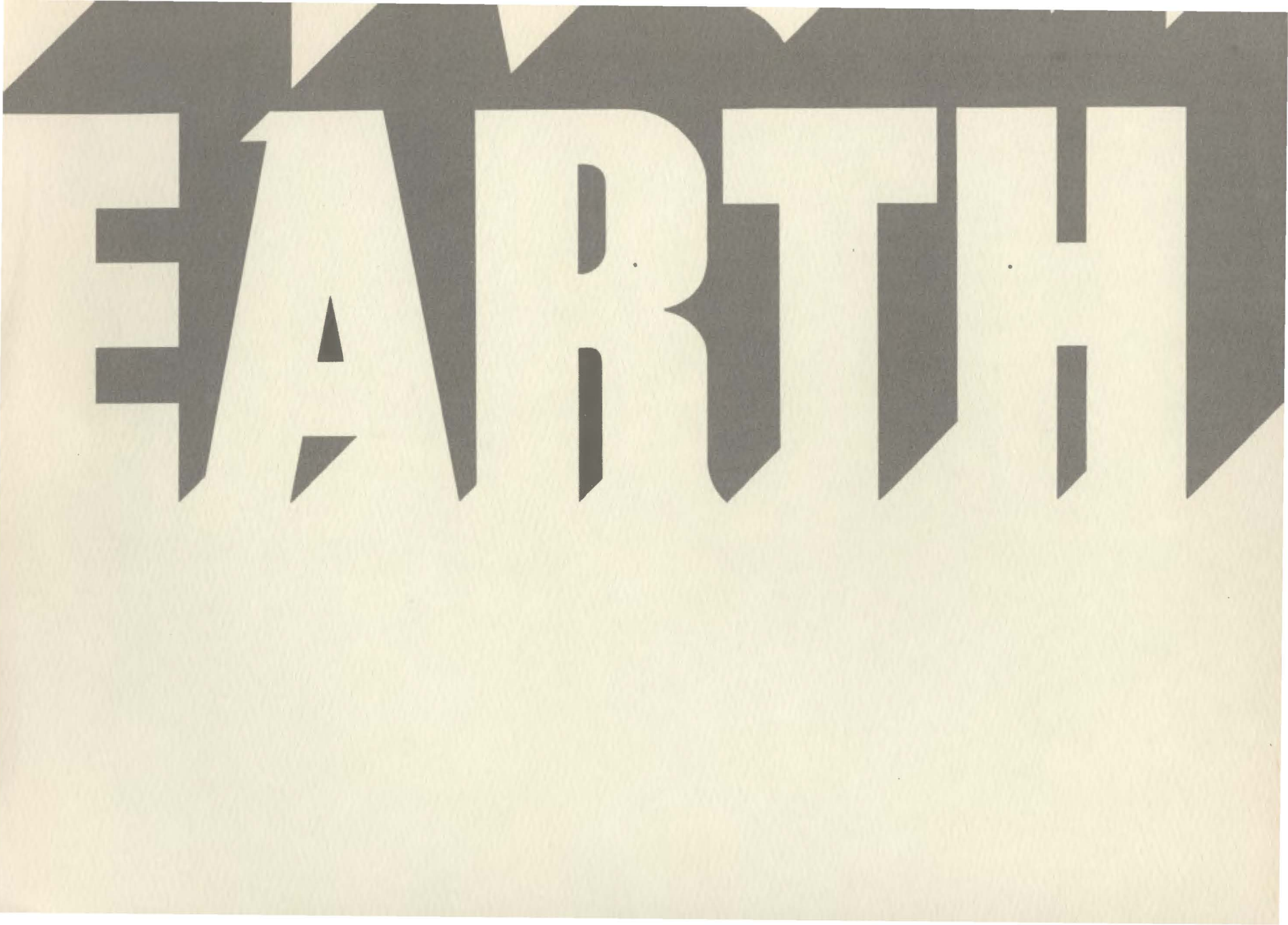
EARTH

ANDREW DICKSON WHITE MUSEUM OF ART, CORNELL UNIVERSITY FEBRUARY 11–MARCH 16, 1969


EARTH

Jan Dibbets

Hans Haacke

Neil Jenney

Richard Long

David Medalla

Robert Morris

Dennis Oppenheim

Robert Smithson

Günther Uecker

Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art

Cornell University

February 11–March 16, 1969

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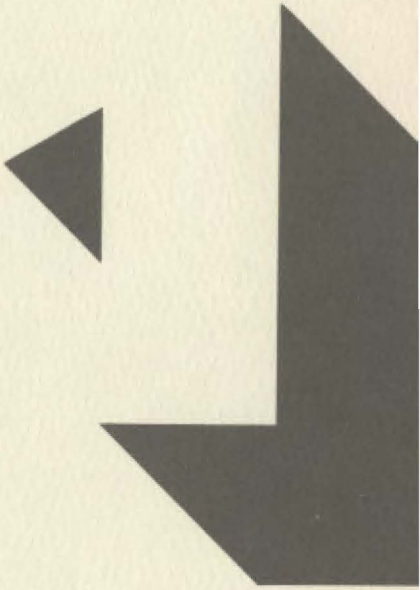
Foreword and Essays



Foreword

This catalog is a documentary record of the "Earth Art" exhibition at Cornell University in February of 1969. Because most of the works were not finished until just before the show opened, the catalog could not be produced until after the exhibition took place.

The idea of bringing together the works of a number of artists who use earth as a medium originated with Willoughby Sharp. He knew the artists personally, persuaded them to come to Ithaca to execute new pieces, and acted as coordinator for the exhibition. Most of the artists are Americans; however, Jan Dibbets from Holland, Gunther Uecker from Germany, and Richard Long from England also came to Cornell to participate. David Medalla from the Philippines took part by sending instructions for the execution of his piece. Robert Morris, who could not make it to Ithaca because of a blizzard in New York City shortly before the opening of the exhibition, sent instructions by telephone.

While at Cornell, the artists chose their sites and materials and created their works with the help of students from the University. At one point eight of the artists participated in an informal symposium held in an auditorium filled to capacity with Cornell students and faculty. In this discussion, as well as subsequently in the pieces that they produced, the artists demonstrated that although their material might be similar their aims were very different from one another. It became

clear that an earth art movement could not be spoken of as such, but that the artists, in their concern for elemental material and its use to sharpen sensory and intellectual perception, had begun to create an art form that contained profound implications for the future of art and of art museums.

Earth art is one facet of a general tendency among younger artists to renounce the construction of art objects in favor of the creation of art experiences related to a broad physical and sociological environment. If this tendency prevails, it could ultimately transform the entire structure of the art world. Museums wishing to support the efforts of contemporary artists may have to think increasingly in terms of backing projects rather than acquiring art objects or holding conventional exhibitions. A basic revamping of most museum budgets would be required to effect this change, but several forward-looking institutions have already begun to think in these terms. Some museums are beginning to sponsor temporary and permanent environmental projects far removed from the confines of the museum building. It appears likely that, in the future, any museum wishing to contribute seriously to the advancement of contemporary art will have to devote part of its resources to extramural projects like those in this exhibition. It is even conceivable that a new kind of museum, a true "museum without walls," could come into being. In such an institution the physical plant could be quite modest, housing perhaps only administrative offices and the documentary records of the projects it has sponsored. Its main activity would take place in the outside world, wherever an artist's sensibility led him to alter existing environmental conditions. For most museums, however, the new tendency will add an exciting new dimension to existing programs.

In spite of the statements of several artists who are involved in environmental art, I see no reason to suppose that the making of art objects has reached a dead end. Probably there will always be artists whose aesthetic feeling for form and scale will lead them to produce works for contemplation and enjoyment within a museum context. There is nothing mutually exclusive about the two approaches to art. An artist must perhaps decide in favor of one or the other, but there is no

reason that a viewer cannot appreciate both art objects and the environmental projects.

The White Museum was hardly prepared to participate in the "Earth Art" exhibition: our financial resources were meager and we were completely inexperienced in this kind of endeavor. The resourcefulness and forbearance of the artists, however, as well as the enthusiastic cooperation of students, staffs of several departments at Cornell, and local business firms brought all the projects to fruition. We are especially grateful to Richard M. Lewis, director of the Cornell Plantations; George T. Swanson, superintendent of the Grounds Division at Cornell; Clateus H. Rhoades, supervisor of Industrial Safety; and the staff of Cornell's Center for Aerial Photographic Studies. For their material and assistance in Robert Smithson's project, we wish to thank the Cayuga Rock Salt Company and its vice president, William B. Wilkinson, and the Falconer Plate Glass Company, Falconer, New York. We are also indebted to the many Cornell students who helped with the construction of the projects and the photographic documentation of them. In addition to the hundreds of photographs taken of the various pieces, thousands of feet of motion picture film were taken under the direction of Willoughby Sharp. Mr. Sharp and Professor William C. Lipke have generously contributed the introductory essays for this catalog.

Many of the artists did not limit their art activities in Ithaca to the one project needed for the exhibition. Their creative energies which were stimulated by the geological conditions and the climate of Ithaca led them to produce additional pieces which provided a dividend to visitors to the exhibition. Hans Haacke, for example, stretched a rope across Fall Creek just below the waterfall so that icicles were formed along it and appeared to be suspended in midair. Dennis Oppenheim used various materials to reproduce the shape of the Museum galleries in outdoor spaces in Ithaca. Jan Dibbets selected fourteen trees standing in a row in a forest and painted them white from the ground up to a height of five feet. Robert Smithson chose a nearby rock quarry for an additional site and used a stone-walled closet in the Museum's basement for the non-site. Photographs

of these projects are included in the back of the catalog. The making of these additional pieces exemplifies the continuous creative response to environment which is characteristic of the new sensibility embodied in earth art.

