growth and civilization.



**THE WATER WITCH**, Sculpted glass, photograph, found object, center-cut Douglas Fir,  
47 x 28 x 7 inches

## **POETIC STATEMENTS: RECENT SCULPTURE BY JOSEPH ROSSANO**

**KAREN S. CHAMBERS**

**RECENTLY, THE LINE BETWEEN LITERATURE AND VISUAL ART** has become blurred, with gallery walls displaying works that literally must be read to be comprehended. It is a relief to encounter a sculptor who makes poetry: Joseph Rossano is creating the visual equivalent of haiku.

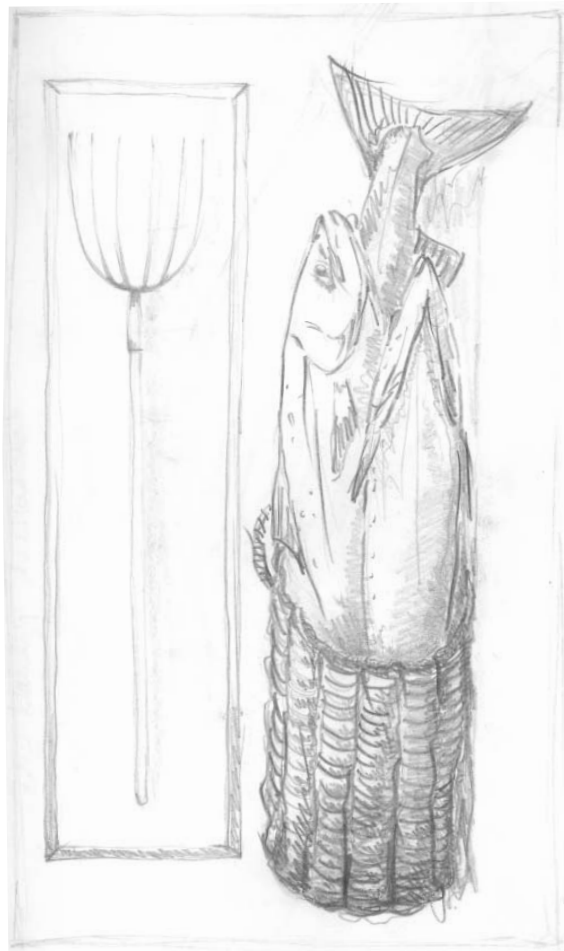
In that highly stylized Japanese form of poetry, the poet must communicate his message using 17 syllables, divided into three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables each, for example, “Waterjar cracks: / I lie awake / This icy night,” by the Japanese master Basho (1644–1694). The reader absorbs the meaning as much as interprets it. Like haiku, Rossano’s work uses a prescribed format to present a message that is more evocative than literal.

For the sculptures that hang on the wall, the artist places several elements on a highly varnished, rectangular slice of old-growth Douglas fir. Each growth ring reveals something of the history of the earth over the perhaps six centuries of the tree’s life before it was felled. Framed like a picture, this support is as refined as the structure of a haiku.

