

Ian Hamilton Finlay

Garden Works

March 24- April 29, 2000

At the heart of Ian Hamilton Finlay's work is the garden outside of Edinburgh, named Little Sparta, which is one of the most beautiful gardens in the world. This magnificent intertwining of landscape, sculpture and architecture has been the focus of Finlay's life since 1966, when he began the arduous work of transforming an abandoned farm into a cultivated domain of flowers and plants, ponds, bridges, grottoes, and temples.

Little Sparta is more than a beautiful garden. It is an environment that, quite literally, speaks to the viewer. References to ancient Greece and Rome, the Renaissance, and the 18th and 19th centuries are embedded in classical stone sculptures, and placed on trees, buildings, bridges, and lawns. The garden surrounds the viewer with the form and thought of antiquity, while it simultaneously critiques the events of the present. Finlay's subtle transformation of the past into a vivid commentary on the contemporary world is a remarkable achievement.

This exhibition, the first to focus entirely on the garden theme, includes a sundial, inscribed stone plaques, wooden benches, and other objects. It can be described as providing the viewer with some of the atmosphere of Little Sparta, without the difficulties of international travel.

Ian Hamilton Finlay was born in 1925 in Nassau, Bahamas. He has exhibited widely, most recently at the Miro' Foundation in Barcelona. His two previous shows at Nolan/Eckman have dealt with nautical themes and the French Revolution.