Thomas W. Leavitt, *Director*
Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art
Cornell University

Notes Toward an Understanding of Earth Art

ince the fall of 1966, a new kind of sculpture has become increasingly recognized. The exhibition of these works and the critical interest they have stimulated indicates that this seemingly accidental, unordered, and unpretentious art is the outcome of a sculptural sensibility which is quite independent of the last dominant mode, Minimal Sculpture. Variously characterized as antiform, anti-illusion, elemental sculpture, impossible art, microemotive art, the new naturalism, and poor art, the new work was examined in at least four other important exhibitions in 1969: "9 at Leo Castelli," New York City; "When Attitudes Become Form," Kunsthalle Bern; "Square Tags in Round Holes," Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City.

One of the most striking aspects of this work is the wide range and unusual character of the materials employed, materials seldom previously associated with the making of sculpture. These have certain features in common: they tend to be easily manipulated, commonplace, flexible, and often heavily textured. How far contemporary sculptors have ventured in their search for new materials for sculptural expression is clearly shown by the following list, by no means exhaustive: air, alcohol, asbestos, ashes, bamboo, benzene, candles, chalk, charcoal, down, dust, earth, excelsior, felt, fire, flares, flock, foam, graphite, grease, hay, ice, lead,

mercury, mineral oil, moss, rocks, rope, rubber, sand, sawdust, seeds, slate, snow, steel wool, string, tar, twigs, twine, water, and wax.

The treatment of material by different sculptors is hardly less diverse than the range of things used and is to a large extent dictated by the properties peculiar to each. They are bent, broken, curled, crumpled, heaped, or hung; piled, propped, rolled, scattered, sprayed, spread, and sprinkled. Such procedures appear casual, offhand; they blatantly defy the definition of sculpture as something modeled or carved. Nothing is *made* in the traditional sense; materials are allowed to subside into, or assume, their final shape naturally without being coerced into a preconceived form. The tools employed are very basic or else considered redundant. With a tremendous vocabulary of means at its disposal, the new sculpture manifests itself in an infinite variety of configurations. A common denominator of these works is their focus on physical properties—density, opacity, rigidity—rather than on geometric properties.

A natural consequence of the features singled out above is the intimate relation which the work bears to its site. Many pieces are improvised *in situ*. Distribution of the constituent matter is intuitive and informal, and little attempt is made to arrange the material. The massiveness of the works is often dictated by economic factors rather than by esthetic considerations. A sense of anonymity and impermanence emanates from them. Of especial importance in the context of site is the work's relation to the floor or the ground. The new sculpture does not stand remote and aloof on a pedestal. It is laid down on the ground or cut beneath its surface. The floor or ground often forms an integral part of the piece, as may the wall plane. Spectators can sometimes pass through the work as well as past it or around it.

Apart from the new attitude to making and the close work-to-place relationship, other aspects of the new sculptural sensibility are an emphasis on time and process, and antiobject orientation, and a desire to subvert style. The new works seem to proclaim the artists' rejection of painting and previous sculptural concerns; the production of artifacts; the commercial art world and its consumer

ethos; the urban environment; and the long-standing esthetic preoccupations with color, composition, illusion, and the internal relation of parts. Many works express a strong desire to draw attention by artistic means to real phenomena. Materials usually thought of as mundane and inartistic have now been designated as esthetically interesting. With the new sculpture, the pure presentation of materials in carefully selected situations has become a significant esthetic statement. The nonutilitarian use of certain ordinarily useful materials is not without a sense of paradox: many of the works display a certain stubbornness and recalcitrance, as though they refuse to be absorbed into the existing culture. One major consequence of this is that the traditional line between art and life has become blurred. We are encouraged to draw the distinction between the two afresh.

Sources and Inspiration of Earthworks

Early indications of a painterly interest in earth materials may be seen in Duchamp's *Dust* (1920), the pebbles in Pollock's *Number 29* (1950), and Robert Rauschenberg's *Nature Paintings* (1952–53). A more environmental attitude is present in Herbert Bayer's outdoor playground, *Earth Mound* (1955) in Aspen, Colorado; in Walter De Maria's proposal for an "art yard" (1960) using earthmovers in an empty city lot; and in Heinz Mack's *Sahara Project* (1961), an "art reservation" which aimed to activate sculpturally a large-scale land mass. A number of kinetic sculptors became interested in earthmoving works in the mid-sixties. In 1964 David Medalla made both his first *Sand Machine* and the first of his series of *Mud Machines.* In 1966 Günther Uecker did two works with sand, *Small and Large Desert* and *Sand Mill.* After that, the interest in outdoor earthworks accelerated with Robert Morris's *Model and Cross-Section for a Project in Earth and Sod* (1966) and *Earth Project* (1967); Robert Smithson's *Tar Pool and Gravel Pit* (1966); Hans Haacke's *Grass Cube* (1966) and *Grass Mound* (1967); Mike Heizer's *Depressions* (1967); Barry Flanagan's *One Space Sand Sculpture* (1967); Richard Long's *Dirt* (1967); Claes Oldenburg's *Pit* (1967); Dennis Oppenheim's *Cut in an Oakland Mountain* (1967); Walter De Maria's *Pure Dirt* (1968), and Jan Dibbets's

Grass Roll (1967). While local factors have played some role in shaping the works of these artists, crosscurrents in the art world and the almost immediate information flow have brought about the existence of a truly international sensibility with national variants. Given the number of significant works with earth, critics have hailed an earth art movement. But most of the artists mentioned have sculptural concerns which transcend the use of any single material or group of materials. There is no earth art, there are just a number of earthworks, an important body of work categorized under a catchy heading.

The sources of the earth sensibility are extremely diverse: Pollock's drip paintings inspired by the Indian sand painters, Rauschenberg's realization that everything can be used as artistic material, Kaprow's emphasis on the process of materials used in large-scale situations, and Morris's writings focusing on the way in which sculpture is experienced. These all have made a strong impact on most of the earth artists, especially the Americans. Older works have also had an influence. Carl Andre has said that archaic earthworks have had a tremendous influence on his thinking. Stonehenge and the English countryside which he visited in 1954 also made a great impact on his sculpture. Andre's interest in the six-inch-high Indian mounds which stretch for miles through Minnesota is also relevant, since he showed a small mound of white sand in the "Monument and Tombs" exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City in 1967. But Andre is primarily concerned with place and elemental units rather than the use of earth materials *per se*.

Robert Smithson, who spent his childhood in Passaic, New Jersey, on the cliffs of the Palisades, is interested in geological phenomena and has created sculptural projects with glaciers and volcanos. Another influence on Smithson has been his work since July 1966 as "artist-consultant" for the architects-engineers, Tippetts-Abett-McCarthy-Stratton, in the development of an air terminal site near Fort Worth and Dallas. This experience introduced the artist to a systems approach for the study of information: maps, surveys, reports, specifications, and construction models.

The influence of formal garden arrangements shows up in Dennis Oppenheim's 1968 scale models which use grass, trenches, furrows, flowers, and hedges. His recent work, *Wheat*, in Holland calling for the seeding of a field in accordance with its topographical configuration and the subsequent harvesting of it relates directly to ordinary farming.

Born of German farming parents, Günther Uecker says that his strongest childhood memories are of drawing in the sand on the shores of the Baltic and ploughing the Mecklenbergian fields, an activity which was to be simulated in one of his proposals for the "Earth Art" exhibition. Another formative influence of Uecker's work has been his interest in Oriental culture, particularly the Zen rock gardens. Richard Long's works which almost disappear into the land, appear to have grown directly out of his physical environment, the gently rolling moorlands of southwest England surrounding his home in Bristol. His soft-edged indentations certainly reflect the subtleties of the English landscape.

It also may be significant that two of the earth workers, David Medalla and Mike Heizer, have fathers who are anthropologists. Heizer's *Depressions,* diggings done with simple tools like a pick and shovel in the Nevada mudflats, resemble the abandoned excavation sites that he frequented during his youth.

Common Aspects of Earthworks

Despite the extremely disparate origins of earth art, several sculptural concerns are widely shared by earth artists, including a total absence of anthropomorphism and a pervasive conception of the natural order of reality. The conceptual bases of the works vary greatly, but visually they all tend to be unpretentious and relatively unobtrusive. This apparent lack of sophistication, however, is deceptive. The works are without physical support, without base, grounded in their environment either indoors or out. The result is an unframed experience with no one correct perspective or focus.

Outdoor works such as Oppenheim's ice cut in Beebe Lake present the dynamics of elements in the environment. The whole work cannot be taken in at a single glance. The spectator has to experience the different stages of the system

if he wants to experience the whole work, which has its own life span. Neither can such works be fully understood through single photographs in the manner of traditional painting or sculpture.

