

GLADSTONE

Mayer Rus, "Artist Ugo Rondinone and Designer Dennis Schrader Create a Mediative Landscape Where Bold Sculptures Mingle With Moss," *Architectural Digest*, November 13, 2025.

AD

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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In the artist's Long Island garden, Rondinone brokers a
harmonic convergence of nature and culture

November 13, 2025



Ugo Rondinone in his Long Island garden amid his cloud sculptures of concrete, pebbles, and sand. Rising roughly 12 feet, the sculptures replicate the forms of Chinese scholar's rocks from the artist's collection.

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Much like the proverbial rolling stone, a coastal bluff with sandy soil is a tricky spot to gather moss. But Ugo Rondinone remained undaunted. Starting in the COVID lockdown of 2020, the Swiss-born artist spent years cultivating a verdant wonderland at his beach home on the North Fork of Long Island (*AD*, [December 2018](#)). "My vision was a landscape that features moss as its star attraction—a lush, tranquil ground cover that can be enjoyed all year round," Rondinone says of his garden odyssey. Although the property already boasted mature trees and patches of existing mosses, lichens, and ferns, the artist's path to arcadia was hardly straightforward. "The beginning was difficult. We failed the first two seasons," he confesses. "Moss takes a lot of patience."



Paintings, sculptures, and a work in progress in the artist's garden studio.

Art: © Ugo Rondinone

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Rondinone wrapped a sick, 100-foot-tall red oak in silver tape and added chimes. The sculpture, *nothing has changed*, re-creates a work from 2004.

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Shadows animate the moss ground cover.

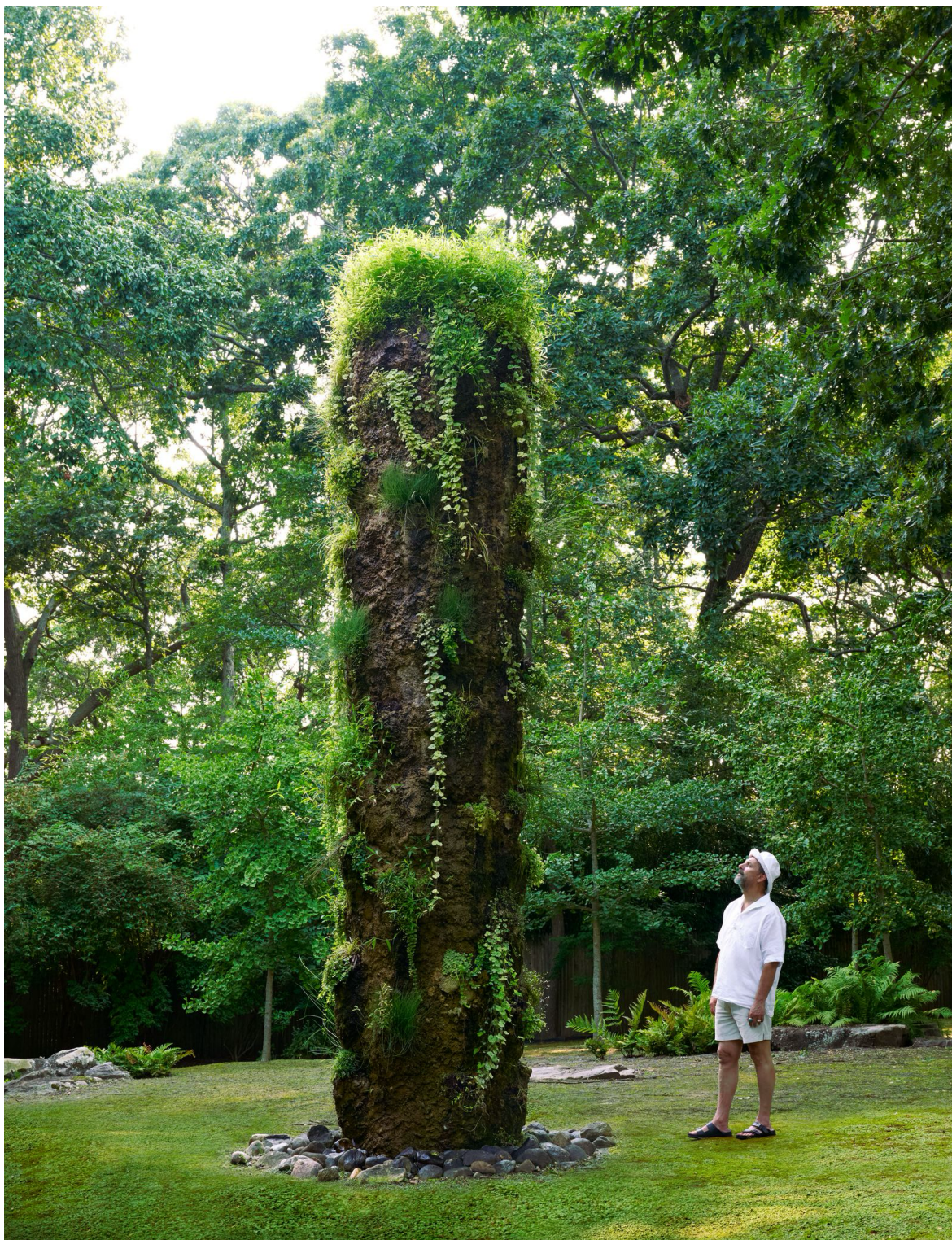
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To realize his vision, Rondinone found an expert collaborator in landscape designer Dennis Schrader of Landcraft Design Associates. "The site was a blank canvas. We talked about creating destinations in a serene, contemplative landscape," Schrader recalls of his early conversations with the artist. The garden they devised is loosely organized in four sections. A collection of maidenhair, ostrich, Christmas, and New York ferns borders the entry to the home, which is perched atop a bluff overlooking the Long Island Sound. Twenty-one varieties of Japanese maple, a species well-suited to the North Fork climate, are planted around a capacious pond. In the third section, closely spaced river birch trees form a natural canopy for shade-loving moss. The last segment of the garden features cherry trees and ginkgoes surrounding a 16-foot-tall columnar concrete fountain covered in native plants—a living sculpture that feels like a pagan altar readymade for harvest festivals and virgin sacrifices.

