

delight



A GARDEN FOLLY IN THE WOODS OF ONTARIO THOUGHTFULLY USES GLASS AND ELECTRICITY TO MAKE SUBTLE COMMENTS ON NATURE, AND AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDES STIMULUS TO SWIMMING.

A turn of the century Canadian Arts and Crafts house overlooks Lake Ontario from a small bluff. Its owners wanted a swimming pool and asked designer John Thompson to create one that would relate to the forested terrain. Initial hopes of building it entirely in granite to harmonize with the landscape had to be abandoned on cost grounds in favour of slate and grey render; only a granite diving rock remains of the original intentions. But the result was gloomy, so Thompson was asked to find some way of relieving it.

Working with glass artists SWON (Orest Tataryn, Alfred Engerer and Andrey Berezowsky), he evolved a translucent wall of glass: a waterfall that reflects light onto the smooth surface of the water which ends with a negative edge so that the pool seems to be a piece of lake inexplicably lofted up onto the slope. Thompson and SWON

chose to pattern the surface of the glass wall in a rhythm based on the ripples of sand made by the water of the lake. Wall elements are of glass cast against carved graphite moulds and coloured by careful admixture of additives. In all, 70 pieces in seven basic shapes make up the 3m wide, 2m high glass wall, that has a thin slit at the top from which water continuously cascades, softly chattering over the texture of the glass or splashing robustly into the pool. If you want, you can sit at the base of the wall on an underwater bench below the waterfall.

At night, the wall instead of reflecting, becomes multi-dimensional with coloured neon tubes behind the glass. Integrated into the garden with native and exotic trees and shrubs and a hardwood deck, the pool and its glass wall make a magic moment in a semi-natural scene.