Apart from the time dimension, which forms an integral part of much of the work with earth materials, the most common perceptible aspect of earthworks is their formal simplicity. The materials are treated in a direct, straightforward manner, allowing physical comportment of substance to take precedence over any plastic ambition. In many cases the medium is presented intact with minimum formal modification. Although Smithson has said that he is not interested in presenting the medium for its own sake, several artists (De Maria, Long, Morris) are. But the intellectual and artistic aspirations evident in their work, as in all the earthworks in the exhibition, go further than mere media presentation. Each artist has carefully worked out a theoretical framework for his sculptural projects, and in a sense this may be said to be a substitute for the traditional sculptural "base." Haacke entertains a programmatic approach to his work and advocates sculpture which "experiences, reacts to its environment, changes, is nonstable . . . which lives in time and makes the 'spectator' experience time. . . ." He stresses process, the growth cycle of living systems, allowing them to develop from birth to death. Uecker, a German kineticist and member of the Zero Group, has written very little about the esthetics of his work; he wants the beauty of the material and its motion to become self-evident. So he endeavors to purify, to reduce to the elemental zero point everything but the essential esthetic experience of the work. He wants to "beautify the world with movement." Neil Jenney's work aspires to transcend its visual image through an environmental theatricality, a tableau consisting of objects which shock the spectator when he realizes that they are not a part of the natural environment but of the piece. According to Jenney "The activity among the physical presences of the items and events they realize, providing they exist together, is theatrical." Related to this attitude is De Maria's and Heizer's concern for the religious aspect of their work, which is not without a moral element. De Maria has written: "God has created the earth—and we have ignored it."

And Heizer states that art is tending more towards religion. Similar sentiments are present in the persistent pantheism of many of the outdoor earthworks. Perhaps this connects to Heizer's antiurbanism, a quality of much of the work in earth. It is a reaction to the city where art is necessarily first seen in a gallery or museum. Jenney takes a different attitude: "Take any portion of the world out there; put it out of context in a gallery, and it's beautiful." Jenney's dependence on the gallery site singles him out from the other artists in the Cornell exhibition, all of whom have executed or made plans for outdoor works. If his work were placed in an outdoor situation it would probably go unnoticed, because it could not work against the natural environment. Being professionals, all the artists take their exhibition opportunities where they come and are reluctant to express general preferences. Heizer, for example, says that he works outside because he likes the space and it is the only place where he can display mass. But he claims that there are just as many esthetic restrictions working in the Mojave Desert as there are in the Dwan Gallery. Such viewpoints indicate the strong environmental sensibility and the concern for a man-nature interaction that these artists share.

Another force operative in bringing the new sculpture back to earth is the artists' sharp awareness of the artistic "mistakes" of the immediate past. The drunken redundancy of the abstract expressionist gesture, the commercialism and camp of Pop Art, and the pristine absolutism of Minimal Sculpture all were only incidental factors in these individual modes until they were exploited by the gallery and museum system, by an overanxious press geared to superficial exposition, and by an insensitive art public.

Genesis of the Earth Art Exhibition

The "Earth Art" exhibition was conceived in the summer of 1967 as one of a series of four traveling exhibitions devoted to the elements of air, earth, fire, and water. The problem was to find the most suitable place to initiate these projects. Thomas Leavitt made the realization of the "Earth Art" exhibition a practical possibility through his energy and perceptive interest in the work. Other factors

shaping the decision to inaugurate the exhibition at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art were the relative autonomy of the Museum within the Cornell University system and the unique geological and geographical character of Ithaca. The richness of its raw materials is almost unsurpassed in the eastern United States. Financial considerations dictated that the number of participating artists should not exceed a dozen, because a unique feature of the exhibition was that the artists would be invited to Cornell to execute their works *in situ* from locally available rock, soil, etc. The invitations sent out to the artists for the February exhibition each contained a small brochure with a floor plan of the available exhibition area and photographs of the land around the Museum which was to serve as exhibition space. Each artist had the choice of doing his piece either indoors or outdoors. The outdoor works did not have to be executed on Museum property as long as they were within reasonable access of the Cornell community. Each artist submitted a detailed plan of his project, giving the amount of materials and tools required, method of execution, and locale of the activity. Many of the participating artists spent several days at Cornell University discussing individual aspects of their work with specialists in various departments: buildings and grounds, archeology, architecture, art, physics, applied mathematics. The University community thus became involved to an unusual degree in the exhibition. All the participating artists had decided to execute their works at Cornell themselves except for Medalla who was in India at the time. Medalla expressed his desire to be represented at Cornell either by his *Mud Machine* (1964) or an outdoor *Mud Mound,* both of which could be executed by an appointed person. The three European artists (Long, Dibbets, and Uecker) arrived about a week before the exhibition, and the other artists were in Ithaca several days before the opening. The execution of the works, performed with the help of many Cornell University students, was complicated by severe weather conditions: frozen ground, snow, and ice.

Ideological Bases of the New Sculpture Earthworks show a clear emancipation from ideologies and doctrinaire esthetic codes. Only a few of the new sculptors have themselves been associated with recent attempts made in New York City to plan reforms of the existing art world structure.[1] These call for radical postures including the payment of rental fees by museums for works shown in exhibitions, the boycott of commercial galleries by artists, more legal protection against the exploitation of art works, and increased control by the artist over his work. Such potential reforms obviously require long and careful exploration. But experimental exhibitions like this one help to modify the prevalent anachronistic situation of contemporary art in America. A marked feature of this radical work is that it casts doubt on a whole range of previous assumptions about the nature of sculpture, the nature of art itself. It is understandable that earth art should throw open to question the exhibition system generally adopted throughout the world. The artist is traditionally expected to make a work in his studio; when the work is selected for an exhibit he rarely has further contact with it. Now it is possible for the artist to leave his studio and produce whatever he wants in the exhibition area itself, and this offers him a way of having greater control over his artistic output.

The Esthetic Significance of the New Sculpture In art's escape from object orientation, the new sculpture is trying to confront new issues, ones of vast scale, of open, unstructured space and nonmaterialistic attitudes. The cloud-seeding project that Oppenheim proposed for the opening of the exhibition, his large-scale crop arrangements in Holland, and his recent underwater projects in the Bahamas indicate the wide-ranging nature of current sculptural concerns. Earth art calls for the radical reorganization of our natural environment; it offers the possibility of mitigating man's alienation from nature. While the new sculptor is still thinking esthetically, his concerns and tech-

1. See the publications of the Art Workers Coalition, Box 553, Old Chelsea Station, New York, New York 10011.

niques are increasingly becoming those of the environmental manager, the urban planner, the architect, the civil engineer, and the cultural anthropologist. Art can no longer be viewed primarily as a self-sufficient entity. The iconic content of the work has been eliminated, and art is gradually entering into a more significant relationship with the viewer and the component parts of his environment.

Willoughby Sharp

Earth Systems

The exhibition "Earth Art" at Cornell brought together a number of works which illustrate various recent aesthetic positions that can collectively be described as minimal, kinetic, and environmental. Within the broad spectrum of these statements there are similarities which explain their inclusion under one rubric. The artists, in their concern with natural materials and processes, use earth both as a means *to* expression (as a material) and as a means *of* expression (as a medium). Further, their similar philosophic viewpoints are evidence of a "transition from an *object-oriented* to a *systems-oriented culture.* Here change emanates, not from *things,* but from *the way things are done.*"[1] Emphasis is placed not on the creation of enduring art objects, but on conceptual or ideological speculation.

The work in this exhibition can be grouped conveniently by manner of presentation: (1) works which were placed within the existing landscape, (2) works whose components were placed both within and without the boundaries of the museum, and (3) works whose material limits were revealed within the confines of the gallery space. Confronting works with these unconventional presentational schemes, the viewer experiences difficulties because of the various perceptual and conceptual adjustments necessary to focus on each piece. As one student observed after visiting the exhibition: "We expect to see art objects—paintings

1. Jack Burnham, "Systems Aesthetics," *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (September 1968): 31.

hung on the walls and sculpture occurring in discrete places. Our biases tend to limit our interaction with what is really there. This process is only a part of the conventionalization of perception and experience that occurs as a result of growing up in a patterned society."

The visual statements at the earth show not only fall outside the traditional categories of painting and sculpture but also deny altogether the notion of the art object as traditionally displayed. As Jack Burnham notes: "In systems perspective there are not contrived confines such as the theatre proscenium or picture frame. Conceptual focus rather than material limits define the system."[2]

Because it contributes to the playing down of aesthetic information, art is now seen as a reunification of the conceptual/perceptual dichotomy; earth art, especially as practiced by an artist like Robert Smithson, somehow attempts to bring into clearer focus the relationship between the artifact and the experience for which it stands. Smithson commented: "The piece is there in the museum, abstract, and it's there to look at, but you are thrown off it. You are sort of spun out to the fringes of the site."[3] Thus, it would be misleading, for example, to see these works essentially as extensions of problems or solutions raised within traditional media, particularly sculpture.[4] Although the concept of "systems" has been offered as one approach to these works, other constructs are also plausible, such as Michael Fried's "theatrical objects or situations"; Dennis Oppenheim's

2. Ibid., p. 32.

3. In the symposium on earth art held at Cornell University on February 6, 1969, excerpts of which appear in section 4 of this catalog. Related points of view were expressed by Dennis Oppenheim.

All quotations from the earth artists, unless otherwise noted, are from the symposium.

4. However it should be noted that most, if not all, of the earth artists were previously concerned with sculpture or object making, three-dimensional rather than strictly two-dimensional concerns. In part, the present works seem to confirm the development of the medium of sculpture as stated by Carl Andre: "The course of development/Sculpture as form/Sculpture as structure/Sculpture as place." Quoted in David Bourdon, "The Razed Sites of Carl Andre," essay in *Minimal Art,* ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1968), p. 103.

