

umbrella

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S/10: SCULPTURE TODAY Theory & Practice Combine in Toronto

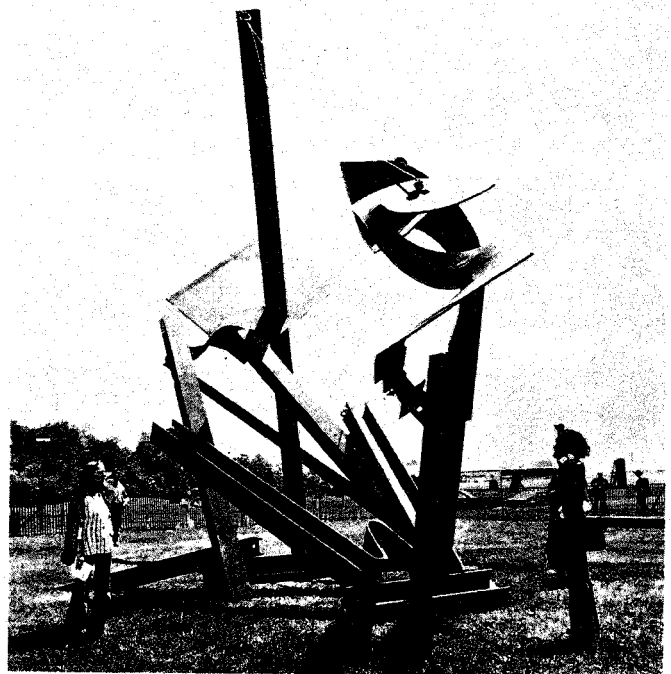
10th International Sculpture Conference,
31 May - 4 June 1978

BACKGROUND

Twenty years ago, a small group of American sculpture teachers gathered at the University of Kansas to discuss traditional sculpture techniques—plaster casting, bronze founding and stone carving—and to organize the National Sculpture Center there, under the direction of Elden Tefft. Meeting every two years, these conferences grew larger in size and scope, reflecting the growing interest in new sculpture technologies. As practising sculptors became increasingly involved the focus enlarged to include aesthetics and current issues. Two years ago the conference met in New Orleans, attended by delegates from the U.S., Canada and Mexico and some foreign countries. This new dimension is evidenced by the designation, International Sculpture Center, University of Kansas, whose director remains Elden Tefft, and by the bid by Canadian delegates to host the 1978 International Conference in Toronto. The possibility of government and private sponsorship of the Conference, the availability of extensive studio facilities and accommodations at York University and the high level of art activity in Toronto made it a logical choice. Members of the organizing committee were able to travel abroad to interest sculptors there and to encourage their governments to fund delegates.

SUMMARY

The result was an unqualified success. Generous funding made it possible to invite outstanding panelists; registration exceeded anyone's anticipation and late registrants had to be turned away. In addition to the 1500 delegates from the U.S. and Canada, some 200 sculptors came from 35 countries. Delegates included students, teachers, practising sculptors, curators, critics, dealers, collectors, arts administrators, planners and fabricators. Panels and talks covered theories and principles, aesthetics, thematic and practical concerns, while workshops covered every imaginable aspect of current practice. Outstanding among these was Mark di Suvero's demonstration/workshop, **The crane as a tool**. Working in a large field opposite the Anthony Caro sculpture park, behind the Fine Arts building, di Suvero and helpers constructed in three days a large scale permanent piece. The idea to provide this opportunity to watch a work in progress showed genuine



MARK DI SUVERO: Sculpture, York University
(Photo: Stephen Fine)

insight into the real purpose of any conference—to learn from first-hand experience.

A warm opening lecture by George Rickey and a thoughtful closing address by Mathias Goeritz provided dignified personal brackets to three non-stop days. In addition, major sculpture exhibitions and installations were planned by every museum and gallery in Toronto, plus a mile-and-a-half exhibition of some 99 pieces at Harbourfront and Art Bank, including environmental pieces and a sky sculpture by Howard Woody. Major commissions were executed and their unveiling timed with the Conference; a public audiovisual presentation "Sculpture Today/Canada" screened at Ontario Place for several weeks. Other activities included continuous slide showings by delegates, the world premier of the Blackwood Production's three-part film, "Masters of Modern Sculpture", a screening of "Christo's Running Fence" and other films; a performance of three pieces by Toby MacLennan; displays by exhibitors; the demonstration of an exciting new resource, **Soft Arkiv**, a computer data-base of biographical and exhibition information on living sculptors; several pre-conference

workshops conducted for students at the Ontario College of Art; and a variety of social events. As with all good conferences, more had been planned than one person could possibly attend, providing that curious mixture of excitement and frustration familiar to conference-goers everywhere as Both/And-Either/Or Syndrome. Fortunately all panels were taped and cassettes are available for purchase. The following highlights can only approximate some of what really went on at this outstanding conference:

