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## ‘UNNATURAL LANDSCAPES’ BLENDS NATURE WITH MANMADE STRUCTURES

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Cheryl Molnar’s work, ‘Unnatural Landscapes,’ explores the intersection between the natural and built environment. Molnar spent months layering painted paper and photographs of natural landscapes with urban architectural fixtures.

If you look hard enough inside Wave Hill house’s tearoom on a busy day, you’ll find paintings of familiar and unfamiliar natural landscapes.

Cheryl Molnar’s “Unnatural Landscapes” lines the walls of the facility’s tearoom, and has since March 7. Molnar was a winter workspace artist at Wave Hill in 2014, a time in which emerging artists spend seven weeks immersing themselves in nature at the 28-acre public garden and accompanying cultural center to inspire future art.

Throughout her time as a workspace artist, Molnar took full advantage of everything that surrounds Wave Hill: The plants, the view of the Hudson River and Riverdale itself. “Unnatural Landscapes” is a combination of her time in the area and the things she’s seen when walking around her Brooklyn neighborhood and visiting Long Island and Los Angeles.

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When taking a step back to define her work, Molnar asks observers to ask themselves two important questions: “How does man alter nature to get our houses and to get our structures into these things?” she said, and, “What is our footprint on nature?”

Gabriel de Guzman is Wave Hill’s curator who oversaw this exhibition. Although the majority of Guzman’s curatorial work focuses on putting together thematic exhibitions at the site’s Glyndor Gallery, it also carries over into the Wave Hill house when it comes to deciding what will best represent their artistic interests.

He picked Molnar’s work for those reasons.

“We’re interested in artists whose work has some sort of dialogue with nature, with the natural world in some way,” he said.

As an artist, Molnar has learned a lot about the way she perceives nature. Before “Unnatural Landscapes,” she would walk around and take pictures of what she’s seen before sketching a preliminary design. But after a serene experience at Wave Hill, her approach changed.

“There’s a lot of quiet time and a lot of time to be able to go for a walk and look around and react to the things that I was seeing while I was working there,” she said. “Being able to work there and be embedded in the beautiful environment, it was a little bit more of an immediate ... feeling that reflected into the work.”

The experience Molnar anticipates people will have isn’t far from what Guzman has in mind. Both want visitors to take a step back and think about the implications of what happens when you mix architecture and nature.

“I think that the experience we’d like our visitors to have when they’re looking at the work is for them to have a greater sense of awareness of their environment, their surroundings in general,” Guzman said. “Maybe that will lead to people wanting to be more sensitive to the environment and how we interact with the natural world.”

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