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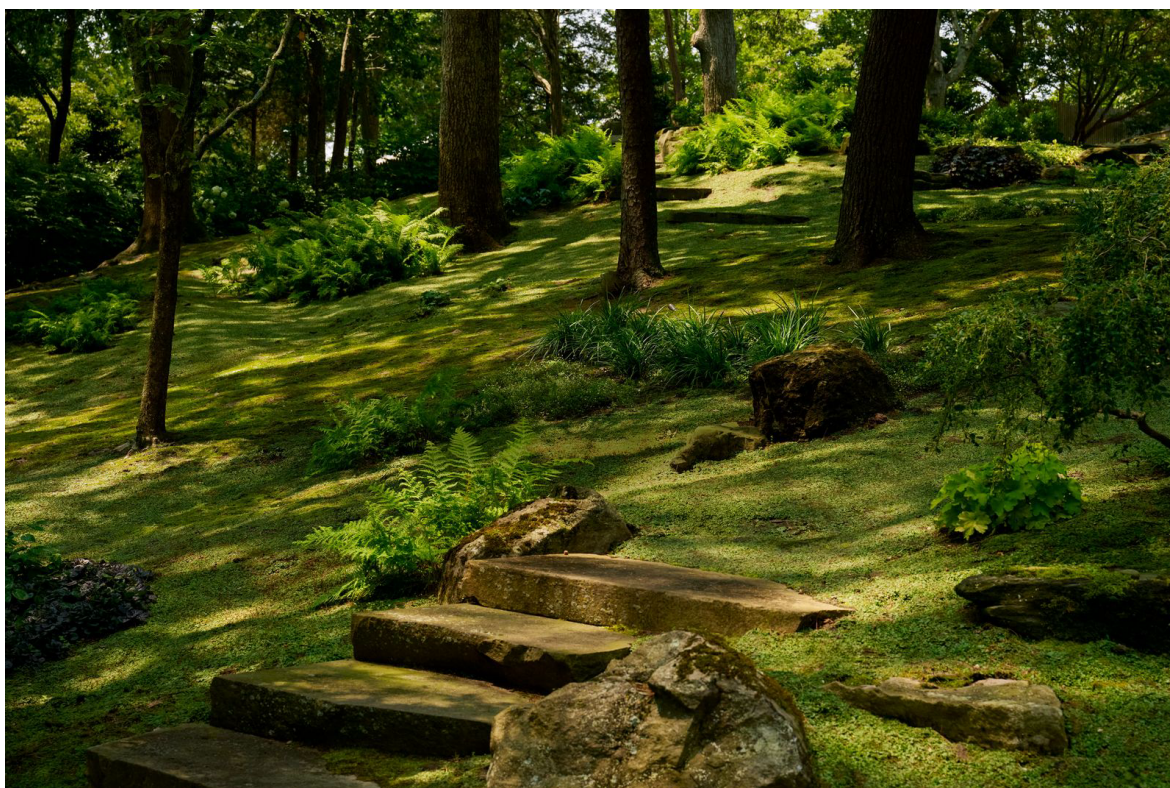
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The *Mattituck Waterfall*, a concrete fountain covered in native plants, rises in an open area surrounded by cherry trees and ginkgos.

