

PAUL RODGERS

9W

Featuring:

Michael Dominick

James Hegge

Win Knowlton

Mary Ziegler

Going Nowhere

Text on Robert Smithson's

Spiral Jetty by Allyson Spellacy

Post-face by Eugenie Tsai

July - August 2002

3000°

The contemporary influence of the Smithson/Serra nexus, through
Georges Bataille's solar lense.

3000°

GROUP EXHIBITION

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Exhibition at

PAUL RODGERS/9W
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New York, NY 10011
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9W Summer Installation 3000°

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*The contemporary influence of the Smithson/Serra nexus,
through Georges Bataille's solar lense.*

July - August, 2002

Paul Rodgers/9W is pleased to present a summer group exhibition of contemporary sculpture by Michael Dominick, James Hegge, Win Knowlton and Mary Ziegler, all artists who have been associated with the sculpture program at 9W. The great question facing contemporary art in America, after a car crash ended Jackson Pollock's life in 1956, appears to have been quite simply "What do we do after Pollock"? Following the turbulent years of the 1960's, which saw the birth of Pop, Minimal, Performance and Conceptual art, the then editor of Artforum, Philip Leider, argued that, when Robert Smithson was killed in a plane crash in 1973, American art abandoned its effort to answer that question. This exhibition has a dual intention. Firstly, it pays tribute to the friendship between Robert Smithson and Richard Serra as being central to this challenge of understanding Pollock's legacy. Secondly, it argues that Georges Bataille, one of the great anti-academic thinkers of the twentieth century, played a clandestine role in the elaboration of an alternative art thought in America. The selection of recent sculpture by Dominick, Hegge, Knowlton and Ziegler is intended to demonstrate how this line of thought, linking Pollock to Smithson, Serra and beyond, persists in contemporary art.

Serra is on record as testifying to how Smithson's idea of entropy interested him and how Smithson in turn was interested in his thrown lead pieces. What is less well-known is that a copy of the first American translation of writings by Georges Bataille, under the title *Death and Sensuality*, published 1969, was in Robert Smithson's library and that he referred to Bataille in his own writings at a time when the philosopher was otherwise absent from art discourse in the United States. It is, therefore, historically established that contemporary American aesthetic thinking took note of Bataille at a key moment in its

development and through the conduit of its most audacious conceptual mind. Both the style and content of Smithson's 1972 text *The Spiral Jetty* testifies to his involvement with Bataille's thought. It indicates that Smithson's central concept of entropy, the notion that matter inevitably reverts to inertia, should be seen in the larger context of Bataille's thesis of 'General Economy' driven by surplus solar energy. In this scenario, art must mediate issues of threat, disorientation, instability, dissolution, excess and, ultimately, questions of shifting identity. This exhibition proposes that these issues are at the heart of Pollock's legacy, that Smithson and Serra took them up and that each of the included artists continues to find new forms with which to explore them.

Welders use the round number of 3000 degrees to indicate the temperature at which iron melts, hence the title of the show. The exhibition will consist of four sculptures engaged with energy and its expenditure. Michael Dominick will present one of his found radiator pieces which will augment the temperature of the gallery to repellent levels above the normal heat of the summer season. It is intended that the visitor will experience discomfort in relationship to the exhibition space. Win Knowlton will present *Speaker of the House* from his recent one-man show at the gallery. This piece, through its perforated steel layers, captures the eye in a vortex, similar in effect to the solar vortex that Smithson speaks of at the Salt Lake, and provokes sensations of retinal vertigo. James Hegge will present a new piece, made during his recent residency at the Bemis Center of Contemporary Arts by throwing an object off a sixth floor building and repairing the consequent damage, only to repeat the process over again and again. The work explores the effects of physical shock and stress on base matter, to produce a sculptural form which the artist would not otherwise have been able to invent through conscious decision making. Mary Ziegler will present a new kinetic sculpture using electro-magnetic force to evoke themes of manipulation and control, and their opposite, that are inherent in all natural, social and cultural systems.