"transplants"; Neil Jenney's "environments"; and Günther Uecker's "zones." Only the concept of "art" seems applicable to every work in the exhibition. For, although it is true that these works tend to escape any systematic categorization, it is incontestable that they are intended to be seen as "art."

The earthworks are not defined as art through our usual criteria—iconographic, formal, material, or conventional presentation of the art object—but instead by usage and intent, much in the same way that ordinary language philosophy determines the meaning of a word by usage rather than by a priori definition. Earthworks thus illustrate Robert Morris's thesis that: "Anything that is used as art must be defined as art. The new work continues the convention but refuses the heritage of still another art-based order of making things. The intentions are different, the results are different, so is the experience."[5]

The nature of the experience to which Morris is referring places aesthetic considerations in a secondary position, a view substantiated by the earth artists themselves. Haacke states: "I'm not interested in the form. I'm more interested in the growth of plants—growth as a phenomenon which is something that is outside the realm of forms or composition and has to do with the interaction of forces and interaction of energies and information." And Oppenheim comments: "At this point I'm concerned with an art that rides above the frequency of pictorial or compositional treatment." It is in this sense too that one must understand Jenney's remark, "I don't care what the work looks like."

Given these departures from traditional art, how do we critically assess the work? For, surely, the older models of criticism are irrelevant, and there is little in recent criticism that seems applicable. "Modernist" criticism is particularly inappropriate to earthworks, and an elaboration of this position is needed at this point to reveal more clearly just how far earthworks have gone beyond modernist thinking.

5. "Notes on Sculpture, Part 3," *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967, special issue): 29.

One tendency in criticism has been to see each new kind of visual statement as a criticism of earlier art. This tendency to suggest a constant feedback implies a set of problems established by the limits of a given medium, such as painting and sculpture, and when these problems are successfully resolved or exhausted new problems must be invented within the limitations of the medium. This point of view, and that of modernism in general, has been put forth by Clement Greenberg: "Given that the initial look of non-art was no longer available to painting, since even an unpainted canvas now stated itself as a picture, the borderline between art and non-art had to be sought in the three-dimensional, where sculpture was, and where everything material that was not art also was. Painting had lost the lead because it was so ineluctably art, and it now devolved on sculpture or something like it to head art's advance."[6]

Earth art does not fit Greenberg's analysis of the situation because the intention is different; there is no attempt to provide critical feedback to conventional art forms because the earth artists intend a reorientation of the very function and process of art.

A position related to Greenberg's is held by Michael Fried who claims "that the literalist espousal of objecthood amounts to nothing other than a plea for a new genre of theatre; and theatre is now the negation of art."[7] Fried argues that literal objects—as contrasted with art objects—have a stage presence evidenced by the nature of the experience of the spectator, noting that the duration of the experience between the work of art and the spectator is also paradigmatically theatrical.

Fried's thesis depends upon fundamental but inconsistent propositions regarding the nature of art. He would admit that the concept of art differs iconographically and even physically from culture to culture and that the locus and

6. "The Recentness of Sculpture," essay in *American Sculpture of the Sixties* (catalog), ed. Maurice Tuchman, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1968), p. 24.

7. "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (Summer 1967, special issue): 15.

function of art changes in relation to any given society. Neither are constants. Yet Fried maintains, as does Greenberg, that the concepts of quality and value are constants and that categories within the visual arts, such as painting and sculpture, are absolute to the degree that all artistic problems must be resolved within the limits of those media boundaries. This proposition is stated quite clearly by Fried when he argues that "the concepts of quality and value—and to the extent that these are central to art, the concept of art itself—are meaningful, or wholly meaningful, only *within* the individual arts. What lies *between* the arts is theatre."[8] Hence, according to Fried, earthworks are theatrical because they fall between the arts. But, in fact, it would be truer to say that they fall outside the realm of art as defined by Fried and Greenberg.

A slightly different statement of modernism has been offered by Sidney Tillim in his comments directed to the earthworks show held at the Dwan Gallery in New York City in December 1968. Like Greenberg, Tillim implies that this "non-art" exercise is a bid for "avant-gardism," specifically, an attempt to "renew modernism." Referring to earthworks as a kind of "precious primitivism," Tillim draws a parallel between earth artists and the eighteenth-century artists who cultivated the concept of the picturesque. He implies that the earth artists, like these earlier artists, have "substituted the sentimental for nobility of feeling and developed the cult of nature as an antidote to the excessive sophistication of cultivated society."[9] The contrary seems to be the case, especially in the work of Robert Smithson. The picturesque as an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century mode of vision was, as Christopher Hussey noted, "the first step in the movement towards abstract aesthetic values."[10] The ensuing aestheticism of the last quarter of the nineteenth century and its camouflaged appearance in the contemporary preference for formal analysis are precisely what Smithson and others intend to

8. Ibid., p. 21.

9. Sidney Tillim, "Earthworks and the New Picturesque," *Artforum* 8, no. 4 (December 1968): 43.

10. *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), p. 17.

avoid. As Smithson remarked: "You just can't say it [art] is all just shapes, colors, and lines. There's a physical reference. The choice of subject matter is not simply a representational thing to be avoided. It has important physical implications."[11] Smithson and the other artists in this exhibition assume an attitude of literalness to nature which is anything but picturesque. They are insisting now on the other half of experience, on the physicality to which their works refer and of which they are made.

Few if any of the artists at Cornell were concerned with the way or manner in which their statements were made. In earth art the shift toward a concern for awareness of literal presence and the emphasis on the conceptual aspect of art is in accordance with Jack Burnham's thesis that the purpose of such statements is to show the "*relations between people and between people and the components of their environment.*"[12] In this regard, Oppenheim has talked about art's being eventually reintegrated into the social system rather than remaining something distinct and remote from other activities. Once the transition to a socially integrated art is complete, we may see the full implementation of the art impulse in an advanced technological society. Earth artists just may fulfill an ideal stated earlier by John Cage to "set forth a view of the arts which does not separate them from the rest of life, but rather confuses the difference between Art and Life, just as it diminishes the distinctions between space and time."[13]

William C. Lipke

11. Robert Smithson in conversation with the author, 1969. Smithson elaborated: "Reversing the perspective to get another viewpoint. We've seen it so long now from the decorative design point of view and not from the point of view of the physicality of the terrain. That perception is needed now more than the abstract, because we're now into such a kind of soupy, effete thing. Art has been so one sided and groundless."

12. Burnham, "Systems Aesthetics," p. 31.

13. *A Year from Monday* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), p. 32.

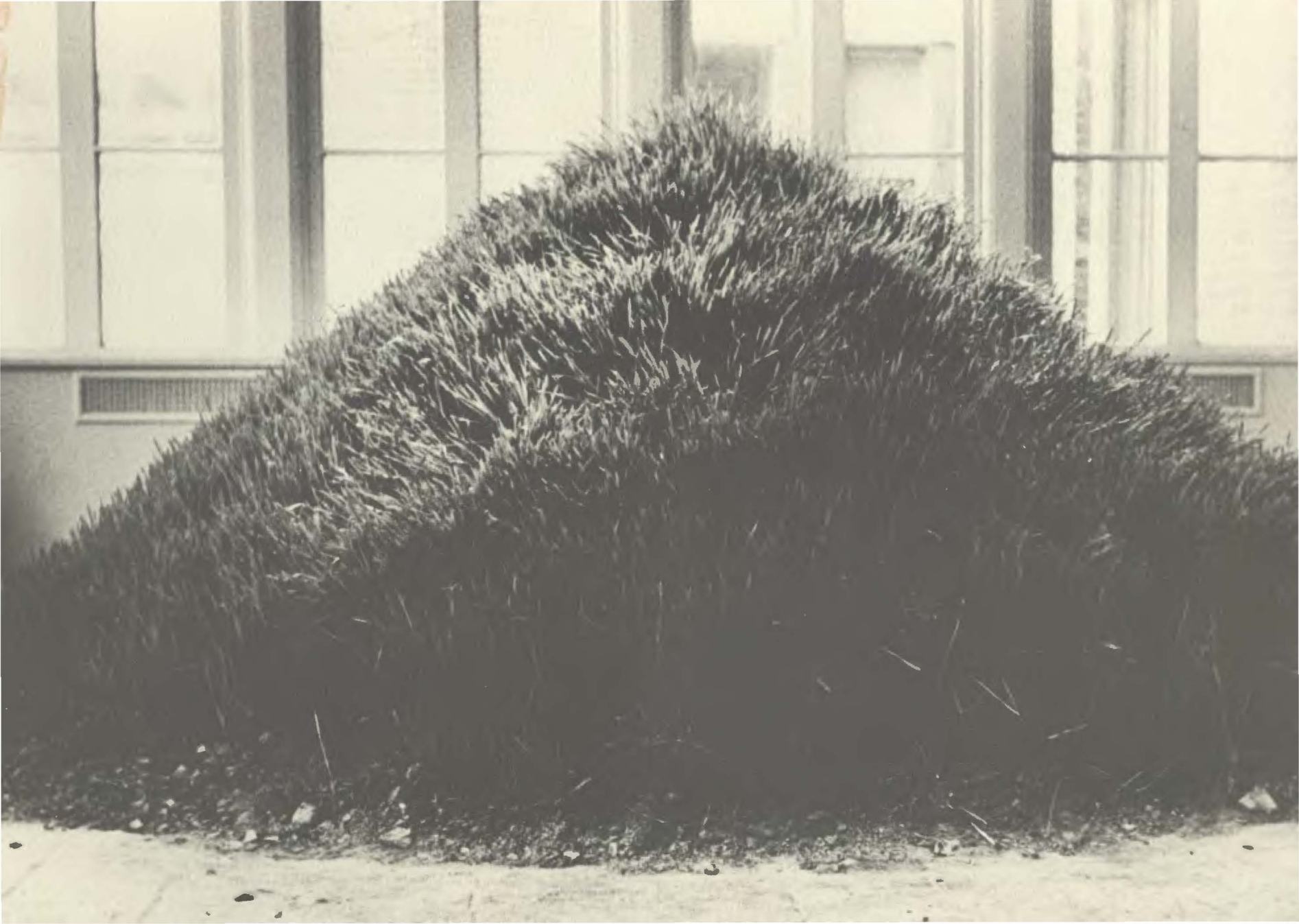
The Exhibition

Jan Dibbets, *A Trace in the Wood in the Form of an Angle of 30° Crossing the Path*