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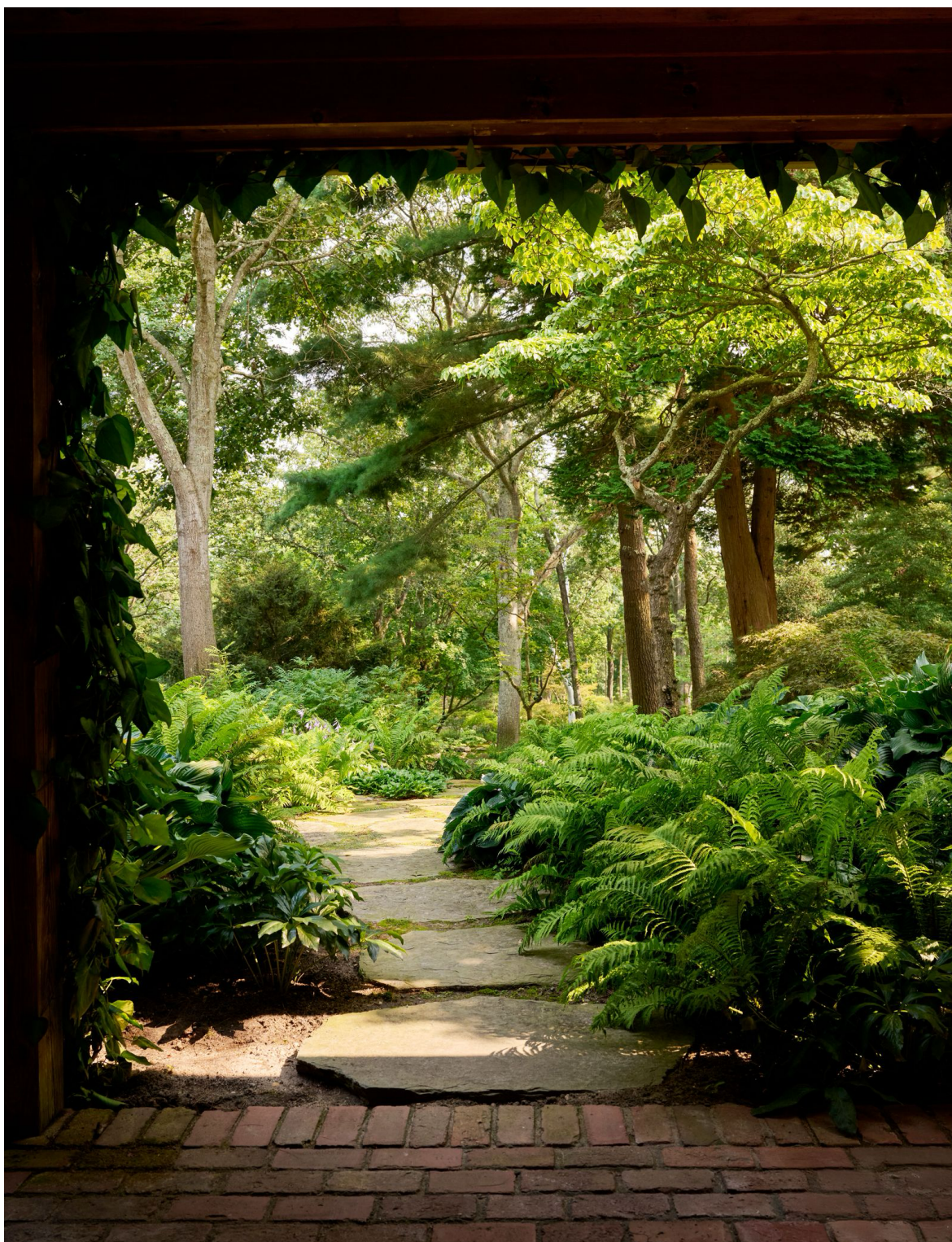