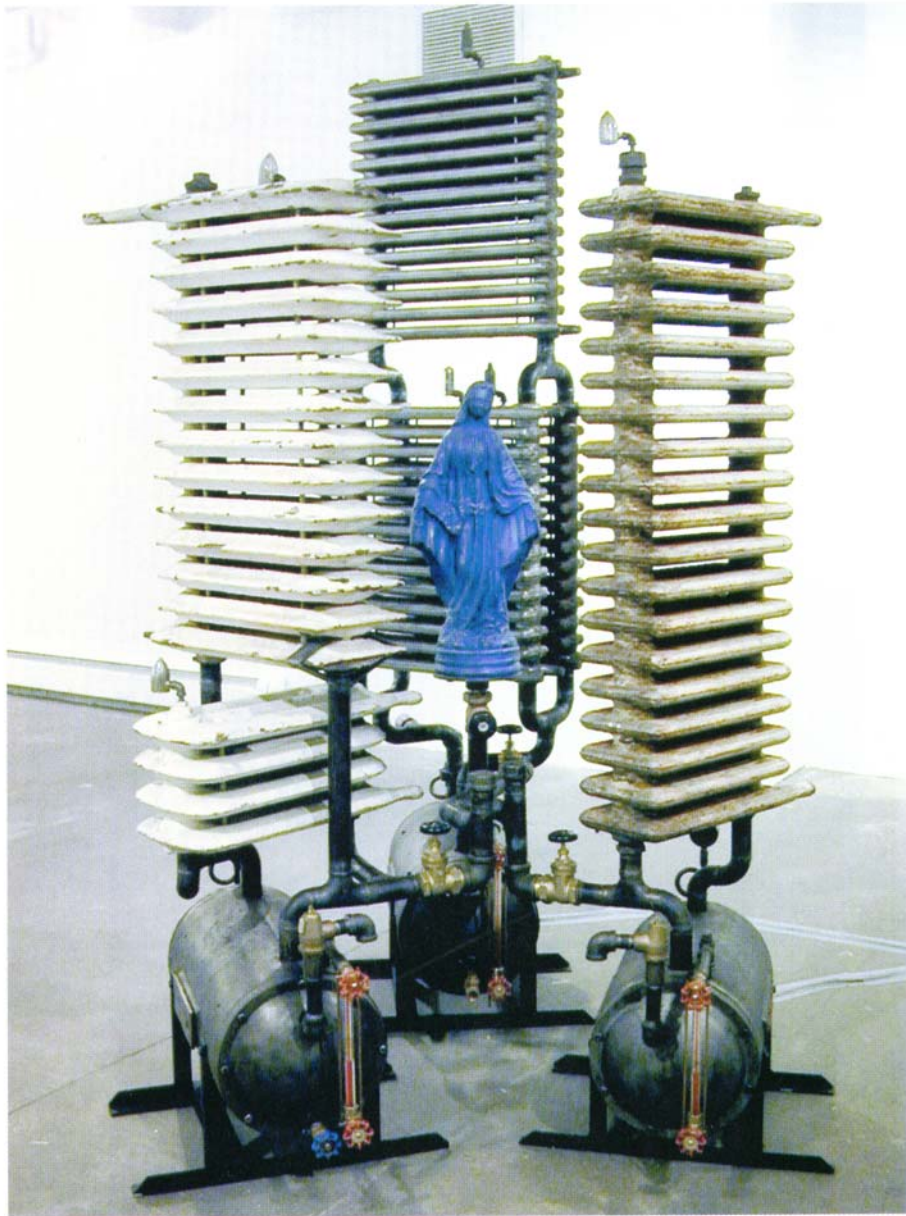
MICHAEL DOMINICK

The Radiator Series initially emerged from a concept for an outdoor winter project intended for Manhattan's Tompkins Square Park. Fully operational radiator sculptures were intended to perform on practical and social as well as aesthetic levels. Placed outdoors, the winter climate would dramatically emphasize the radiating heat waves and provide respite from the cold while functioning as an object of public aesthetic pleasure. I soon realized that even in a warm climate the integrity of the work would remain unchallenged, as virtually any unusual location would contribute to its contemplative merit. The invitation for inclusion in a summer, indoor exhibition at Paul Rodgers 9W was an excellent opportunity to see how the work would perform in a different context.

The ninth floor at 529 West 20th street was already at ninety degrees the afternoon of installation in mid June. Once the sculpture was up and running, the exhibition space heated to over one hundred and ten degrees. Unlike the conceptualized outdoor park setting where the heat would quickly dissipate, the gallery contained and amplified it. The exhibition space was quickly pervaded with a physical representation of the aura of the work. The sculpture tangibly warmed us, an irrevocable reminder of how the sacred character of unique objects once warmed our ancestors' hearts.

Although the radiators were still heating a room, they were no longer functioning in a utilitarian sense. As sculpture objects, the radiator's production of heat was usurped from the duty of providing warmth to become a palpable, formal and psychological element of the work. The typical boundaries of sculptural reception were stretched to their limits as viewers were forced to engage the work through sensations received not only through vision but also, inescapably, through breath and skin. In the setting of this exhibition space, the non-object quality of heat was forced into coexistence with the object of its creation. By forcing the boundaries of viewer interaction beyond traditional means, I hope this work serves to engender new directions in sculpture.

The Aura of The Virgin, 2002,
cast iron, steel, steam heat.
85 x 52 x 48 Inches.



JAMES HEGGE

My work is concerned with elemental phenomena: behavior of material, the forces that act upon it and the mechanisms through which it is revealed to us. Rather than depict these phenomena, it seeks to dramatize them through direct engagement.

Dropped Ball, which began as a perfectly round fiberglass sphere, was thrown from a sixth floor window and then restored to its original condition as best as possible. This process was repeated fifteen times. While scars, rips and tears have been removed from the object's surface, the flat planes and swells altering its contour bear witness to the properties of the material and the forces and pressures exerted by the fall. As both a site on which an action occurs and a tool for recording phenomena outside of itself, the work explores the possibilities for and limitations of translating the physical happenings of the world into intelligible form.

