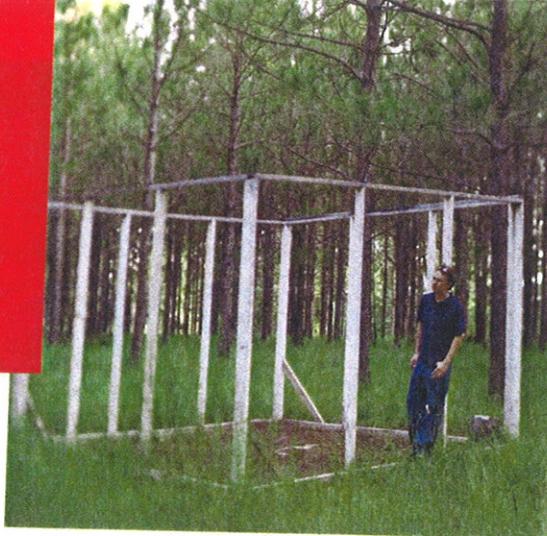
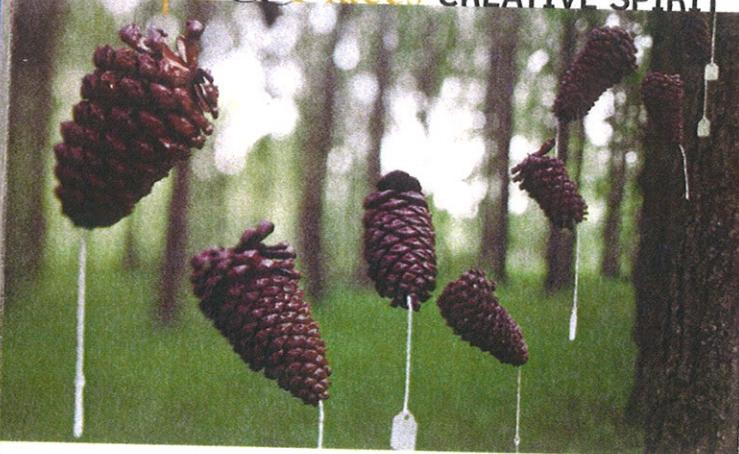


LEFT: Bridget Conn's red pinecones still hang in the woods long after the art show for which she strung them there. RIGHT: This simple frame of a room becomes a gallery without walls.



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media artist who teaches at East Georgia College in Swainsboro. "Now they are common ground for the entire Stillmoreroots Group. We are all either from around here or live nearby. We hold an annual show called Art in the Woods, literally using this patch of trees as a gallery without walls."

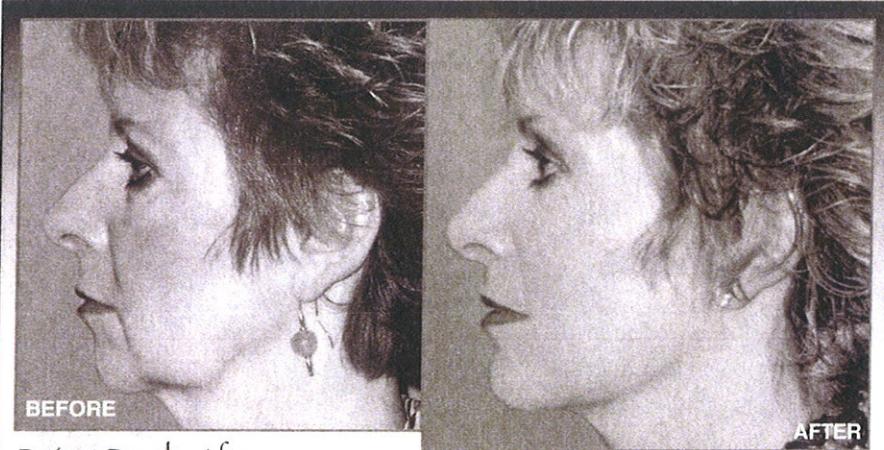
No Reason To Stop "When the group formed in 2002 before the first Art in the Woods show, we weren't thinking long term," says Anthony Faris, who with fellow photographer Bryan Ghiloni runs Gallery RFD in Swainsboro. "We created a lot of site-specific installations on the Purcell tree farm, enjoyed working together, and kept coming up with reasons to collaborate."