After exploring the woodland near Six Mile Creek several miles from the Museum, Dibbets found a large clearing in the forest where a path crossed a naturally beautiful site next to the creek. With a clothesline attached to large rocks, Dibbets and a small crew of students marked out a large **V** on the ground, each arm of which was approximately five feet wide and one-hundred feet long. The turf within each arm of the **V** was turned over with pickaxes and shovels, except where the **V** was intersected by the path. Several times during the course of the exhibition, snow fell in the area, giving the work a continually varying appearance. Dibbets considers the long walk through the woods to the site of his work to be part of the piece.

Hans Haacke, *Grass Grows*

In 1967 Haacke made *Grass Cube*, a thirty-inch, clear plastic cube with grass growing in soil on its top. He proceeded with plantations in soil that was poured right on the ground. For Ithaca he selected the gallery most exposed to sunlight. A cubic yard of topsoil was mixed with peat moss and formed into a cone-shaped mound nine feet in diameter and approximately three feet high. Haacke then sowed the mound with a fast-growing winter rye and annual rye seeds. The mound yielded a luxuriant growth during the course of the exhibition. By the time the exhibition closed, most of the grass had died, having completed its life cycle.

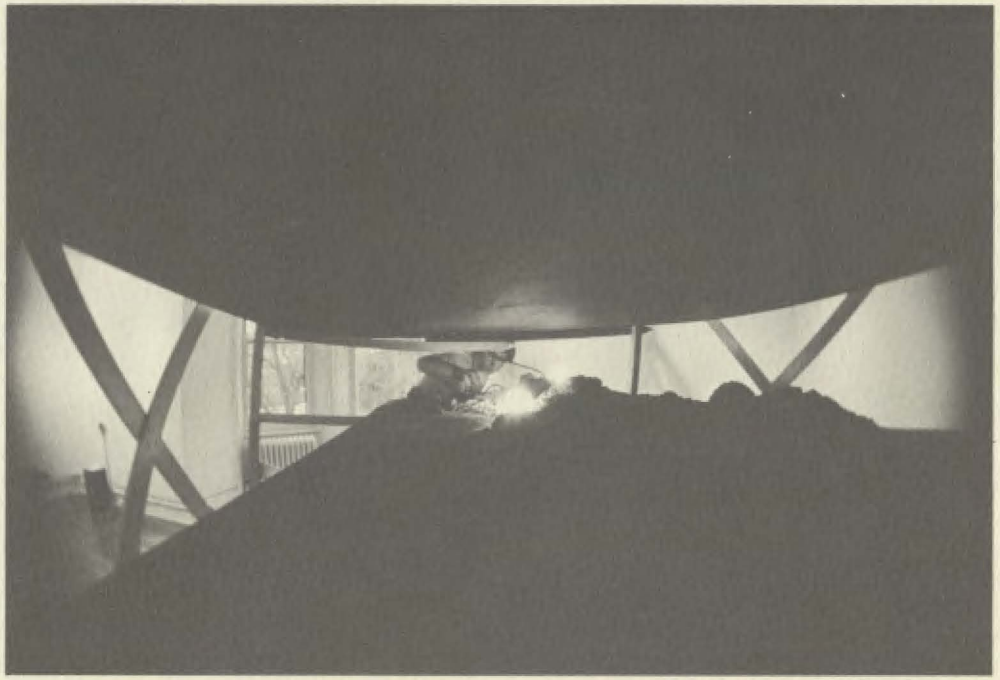


Neil Jenney, *Untitled*

The space for Jenney's piece was a gallery measuring sixteen by twenty-four feet. From scrap lumber in the Museum basement he erected a scaffolding approximately seven by seven by eight feet, on which he placed three horizontal plywood panels at different levels. On these panels he piled dirt from an excavation near the Museum and placed, partially hidden in the dirt, lightbulbs which remained lit during the exhibition. He then built and connected three new electrical outlets in the room with cables extending about two feet above the floor. Finally, he placed around the gallery several floor-type ashtrays filled with sand, cigarette butts, and ashes, and posted the following statement.

This piece consists of:

1. *Installed electric extension*
2. *Ashtrays*
3. *Shelving apparatus with earth*



Richard Long, *Untitled, 27 East Avenue, Ithaca, New York*

During an extensive search in a rock quarry near Ithaca, Long found some dark gray schist from which he picked out twenty-six fragments. These were transported to the Museum in a station wagon. Before dawn one morning shortly before the exhibition opened, Long selected twelve flat pieces from the twenty-six and, marking off seven paces between stones, arranged them in a rectangle on the sloping lawn in front of the Museum.

David Medalla, *Untitled*

On authority from the artist, several tons of earth were dug from behind the Museum and trucked to a site on the south side of the Museum where the dirt was dumped in an oblong pile. Just before the opening of the exhibition, the pile was watered with a hose until it became muddy. Throughout the exhibition, changes in weather and temperature imparted a constantly varying appearance to the work.

Robert Morris, *Untitled*

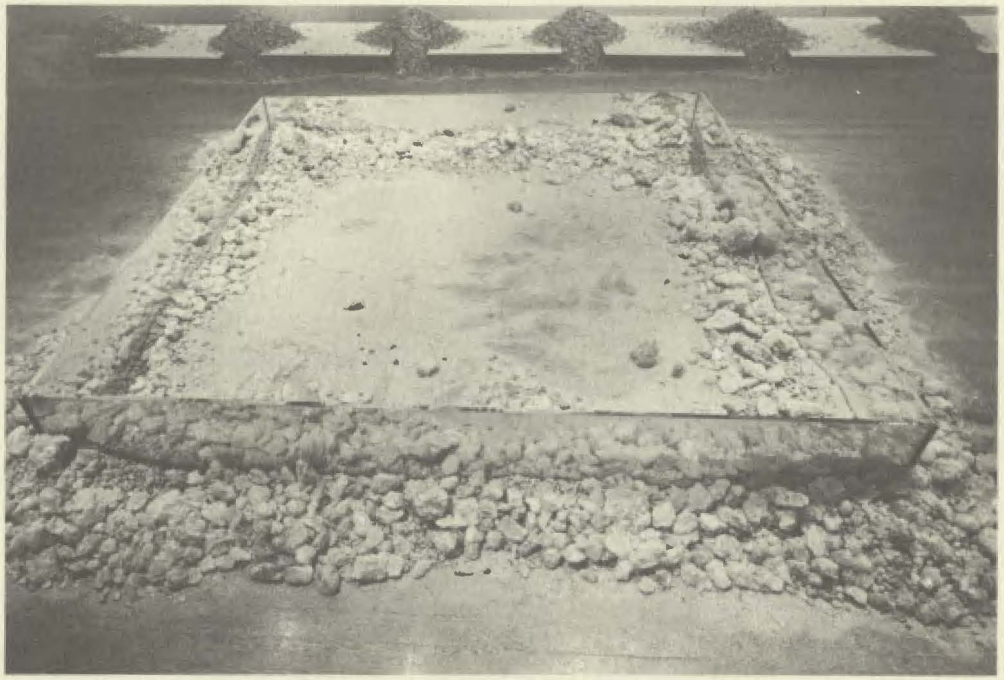
Unable to reach Ithaca because of a blizzard in New York City, the artist telephoned instructions to the Museum for the execution of his piece. He asked that a diagram of the eighteen-by-twenty-eight-foot gallery assigned to him be marked off into a one-foot grid. He then designated the sizes of piles of earth, anthracite, and asbestos and where in the gallery they were to be dumped. The work was carried out by Museum staff and students.

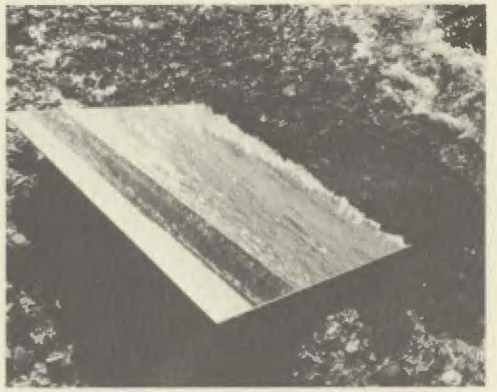
Dennis Oppenheim, *Beebe Lake Ice Cut*

Oppenheim's original project, entitled *Woodcut,* was to be a trench in the steeply inclining slope bordering the shores of Beebe Lake on the Cornell campus, and ice saws were to be used to continue the cut into the frozen lake. When he began to execute the work a few days before the exhibition opened, Oppenheim decided to make the cut only on the frozen surface of the west end of the lake at the edge of the falls. A chain saw was used to make a cut two-hundred feet long, and loosened ice was pushed over the falls with rakes and brooms.