Mosses now blanket the bluff.

The phallic fountain is one of three large-scale art installations set within the landscape. Near the koi-stocked pond, the artist wrapped a sick, 100-foot-tall red oak entirely in silver rubber tape, re-creating an earlier sculpture, *Jahrestage* (2004), made for a public park in the Dutch city of Tilburg. A massive wind chime with six metal pipes hangs from one of the tree's sturdiest branches, gracing the garden with mellifluous tones that Rondinone likens to cathedral bells and Tibetan singing bowls. In front of his garden studio, he erected three monumental cloud sculptures fabricated of concrete, pebbles, and sand. Their gnarled, perforated forms replicate specimens from the artist's collection of Chinese scholar's rocks at a scale of roughly 12 feet high.

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Various ferns frame the path to the house's front door.

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View of the artist's sunlit garden studio. The two watercolors on canvas are *elfterjulizweitausendfünfundzwanzig*, 2025 (left), and *zehnterjulizweitausendfünfundzwanzig*, 2025 (right).
Art: © Ugo Rondinone

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Hostas seen through the entry hall of the main house.

The through line for the various garden zones is, of course, moss, one of Earth's oldest plants, redolent of nature's fragility and resilience, its slow rhythms, and the beauty of quiet, simple things. "We planted several horizontally arranged fern barriers to keep the moss from washing down the slope. Drip irrigation is very helpful because it delivers water directly to the soil without runoff," the artist advises, adding, "It takes time to get it right, but once a moss garden is established, it is famously low maintenance."

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A large firepit sits near the top of the bluff.

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Rondinone seen through an aperture in one of his cloud sculptures of concrete, pebbles, and sand.

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A tree covered in silver rubber tape echoes *Jahrestage* (2004), a sculpture Rondinone created for a public park in the Netherlands.

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Rondinone is far from finished. Last year, he acquired an adjacent five-acre property, where he plans to expand his garden, install more sculptures, and renovate two existing farmhouses to host a summer residency for artists and poets. The residency will be part of a namesake foundation the artist is currently establishing. For now, he's simply enjoying the multi-seasonal pleasures of his Long Island Shangri-la. "When temperatures and light levels plummet in the fall and winter, most plants stop growing. But moss does the exact opposite. It bursts into life just as other plants slip into dormancy," he explains. "Moss provides you with a horticultural happy pill just when you need it most."