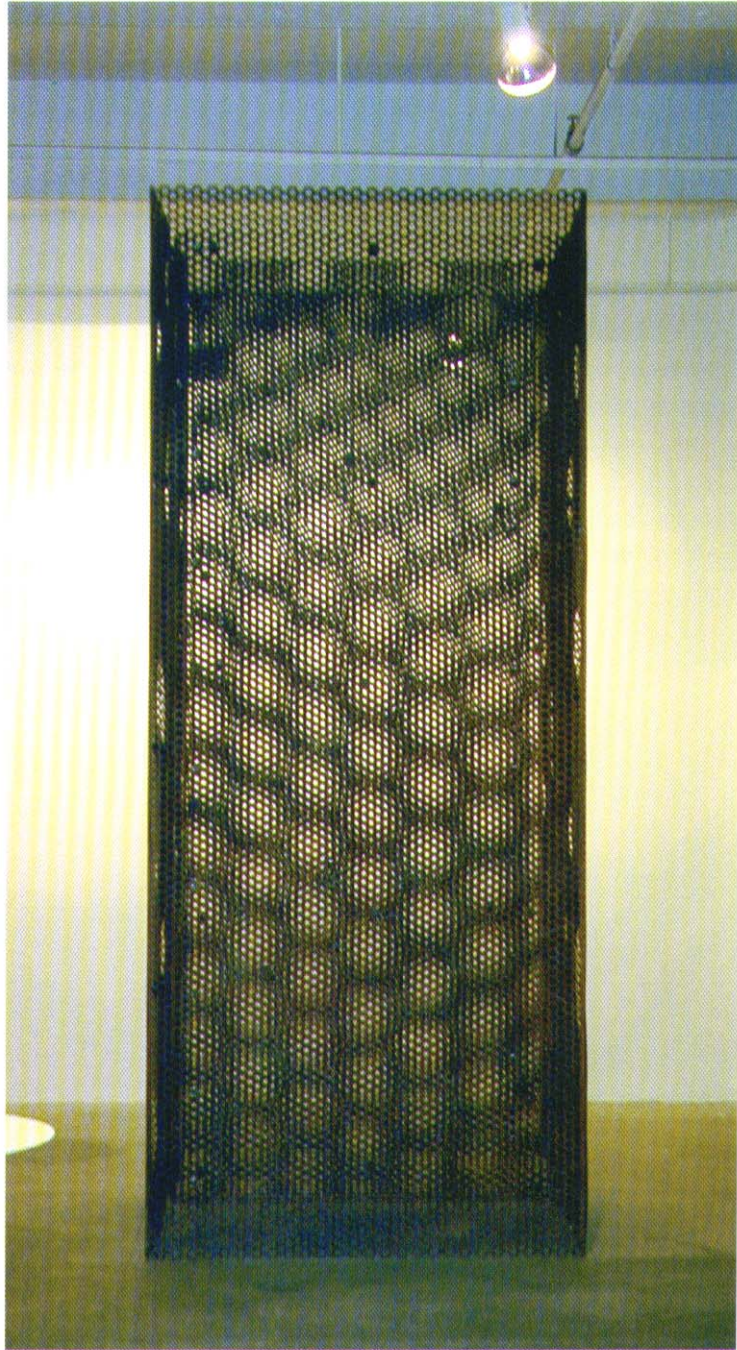
Dropped Ball, 2002, Fiberglass,
24 x 21.5 x 22.5 Inches



WIN KNOWLTON

Speaker of the House (2001) is more about visual phenomena than it is a piece about its material and form, which is relatively neutral. Roughly human scale, the viewer experiences *Speaker* head on. Distance and movement change the optic patterns that appear to float both outside and within the piece. A pulse is almost audible in its mute presence.

Win Knowlton, *Speaker of the House*, 2001,
Rusted steel and rubber, 118 x 48.5 x 48.5 Inches



MARY ZIEGLER

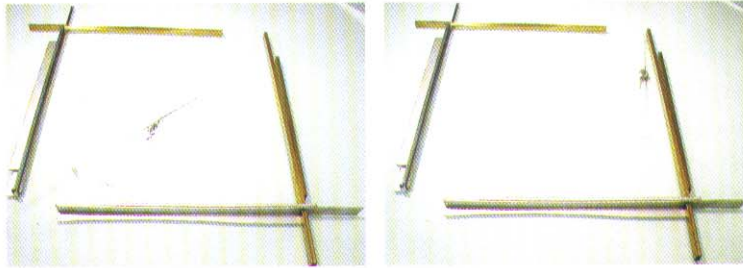
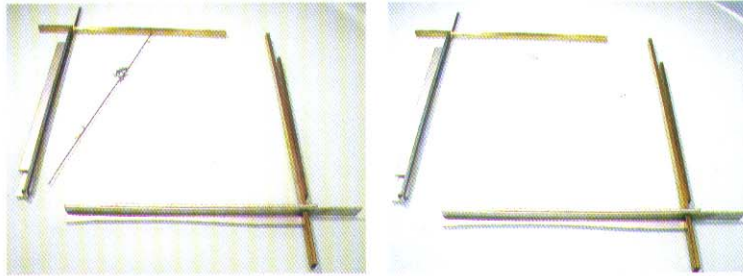
Site looks like a footprint or floor plan seen from a bird's eye view. The act of placing a line within its confines, moving it into position looking for critical placement, is the objective. Of course, the nervous kinetic action of the sculpture cannot be captured in a still photograph.

Small bits of detritus nudge, budge, coax and drag the line around. It gets stuck. They pull it out. It gets stuck again. Placement of any kind is temporary. We have the build-up, but placement itself never happens. Instead, we seem to be watching the indecisive musings of a baffled architect, the ineffectual effort of a delirious construction crew, or just a stick swirling endlessly in a pond.

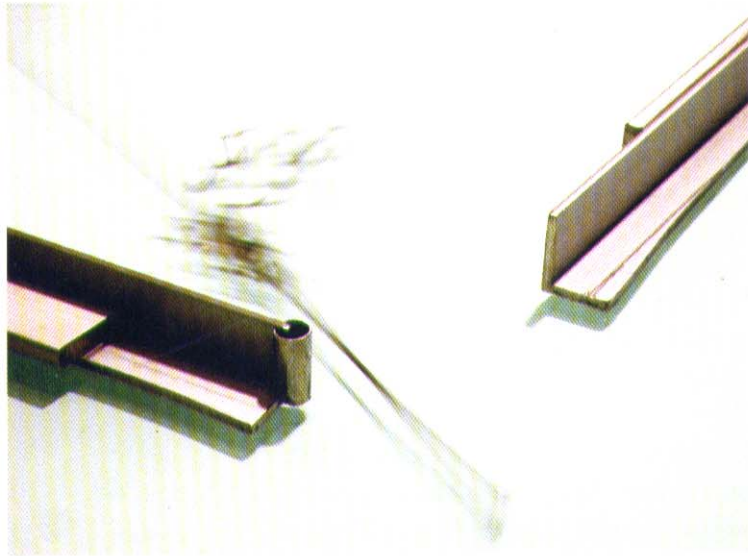
The process of decision making is by nature messy. Linear thinking gives way to spikes of brilliance that seem to pop out of nowhere. The unconscious is capable of connecting mysterious dots, and incessant wanderings pose the possibility of giving way to revelation, or in this case, not.