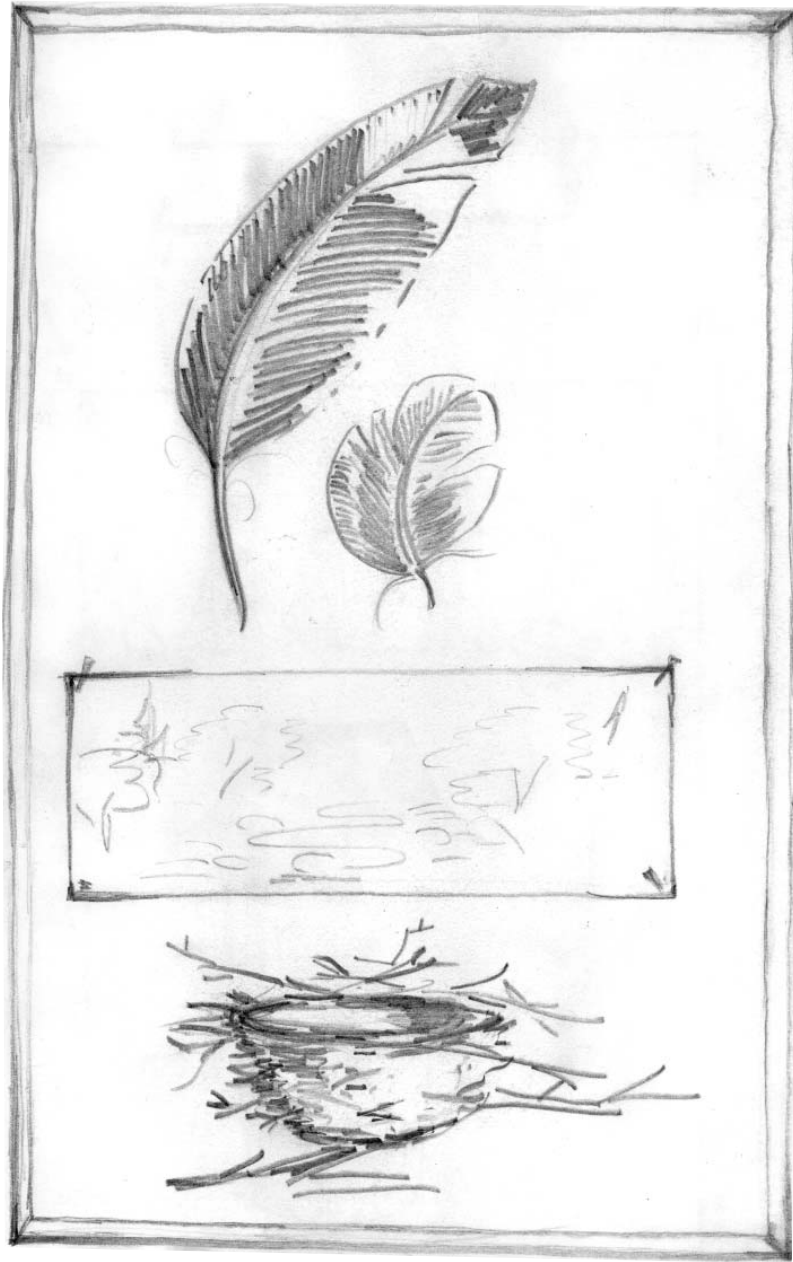
On this background, which represents both nature and civilization, Rossano places objects that are the equivalents of the words of a haiku. These elements often include a contemporary photograph taken with an antique camera and sandwiched between two pieces of glass; the portrayal of a current scene stands for the present but is seen through a romantic, historicizing eye. Other elements are remnants of nature or artifacts of man, such as the wings of a blue jay, a salmon spear, or a saw blade. They are presented for the viewer’s inspection, as they might appear in a natural history or anthropology museum. Plucked out of context by Rossano’s act of selection, they are transformed from ordinary to remarkable, just as mundane words take on unexpected depth and meaning when placed in a poetic sequence.

To these found or recovered objects, Rossano adds a glass representation of an item that speaks of the past. It may be something that once lived and is now extinct—the salmon that no longer thrive in their once natural habitat—or it may be a symbol of a personal memory. In glass, these realistically rendered elements are exquisite and otherworldly, the distilled essence of what they represent.

Each of the elements relates to the others in some way because all are of the natural world or signify a tool made by man to subjugate that world to his will. The meanings of Rossano's sculptures can be as elliptical as haiku but, like that challenging poetic form, may also be vastly rewarding for those who open themselves to the artist's message about nature and man's place in it.







