

**Leslie Fry, *Onward*, 2009.
Plaster, ink, and maple
frame, 13 x 20 x 2.5 in.**

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

Leslie Fry

Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art
Leslie Fry's recent exhibition focused on new wall sculptures and drawings. The cast plaster wall reliefs refine motifs and concepts that she began implementing with earlier works in which the human figure or face evolves into or emerges from nature. The new pieces explore the relationship between botanical and architectural forms more fully by including construction tools and vehicles.

While Fry does not target issues of gender identity in her work, she often incorporates the female torso. In her recent pieces, she intends the heads and faces, sometimes female, sometimes male, as "signifiers for consciousness." The dream-like quality of her imagery is enhanced by unexpected discrepancies in scale and threads of hemp that escape the confines of the frame, as in the wall relief *Transplant* (2009). By shifting the relative scale between a head resting on the bed of a truck and the truck itself (toy-like in relation to the head), Fry identifies the vehicle as a carrier of dreams and visions. Unlike John the Baptist's head served on a platter, Fry's head appears asleep and tranquil, with the hint of a smile. The painted plaster surfaces are reminis-



cent of colors found in nature. In the related *Onward* (2009), architectural façades surround the resting or dreaming head on a truck bed. Ink on the cast plaster highlights details of the buildings and of the face.

Forms found in nature also appear in Fry's indoor work, where they seem capable of escaping back into the outdoors, as in *Quercus Emancipation*, her Wave Hill project from 2003. In the six outdoor installations forming *Wild Life*, a 2007 public art project at the Boca Ciega Millennium Park in Seminole, Florida, Fry's use of plaster emphasized the notion of impermanence. Smaller works underline the versatility of the forms that she uses to compose her larger projects. Fry uses these smaller elements repeatedly like phrases to make sentences.

In her earlier cast plaster or bronze sculptures, also included in this exhibition, a

single natural shape is formed by others. These dream-like, even fanciful, forms are quirky, individual, and surprisingly moving. Whether human beings clear a path through nature or merge with it, the artifacts of Fry's buildings seem to be part of an irrepressible natural order. Demolition becomes construction.

—Anne Barclay Morgan