Site (Homage to Richard Serra) 2002,
glass, wood, motor, metals, magnet
34 Inches high by 27 Inches diameter



Clockwise Rotation: Elapsed time 15seconds.



MICHAEL DOMINICK

EDUCATION

- 1998 - 2002 Hunter College of the City University of New York. M.F.A.,
Sculpture.
- 2000 The Slade School of Fine Arts. London, England.
- 1991 - 1994 State University College of New York at Buffalo. B.F.A., Sculpture.

SELECTED AWARDS

- 2002 Nomination for the Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA Grant for
Painters and Sculptors
- 2000 Foreign Exchange Scholarship - Hunter College of the City
University of New York
- 1998 CAAP Grant - City of Chicago Cultural Affairs Department
- 1995 First Place - Cozzi Iron And Metal Sculpture Exhibition, Chicago, IL

EXHIBITIONS

- 2003 Paul Rodgers 9W, Transfigurations, Solo Exhibition, New York, NY
- 2002 Paul Rodgers 9W, 3000 Degrees, Summer group show. New York, NY
Johnson Atelier, Fire to Form, Mercerville, NJ
- 2001 Deep Dale Gallery, Appropriations, New York, NY
- 2000 The Rhythm Factory, East End Live, London, England
Betekints Hotel, Cast Iron Sculpture Exhibition, Veszprem, Hungary
- 1999 57N Fine Arts, Into Balance, Washington, D.C.
Upton Gallery, Millennial All-Star Sculpture Review, Buffalo, NY
Pedvale Open Air Sculpture Park and Museum, 1999 Summer
Exhibition, Pedvale, Latvia, Muveszet Malom, International Cast
Iron Sculpture Symposium Exhibition, Szentendre, Hungary

1998 Navy Pier, Pier Walk 98, Chicago, IL

1997 The Floating Gallery, International Art Expo, Carnegie Hall,
New York, NY
Roberto Lopez Gallery, Against the Nightstick, Chicago, IL
Women Made Gallery, Making Waves, Chicago, IL
Greater Lafayette Museum of Art, Art Forms 97, Lafayette, IN

1995 Cozzi Iron and Metal Inc., Cozzi Iron and Metal Sculpture
Exhibition, Chicago, IL

1994 Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Artists and Models Affair,
Buffalo, NY

1993 Burchfield Art Center, Unknown Boundaries, Buffalo, NY

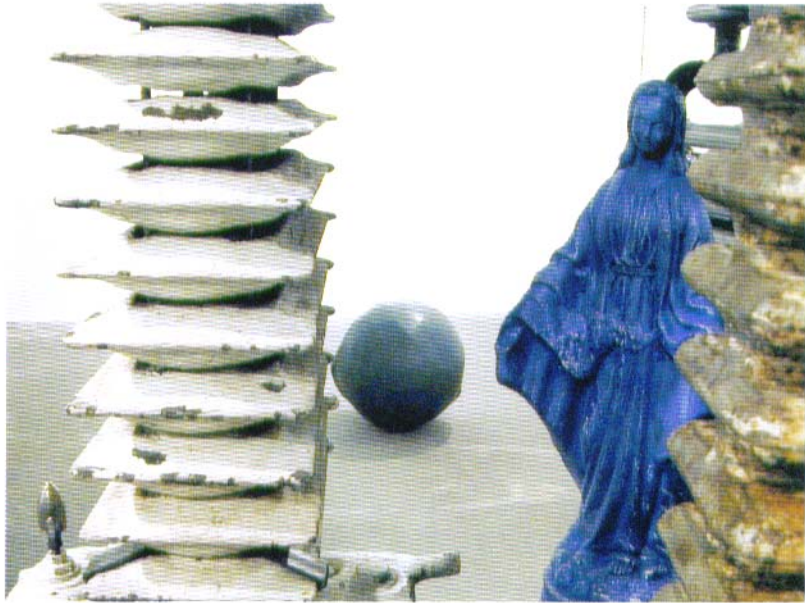
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pp. 51, 53

Selwood, Jonathan. "Hot Enough For You ?"
Brooklyn Bridge, Summer 1999, pp.29-30

Shields, Karen. "Monument Highlights Groups Anger at Police Brutality"
Chicago Defender, September 17, 1997, p.4

Danto, Ginger. "3000 Degrees," Artnews, October 2002, pp.158-160



Gallery installation shots of 3000°

JAMES HEGGE

EDUCATION

2000 MFA Stanford University, Stanford, CA
1992 BFA Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2002 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant
 Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE
 Dieu Donn  Papermill, Workspace Program, New York, NY
2000 The MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH
 Full Fellowship, Vermont Studio Center residency program
1992 Otto F. Ege Award for academic and artistic achievement
 Agnes Gund Scholarship for Foreign Study

EXHIBITIONS

2001 Treadmill of Myself, solo exhibition, Paul Rodgers/9W, New York.
 Blink, Kirkland Art Museum, Kirkland, WA Spunky, Exit Art, New
 York, NY
 Brooklyn!, Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art, Lake
 Worth, FL
 clenchclutchflinch, Paul Rodgers/9W, New York, NY
 Donut Shop 4, Whatcome Museum, Bellingham, WA
 Marginalia, Millenium Film Workshop, New York, NY
2000 Millennium, City Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1997 Wrecking Ball, WORKS, San Jose, CA
1996 Seeking Security, WORKS, San Jose, CA