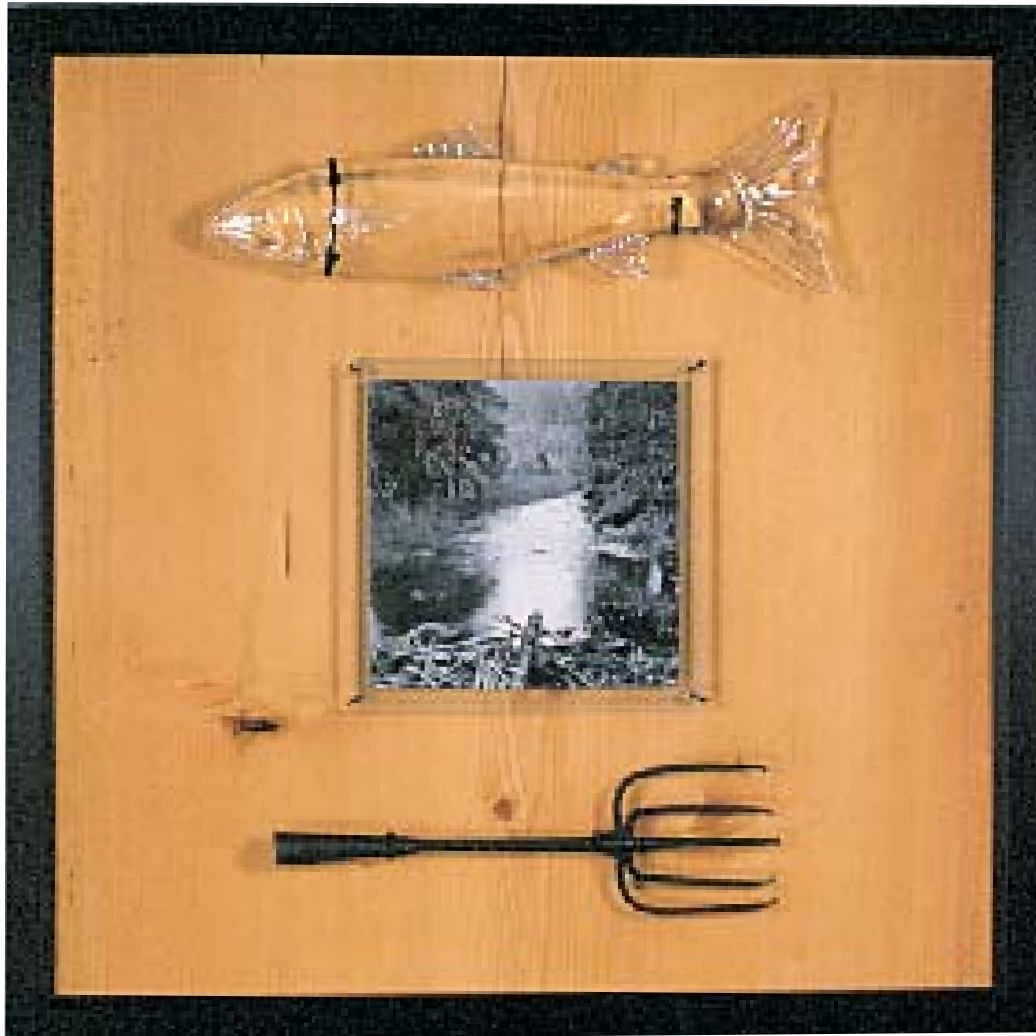
**STUDY FOR UNTITLED.** Pencil on paper, 6 x 9 inches



