

Big Rock Candy Mountain New York 1995

Michael Molter

L'espace signifié

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qui n'a d'autre but que le plaisir mental et esthétique qu'il procure. Les signes y sont utilisés comme des éléments formels qui désignent l'arbitraire des correspondances entre le terme et l'objet. L'installation se lit comme une représentation d'images.

La production plus récente pousse un peu plus loin la démarche afin d'explorer la question plus complexe de l'origine du sens. *Ici, Maintenant & Ailleurs, un voyage au Québec* (1994) et *Stella* (1994) récupèrent tout le répertoire iconographique ainsi que la problématique des oeuvres antérieures tout en utilisant un vocabulaire nouveau, la cartographie. Il s'agit d'éléments de bois de forme cubique (2 x 2cm), mesurant un mètre de longueur — le mètre faisant référence à la

mesure et à la distance — et dont la surface est constituée de fragments de cartes géographiques colorées à l'aquarelle et couvertes de résine polyester et de sable. Mis bout à bout les mètres sont, ou bien fixés au mur et au sol *Ici, Maintenant & Ailleurs, un voyage au Québec*, ou bien tracent une immense étoile *Stella*. Ils servent de support à des fragments de lieux géographiques qui se juxtaposent dans un ordre arbitraire, mais selon un parcours déterminé qui dessine des courbes. La carte géographique est en soi comparable au langage puisque les unités de mesure, les dessins et les légendes organisés selon un ordre précis remplissent une fonction discursive; leur spécificité est de désigner des lieux, dans ce cas-ci des fragments de lieux. Avec une ordonnance

minutieuse, Mario Callens colore et texture de petites surfaces où l'on croit pouvoir reconnaître des sites. Mais en s'approchant de l'objet le spectateur est piégé, confronté à une surface sablée. La matière s'impose de telle sorte qu'elle refoule le contenu discursif dans une couche inférieure. Le sens des groupements nominaux est indéchiffrable. La surface dissout l'ordre sur lequel l'ensemble des connaissances repose et le désordre des lieux (fragmentés) entraîne la dispersion d'une multiplicité d'identités. Il s'agit, en fait, d'un désordre de fragments de plusieurs ordres possibles, une hétérotopie qui ne permet pas de nommer et fait éclater la syntaxe.

Tompe-l'oeil, texture, espace du non-lieu et surface opaque déstructurent le langage. En

explorant l'origine du sens, les oeuvres de Mario Callens racontent en sous-entendu et construisent un espace fictif, un ordre nouveau qui donne un sens à la production artistique et lui assure une conscience critique. ■

Ici, Maintenant & Ailleurs, un voyage au Québec
La Gare, L'Annonciation,
5 novembre-11 décembre 1994.
Galerie Il Patio, Ravennes,
2-24 septembre 1995
Palazzo S. Salvatore, San Giovanni
in Persiceto, janvier-février 1996

NOTE :

1. Nous nous référons ici à Michel Foucault. Ainsi, le "lieu commun" devrait être entendu comme l'espace d'ordre dans lequel se constitue le savoir dans une culture donnée. *Les mots et les choses*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1966.

Mario Callens, *Stella*, 1994. Lampe, bois, aquarelle, résine polyester et sable. Installation : Rocca Ossente, Bondeno. Photo : Mario Callens.

Mario Callens, *Ici, Maintenant & Ailleurs, un voyage au Québec*, 1994. Bois, aquarelle, résine polyester et sable. 30 x 40 cm. Vue partielle de l'installation. Photo : Montréal Multimédia.

New York 1995 Big Rock Candy Mountain

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This year's NYC rites of spring included a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) version of the Whitney Biennial, reflecting opening borders, with work for the first time by two Mexican and two Canadian artists, in a 1995 appraisal of contemporary American art. A brilliant Bruce Nauman MOMA retrospective, new work by Canadian Claude Simard in solo at Jack Shainman Gallery, and African-Asian combinations in an exhibition titled *Ancestors* in the East Village, were enough incentive to witness the April season.

Claude Simard, *Passé composé*, 1995. Installation view. Courtesy of Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.



