

# ART NEW ENGLAND

CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

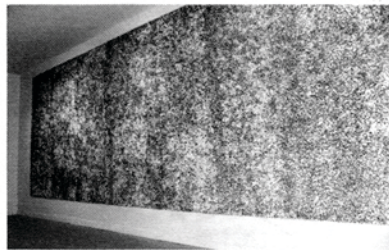
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New Bedford Art Museum/New Bedford, MA

[www.newbedfordartmuseum.org](http://www.newbedfordartmuseum.org)

## **VAULT SERIES FOCUS: RAGNA RÓBERTSDÓTTIR**

Ragna Róbertsdóttir exhibits primarily in her native Iceland and in Europe. She is strongly influenced by the unique volcanic landscape of her country, from which she extracts some materials. These installations give the opportunity to see the work of an artist that is rarely seen in the United States, in the unique setting of this repurposed bank building.



Ragna Róbertsdóttir, *Lava Landscape*, lava from Hekla, Iceland, 76" x 16 1/2', on wall 96" x 19 1/2', 2005.

In *Landscape* (2005), Róbertsdóttir glued crushed glass to an installed wall in a nearly square shape, and for *Lava Landscape* (2005) she glued small bits of black lava directly to the gallery wall with-

in a rectangular shape echoing the dimensions of the wall. The resulting pieces have an elegant, evocative richness that transcends their technical and visual simplicity.

*Plasted Landscape* (2004) is installed in the museum's subterranean vault space, where it enters into a narrative dialogue with the unique features of that cave-like space. The entrance to this narrow space is on a long wall, through a massive, partially rusted circular steel doorway. Along the opposite long wall Róbertsdóttir has arranged a row of twenty-six clear plastic folders holding bits of red lava. The horizontal line of folders reads as landscape on two levels; taken as a whole it suggests a panoramic landscape, but it also reads as a sequence of individual images, as if one were viewing stills from a film. The vault entrance frames the piece and has the feeling of passing through a portal to another world; the interior space resonates metaphorically with the subterranean origin of the lava. While Róbertsdóttir's other work is undeniably strong and beautiful, it is this piece that most fully realizes the potential of the *Vault* series. *Mary Bucci McCoy*