DIARY

Wednesday 31 May. I am fortunate to be staying with a friend, Kosso Eloul, a sculptor who is a member of the organizing committee. Through him I have already met several of the other organizers and some of the foreign delegates and have had a chance to get additional background on the problems and goals of this particular conference. Everyone is amazed and delighted at the overwhelming response, which closed out registration weeks before the conference. One of the American organizers, Jeffrey Bayer, from the Univ. of Alabama, has been instrumental in inviting a number of contemporary—sometimes controversial—panelists. There is a great anticipation and already the energy level is very high. The Canadian committee has worked terrifically hard; the conference is clearly very important to them and there is a determination to have this be the best one ever. Although registration is a bit of a muddle, chiefly because no one is quite prepared to deal with the quantities of people involved, David Silcox smoothly presides over the tangle with the same good-humored patience he was to demonstrate at every subsequent event (it soon became clear why he was chosen chairman of the organizing committee).

The opening part at the Art Gallery of Ontario is the first official opportunity to see who's here (and who's not), to meet old friends, make new ones, and immediately introduce them all to each other. On view are the installation of "Structures for Behavior", new works by Robert Morris, David Rabinovitch, Richard Serra and George Trakas and a display of folk art from Nova Scotia, as well as the Henry Moore Centre Collection across the street. Already the pattern for the conference is set—everything scheduled is of interest, there is too much to do and not enough time to do it in!

Thursday, 1 June. Di Suvero has not yet begun work, but locating the site of the piece has already made me late for the first talk—which helps solve my first conflict. The Rickey lecture is so jammed I have no choice but the James Wines lecture on **De-Architecture and the sculpture of risk** in which he describes his outrageous and enormously inventive projects and berates conventional architects as too limited and confining. His talk is humorous and provocative and we are off to a fine start.

The next panel on **Integrating responsibilities of sculptors/architects** with Reyner Banham, Ted Bieler, Kosso Eloul, Phyllis Lambert, Richard Lippold, Donald Thalacker and James Wines explores that curious ocean where sculptors have to navigate known as the Ex-post-facto Doldrums or "Why wasn't I consulted before you built the damned thing?" or "Is sculpture just jewelry for architecture?" There is some peevishness and some quick repartee, but one senses that these are familiar adversaries or as Thalacker

puts it, a "travelling roadshow of controversy", and that they all know they will meet again. Meanwhile, at **Land-forms** Richard di Marco, Dennis Oppenheim and Jody Pinto each present very different views of that concept. Di Marco's entertaining and stimulating mile-a-minute whirlwind overview of megalithic monuments and sites urges us to remember it was all done without diplomas or government grants. This rapid transit through time and space is a hard act to follow and Oppenheim seems conservative by contrast. Jody Pinto's work is intimate and personal and her description moving.

Next, John Grayson uses audio and video tapes as well as slides to survey **Recent advances in Sound Sculpture**; there is so much material to cover he agrees to do another session the next day. **Primitivism and cult objects**, with Nancy Graves, Charles Simonds, Tony Urquhart and Alex Wyse offers an opportunity to hear sculptors with a very private, sometimes fantastic, vision discuss their work. Wyse is surely the wittiest and Simonds perhaps the most mysterious and interesting (his piece at Harbourfront later proves this to be true).

These panels are followed by two more—**Sculpture in landscape** moderated by Joop Beljon, in which Ted Bieler, Helen Escobedo, Mathias Goeritz, Ezra Orion, Emil van der Meulen and Peter Walker describe their large-scale outdoor work and express concerns for coherence and visual integrity, while David Silcox moderates Henry Geldzahler, Max Hutchinson, Geoffrey James and Donald Thalacker in a discussion of **Who pays and why—the politics and economics of cultural policy**.

I have not managed to get to any of the workshops (not even all the panels, by a long shot) but catch a glimpse of Fred Eversley conducting an outdoor demonstration on large scale polyester casting on my way to the field where Di Suvero is by now in full swing, bobbing back and forth between the crane cab and pieces to be welded, talking through a PA system surely the center of the most vital and didactic activity at the Conference. Social events, including dinner at the Ontario Science Center, round out an exhilarating first day.