Robert Smithson, *Mirror Displacement*

After examining geological maps of the Ithaca area, Smithson selected the Cayuga Rock Salt Company mine as the site for his piece. He took mirrors down into the mine, one-half mile below the earth's surface, and photographed them in the tunnels and among piles of rock salt. More than a ton of material was then transported to the gallery and exhibited in variously shaped piles with mirrors to be the interior section of the piece ("non-site"). On the walls were displayed geological maps of the area; photographs of mirrors in the mine ("site"); and photographs of mirrors along the route from the mine to the Museum ("mirror trail").





Günther Uecker, *Sandmühle*

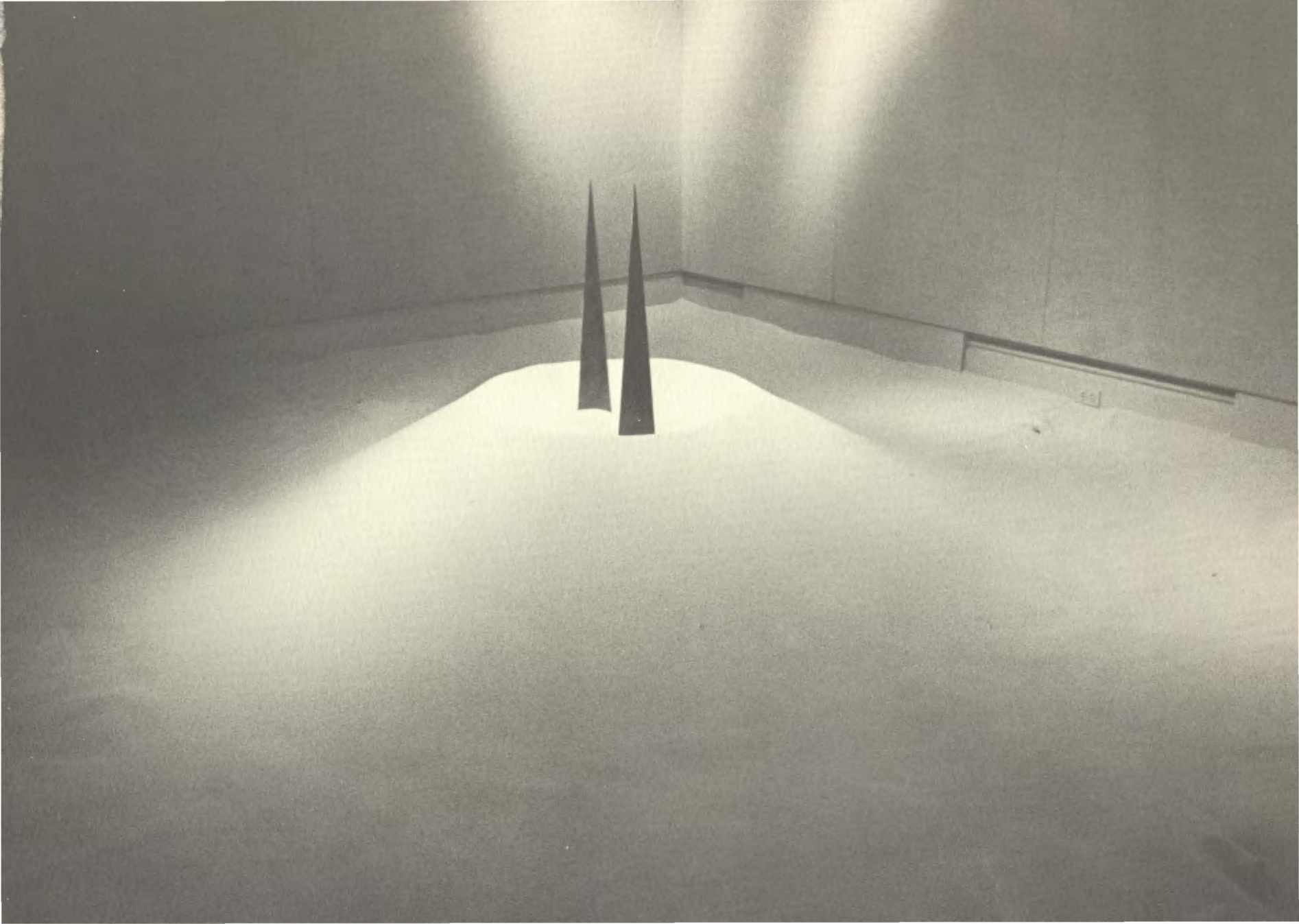
In the center of a gallery measuring eighteen by fifteen feet, Uecker constructed two blades of steel welded to an axle which was rotated by a small motor housed in a wooden box. Then he and a group of students carried three thousand pounds of white sand into the gallery and spread it over the entire surface of the gallery floor, creating in the center of the room a mound which concealed the wooden box, but through which the blades were allowed to protrude. In the center of the mound the sand was moved by the two slowly rotating blades. Visitors were not allowed in the gallery but could view the piece through two doorways.

Earth
by Günther Uecker

Earth is a new aesthetic medium that enables us to express our innermost ideas and feelings. It is a desert region, a place for free articulation. Unlimited intellectual emancipation is possible in this region. Earth stimulates a free play of the imagination, liberating art from traditional associations in the world of objects. Earth is an archaic condition, the source of a new language which could free us from the confines of the material world.

The use of earth as a concrete medium reflects the origins of a new sensibility. Whatever the spiritual sources of this sensibility may be, they will lead to changes in our consciousness of material objects.

When astronauts ventured into the void they were unable to relate to astral space. They clung to the memories of the world they had left behind and sang folksongs. Since new regions of the universe are being explored and landscapes on other planets are being discovered, we should try to approach them with a finer sensibility. We should endeavor to expand our mental horizons, so that we can leave material objects behind and become receptive to distant sounds. Let us enter the vastness of new realms. Let us not take to other planets ideologies which are the product of an outdated world consciousness. Let us envision the future. Let us identify ourselves with new discoveries. Let us use the earth itself to create a new spiritual awareness.



The Artists

Jan Dibbets

Born in Holland, 1941.

Education

Royal Scholarship for Painters, 1964.

British Council Scholarship, 1967.

Cofounder of the International Institute for Re-education of Artists, Amsterdam, 1967.

One-Man Exhibitions

Galerie 845, Amsterdam. 1965.

Galerie Swart, Amsterdam. 1966 and 1967.

Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam, Netherlands. 1967.

Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf. 1968.

Seth Siegelaub, New York City. 1969.

Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany. 1969.

Selected Group Exhibitions

"Serielle Formationen." University of Frankfurt. 1967.

"Dies Alles Herzchen." Galerie Loehr, Frankfurt. 1967.

"Liga Nieuw Beelden." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1967.

"RA 3/Arte + Azione Povera." Amalfi. 1968.

"Junge Kunst aus Holland." Kunsthalle Bern. 1968.

"Biennale d'Art Graphique." Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. 1968.

"Public Eye." Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg. 1968.

"Op Losse Schroeven (Cryptostructuren)/ Square Tags in Round Holes." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1969.

"When Attitudes Become Form." Kunsthalle Bern. 1969.

"Number 7." Paula Cooper Gallery, New York City. 1969.

Center for Communication and the Arts, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver. 1969.

"Summer Show." Seth Siegelaub, New York City. 1969.

"Ecological Art." John Gibson, New York City. 1969.

"557,087." Seattle Art Museum. 1969.

"Prospect 69." Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. 1969.

"Conception." Städtisches Museum Leverkusen, Germany. 1969.

Hans Haacke

Born in Cologne, Germany, 1936.

Education

Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Kassel, Germany, 1956–60 (M.F.A.).

Grant from Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst: Atelier 17, Paris, 1960–61.

Fulbright Travel Grant and scholarship from Temple University, Philadelphia, 1961–62.

One-Man Exhibitions

Wittenborn Gallery, New York City. 1962.

Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf. 1965.

Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin. 1965.

Howard Wise Gallery, New York City. 1966, 1968, and 1969.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge. 1967.

Selected Group Exhibitions

"Junger Westen." Recklinghausen, Germany. 1959.

"Photokina." Cologne. 1960.

"Nul." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1962.

"New Prints from Germany, Poland, and Russia." Museum of Modern Art, New York City. 1962.

"Photokina." Cologne. 1963.

"New Experiments in Art." De Cordova and Dana Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts. 1963.

"Zero." Halfmannshof, Gelsenkirchen, Germany. 1963.

"Deutscher Künstlerbund." Berlin. 1964.

"Zero." New Vision Centre, London. 1964.

"First Pilot Show of Kinetic Art." Signals, London. 1964.

Sammlung Kley. Dortmund, Germany. 1964.

"Zero." Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. 1964.

"Nul." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1965.

"Zero." Milan. Venice. Turin. Brescia. 1965.

"Zero." Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C. 1965.

"Licht und Bewegung/Kinetische Kunst." Kunsthalle Bern. Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden. Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf. 1965–66.

"Directions in Kinetic Sculpture." University of California, Berkeley. 1966.

"Kinetic Currents." San Francisco Museum of Art. 1966.