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Art Forum, David Levi Strauss, February 2002
ARTnews, Ginger Danto, October 2002
Art Forum, David Levi Strauss, February 2002

WIN KNOWLTON

1953 Born in Boston / 1974 Instituto Allende, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
1977 Winchester College of Art, Winchester, England
1978 B.F.A. Parsons School of Design, NYC

AWARDS

1999 New York Foundation for the Arts Grant
1996 Studio, American Center, Paris, France
1996 Kaplan Foundation Grant, NYC
1995 Augustus St. Gaudens Fellowship, Cornish, NH
1994 Residency at Kohler Co., Kohler, WI
1991 Guggenheim Fellowship, NYC
1988 Residency at Chesterwood, Stockbridge, MA
1980 Studio, Institute for Art & Urban Resources at PS1, NYC
1979 Studio, Institute for Art & Urban Resources at the Clocktower, NYC

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2002 Birds Blocks Bamboo, PS1 Project, NYC
Knowlton Mfg., Paul Rodgers/9W, NYC
1998 Win Knowlton, Bill Maynes Gallery, NYC
1995 Win Knowlton: Trees, Bill Maynes Contemporary Art, NYC
Augustus St. Gaudens Fellowship Exhibition, Cornish, NH
Recent Works, Contemporary Art Gallery, Ahmedabad, India
1993 New Sculpture, Eugene Binder Gallery, Dallas, TX
1991 Description Without Place, BlumHelman Gallery, NYC
Win Knowlton, Eugene Binder Gallery, Dallas, TX
1990 New Sculpture, BlumHelman Gallery, NYC
Win Knowlton, Vaughan & Vaughan, Minneapolis, MN
Win Knowlton, Eugene Binder Gallery, Cologne, Germany
1989 New Drawings, BlumHelman Gallery, NYC
1988 Win Knowlton, Galerie Montenay, Paris, France
1987 Win Knowlton, New Sculpture, BlumHelman Gallery, NYC
1986 Projects, Museum of Modern Art, NYC
1981 Win Knowlton: Sculpture and Drawings, The Clocktower, NYC

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2002 3000°, Paul Rodgers/9W Gallery, NY
2002 PS 1, Long Island City, NY
2001 Beauty and the Beast, Paul Rodgers/9W, NYC
2001 Outlooks, Paul Rodgers/9W, NYC
1993 Win Knowlton, Wes Mills, Sarah Schwartz, Laura Carpenter Fine Arts, Santa Fe
1992 The Figure, BlumHelman Gallery, NYC
1991 Forbidden Games, Jack Tilton Gallery, NYC
Out of Sight, Institute for Art & Urban Resources (PS1), NYC

1989 For the Collector: Important Contemporary Sculpture, Meredith Long & Company
1988 Abstract Expression, Recent Sculpture, The Lannan Museum, Lake Worth, FL
Three Decades: The Oliver-Hoffmann Collection, Museum of Contemporary
Art, Chicago, IL
1985 Selections 29, The Drawing Center, NYC

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ratcliff, Carter. "Fabricating the Here and Now", *Art In America*, January 2003
"Beauty and the Beast," *The New Yorker*, August 20 & 27, 2001
Taplin, Robert. "Win Knowlton at Bill Maynes," *Art in America*, October, 1998
"Win Knowlton at Bill Maynes," *The New Yorker*, May 11, 1998
"Win Knowlton," *New York Magazine*, May 11, 1998 (illustrated).
Ziolkowski, Thad. "Win Knowlton," *Artforum*, November 1995, page 93.
Bricker Balken, Debra. "Win Knowlton at Bill Maynes," *October* 1995, *Art in America*, page 126.
Melrod, George. "Win Knowlton," *Sculpture*, September-October 1995, page 39.
Cotter, Holland. "Win Knowlton: trees," *The New York Times*, June 9, 1995, page C24.
Mahoney, Robert. "Win Knowlton at BlumHelman," *Flash Art*, Summer 1991, page 132-3.
Kuspit, Donald. "On Being Boxed In," *Sculpture*, November/December 1991, page 30-37.
Brenson, Michael. "Win Knowlton," *The New York Times*, March 9, 1990, page C32.
Cyphers, Peggy. "New York In Review," *Arts Magazine*, May 1990, page 116.
Johnson, Ken. "Win Knowlton at BlumHelman Warehouse," *Art In America*, September 1990,
page 191.
Brenson, Michael. "Fossilization Evolves Into Metaphor for Our Age," *The New York
Times*, January 31, 1988, pages 31-33.
Bataillon, Françoise. "Win Knowlton: Galerie Montenay," *Art Press* 124, April 1988, page 82.
McLaughlin, Jeff. "The Berkshires: Harmony in Summer Closing Scenes," *The Boston
Globe*, August 19, 1988, pages 25, 32-33.
Masheck, Joseph. *Atlantic Sculpture*, Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California,
1987, (exhibition catalogue)
Brenson, Michael. "Metaphor," *The New York Times*, February 20, 1987, page C27.
Russell, John. "Win Knowlton," *The New York Times*, October 31, 1987, page C28.
McDaniel, Bob. *Projects: Win Knowlton*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1986, (brochure)
Brenson, Michael. "Art: Knowlton's Work on Show at the Modern," *The New York Times*,
March 28, 1986, page C30.
Larson, Kay. "Win Knowlton: Museum of Modern Art," *New York Magazine*, March 31, 1986,
page 80.
Yau, John. "Win Knowlton: Museum of Modern Art," *Artforum*, Vol. 24, Summer 1986,
page 121-22.
Princenthal, Nancy. "Win Knowlton at MoMA," *Art In America*, November 1986, pages 168-69
Larson, Kay. "Art," *New York Magazine*, November 1, 1982, page 60.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Arkansas Arts Center / Brooklyn Museum / Detroit Institute for the Arts
Fogg Museum / Hirshhorn Museum / Kohler Art Center /
Museum of Modern Art, New York / National Gallery
Neuberger Museum / Walker Art Center