Friday 2 June. A morning panel by some of the Mexican delegates—Helen Escobedo, Mathias Goeritz, Manuel Felguerez, Jorge Manrique and Joaquin McGregor—describe a new commission for six sculptors in a lava bed at the

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JUDITH A. HOFFBERG, Editor
AMY NAVRATIL, Book Review Editor
KEN FRIEDMAN, Contributing Editor

university, a challenging work still in the planning stage and a promise for 1980 if the conference is held there. It is revealing to hear of some of the anticipated problems still in the process of resolution of integrating the work of six very different artists and working with a visually dramatic site without destroying it. An unscheduled talk by Tamon Miki of the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo provides a stunning and rare survey of Japanese sculpture since the sixties, demonstrating that the interest in new technologies was universally shared, however individually explored and that there is common sensibility. Many of the sculptors whose work is shown have come along and there is a marvelous spontaneous exchange of slides, and comments as well as names and addresses among the Japanese and other delegates.

I can no longer resist the temptation to duck out and satisfy my curiosity about the commissions for subway stations on the new Spadina line and go off to see all eight and to shoot some slides. The variety and success of each commission demonstrates once again the admirable (even enviable) relationship which Toronto artists and their public enjoy. Toronto is a handsome and sophisticated city; visual literacy seems high, although I do not know how it has been achieved. Every activity associated with this conference or with its Canadian participants seems to have public support and approval, including allocation of funds from Wintario (a lottery). If there are any ruffled feathers or unhappy constituents, they certainly are discreet! I return just in time to hear Kosso discuss creative decision-making in **Scale: when is big too big?**

Torn between performance and art & technology, I opt for neither and visit Robert Arn at the demonstration of **Soft Arkiv**; we speculate on some of the international ramifications of this project. . . most telling in our conversation is his repeated concern for flexibility and the humane application of computer technology. Mary Ann Carswell, another collaborator, demonstrates the program in operation; utilizing UNIX, a system designed for the humanities, the program proves to be remarkably responsive and capable of much idiosyncratic input. For the fun of it we retrieve information on: histories of specific local galleries since 1965; exhibition history for particular artists; all delegates to the conference named Steven, Stephen, Eteban, or Etienne; all sculptors working with a particular material or medium. It appears we can ask the base to produce virtually any information in straightforward language. **Soft Arkiv** is most eager to add to its data-base and wants to know of any tape compatible resources or of any artists' archives, whether or not on tape, which it could add. It is supported by the University of Toronto and has access to conversion facilities. Obviously the potential is enormous and with regional terminals we could all have access to an international resource of the first magnitude. (Be sure to see details elsewhere in this issue). With Stan Bevington, of the Coach House Press, we had already spun fantasies of simultaneous publication via computer type-setting and the possibilities of continuous on-demand publication, rendering "out of print" obsolete! These encounters somehow typified the conference—it seems that technology has been gentled by very human concerns and that theory (always long on philosophy and aesthetics) and practice (always short on human concerns and impact) has somehow and at long last accommodated to each other

harmoniously. Occasional outbursts from isolated artists claiming not to want to *talk* about sculpture, just *do it*, or that there was too much philosophy, only seems to point up the very real consensus that sculpture—and sculptors—have achieved a remarkable and perhaps unique *modus vivendi*. These thoughts were later to be reiterated by Mathias Goeritz' closing address the following afternoon.

By now I am running well behind any schedule I might have pretended to; I am in time for Toby MacLennan's performance of "Singing the Stars," a piece in which pseudo-astronomers perform star-charts; "The Bear" in which reality and illusion are further confounded, and "Does a wave belong to the sea or the shore?" in which this philosophical conundrum is given literal meaning. Wonderful. . . (I distribute *Free Sculpture* to all the cast and move on). . . Off to the galleries, highlighted by a performance at A Space of Vera Frenkel's video/installation piece "Signs of a Plot" (part 5 of the No Solution—A Suspense Thriller Series), then off to Robert O' Driscoll's for a party for Ricky Di Marco. I learn that Marshall McLuhan has just left, after having led everyone in a circle dance. Ah well, one can't be everywhere at once!