"Atmosphere 1966." Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. 1966.

"Deutscher Künstlerbund." Essen, Germany, 1966.

"Salon des Réalités Nouvelles." Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. 1966.

"Kinetic and Programmed Art." Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. 1966.

"Slow Motion." Rutgers — The State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. 1967.

"Miscellaneous Motions of Kinetic Sculpture." Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge. 1967.

"Light, Motion, and Sound in the New Art." Newark Museum, New Jersey. 1967.

"Kinetic Environments I and II." Central Park, New York City. 1967.

"ars multiplicata." Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne. 1968.

"Plus by Minus: Today's Half Century." Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. 1968.

"Air Art." Arts Council of Philadelphia. Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati. Lakeview Center for the Arts and Sciences, Peoria, Illinois. 1968.

"L'Art Vivant 1965–68." Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France. 1968.

"Options." Milwaukee Art Center. Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. 1968.

"Junge Deutsche Plastik." Wilhelm-Lehmbruck-Museum der Staat, Duisburg, Germany. 1968.

"The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age." Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Houston. San Francisco. 1968.

"Some More Beginnings." Brooklyn Museum, New York City. 1968.

"Soft Sculpture." American Federation of Arts circulating exhibition. 1968.

"When Attitudes Become Form." Kunsthalle Bern. 1969.

"The Sky is the Limit." University of St. Thomas, Houston. 1969.

Paula Cooper Gallery, New York City. 1969.

"Wilhelm Morgner Preis für experimentelle Kunst." Soest, Germany. 1969.

"New Alchemy: Elements, Systems, and Forces in Contemporary Art." Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. 1969.

"Other Ideas." Detroit Institute of Arts. 1969.

Neil Jenney

Born in Torrington, Connecticut, 1945.

Education

Massachusetts College of Art, 1964–66.

One-Man Exhibition

Galerie Rudolph Zwirner, Cologne. 1968.

Selected Group Exhibitions

"Arp to Artschwager." Ralph Bellamy, New York City. Noah Goldowsky Gallery, New York City. 1967.

Noah Goldowsky Gallery, New York City. 1968.

"When Attitudes Become Form." Kunsthalle Bern. 1969.

"Op Losse Schroeven (Cryptostructuren)/ Square Tags in Round Holes." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1969.

"Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials." Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1969.

Richard Long

Born in Bristol, England, 1945.

Some Notable Exhibitions

St. Martin's School of Art, London. 1967.
Bethnal Green Institute, London. 1967.
Hertfordshire. 1967.
Buckinghamshire. 1967.
Northamptonshire. 1967.
Huntingdon and Peterborough. 1967.
Cambridgeshire. 1967.
Essex. 1967.
Epping Forest, England. 1968.
Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf. 1968.
John Gibson, New York City. 1969.

David Medalla

Born in Manila, Philippines, 1942.

Made the first translations into Tagalog of Shakespeare, Whitman, and Milton, 1952–54.

Edited *Signals,* 1964–66.

Cofounder of Exploding Galaxy, a dance-drama group, 1967.

Education

Columbia University, 1954–56.

One-Man Exhibitions

Mayflower Barn, Jordans, Buckinghamshire. 1962.

Mercury Gallery, London. 1965.

Indica Gallery, London. 1967.

Selected Group Exhibitions

"Soundings One." Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. 1964.

"Structures Vivantes." Redfern Gallery, London. 1964.

"First Pilot Show of Kinetic Art." Signals, London. 1964.

"Nocturnal Exhibition of Mobile Sculpture." Villa La Malcontenta, Venice. 1964.

"Second Pilot Show of Kinetic Art." Signals, London. 1965.

"Art and Movement." Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh. Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow. 1965.

"Weiss auf Weiss." Kunsthalle Bern. 1966.

"In Motion." Bear Lane Gallery, Oxford. Arts Council Gallery, Cambridge. City Art Gallery, Leeds. Leicester University. 1966–67.

"Air Art." Arts Council of Philadelphia. Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati. Lakeview Center for the Arts and Sciences, Peoria, Illinois. 1968.

Camden Arts Centre, London. 1968.

"Kineticism: Systems Sculpture in Environmental Situations." University Museum of Art and Science, Mexico City. 1968.

"When Attitudes Become Form." Kunsthalle Bern. 1969.

Robert Morris

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, 1931.

Education

University of Kansas City and Kansas City Art Institute, 1948–50.

California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco, 1951.

Reed College, Portland, Oregon, 1953–55.

Hunter College, New York City, 1961–62 (M.A.).

One-Man Exhibitions

Dilexi Gallery, San Francisco. 1957 and 1958.

Green Gallery, New York City. 1963, 1964, and 1965.

Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf. 1964.

Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles. 1966.

Leo Castelli Gallery, New York City. 1967, 1968, and 1969.

Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands. 1968.

Galerie Ileana Sonnabend, Paris. 1968.

Galleria Enzo Sperone, Turin. 1969.

Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles. 1969.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Green Gallery, New York City. 1963 and 1965.

"Sight and Sound." Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery, New York City. 1963.

"Black, White, and Grey." Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford. 1963.

"Young America 1965." Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1965.

"Shape and Structure." Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York City. 1965.

"The 'Other' Tradition." Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. 1966.

"Primary Structures." Jewish Museum, New York City. 1966.

"Art in Process." Finch College Museum of Art, New York City. 1966.

"Contemporary American Sculpture: Selection I." Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1966.

Sixty-eighth American Exhibition, Art Institute of Chicago. 1966.

"Eight Sculptors: The Ambiguous Image." Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. 1966.

Annual Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1966.

"Ten Years." Leo Castelli Gallery, New York City. 1967.

"Color, Image, and Form." Detroit Institute of Arts. 1967.

"American Sculpture of the Sixties." Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Philadelphia Museum of Art. 1967.

"New Sculpture and Shaped Canvas." California State College, Los Angeles. 1967.

"The 1960's: Painting and Sculpture from the Museum Collection." Museum of Modern Art, New York City. 1967.

International Institute Torcuato di Tella, Buenos Aires. 1967.

"Kompass III." Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven. Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt. 1967.

"Fifth Guggenheim International Exhibition." Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. 1967.

"Air Art." Arts Council of Philadelphia. Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati. Lakeview Center for the Arts and Sciences, Peoria, Illinois. 1968.

"Plus by Minus: Today's Half Century." Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. 1968.

"Minimal, Etc." Galerie René Block, Berlin. 1968.

"Minimal Art." Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. 1968.

Thirty-fourth Biennale, Venice. 1968.

"L'Art Vivant 1965–68." Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France. 1968.

"Earthworks." Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1968.

"Art of the Real." Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Tate Gallery, London. 1968.

"The Pure and Clear: American Innovations." Philadelphia Museum of Art. 1968.

"Prospect '68." Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. 1968.

Annual Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1968.

"L'Art du Réel." Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grand Palais, Paris. 1968.

"Plastics and New Art." Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. 1969.

"New York 13." Vancouver Art Gallery. 1969.

"New Media — New Methods." Museum of Modern Art circulating exhibition. 1969.

"Soft Art." New Jersey State Museum, Trenton. 1969.

"Op Losse Schroeven (Cryptostructuren)/ Square Tags in Round Holes." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1969.

"When Attitudes Become Form." Kunsthalle Bern. 1969.

"Contemporary American Sculpture: Selection II." Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1969.

Fourteen Sculptors: The Industrial Edge." Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. 1969.

"Painting and Sculpture Today — 1969." Indianapolis Museum of Art. 1969.

"Minimal Art." Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. 1969.

"Der Raum in der amerikanischen Kunst 1948–1968/The Art of the Real: USA 1948–1968." Kunsthaus Zürich. 1969.

Dennis Oppenheim

Born in Mason City, Washington, 1938; lives in New York City.

Education

California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland (B.F.A.)

Stanford University 1966, (M.A.).

New House Foundation Grant, 1966.

One-Man Exhibitions

Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California. 1965.

Belmonte Gallery, Sacramento. 1965, 1966, 1967.

Comara Gallery, Los Angeles. 1967.

"Ground Systems." John Gibson, New York City. 1968.

Green Gallery, San Francisco. 1968.

"Removal/Transplant — New York Stock Exchange." Roof of 381 Park Avenue South, New York City. 1969.

"Below Zero — Snow Projects." John Gibson, New York City. 1969.

Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris. 1969.

Galerie Lambert, Milan. 1969.

Selected Group Exhibitions

"Language II–III." Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1968–69.

"Earthworks." Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1968.

Sculpture Annual. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1968.

"New Media — New Methods." Museum of Modern Art circulating exhibition, New York City. 1969.

"When Attitudes Become Form." Kunsthalle Bern. 1969.

"Gallery Space." San Francisco Art Institute. 1969.

"Land Art." Fernsehgalerie Gerry Schum, Berlin. 1969.

"Op Losse Schroeven (Cryptostructuren)/ Square Tags in Round Holes." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1969.

"Prospect 69." Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. 1969.

"March." Seth Siegelaub, New York City. 1969.

"Ecological Art." John Gibson, New York City. 1969.

"A Report — Two Ocean Projects." Museum of Modern Art, New York City. 1969.

"Return to Abstract Expressionism." Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California. 1969.

"Art by Telephone." Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. 1969.

"Place and Process." Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta. 1969.

"The Artist's View." Jewish Museum, New York City. 1969.

"Plans and Projects as Art." Kunsthalle Bern. 1969.

"557,087." Seattle Art Museum. 1969.