Uptown, the 68th version in a long tradition of Biennial, on three floors of the Whitney, included a large suspended sculpture, *Mattresses and Cakes*, by Nancy Rubins. Rather than specific themes or subjects, the exhibition emphasizes art's metaphorical functions. Canadian artists are represented by Vancouver's Jeff Wall, (fluorescent light transparencies) and film maker Stan Le Va, (*Separated Animation: Group-*

ings, Configurations, Proportions, Materials catalogued, sealed or discarded); Andrew Lord, (bronze jugs, vases, and dishes); Richard Serra, *Primo Levi* (forged steel); Rirkrit Tiravanija (pavillion installation with film projection and live music); Andrea Zittel, *A-Z Comfort Unit*, (steel, birch plywood, upholstery fabric, foam, plexiglass and objects); Bessie Harvey, *A Thousand Tongues Can Never Tell*, (wood, paint, glitter and found objects); Nari Ward, *Peace*

Keeper, (hearse, mufflers, iron fence, industrial plastic, grease and feathers), and Gabriel Orozco, *Elevator*, (altered elevator cabin). The Biennial was to re-open in September in Prague, Czech Republic, on to December, at Valenztrni Palac Museum of Modern Art, but has been cancelled.

The Nauman retrospective 25 years, MOMA, March 1-May 23, stresses recognition of the work by the effect and diversity of the media



as opposed to any consistent style. Examples of divergent approaches are displayed with equal strangeness and intensity in wax and plaster; fibreglass and latex; electronic display reproduction, holography, neon, video, recorded sound; to live performance. Each of Nauman's visual mediums is a language with its own sensory vocabulary, connotations and ambiguities. Nauman manipulates language as if words were a sculptural substance, in which common catch phrases assume dynamic shape, qualified by gestural adverbs and adjectives of light and colour. Nauman produces

entanglements of emotional and intellectual response, by affective and spiritual conceptual art processes, attacking the dichotomy of reason and instinct, revelling in rational exceptions to logic and systems of chaos.

Perhaps, the most internationally influential figure of his generation of American artists, Nauman's sculptures and environments examine life and death, love and hate, faith and doubt, in an age of disquiet in its own distinct idioms, in work titled: *A Cast of the Space under my Chair*, concrete, 1966, to *Room with my Soul Left Out*, wood,

foamcore, wire and graphite, 1984, to *Learned Helplessness in Rats (Rock and Roll Drummer)*, plexiglass maze, closed circuit video, scanner and mount, monitors, video, colour, sound, 1988, to *Ten Heads Circle /Up and Down*, wax and wire, 1990, and *Poke in the Eye/Nose/Ear/ 3 /8 / 94*, (video projector, video disc, colour, sound).

At 420 West Broadway, Leo Castelli's, Nauman, 25 years was held in the same building where the former 49th Parallel closed its Canadian offerings with *Outlines*, a recent series of work by Saskatchewan sculptor Joe Fafard. A retrospective of his work is planned in 1996 for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The D.C.A. Gallery, modelled after the 49th Parallel, showed *Recent Sculpture* by Cologne based Danish artist, Kirsten Ortved. Ortved's chain and cast process sculptures are subtly dazzling in interplay, as an overall installation. In the work of Ortved, there is a

sense of direct contrast easily related to the "material dualism" within an installation of eight sand blasted aluminum and galvanized steel chain constructions. Opposite, DIA houses Walter De Maria's installation *The Broken Kilometer*, 1979, composed of 500 highly polished brass rods, measuring two metres in length and 5 cm. in diameter and placed in five parallel rows of 100 rods weighing 18.3 tons, commissioned and maintained since installation by DIA Centre for the Arts. Monumental stone and wood sculpture by Ilan Averbuch and ceramic sculpture by Viola Frey were among offerings at the Nancy Hoffman Gallery, while at Fawbush Gallery, Grand Street, work by Montreal's Betty Goodwin highlighted recent sculpture.

Danish artist, Bjarne v. H.H. Solberg's installation *Memory boxes*, operating in two forms of space putting sight, sound and taste into play at the same time corresponding, to memories and

Kirsten Ortved, *The Eyes of the Portrait*, 1994, 8 part installation. Sand blasted cast aluminum, galvanized steel chain. Courtesy of D.C.A. Gallery, New York.

