

New England's Culture Magazine

# artscope

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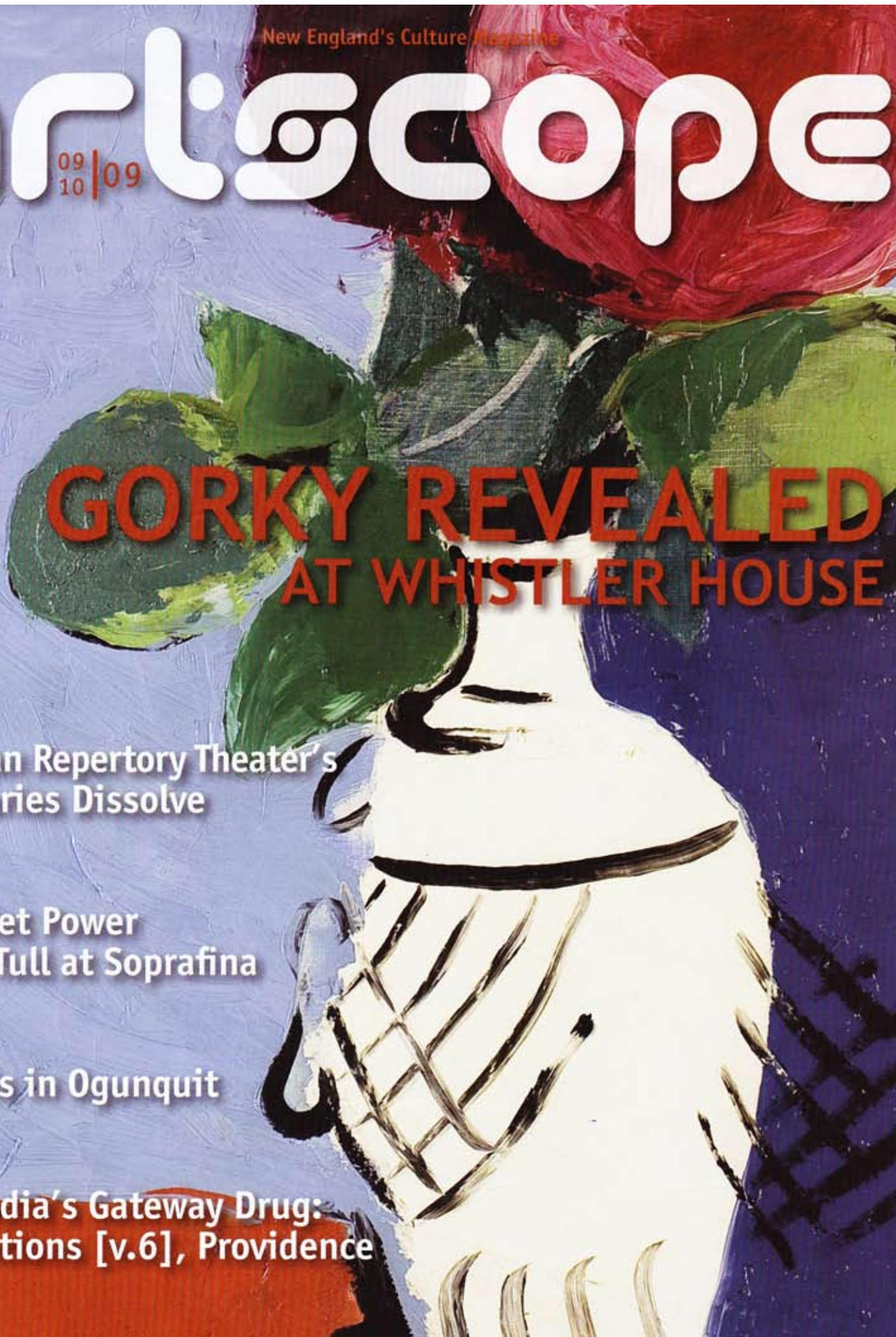
## GORKY REVEALED AT WHISTLER HOUSE

American Repertory Theater's  
Boundaries Dissolve

The Quiet Power  
of Nan Tull at Soprafina

An Oasis in Ogunquit

New Media's Gateway Drug:  
Pixilerations [v.6], Providence



# A FRESH LOOK AT AN OLD TRADITION

## THE ART OF MOSAIC 2009



Cynthia Fisher, *Pavement Fractals*.