Saturday 3 June. I do *not* get up early, miss the morning sessions and arrive in time to complete my cache of handouts, giveaways and documentation, and manage to meet Sebastian, give him a copy of *Free Sculpture* and a set of *Artwords and Bookworks* and learn about his forthcoming underground mail-in exhibit. A last visit to the Di Suvero site reveals that the piece is already complete and someone is climbing on it. (I learn later from Karyn Allen that they had worked until 10 p.m. the night before, welding in the dark, launched it with champagne, and celebrated it with dinner. Well done!) Events scheduled for the afternoon are wisely left loose and include much that is just plain fun. The exhibition at Harbourfront is extensive, almost overwhelming after all the other sculpture we have seen by now, but a pleasant—and public—environment. The launch of Howard Woody's mylar and helium sky sculpture is a huge success; the piece is tracked by aircraft long after it is out of sight over the water and seems an appropriate end to this whole event. We ourselves drift over to Ontario Place, in configurations not nearly so elegant as the airborne mylar serpentine. How wise to have chosen an amusement park for the end of a sculpture conference! Both share environmental concerns which cannot be overlooked and which by now seem compatible. Dire rumors that Michael Hayden's **Ice Wedge** has developed trouble and refuses to produce ice are confirmed but somehow do not dampen spirits.

Mathias Goeritz' keynote address (part of which is blown in the wind) seems to sum up everyone's feelings that an enormous amount of goodwill, energy and enthusiasm have been generated here; that what we have learned is that we exist as an interested enclave and can generate such enthusiasm; that the challenge for the next conference, hopefully in Mexico City, will have to be met with as much imagination and hardwork. He ponders if painters could muster the same amount of energetic focus (there has been private speculation that they could not, because painting is too private an activity, and I have been recalling artists' sessions at CAA and feeling that they had been vitiated by too many concerns for validation and status as well as randomness, whereas the speci-

ficity of focus here has contributed to its success.) His summation is that this has been a landmark event, a culmination and a challenge, in which theory and practice, different views and generations, have managed a truly creative convergence. I agree.

—Joan Hugo

S/10: SCULPTURE TODAY – DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE

Audio Cassettes: The 26 panels and talks were recorded and are available for purchase at \$7.50 each (\$195 a complete set) from Audio Archives of Canada, 250 Merton St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4S 1B1. (While instantaneous translation into French was provided at each session, I do not think the translations were recorded.)

Cityforms: A concise map of publicly available sculpture in Toronto, with a biographical supplement, was included in every delegate's packet. A model of its kind, it was produced by, and may still be available from, Visual Arts Ontario, 8 York Street, 7th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5J 1R2.

Sculpture Canada '78: Illustrated catalogue of the 50th anniversary exhibition of the Sculptors Society of Canada, 1750 B Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5M 3Y9.

Artmagazine, 38/39, June 1978: "Sculpture in Canada" issue, including articles by or about many of the Canadian participants and a stunning photograph of Michael Hayden's *Arc-en-Ciel* subway station design. Distributed to all the delegates free, there may still be complimentary copies available. 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 403, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 1K5.

Page, Bulletin of the Computer Arts Society, no. 39, Nov. 1977. The American issue on computer-assisted sculpture and performance designs, edited by Kurt Lauckner, Mathematics Dept., Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Write to him for a copy and for information on the Computer Arts Society.

Art-in-Architecture Program. Illustrated catalogue of commissions in federal buildings and a description of the program administered by the GSA. U.S. General Services Administration, Washington, DC 20405.

Johnson Atelier, Technical Institute of Sculpture. A brochure describing their services for sculptors, the apprenticeship program, an issue of *Sculptor's News Exchange*, and a list of 12 slide/cassette packages available for purchase on sculpture techniques. 743 Elexander Road, Princeton, NJ 08540.

A SCULPTOR'S VIEW: THREE CHEERS FOR TORONTO

The Canadian Government, the Province of Ontario, and the city of Toronto did their utmost, and succeeded, in creating an atmosphere of total support for the 10th International Sculpture Conference, held at York University. If ever a city could roll out its red carpet for artists, Toronto certainly did. Over 2,000 persons participated in lectures, panel discussions and workshops at York University. Bill Boyle, the Executive Director of Visual Arts Ontario, handled the management of the Conference superbly. Bill explained to me on the closing night of the Conference how it was two years in planning and cost over \$400,000 with half the money coming from various levels of the governments of Canada. Intentions were to limit participants to 2,000, and so they ended up by turning away almost that many more.

As is typical of any conference, at any given time slot you had a choice of any of four different lectures or discussions.

