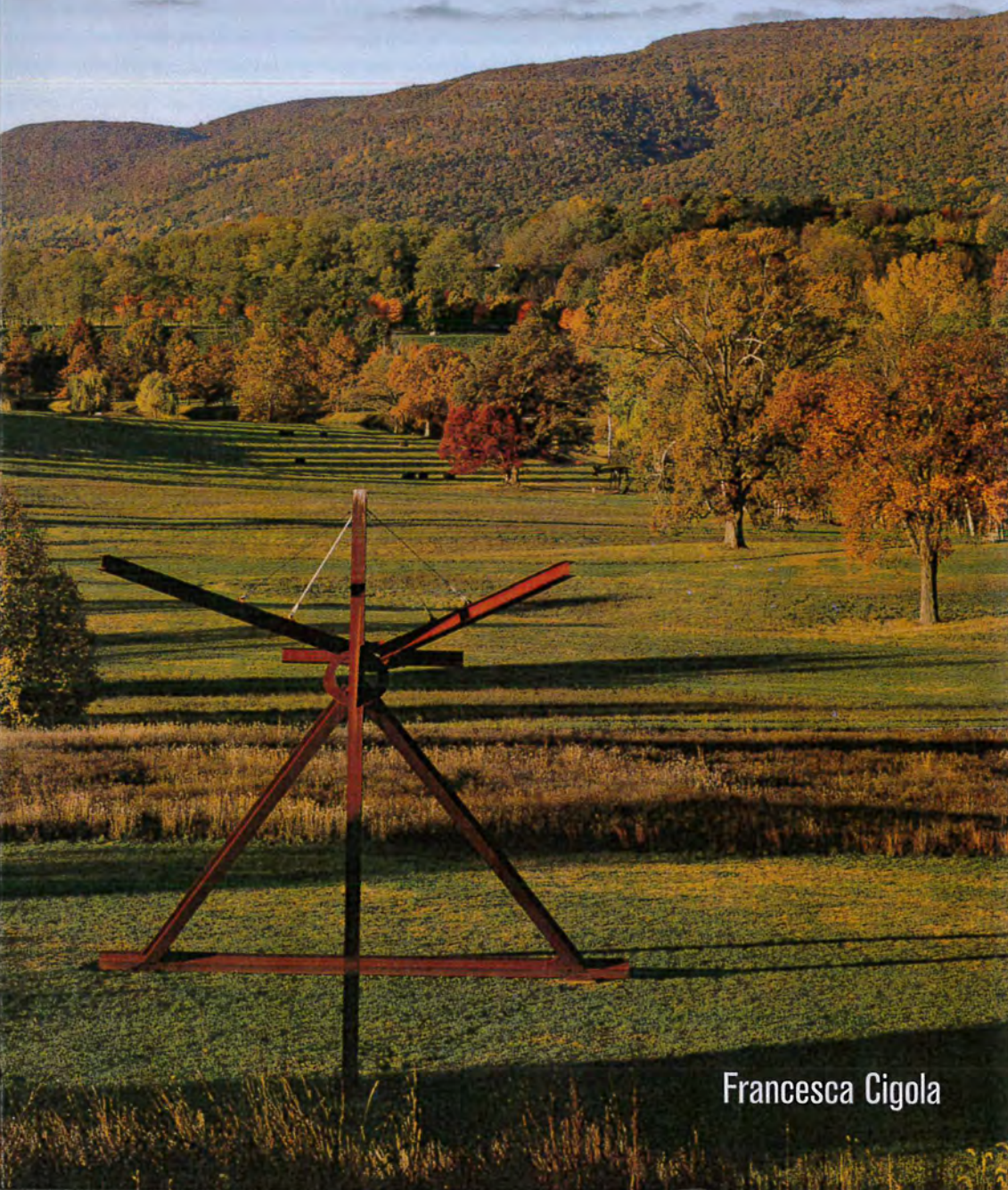


ART PARKS

A Tour of America's Sculpture Parks and Gardens



Francesca Cigola

Oliver Ranch Foundation Sculpture Collection

Geyserville, California

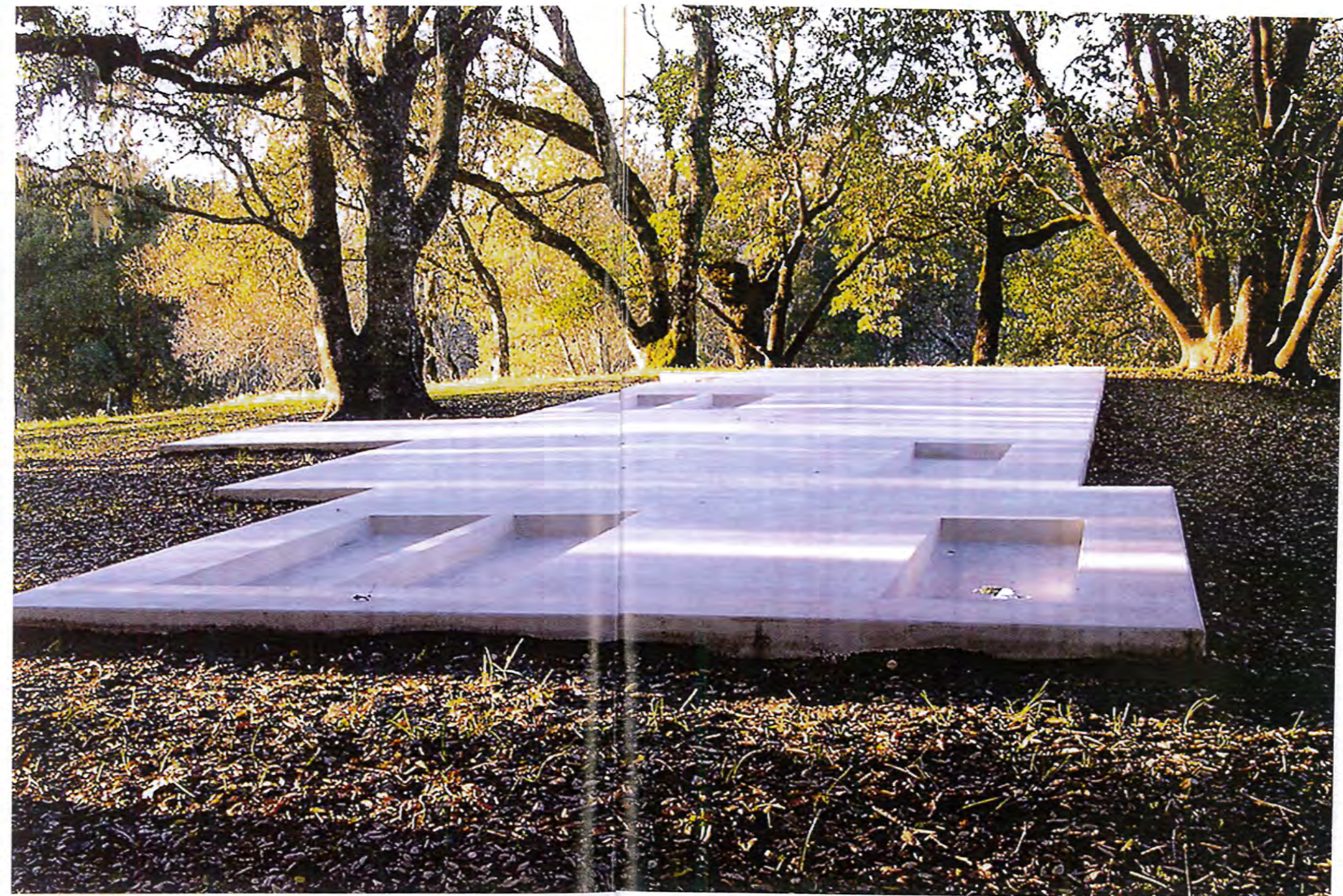
Collector Steven Oliver lives with his wife, Nancy, on Geyserville Ranch in Sonoma County, the location of the Oliver Ranch Foundation Sculpture Collection.

This sculpture collection began with the 1985 acquisition of Judith Shea's *Shepherd's Muse* (1985–88). The Olivers wanted to create a collection of art in its purest form, where each work is designed in response to a place and cannot be moved or sold. The process of creating the park is a work in progress that has not, over the last twenty-five years, followed any particular plan or established rules. Instead, it allows artists significant decision-making power without the pressure usually imposed upon them by work on commission for public display.

The only rule is that artists are asked to visit the ranch at least three times at different times of the year before submitting a proposal, in order to create work that will mesh with the landscape; there is no time limit for creating the sculptures, which are commissioned one at a time. (Until 1994, there were two pieces commissioned per year, but over time the Olivers became unconcerned with the length of time required to