Somerville Museum  
1 Westwood Road  
Somerville, Massachusetts

September 10 through October 31

**A PARADOX OF ALL THE ARTS IS THE COMPLEXITY OF THE LABOR THAT EVENTUATES, IN THE RIGHT HANDS, IN SEEMINGLY SPONTANEOUS VISIONS OF REALITY. BUT PERHAPS THE ART OF MOSAIC IS UNIQUE IN CONJURING THIS PARADOX MOST OBVIOUSLY.**

Most of us are starved for mosaic art, for a way of seeing and remembering our transitory, digitalized, everyday reality that is actually "set in stone." For "The Art of the Mosaic 2009," Bill Buckingham and Margaret Ryan have dedicated their curatorial talents to gathering an assemblage of talent of nearly 60 New England artists.

Even a non-initiate, a rank newbie in the mysteries of mosaics, can marvel at every one of the hundreds, even thousands, of tiny tiles which artist Michelle Eckhart has selected and placed, at every angle, to create "Pepper." And yet, drawing back from this examination, we both see and feel the hurtling presence of Pepper, the dog, not slowed by a mini-second as she responds to the call of her master's artfully lingering hand.

Likewise the "Botanical Rose," in Lynn Moor's masterly evocation, loses none of its perfume or tremblingly balanced poise even though the eye sees clearly the minutia of choices in color, form and size of the pieces that meticulously compose this fresh vision of an old and honored floral tradition.

Contemporary in both-method and subject is Cynthia Fisher's "Pavement Fractals." As a bicycle racer, Ms. Fischer has, from her streamlined, head-down position, seen miles and miles of pavement flow under her gaze. As a mosaic artist, she conjures the bursting speed of this journey by perspectives that leap at us from all angles, all powered by size, direction and hue of her rhythmically placed tiles.

As entranced by nuances of speed as any futurist painting, as dizzily coherent as any "crazy quilt" from American folk art, Fisher's evocation of a racer's day keeps good company with both the eclectic current of mosaic art now and past traditions of other central artistic media.

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Taking a break from viewing, you can increase your knowledge with as little effort as it takes to grab a glossary of technical terms from the wall. There you can learn that many mosaic artists choose to "backbite," using the flat, or backside, of their nippers to cut the tiles. Or that breaking one of your grandmother's heirloom china plates or saucers supplies you not only with regret, but also with fresh material for the Picassiette technique of mosaic art.

Along with compiling this exhibition, curators Buckingham and Ryan have labored to present a multi-dimensional immersion of films, lectures, demonstrations, docent tours and workshops that will take you just as far as you want to travel. Do search your calendar for open spaces to schedule at least some of these enriching extra curricular activities, but don't neglect the less formal invitation to put your nose close to the meticulous craft of whichever work, either on or off the wall, at the Somerville Museum draws your attention.

In one of the free "Art of the Mosaic" Thursday evening lectures, objects conservator Paula Artal-Isbrand of the Worcester Art Museum will speak about their Antioch mosaics and, hopefully, inspire you to view or re-view them on site in Central Mass., where thousands of tesserae transported from a villa in the Roman colony of Antioch recreate a hunting scene from the sixth century C.E.

James Foritano

THIS PAGE TOP TO BOTTOM: Lynn Moor, *Botanical Rose*.  
Michelle Eckhart, *Pepper*.



## NANCY HAYES

### Primordial

Ceramic Sculpture

October 1 - 31, 2009

Opening Reception: Friday, October 2 from 6-8 pm



*Spanning Out*, terracotta, 20" h x 13" w x 18" d, 2000

**Colo Colo Gallery**

25 Centre Street

New Bedford, MA 02740