Herein are descriptions of some of the sessions I attended:

1 June: George Rickey gave the opening talk on "Problems of a Kinetic Sculptor," discussing quite candidly his problems and his successes, bringing us up to date from his earliest works to his latest pieces. Concerning critics, he quoted H.G. Wells: "Don't read the reviewers, just measure the length." Rickey went into depth about how he uses the pendulum, in its simplest forms as in a clock, to its more complex forms as in a wheel, to achieve time and movement in space. By balancing the weights and lengths about the pivotal point of the pendulum, the swing time can be adjusted. When the pivot is tilted out of the vertical position (in a wheel pendulum), the weight seeks the lowest point due to gravity.

Rickey also emphasized how he only makes the component parts of larger pieces no heavier than that weight which two persons can lift; that includes the crates, one of which he showed us which he designs so that no matter how the

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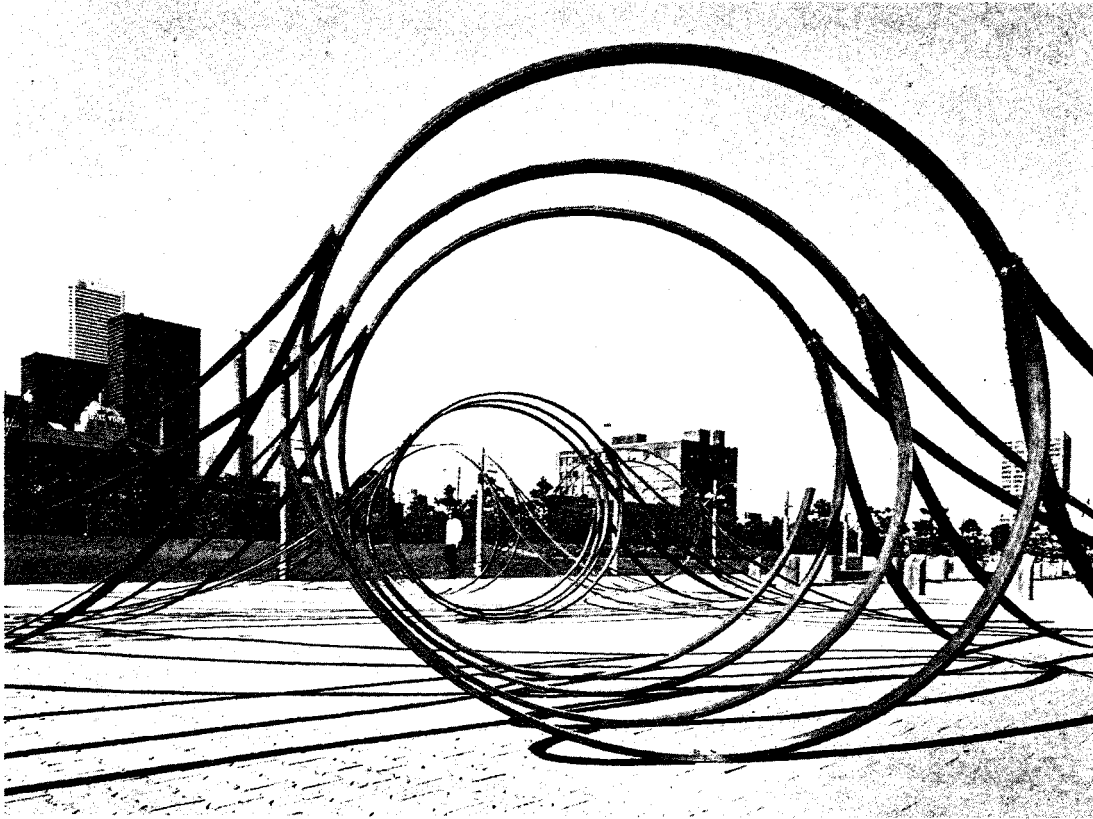
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LOUIS STOKES: Harbour Spirals (Photo: Michael Mitchell)

crate is dropped, no damage can be incurred to the work.

Concerning contracts, Rickey tries to foresee all possible problems and estimate costs (fabrications, crating, transportation, storage, installation, insurance); particularly in regard to a piece commissioned for an unbuilt building, he strongly suggests that you insist that the buyer accept the piece when the artist has completed it! For example, he related an incident where his sculpture was completed on time, and the building took three more years to complete. When executing and integrating a piece with architecture, Rickey believes "there is no scale in harmony with large buildings. Harmony is created with contrast or tension. . . relate (instead) to the human use on the ground. . . Don't enlarge scale beyond the idea. . . enlargement and means of fabrication change the nature of the piece. When changing scale and fabrication, the piece changes from being hand-made to machine-made."

