

SMART ART | PAUL SMART

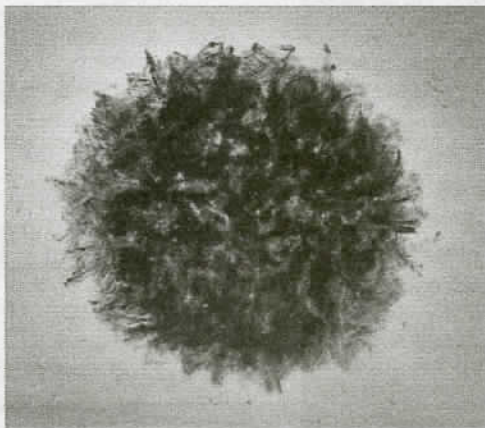
# An arena for drama

**IAIN MACHELL**, PROFESSOR OF ART AND CHAIR of SUNY Ulster's Department of Music, Art, Design, Fashion, Communication & Theatre, as well as an initially taciturn but inevitably witty Scotsman, spent time last summer at the Catskill Center's Platte Clove Cabin on the Greene County Mountaintop. His solo show of drawing work produced then, "Platte Clove Lens," opens with an artist's reception at Cross Contemporary Art in his new hometown of Saugerties this Saturday, Oct. 31.

Known for his cerebrally-charged often minimalist sculpture, the new pieces Machell has created capture the gnarled elements of the forest the cabin retreat he painted in is nestled within, atop and bestride a series of dramatic waterfalls. They play off the series of remarkable drawings he's been posting online daily over recent years, as if incorporating everything he's seen, studied and shared. Yet they also feel perfect for a Halloween debut, given the spirited elements of the tree trunks and rocks — a mix of dark and lighter elements — he concentrated on while sojourning in the century-old cabin with a feel of deep connection to the Catskill's most mysterious past and present myths and spooky realities.

"Platte Clove is an ominous ravine, a break in the Catskill Escarpment created during the last Ice Age as meltwater eroded its way through from the Catskill Plateau to the Hudson River below," he has written of his time there. "I see Platte Clove as an arena for drama, the stage for a number of contradictions: IMMEDIATE/TIMELESS, LIQUID/SOLID, HARD/SOFT, WET/DRY, LIGHT/DARK, GROWING/DECAYING, VAST/TINY, PRETTY/UGLY, THREATENING/THREATENED. My drawings are direct respons-

es to these extremes of landscape and go beyond beauty to see what is beneath."



IAIN MACHELL

River School, whose artists also had a penchant for the Clove.

Machell studied at Grays School of Art and received his MFA from SUNY Albany. He's been awarded the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching for his long SUNY gig and been a visiting artist and lecturer at numerous colleges and universities including Bennington College, Parsons School of Art, University of Massachusetts, University of Wisconsin/Madison, SUNY at Albany, West Virginia University and Montserrat College of Art. Other venues Machell has shown at include The Drawing Center, The Sculpture Center and the Center for Book Arts in New York City, and the ongoing Kingston Sculpture Biennial.

"Platte Clove Lens" opens Oct. 31 with a reception from 6–8 P.M. and continues through Nov. 22. The gallery is located at 81 Partition St. in Saugerties. Visit Cross Contemporary Art on Facebook or [www.ianmachell.com](http://www.ianmachell.com) for further information.

