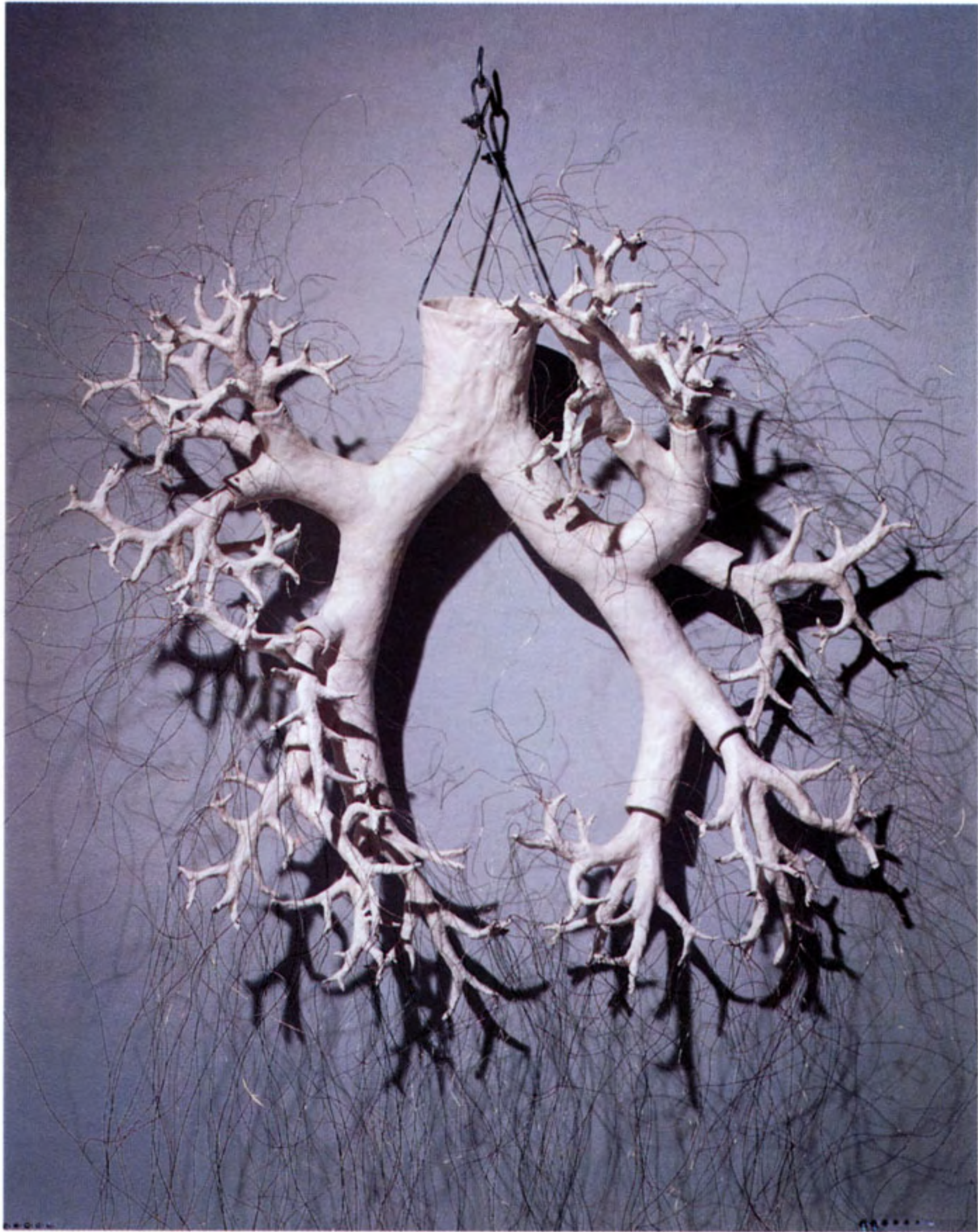




Judy Moonelis

Based on the bronchial tree—the central element in the human respiratory system—Judy Moonelis's *Breathing Root* is an aeriferous profusion of tubelike forms terminating in a cascade of wires that resembles a botanical root structure. Implicit in the piece is a reference both to the primacy of breath in the living body and the fundamental capillary action in the extremities of a growing plant. The structure is, in other words, presented as a vessel indispensable to life in general, serving through its hollowness as a conduit for crucial resources. Moreover, the sculpture suggests the connections of the living organism to a broader environment. *Breathing Root* is, in fact, a product of Moonelis's ongoing exploration of a set of vital relationships between human being and the external realm of experience. The wires in her mixed-media work suggest paths for the electrochemical impulses regulating the body's nervous system and imply a causal connection between information acquired by the sense of touch and the rapidity and profundity of breath. Her belief that *Breathing Root* constitutes a kind of internal human portrait can therefore be taken as an assertion of the essentially systemic nature of human being—its dispersal through process as well as its localization in matter.

by Glen R. Brown



Judy Moonelis, *Breathing Root* (detail), 2001, mixed media, 72" x 40" x 12", courtesy of John Elder Gallery, New York City, NY; photograph by Cathy Carver