Integrating Responsibilities of Sculptors/Architects Panel: Someone suggested for some architects, art is the only three-letter four-letter word they know. It seemed evident that the artists felt architects looked upon their works as decoration or jewelry. Don Thalacker of the Art-in-Architecture Program of the General Services Administration of the United States discussed some of the problems with placing artworks in the public view, mainly public criticism, outrage at the piece and sometimes at the cost. However, he defends all the pieces vigorously and encourages any artist to take advantage of the Living Buildings Act passed by Congress in 1976, whereby artists contact the Buildings Manager of a Federal Building about placing their work in a building or its plaza (a kind of Federal Government alternative space pro-

gram). However, all expenses are carried by the artist, and the building manager cannot deny you access to the space, other than the work being dangerous and in the way of people.

Kosso Eloul, a Toronto sculptor, and partly responsible for bringing the Conference there, took the same position as Rickey that sculpture should be integrated with the building by being the medium between the grandness of scale of a building and people's sidewalk experience. In a separate slide presentation he discussed the way his works are scattered throughout the city. On the other hand, James Wines asserts that "Art should take over architecture," the end result being that the artist felt that if art is to be placed in an architectural setting, then it would work to have the architects and artists consult each other from the beginning design stages.

Sculpture in Landscape Panel: There is a sculptor working in the Israel desert who has been doing so for the last ten years, Ezra Orion, who believes that "sculpture has to exist in terms of geological time. Like mountains, slopes, plains, made of materials that will stand against time. . . sculpture has to be far above the size of humans. Tens of meters high. Extending over hundreds of meters square. Sculpture has to dominate the entire space that contains the people. Around, above and beneath them. It has to contain them in its interior and exterior spaces. Large spaces sinking, rising, rising, falling. Bursts of light into high masses of darkness, darkness enveloped by concrete walls. . . Landscape has to complete, support and strengthen sculpture. Not a city. . . sculpture cannot exist as a single unit but as a complex of units. A sculpture community. A Sculpture Field. On the edge of a high plateau. Far into the empty desert. This is total

sculpture.”

His work, presented in this panel, was incredibly spiritual. He is working on his sculpture field, above and high in an empty desert plateau in Israel. His background is spectacular eroded series of high mountains and plateaus, with no view of civilization, just space and eons of time. His geometrically derived concrete sculptures will perch atop this plateau overlooking this landscape. His field of works are so large compared to a human's size that they *become* the landscape.

Emiel van der Meulen and Peter Walker, both landscape architects, are very sensitive designers integrating artworks into their design jobs quite beautifully, just as Mathias Goeritz and Helen Escobedo, both artists from Mexico.

2 June: You and your Fabricator Panel.

This panel discussion pitted fabricators Bruce Gitlin and Don Lippincott and Robert Murray, an artist who uses Lippincott's services, against sculptor Bruce Beasley who does his own fabricating and Michael Hayden, who coordinates as many as forty different contractors to do his pieces. Beasley vigorously claimed he would rather do his own fabricating, noting that by doing so, the extra money he receives on his commissions (instead of going to the fabricators for expenses) allows him to build a very nice studio and obtain all the tools he needs. In contract, Murray claimed that the advantages of using a fabricator were that they had the resources, meaning special tools and heavy equipment, to manufacture his pieces that he could never afford.

A few practical points were gleaned from this discussions: Lippincott in his contract with the artist writes the cost in at plus or minus 10% of the original estimate to protect himself from loss. An artist would be wise to do this in his contract with the buyer. Gitlin added to be sure to take out products liability insurance on your pieces, particularly when they are installed in public spaces, to cover your pieces, particularly when they are installed in public spaces, to cover yourself in case something goes wrong with the piece, since the artist and fabricator will both be sued.

3 June

One of the final panel discussions, **Pygmalion or Pythagoras—Sculptural Response to Living Systems**, featured the work of Edward Ihnatowicz and Norman White, who stand out in their designing of robots that respond to humans. These machines have such fluid movements and responses that Ihnatowicz's robot systems are now being built for use in certain industries in England, as Tsai's work, really a forerunner of these two men, was discussed by Jonathan Benthall of London's Institute of Contemporary Art.

Jack Burnham talked of the “ecoartists”, particularly Alan Sonafist's reforestation project in New York City, as well as Peter Hutchinson's nature walks in the English tradition and Hans Haacke's systems theory approach to art.