"Even set in the woods, the show drew a good crowd," says Jean Gray Drake, a painter and elementary school teacher who explains that the artists rarely name their pieces, letting the art speak for itself. "Ever since, there's been no reason to stop. We keep organizing shows and projects, all of us or in twos and threes. Everyone in the Stillmoreroots Group inspires everyone else."

"We've become one big, happy family," Anthony says.

Art Advocates "The Stillmoreroots Group creates art that viewers can connect to within an environment that allows artists and audiences to really relate," says Bridget Conn, who runs the group's Web site. (Those are her red pinecones from a past show.) "Exhibiting in unusual settings does that. If we provoke dialogue and inspire community involvement, we achieve our goals."

"The idea of taking art out of traditional gallery settings appeals to all of us," Desmal says. "It gets people involved." *► turn to page 42*



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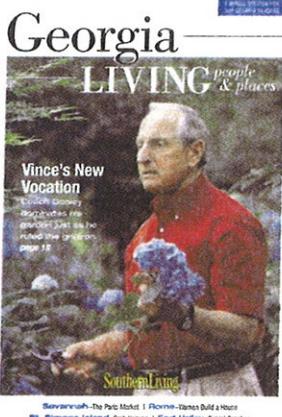
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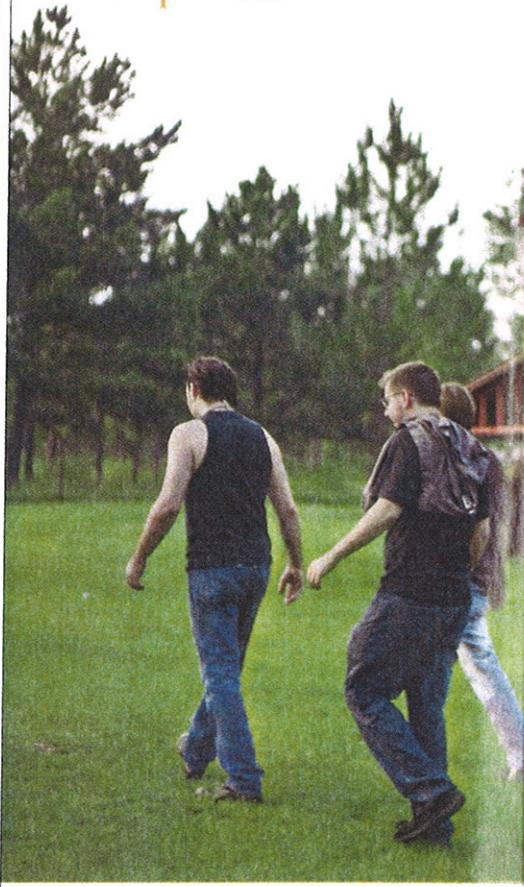
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People & Places



Inspired by Nature Several members teach. One runs an art gallery. One curates a museum. Another is director of downtown development for nearby Swainsboro. All consider rural Stillmore a source of inspiration.

Jean Gray once created an audience-participation piece, sewing taffeta squares to a sort of free-form quilt suspended on clotheslines. Desmal adds to a years-in-progress work, a hut made from defunct-farm-building tin that lets pinholes of sunlight pour onto stones from around the world. Anthony once created an installation exploring agriculture with a rack full of free fruit for viewers to interact with.

Other members—Melissa Cartaya, Nick Nelson, Bryan Ghiloni, and Brandon Tatom—stay expressively busy too. “We all bring out the creative energy in each other,” Bridget says.

Coming Home Most met while studying at Georgia Southern University, Savannah College of Art and Design, and Armstrong Atlantic