

# Neo-Arcadia

Faux-natural  
wonders

BY SUE SPAID

**In contrast to Hendee's human-scale** endeavor, Maura Bendett's equally habitable wallworks (at Post earlier this month) transform enchanting reveries into sparkling fairyscapes. " $-456^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit," the exhibit's title, refers to the temperature at which molecules no longer move. While the title evokes a frozen world, dangling droplets, dripping icicles, springy limbs and wiry antennae ensure a movable feast. Bendett's aesthetic exploration of budding, branching nodules began in 1997 when she built a 21-foot-high papier-mâché stalk for Post's elevator shaft. Since then, seemingly related cuttings have sprouted up all over town. Having explored the cartoonish, she's now approaching the elegance of glass art. *When We Were Young* (all works 1998-99), the exhibit's largest treescape, suggests a succulent nursery replete with nests, breasts, grape clusters, pink clumps, melting icicles, '60s chandeliers and yellow tear-drop pears. *Del Mar's* world includes sea anemone-like tentacles and the alien/insect antennae that have graced Bendett's work for years. *Torrun* contains a creature whose head, a colorless resin globe, alludes to crystal-clear thoughts. Just standing beside these microcosms musters fantasies about landing down on their idyllic sites.

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