MARY ZIEGLER

EDUCATION

1982 BFA, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

GRANTS & AWARDS

New York Foundation for the Arts, Sculpture Fellowship 1993

Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant 1987

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1999 Drifters, Florence Lynch Gallery, NYC

1996 Restless, Pierogi 2000, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NY

1994 Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University,
Cambridge, MA

1992 Herron Test Site, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NY

1989 Large Scale Drawings, DTW Gallery, NYC

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2002 Phenomenality, The Work Space, NYC

3000°, Paul Rodgers/9W, NYC

2001 clenclutchflinch, Paul Rodgers/9W, NYC

Brooklyn!, Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art, Palm Beach, FL
Exit, Maison des Arts, Creteil, France / Via, La Manège, Maubeuge
France

Pierogi Flatfiles, Center for the Arts, Yerba Buena, San Francisco

1999 Outside Edge, Sorbonne Universite, Paris, France

Labworks, Islip Art Museum, East Islip, NY

Time Migration, Taipei Gallery, NYC

1998 Inaugural Exhibition, ArtNation Projects, NYC Southern Exposure,

Ambrosino Gallery, Miami, FL

Interior Landscapes, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE

Force, Bellview Museum, Seattle, WA

1997 Current Undercurrent - Working in Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Museum,
Brooklyn, NY

World Views, proposals, (Creative Time), Duetsche Bank, NYC

Redefinitions: A View from Brooklyn, University of So. California,
Fullerton, CA

New York Drawers, Gasworks Gallery, London /Corner House,
Manchester, England

1995 Project: Exhibition, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD

- 1994 Circular Logic, (2 person show), Univ. of Conn, Storrs, CN
- 1993 The Nature of the Machine, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL
- 1992 The Wall Project, Sculpture Center, NYC
- 1991 Mechanika, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH,
Tweaking the Human, Minor Injury, Williamsburg, Brooklyn
- 1990 E-Motion, Ihara Ludens Gallery, (two person show), NYC
Four Sculptors, Sculpture Center, NYC

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- 2003 Johnson, Ken, exhibition review, New York Times, Jan 10
- 2002 Danto, Ginger, exhibition review, Art News, Oct.
The New Yorker, exhibition review, July 22
Time Out NY, exhibition review July 11
- 2001 Cotter, Holland, exhibition review, New York Times, June 1
Sjostrom, Jan, exhibition review, Palm Beach Daily News.
- 2000 Bellet, Harry, exhibition review, Le Monde, Paris, March 18
Garcia-Fenech, exhibition review, ARTnet.com, Oct
- 1999 Nahas, Dominique, exhibition review, Review Magazine
Johnson, Ken, weekend art guide, New York Times, May 21
Levin, Kim, Voice Choices, Village Voice, June 1
- 1998 Ellison, Victoria, Seattle Times, Feb
- 1997 Curtis, Cathy, Los Angeles Times, Nov 18
Arning, Bill, exhibition review, Time Out NY, July 17
Levin, Kim, Voice Choices, Village Voice, July 2
- 1995 Braff, Phyliss, exhibition review, New York Times, Oct 22
Lindsay, David, profile, New York Press, Feb 18
- 1994 Leonardo Magazine, feature, vol. 27, no.4, Sept
- 1993 Plagens, Peter, The Ghost in the Machine - A Young New Yorker
Revitalizes
Kinetic Sculpture, Newsweek Magazine , USA, Jan 4 / Japan, Jan 21
Iverem, Esther, exhibition review, New York Newsday, April
Bulka, Michael, exhibition review, Sculpture Magazine, Sept/Oct
Felleman / Chametzky, ZYMA/Art Today, Stuttgart, Nov/Dec
Levin, Kim, Voice Choices, Village Voice, July 2
- 1990 Braff, Phyliss, exhibition review, New York Times, Nov 4

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

- Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- Long Island Children's Museum, Garden City, Long Island, NY,
- Phaeno Science Center, Wolfsburg, Germany

GOING NOWHERE

During 3000°, the gallery invited Allyson Spellacy to give a slide-show and talk on her two visits to Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* over the summer of 2002.

"Every object, if it is art, is charged with the rush of time even though it is static but all this depends on the viewer."

Robert Smithson, *A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects*, 1968.

With the Chinati Foundation's inauguration of Dan Flavin's *Untitled, (Marfa Project)* in October 2000 and the subsequent fervor across the artworld, I decided to drive west to see the installation first hand. In the three days of pre-planning, my friend Maureen and I decided it would be 'landart-effective' to fold in as many earthworks as we could, with *Lightning Field*, *Double Negative*, *Spiral Jetty* and *Sun Tunnels*, along with Marfa, being our high priorities. We also hoped to make it to the Rothko Chapel in Houston and the Sante Fe Biennial.

By the time we got to Utah in search of Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* we had put 5,000 miles on the truck, smelled terrible and had had some of the most memorable art experiences of our lives. So it was some surprise to both of us that the one artwork we had traveled farthest to see, was the one we couldn't. Despite being submerged, *Spiral Jetty* became the climax of our entire trip.

