



On Our Radar

Faces, places, treasures, and trends that caught our attention



Creative Genius

At Hogpen Hill Farms, Edward Tufte Has Sculpted a World of His Own

By Zachary Schwartz

Photos courtesy of Edward Tufte



The art cognoscenti know where to go in search of large-scale sculptures that defy museum walls. In Upstate New York alone, there is Storm King Art Center, PepsiCo's sculpture gardens, and Art Omi. Litchfield County's take on expansive sculpture gardens lies quietly off the beaten path at Edward Tufte's [Hogpen Hill Farms](#) in [Woodbury](#).

Much like his artwork, Edward Tufte is multidimensional. Not only is he an expert in statistics and data visualization, but he has also published a series of best-selling data visualization books, consulted for large corporations, opened an art gallery in downtown Manhattan, and even advised former President Barack Obama. Following a successful career in academia and writing, Tufte departed from professorship at Yale University in favor of more creative pursuits: larger than life sculptures.



"I find both data visualization and sculpture very enjoyable and rewarding. But there's no difficulty in sculpture for me. It comes easily. It's perfectly natural," says Tufte.

In order to display his own artwork, the sculptor acquired 234 acres of former farmland in [Woodbury](#) called [Hogpen Hill Farms](#). At first, he rarely allowed public visits to his sculpture garden. That changed during the pandemic, with summer weekends now open for visits to his serene property.

Tufte's panoply of colossal sculptures are scattered throughout the property. "The wonderful thing is that there is so much space here in Litchfield County, which itself is an inspiration. It's a kind of miracle that I have control over making the art and where it goes," says Tufte.

Hogpen Hill Farms exhibits towering stone megaliths, a gargantuan black swan, physics references to Feynman diagrams, and nods to artistic greats like Duchamp, Matisse, and Magritte. Along the road are humorous signs, like "Sign Not in Use" or "Shut Up and Look." These cheeky imperatives introduce the viewer to Tufte's prankish yet didactic messaging for visitors to independently experience the artwork.



The sculptures vary in subject matter and source, but common themes include the use of found objects (such as machinery from the Millstone Nuclear Power Station), unplanned three-dimensionality of materials, the juxtaposition between art and its environmental air space, and a wink of prankishness and pastiche. Some of Tufte's art looks like it could have been jettisoned from outer space, while others look like primitive drawings from prehistoric eras.

Dancer with Calipers depicts a sky-high stainless steel dancer with flowing hair carrying a tool. *Rocket Science 3: Airstream Interplanetary Explorer* wedges a full-size airstream in midair on a rocket to Mars. *Larkin's Twig* is a 32-foot torqued steel installation that shifts perspective and perception with each angle. There is also the bamboo maze, a labyrinth of tall bamboo that demands introspection in its anechoic chamber.

"I want people to have a calm and gracious experience. Most people go away smiling. They leave happy," says the artist. For an opportunity to observe out-of-this-world sculptures and peer inside the inspirational mind of a creative genius, feast your eyes on Edward Tufte's Hogpen Hill Farms.