create the sculptures and instead began to concentrate on the process of creating them.) Some of the sculptures are designed and created on site, while others are simply assembled at the ranch. The only ephemeral environmental work is by Andy Goldsworthy, who created six temporary pieces in 1992 that are still partly visible. The eighteen installations in the park include *Untitled* (1998–99) by Bruce Nauman, a staircase with 289 steps of varying sizes (depending on the shape of the underlying landscape) that connects the entrance to the ranch with the owners' house. The collection also includes work by Richard Serra, *Snake Eyes and Boxcars* (1990–93); Terry Allen; and Miroslaw Balka (the only outdoor sculpture by this artist in the United States, the piece reconstructs the foundation of the house in Poland where he was born in an evocative play on memory and loss). Also represented are Roger Berry, Ellen Driscoll, Bill Fontana, Kristin Jones, Andrew Ginzel, Dennis Leon, Jim Melchert, Martin Puryear, David Rabinowitch, Jim Jennings, Fred Sandback, Judith Shea, Robert Stackhouse, and Ursula von Rydingsvard. The latest installation is Ann Hamilton's *tower • Oliver Ranch* (2003–07), which resembles a silo or other type of farm building and is used as a performance space.



Oliver Ranch, 2003–07



Miroslaw Balka, 43 x 30 x 2, 43 x 30 x 2, 1554 x 688 x 10, 1995-96