Nancy Rubins, *Mattresses and Cakes*, 1993. Installation view. Mattresses (approximately 250) and cakes. "1995 Biennial Exhibition". Courtesy of Whitney Museum of American Art.

Bruce Nauman, *10 Heads Circle/Up and Down*, 1990. Cast wax heads. Installation: 2.43 m diameter x 139.7 cm off the ground. Photo: Dorothy Zeidman, "Bruce Nauman 25 Years". Courtesy of Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

defense mechanisms that inform perception, were seen in a group exhibition on Broadway at the Alternative Museum's 20th season. Japan and China artists are also represented in separate galleries, through work by Yoshiko Kanai using combinations of sculptural figurative representation and selected materials directed toward producing a collision of different values, both physical and existential, and by Wenda Gu, whose work crosses racial borders and national divides in illuminating the effects of ethnic beliefs and prevailing cultural practices on the perception of the art object and notions of the abject. Amos Eno artist centre in its 20th season, bridges between sculpture and architecture in Joseph Polmar's Totemitecure installation.

At 560 Broadway, at Max Protech Gallery, photographs of his-

torical monuments by Fariba Hajamadi, in *The Invisible Mirror of Memory*, resist the translation of abstract perceptual relations put into a structure of language which occurs in painting, but which form entire installation environments. At Cavin Morris Inc., an exhibition of mixed media work by Bessie Harvey parallels her participation in the Whitney Biennial.

At this same address across from the SoHo Guggenheim, the modernist minimalist sculpture by Claude Simard in *Passé composé*, transforms time into art, with the notion that the past is only what we carry with us into the present, and at the Nicholas Alexander Gallery on Spring Street, *Material Identities* including work by Simard, Elise Siegel and Carolee Thea. Simard uses material as metaphor for lived experience: the raw material of memories. His objects and installa-

