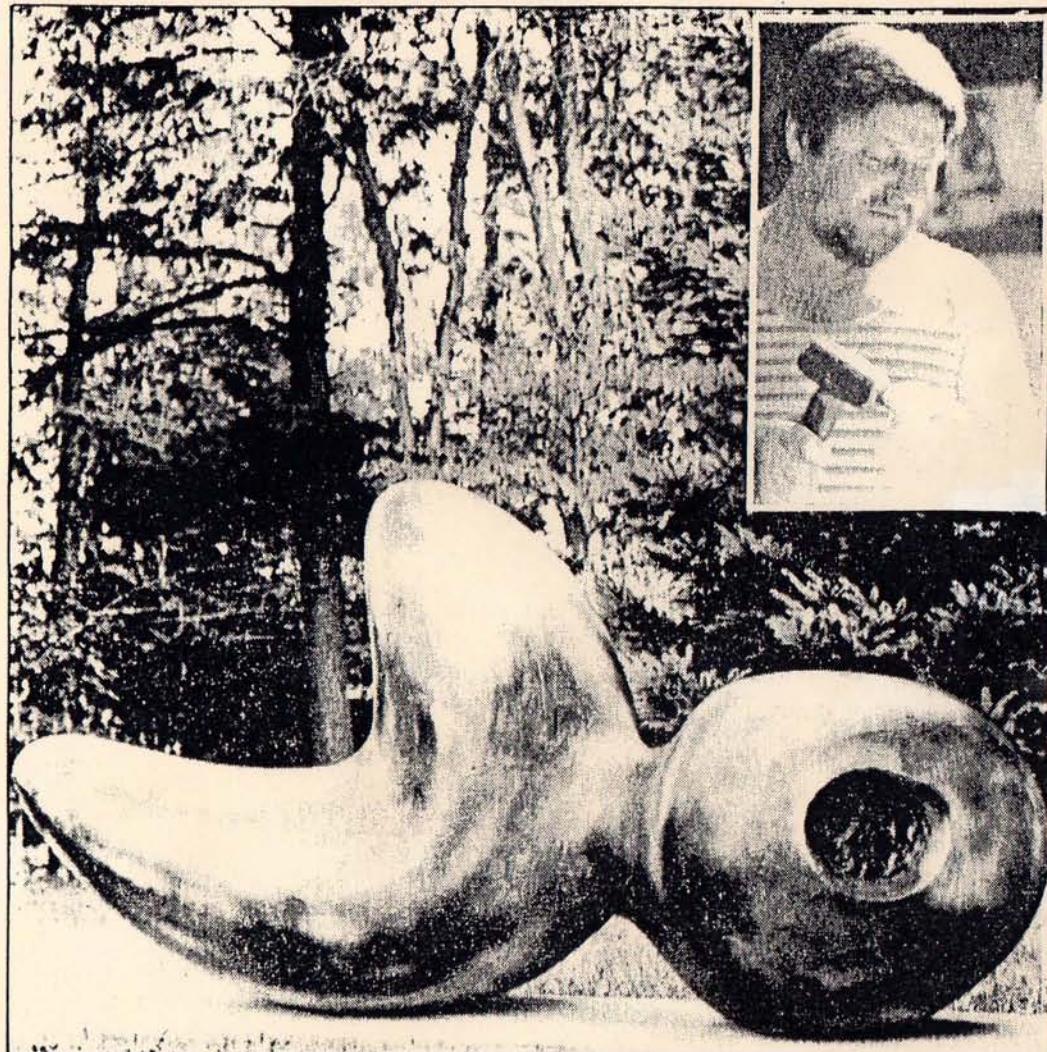


Hudson sculptor's approach 'reflects humanity'

Garden sculpture — working with and not against nature



Garden sculpture 'fish form' was fashioned from bronze, 1986; (inset) Schimanszky at work.

By JOSEPH DENNEY

Internationally renowned sculptor Leo Schimanszky knew his calling early in life. Born in Vienna, Austria in 1943, the Hudson resident displayed by his early teens a formative interest in sculpture, carving simple animal forms from small blocks of wood.

By the time he was in his early 20s Schimanszky had been introduced to the works of Rodin, Jean Arp and Henry Moore in the museums of Frankfurt, Rotterdam and Zurich, and was attending design and free-drawing classes.

The works of these three masters would prove to have a profound and fortuitous influence upon the young sculptor.

This past weekend I visited Schimanszky at his studio in Hudson. His work is on a grand scale, the operating costs of which are tremendous. Schimanszky is now directing his formidable talents towards 'garden sculpture', an art form which is very big in Europe.

Garden sculptures are mainly bronze and/or stone which harmonize with the natural environment in which they are placed. The

overall effect is a pleasing oneness — the opposite of the state-financed monstrosities which many municipalities seem all too ready to have erected in imitation of art.

With garden sculpture, the background foliage becomes the curtain; the sky the ceiling. Nature becomes art and art becomes nature.

The goal is to keep things alive, according to Schimanszky. The method is integration with nature — not fighting against her. Schimanszky's work is a reflection of humanity and nature combined in a sublime way.

This forms a direct contrast to the degenerate, commissioned sculptures so often seen on public display — works which embrace degeneration, falling away from what is human.

Schimanszky hopes to see an interest develop in garden sculpture. People surround themselves with art on the inside; it is now time to surround themselves with art on the outside.

Schimanszky has exhibited his sculptures extensively throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. He is also represented in numerous private and corporate collections throughout North America, Europe, the Caribbean and the Far East.