Rockne Krebs discussed his latest works using the camera obscura in situations to create a collage of landscapes in interior room settings.

The most notable comments were made by Marshall McLuhan, who insists that electronic man exists without his body, and the most human thing about us is our technology. Technological electronics is an extension of our nervous system. “The function of the artist is to bridge biology and

technology. . . The artist is the early warning system to the environment, and acts as an indispensable survival means to report what is going on. . . an early warning system to technological man.”

Among all the special events held throughout the city to coincide with the Conference, the Harbourfront was the focus of events on Saturday, 3 June. Along this one and one-half mile area, the Canadian Art Bank placed over 100 artworks. The walk is a delight, Lake Ontario on your left, art on the walkways and in the water, and the skyline of Toronto at your back. Howard Woody's sky sculpture launch was the culmination of the afternoon. We then moved to Ontario Place to hear the closing address by Mathias Goeritz, “Sculpture Tomorrow—?”, in which he was most concerned with ethics and morals. The night was to include “The Ice Wedge” unveiling of a work by Michael Hayden, a new outdoor work commissioned by Ontario Place in honor of the Conference. Due to refrigeration difficulties, the piece was not complete. It is a 16-foot stainless steel tower that every forty minutes produces an eight foot sheet of vertical ice, which then breaks off and melts into a pool lit by changing, chromatic lights.

The city of Toronto goes out of its way to display art. The new Spadina Subway system has 8 artworks in as many different stations on the line. The most spectacular is Michael Hayden's “Arc-en-Ciel”, a 370-foot neon lightwork at the Yorkdale Subway Station. Hundreds of semicircular neon tubes, spinning the colors of the machine in sequence, line up in the glass dome above your head in the station. The work has a changing program and pulsates in the direction of an arriving train, and when trains arrive from two different directions, it does a double pulse starting at either end. It is a total visual treat, experienced from inside the train, to standing inside the platform, to seeing it while driving by on the neighboring thruway, flickering brilliantly against the Toronto skyline at night.

The Conference was an outstanding success. Except for a notable lack of women participants in the panels, and hardly any Europeans or museum personnel, the Conference organizers did a superb job. Toronto came through as a shining, vital, active art center with its art-filled plazas, and open and friendly people, an ideal model of a city in love with the arts.

—Bruce Fier

Contributors to the Sculpture Conference coverage:

Joan Hugo is the librarian at Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, and an art information specialist.

Bruce Fier is a sculptor, a book maker and comes from the Los Angeles area as well.

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Judith Hoffberg, head of Umbrella Associates, and Stanley W. Hess, Associate Librarian, Cleveland Museum of Art, have compiled two reference works in one volume.

Part One provides a geographically-arranged listing of the art libraries. Part Two is an inventory of art slide, photograph, and other media resources.

Directory of Art Libraries and Visual Resource Collections in North America has a classified, institutional, and special collections index.

A Neal-Schuman publication distributed exclusively by ABC-Clio, Inc.
August 1978. c. 465pp. Index. ISBN 0-918212-05-7 Hardcover \$39.95

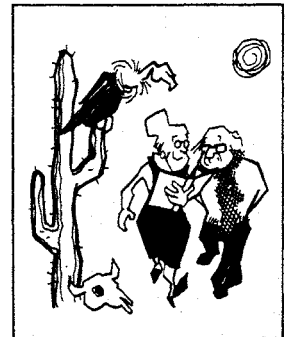
Guide to Humanities Resources in the Southwest

Southwestern Library Association

A treasurehouse of cultural, historical, and scholarly resources lies within the boundaries of Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. From these a single resource guide has been developed by the Southwestern Library Association. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The *Guide* is focused in three major areas: natural resources, multi-cultural societies, and political institutions. 340 scholars are listed to assist you in planning humanities programs. Selected by committees affiliated with the NEH, these specialists are available for consultation, speaking, or other functions.

A Neal-Schuman publication distributed exclusively by ABC-Clio, Inc.
May 1978. 260pp. Subject Index. CIP. ISBN 0-918212-04-9 Hardcover \$24.50



If you thought that the Southwest was only the home of the Alamo, oil wells, cacti and Gila monsters, then you have a pleasant surprise in store.