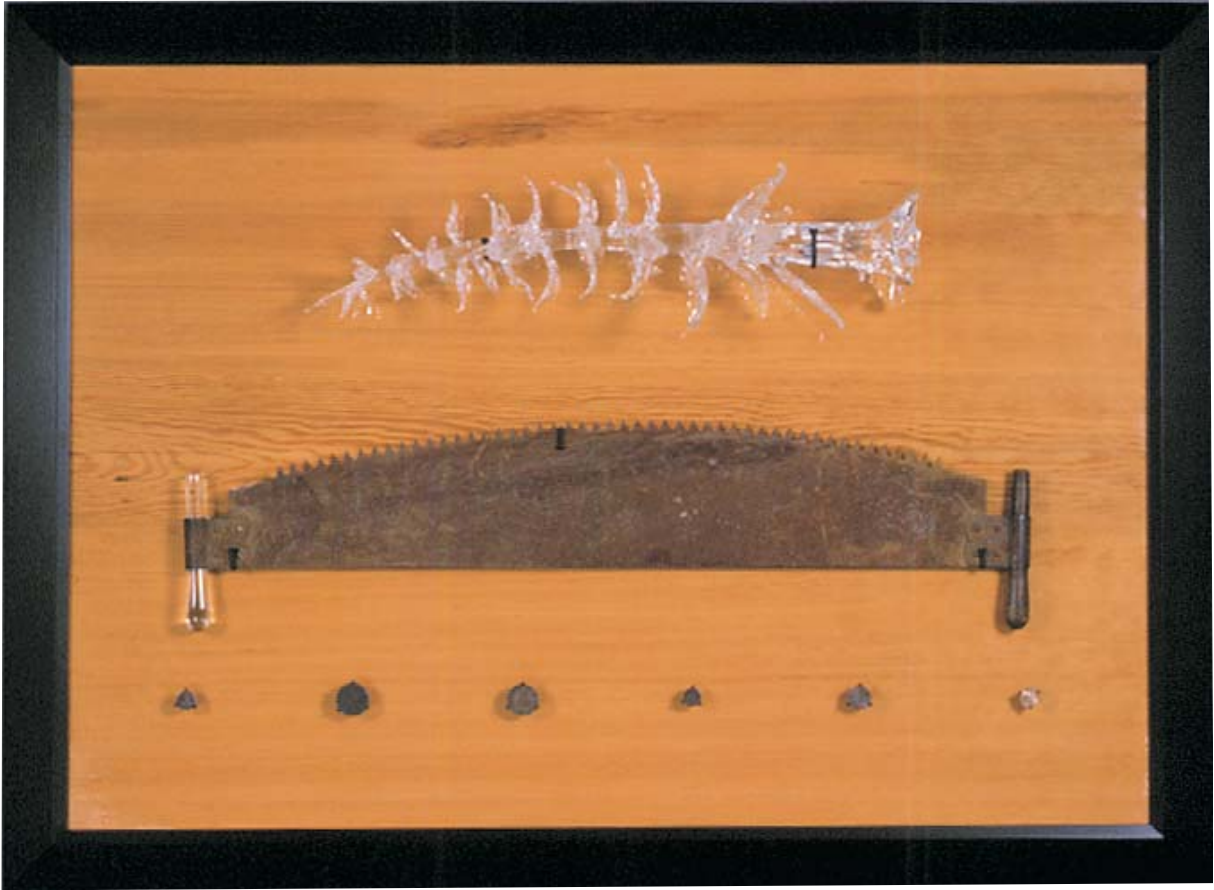
**THE COLONIES**, Sculpted glass, photograph, found object, center-cut Douglas Fir,  
34 x 24 x 3 inches



**A SURVIVOR**, Sculpted glass, photograph, found object, center-cut Douglas Fir,  
36 x 34 x 3 inches



**THE BEGINNING.** Sculpted glass, photograph, found object (Columbia River salmon spear), center-cut Douglas Fir, 34 x 34 x 4.5 inches



**GIANTS**, Sculpted glass, found objects (cross-cut saw, British coins), center-cut Douglas Fir,  
32.5 x 45.5 x 9.5 inches



**THE CLONE**, Sculpted glass, photograph, Blue Jay wings, center-cut Douglas Fir,  
32.5 x 25 x 4.5 inches



**TREES**, Sculpted glass, photograph, center-cut Douglas Fir,  
48 x 28 x 8 inches