We had sketchy directions and we soon discovered that Utah is quite large. Coming up from Arizona, we drove and drove, speeding through abandoned roads and massive, sprawling farmland. At sunset, we finally found the series of cattle guards that were our guide and skirted the Great Salt Lake. We car across the Jetty when it was almost too dark to see, but we could taste the salt in the air. We put sleeping bags and blankets in the bed of the pick-up truck and, with only a couple of warm beers and Twizzlers for dinner, slept sporadically in the cold. We woke just before sunrise: the sight was

brehtaking, a translucent panorama in blood red. The sky, the lakewater, the foam and clouds spanned a red spectrum: the water a deep burgundy, the black basalt of the Jetty almost completely desaturated but then nonetheless imbued with an indefinable red. And while the light kept changing as the sun rose, the atmosphere continued to emit scarlet luminosity. It was difficult to focus, from low light, from fatigue, and so the entire scene seemed even more unreal. The water level was low and so while much of the piece was submerged, it was actually possible to envision where the fifteen hundred foot muddy coil began to turn counter-clockwise. We walked down to the water's edge wading through large amounts of salty foam crystals that were being whipped up by the early morning wind and flying in clumps through the air. We walked out onto the Jetty, stumbling on rocks and holes that were disguised by the lather of foam. Every few steps we stopped to look back as the rising sun intensified the redness and the parked truck seemed farther and farther away.

With time completely displaced our progress seemed impossibly slow. We waded up to our thighs in the freezing water, feeling the salt digging into the pores on our legs and faces and infiltrating our eyes, noses, ears and mouths. As the wind stayed strong, the water lapped loudly. We waded to waist level before turning back. When we emerged we were soaked and covered with foam, which had a sort of cement effect so that our clothes and skin began to stiffen until we could barely move. We peeled them off and threw them in the back of the truck, adding to what had become a mass of brittle bedclothes. The sun was quite high so it was getting very hot. We trekked up to the top of the mountain to get a good view of the Jetty and the Lake itself. It must have been close to noon and the scene remained a thick red. *Spiral Jetty* was still submerged.

"Anti-vision", "negative seeing", a reconstruction of "one's inability to see" (terms borrowed from Smithson's text *"Incidents of Mirror Trail in the Yucatan"* 1969) all fit with the experience of driving across country to "see" an artwork you can't. Even before the Jetty disappeared under the Great Salt Lake's rising waters, there was an implication that many would not see it. Smithson relished the remote location of his sculpture. However, there are opportunities closer to home to investigate this inability to see. In his essay on New York's Central Park and its architect, Smithson applauds Frederick Law Olmsted as "America's first earthwork artist" and proposes that his site "throws a whole new light on the nature of American art."

Smithson wrote about the collapse of time in Olmsted's conception: "In another sense Olmsted's parks exist before they are finished, which means in fact they are never finished: they remain carriers of the unexpected and of contradiction on all levels of human activity, be it social, political, or natural." There is no position in Central Park from where you can outright grasp the park as a whole and this is significant to the park's success. Frederick Olmsted and Calvert Vaux won the commission largely because of the ingenuity of the sunken transversals that could move the city's traffic through the space without interfering with pedestrians and equestrians. In addition, Olmsted worked with what already existed in the landscape, trimming the site with walls, roads, lawns and lakes. Olmsted designed Central Park to allow visitors to wander through unaware of the city that lay in the immediate vicinity that actually ran through the park almost unnoticed. Visitors to the park today still move through the space with a sense of not seeing. Working with what was already there at the Salt Lake, Smithson had a similar conception in realizing *Spiral Jetty*. The experience of Central Park that Olmsted intended, and what we see (or don't see) there today, anticipates the experience of *Spiral Jetty*. So you don't have to drive 5,000 miles not to see it. Or do you?

"When a thing is seen through the consciousness of temporality, it is changed into something that is nothing. This all-engulfing sense provides the mental ground for the object, so that it ceases being a mere object and becomes art. The object gets to be less and less but exists as something clearer."
Robert Smithson, *A Sedimentation of the Mind*, 1968.

Throwing up a rooster tail of Utah desert on the drive away from the site, I could understand why Pollock is constantly mentioned in Smithson's writings and often at strategically key moments such as in his 1972 text on the *Spiral Jetty*. Pieces like *Spiral Jetty* or *Asphalt Rundown* or *Glue Pour* pay more than homage to Pollock's working methods. Smithson invokes Pollock at crucial moments when he is developing his own aesthetic position. For example, Smithson writes elsewhere "Jackson Pollock's art tends toward a torrential sense of material that makes his paintings look like splashes of marine sediments. Deposits of paint cause layers and crust that suggest nothing "formal" but rather a physical metaphor without realism or naturalism." Such a remark should be seen against the background of the formalist debate that raged in the New York artworld during the 1960's and 70's and also along with Pollock's reported response to Hoffman that "I am Nature".

Perhaps what Smithson appreciated about Pollock was his ability to be organic without being naturalistic, that Pollock's gesture and methodology (working on the floor) didn't abandon the idea of nature, but incorporated man into the natural without lapsing into realism or expressionist theatrics. I am reminded of the report that at the construction site of *Spiral Jetty*, when the bulldozers rolled out the spiral arm, Smithson wanted its surface of boulders to be disruptively broken up so that it was not possible to walk on the sculpture without stumbling. Both artists' bodies are still very much present in their work, perhaps even more so through the violence of their deaths. Smithson realized that Pollock had done more to bridge the gap between man and nature, the inside and the outside, by a direct engagement with the gap itself.