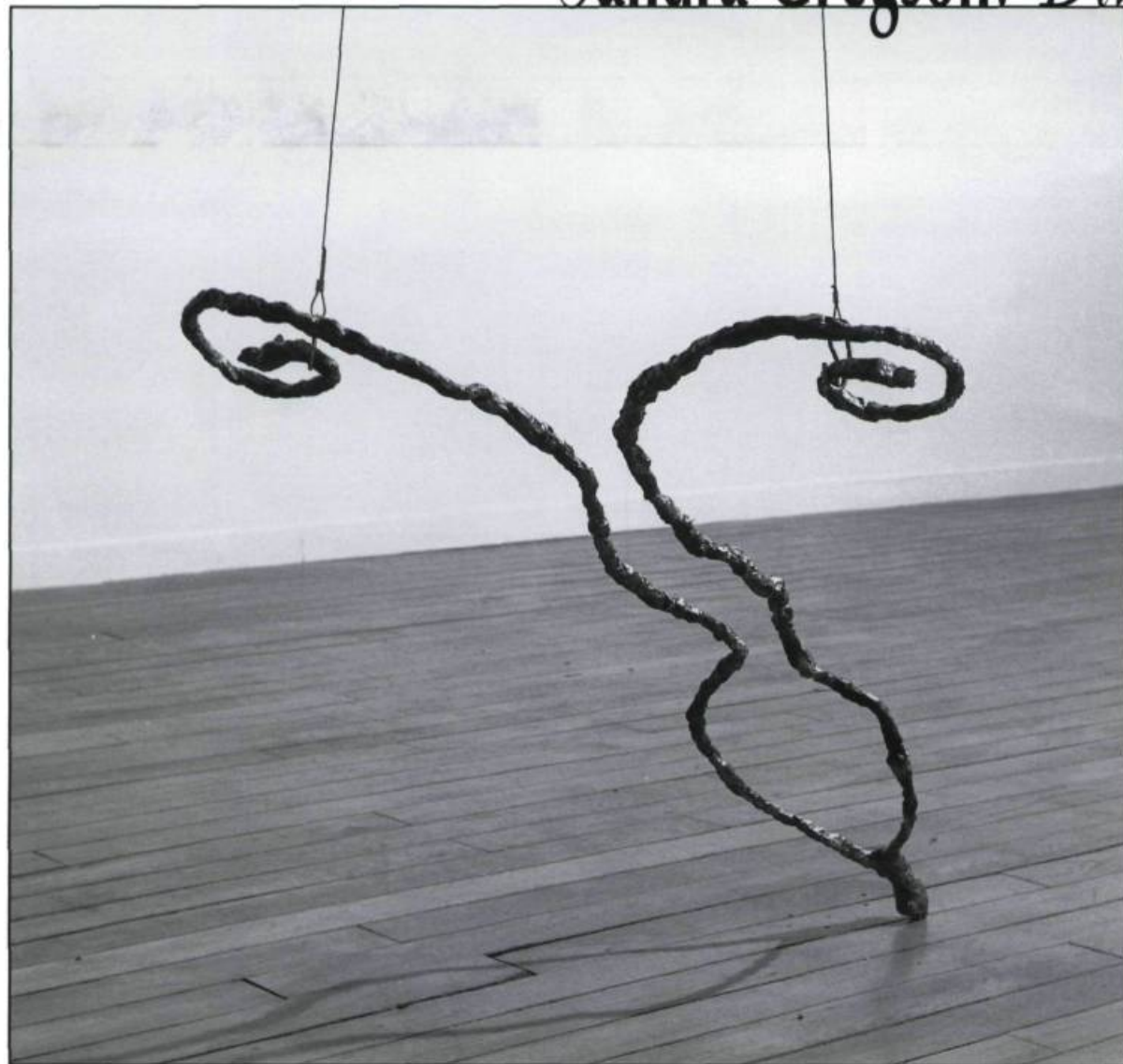
tions implicitly ask why we change and raise questions about gender stereotypes. Born in Larouche, Quebec, Simard commemorates the 100th anniversary of his birthplace, both in a major work in *Passé composé* which includes the names of those 12,000 who have been known to have lived in Larouche revealed through town archives, as well as through the organization of an exhibition, from July 1 to August 25, of international artists in Larouche from the USA, Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland, and England. Among Canadians represented are Sylvie Bouchard, Marion Cuff, Pierre Dorion, Evergon, Michel Goulet, Louis Lussier, Roberto Pellegrinuzzi, and Marc Tremblay.

At the Kabella centre on 2nd Street in the East Village, and the Asian Centre Gallery on the Bowery, curator Robert Lee assem-

bled work in *Ancestors*, that profiles Black Asian American artists. A collaborative piece by Robert Craddock, (who in 1995 undertook a monumental 50' totemic bronze sculpture, built for Chung Qing, Schechuan, China), and Liu Lan Ding, Chinese brush artist, (who has exhibited in both Toronto and Montreal), is a synthesis of the two mediums in an installation tribute to mediums and messages. On a final note, Up-town the Solomon Guggenheim exhibition of work by Felix Gonzalez Torres, included something for everyone with photo reproduction posters and mounds of edible samples for hungry visual art visitors in the form of Bazooka bubble gum and black rock candy with a sign that read: Not for consumption in the museum gallery, please. ■

Sandra Gregson: *Divined*

Susan Shantz



Sandra Gregson, *Untitled (divining rod)*, 1995. Bronze, cable. 72 x 72 x 122 cm. Photo: Simon Glass.

Systems of divination have existed in all times and places. They are, in fact, the roots of our own culture's highly valued scientific methods. While we are ignorant of how to read the entrails of dead animals for meaning (and suspicious of such practices), we use, both professionally and popularly, the language-mediated insights of psychotherapy to understand our circumstances.

This has become our culture's preferred divinatory method. But is it sufficient? What of that which exists outside of language, in the silence before utterance? In the spaces for which words do not exist?

A bronze divining rod, forked near its base and curving upward into elegant, fallopian handles, occupies the center of the room in Sandra Gregson's recent installation at the Red Head Gallery. The broadened, hoofed toe of the piece rests lightly on the floor while two lumpy finger-thick branches swell away from it, then together, before curling in opposite directions and back toward themselves. This object recalls the water-seeking rod of the professional diviner, as well as, in