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Wittenborn Art News, February 1978

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MONEY FLIES AND HEADS ROLL: PROPOSITION 13 An Editor's View

As art heads dropped on the chopping block of Proposition 13 in California, the art market made headlines in all the papers of the world with the "sale of the century," millions being exchanged for masterpieces from the Von Hirsch collection. The \$34 million exchanged for the Robert von Hirsch collection broke many records at Sotheby Parke Bernet in London and made many museums and collectors poorer or richer, as one might want to interpret it.

Norton Simon bought a Giovanni di Paolo Madonna for \$923,500; a pair of multicolored enamels brought more than \$2 million apiece. German museums were fortunate to receive their art back into their arms for less than they had anticipated. In a consortium, major German art treasures such as works by Albrecht Durer, an enameled gilt-copper arm ornament, a Wolf Huber pastel portrait, an ivory plaque depicting David and Goliath were all returned to German museums with the help of a retired Frankfurt banker, state governments, and state-controlled museums. For under \$20 million, the West German government returned some major German art treasures to the homeland of the Nazi-era Jewish fugitive who purchased them.

As the headlines of the *New York Times* read that a record \$13.4 million had changed hands in one day for art treasures, the inner page (in fact, just on the other side of the same article) read that erosion is attacking the Acropolis and the removal of the Caryatids, and the closing off of the Acropolis to traffic both foot and mechanical were making tourists quite irritated. What would \$13.4 million do to headlines if that money went to preserve the Parthenon, or Venice, or the *Last Supper*, or a series of buildings, instead of the purchase of some works of art in London? Would there be anything to *show* for it? But instead, we have headlines for the concrete objects, the jewels of an age gone by. The material, rather than the gesture, the objects, rather than the ideals.

More erosion has set in in the state of California, when on the sixth of June the citizens of that fair state voted to cut their property taxes, and in so doing, also voted to cut through the warp and woof of the cultural fabric of their existence, for there will be less music, less art, less laughter in the playgrounds or in the public swimming pools, less services that we have all taken for granted. And this is only the beginning, since the surplus of California is going to bail out everyone for the most part in the fiscal year 1978-79, but just wait, wait when there is nothing to help us out—wait when there are not only short unemployment lines, but long ones, very long ones, when professions and families will be disrupted, when the fiber of our lives will be cut to shreds.

Just wait until you come to Los Angeles and go to the museum and find the gates locked—or find the admission fee so high that it is prohibitive to take the family to the museum. Or find that creative professionals have become caretakers, for there is no money to be creative. Wait until the private sector is called upon to help with all those millions that they will be saving from property taxes—wait

and see how long their help will last. Just imagine the halls of museums empty, the sound of music stilled in the concert halls, the recreational and park facilities not staffed with supervisory staff or maintenance crews! Last year we had a water shortage, a drought they called it, but this year we have a **cultural drought**. At least, Nature responded with 33 inches of water to quench that thirst and make California lush for longer than anyone had imagined a "green" California to remain. But who will quench the thirst of those who want more out of life than a paycheck and a roof over their heads? Who will give us back our art, our music, our libraries, our play areas?

As Charles White, veteran artist, said at a public meeting of artists in Los Angeles, the art community must find new solutions beyond the immediate present and have "more control of our own destinies." Amen!

PROFILE: soft arkiv

One of the great points of reference gleaned from the Toronto Conference on Sculpture was news of the establishment of **Soft Arkiv**, a federally (Canadian) chartered computer-aided information service conceived and run by artists that provides information to artists for their own use, and information about artists to critics, art administrators, and the general public.

Soft Arkiv attempts to bring an artist's viewpoint to the issues which are becoming central to our society—the symbiosis of man and technological change, and the growing dominance of electronically processed information as the primary medium of social, political and economic exchange.

In this way, Soft Arkiv is attempting

1) to create a computerized information service that is satisfying to use from a human perspective—that accommodates computers to human needs rather than imposing the inflexible requirements of machines on human beings;

2) to isolate social and cultural issues flowing from the extraordinary increase in information gathering and processing, and,

3) to create satisfying responses to such issues. For instance, to resolve the social utility of maintaining extensive information with the individual's drive to privacy and self-determination.

At present, Soft Arkiv is engaged in a project, funded by the Explorations Division of the Canada Council, to create a prototype data base (computer archive) of biographical and bibliographical information concerning living Canadian artists. The first portion of this data base, containing information on selected Canadian sculptors, has been demonstrated to the public at the 10th International Sculpture Conference in Toronto.

Some of the problems have arisen which are interesting: notably the lack of common standards and scarcity of communication among holders of public information, and complex questions of privacy and privilege.