"Let us give passing shape to the unconsolidated views that surround a work of art, and develop a type of "anti-vision" or negative seeing."
Robert Smithson, *Incidents of Mirror Trail in the Yucatan*, 1968.

From Smithson's legendary preoccupation with prehistory to the drama of his death, it's difficult not to think of *Spiral Jetty* in terms of absence - the sculpture's and the artist's. *Spiral Jetty* is different from the other minimalist sculptures (Judd, Flavin and Sandback at the Chinati Foundation) and earthworks (*Lightning Field*, *Sun Tunnels*) I encountered on my trip across country. The experience, as focal point of these sculptures, remained intact, but with the Jetty, this sense of subjectivity intensified: while we moved through the water feeling the work beneath our feet, it also seemed that we had realized the completeness of the experience by waking up there in the morning.

Spiral Jetty had been as much about driving across country to get to it as it was not seeing it in the morning, and the sculpture's absence only served to further structure its meaning. For me, *Spiral Jetty's* inaccessibility was not confounding - it was invigorating. Art that creates some kind of conflicted energy, when I interact with it, sustains my attention.

In a Carl Andre floorpiece the flatness and materiality is both exasperating and exhilarating; the size of Richard Serra's work is intimidating and stimulating; with Robert Smithson it's absence.

Smithson's art has the capacity to operate as a series of opportunities that point to the project, whether it's through maps, directions, photographs or samples of the site. At no time can the participant fully comprehend the work as an object in its entirety. It may be that Smithson's distinctive contribution to contemporary art is to have offered this expansive means of encountering the object. And as possibilities for change are embedded in the work, the viewer is in an active, empowering and dynamic position. Standing that morning at Rozel Point, where the *Spiral Jetty* stretches out under the waters of the Salt Lake, I seemed to arrive at an encounter with the work that created a kind of energy that I have found in few other experiences of looking at and contemplating art.

Post Script

My visit to the *Spiral Jetty* that day brought back an experience I had a while ago. In Derry, Northern Ireland, erected on the heavy 17th century city walls, there are the remains of a statue which was blown up by the IRA in 1972. It represented the effigy of a Protestant general watching over a working class Catholic neighborhood (called the Bogside) as a constant reminder that despite a 70% majority over a 30% Protestant minority, they were not to be the rulers of themselves. The missing figure lingered heavily in the air, purely through the energy of its absence and the railings and pedestal and heavy brass signage remained as a memorial to the missing image and to the violence of its eradication. The plinth continues to be seen from the Bogside, its partner ominous in his absence, still heavy with meaning despite its figurative obliteration. I would go daily to this site, when I was last in Ireland (summer 2000) and wonder what it was that made me feel so aware of my own body when faced with this empty pedestal. As with *Spiral Jetty*, the feeling invoked a strange kind of bridge between introspection and simultaneous outer awareness that comes from being in and out of negative and positive space at the same time.

Allyson Spellacy



Robert Smithson's, *Spiral Jetty*, Great Salt Lake, Utah.
photos by Allyson Spellacy

Post-face

The exhibition 3000 Degrees supports the legacy of Robert Smithson as a rich source of artistic inspiration. While most of us are lucky to have a couple of good ideas in a lifetime, Smithson did not suffer from a shortage of exceptionally good, or even great, ideas. His agile mind and fertile imagination ran relentlessly at high speed, sparking connections between seemingly unrelated topics and incompatible bodies of knowledge. As a look at the work of the artists in this show reveals, the relevance of Smithson's sculpture, works on paper and writings, has not waned, but remains stronger than ever.

Smithson appears in art history textbooks as a canonical figure in the development of Earthworks, or Land Art. To my mind, however, the concept of the entropic landscape is one of the most significant to emerge from his production. An aesthetic shaped by the post-industrial landscape of New Jersey, where Smithson spent his childhood, the entropic landscape embraces fragmentation and rupture. It is both a natural and cultural phenomenon, evident in the shattered walls of a local quarry as well as in suburban housing developments and highways, the "man-made geological networks of concrete". Defying conventional standards of beauty, the aesthetic of the entropic landscape accepts the deadpan and banal qualities that characterize the worst and the best of contemporary American culture.

This aesthetic underlies the work in this exhibition, whether it be with the discarded radiators of Dominick, the asphalt-gray painted fiberglass of Hegge's *Dropped Ball*, Knowlton's rusting steel or the movement and breakdown of detritus on the electro-magnetic field of Mary Ziegler's *Site*.

The nature of Smithson's influence tends to be conceptual, as opposed to formal, and this holds true for the four artists included in *3000 Degrees*. In addition to inspiring artists, Smithson's influence extends to the realm of curatorial endeavors. Not surprisingly, the thesis of *3000 Degrees*, conceived by Paul Rodgers, is also conceptual. He brought these four artists together on the basis of what he perceives as a shared interest in energy: the invisible waves of heating which emanate from Dominick's radiators; the gravitational force harnessed by Hegge to form his irregular sphere; the visual vortex created by walking around Knowlton's architectural structure; and the electro-magnetic force of Ziegler's field.

His argument links Smithson's concept of entropy to Georges Bataille's concept of General Economy. He offers documentary evidence for this unexpected connection by pointing out that a copy of Bataille's *Death and Sensuality* was in Smithson's library and further proposes that the influence of this book can be felt in the imagery and language of Smithson's text *Spiral Jetty* (1972).

Smithson's legacy teaches us that such unexpected connections can be made and are worth consideration. The conceptual and speculative framework of the exhibition *3000 Degrees* represents the exploratory and probing spirit of Smithson's own thinking. He would have appreciated the provocative quality of the exhibition.

Eugenie Tsai.