Robert Smithson

Born in Passaic, New Jersey, 1938.

One-Man Exhibitions

Artist's Gallery, New York City. 1959.

Galleria George Lester, Rome. 1961.

Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1966, 1967, 1968, and 1969.

Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf. 1969.

Selected Group Exhibitions

"Current Art." Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. 1965.

"Plastics." John Daniel's Gallery, New York City. 1965.

"Primary Structures." Jewish Museum, New York City. 1966.

"New Dimensions." A. M. Sachs Gallery, New York City. 1966.

"Multiplicity." Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. 1966.

"Art in Process." Finch College Museum of Art, New York City. 1966.

Abstract Artists Invitational. Riverside Museum, New York City. 1966.

"10." Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1966.

"20." Park Place Gallery, New York City. 1966.

"Pattern Art." Betty Parsons Gallery, New York City. 1966.

Annual Exhibitions. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City. 1966 and 1969.

"New York Group." Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles. 1967.

"Color, Image, and Form." Detroit Institute of Arts. 1967.

"Focus on Light." New Jersey State Museum, Trenton. 1967.

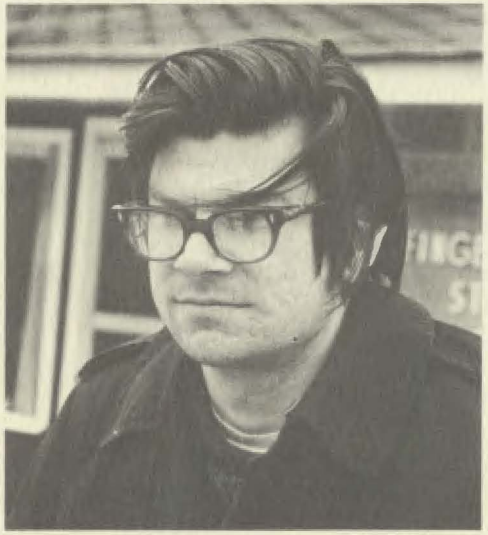
"American Sculpture of the Sixties." Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Philadelphia Museum of Art. 1967.

"Scale Models and Drawings." Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1967.

"Language to be Looked At and/or Things to be Read." Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1967.

"Art in Series." Finch College Museum of Art, New York City. 1967.

"Plus by Minus: Today's Half Century." Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. 1968.



"Minimal Art." Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. 1968.

"Art of the Real." Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Tate Gallery, London. 1968.

"Prospect '68." Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. 1968.

"Options." Milwaukee Art Center. Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. 1968.

"L'Art du Réel." Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grand Palais, Paris. 1968.

"Earthworks." Dwan Gallery, New York City. 1968.

"Der Raum in der amerikanischen Kunst 1948–1968/The Art of the Real: USA 1948–1968." Kunsthaus Zürich. 1969.

Günther Uecker

Born in Wendorf, Mecklenburg, Germany, 1930.

Education

Studium der Malerei, Wismar, Weissensee Art Academy, Berlin, 1949–53.

Düsseldorf Art Academy, 1953–55.

With Heinz Mack and Otto Piene formed the Düsseldorf "Zero Group," 1958.

One-Man Exhibitions

Galleria Azimuth, Milan. 1959.

Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf. 1960, 1961, 1963, and 1966.

Galerie Ad Libitum, Antwerp. 1962 and 1964.

Galerie D, Frankfurt. 1963.

Pianohaus Knoss, Gelsenkirchen, Germany. 1964.

Galerie Orez, The Hague. 1965.

Galerie Müller, Stuttgart. 1966.

MacRoberts and Tunnard Gallery, London. 1966.

Howard Wise Gallery, New York City. 1966.

Galerie Bonnier, Lausanne. 1967.

Galerie Handschin, Basel. 1967.

Galerie Denise René, Paris. 1968.

Galerie Denise René und Hans Mayer, Krefeld, Germany. 1969.

Galerie Argelander 89, Bonn. 1969.

Gegenverkehr, Aachen, Germany. 1969.

Selected Group Exhibitions

"Zero I, Das rote Bild." Piene's Studio, Düsseldorf. 1958.

"Vision in Motion — Motion in Vision." Hessenhuis, Antwerp. 1959.

"Zero." Galleria Azimuth, Milan. 1959.

"Nuova Tendenza." Galleria Azimuth, Milan. 1960.

"Monochrome Malerei." Städtisches Museum Leverkusen, Germany. 1960.

"Das Einfache, das schwer zu machen ist." Galerie Seide, Hanover. 1960.

"50 Jahre Konkrete Kunst." Helmhaus, Zürich. 1960.

Festival d'Art d'Avantgarde. Place de la Foire, Paris. 1960.

International Abstract Painting Exhibition. Taipei. 1960.

"Mobile Architekturen." Galerie Seide, Hanover. 1960.

"Zero." Galleria La Salita, Rome. 1961.

"International Malerei 1960/61." Galerie 59, Aschaffenburg, Germany. 1961.

"Nove Tendencije." Gradska Galerija Savremene Umjetnosti, Zagreb, Yugoslavia. 1961.

"Rorelse i Konsten." Moderna Museet, Stockholm. 1961.

"Bewogen Beweging." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Louisiana Museum, Humblebaek, Denmark. 1961.

"30 Junge Deutsche." Städtisches Museum, Leverkusen, Germany. Kunstmuseum, St. Gallen, Switzerland. 1961.

"Nove Tendencije I." Galerie Grada Zagreba, Zagreb, Yugoslavia. 1961.

"Zero II Demonstration." Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf. 1961.

"Advantgarde 61." Städtisches Museum Trier, Treves, Germany. 1961.

"Europäische Avantgarde." Galerie Dato, Frankfurt. 1961.

"Zero." Galerie A, Arnheim, Netherlands. 1961.

"Nieuwe Tendenzen." Galerie Orez, The Hague. 1961.

"Zero." Galerie Ad Libitum, Antwerp. 1961.

"Zero: Mack Piene, Uecker." Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. 1962.

"Zero, Demonstration auf der Rheinwiesse: Mack, Piene, Uecker." "Düsseldorf. 1962.

"Nul." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1962.

"Forum 62." St. Pietersabdij, Gent, Belgium. 1962.

"Zero." Galerie Schindler, Bern. 1962.

"Weiss Weiss." Galerie Siede, Hanover. 1962.

"Punktuationen und Vibrationen." Galerie Ad Libitum, Antwerp. 1962.

"Dynamo." Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. 1962.

"Mobile Architekturen." Galerie Seide, Hanover. 1962.

"Nieuwe Tendenzen." Galerie Orez, The Hague. 1962.

"White." Galerie Ad Libitum, Antwerp. 1962.

"White." Galerie Schindler, Bern. 1962.

"Mack, Piene, Uecker." Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany. 1963.

"Kleine Formata." Galerie d'Art Moderne, Basel. 1963.

"Krefelder Sammlung." Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, Germany. 1963.

"Zero." Galerie Diogenes, Berlin. Haus am Waldsee, Berlin. 1963.

"Forum 63." St. Pietersabdij, Gent, Belgium. 1963.

Fourth Biennale. San Marino (republic). 1963.

"Europäische Avantgarde." Schwamensaal in Römer, Frankfurt. 1963.

"Angewandte Kunst in Europa nach 1945." Kunstverein in Hamburg. 1963.

"Nove Tendencije II." Galerie Grada Zagreba, Zagreb, Yugoslavia. 1963.

"Foire de Paris." Place de la Foire, Paris. 1963.

"Zero." Studio f, Ulm, Germany. 1963.

"Zero in Gelsenkirchen." Städte-bautagung, Gelsenkirchen, Germany. 1963.

"Uecker and Piene." Galerie Lawrence, Paris. 1964.

"Kinetik II." Galerie Hella Nebelungen, Düsseldorf. 1964.

"International di Tella-Prize." Museo de Bellas Artes de la Soca, Buenos Aires. 1964.

"Group Zero: Mack, Piene, Uecker." MacRoberts and Tunnard Gallery, London. 1964.

"Vigo, Mack, Piene, Uecker." Galerie Wulfengasse, Klagenfurt, Austria. 1964.

"L'Aujourd-hui de demain." Palais St. Vaast, Arras, France. 1964.

"Tomorrow Today." Centre for Advanced Creative Study, London. 1964.

"Zero: Mack, Piene, Uecker." Howard Wise Gallery, New York City. 1964.

"On the Move." Howard Wise Gallery, New York City. 1964.

"Structures Vivantes." Redfern Gallery, London. 1964.

"10 Junge Düsseldorfer Maler." Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. 1964.

"Nouvelles Tendances." Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris. 1964.

"Painting and Sculpture of a Decade, 1954–64." Tate Gallery, London. 1964.

"Zero." New Vision Centre, London. 1964.

"Premio dei Premi." Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan. 1964.

"Zero — Nul." Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. 1964.

"Documenta III." Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany. 1964.

"Fruhjahrsausstellung." Kunstverein Hannover, Hanover. 1964.

"Integratie." Kultuurcentrum, Antwerp. 1964.

"Zero." Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. 1964.

"Lumiere, Mouvement, et Optique." Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. 1965.

"Perpetuum Mobile." Galleria L'Obelisco, Rome. 1965.

"Premio di Tella 65." Centro de Artes Visuales, Buenos Aires. 1965.

"Quantum I and Quantum II." A. M. Sachs Gallery, New York City. 1965.

"Retinal and Perceptual Art." University of Texas Art Museum, Austin. 1965.

"Uecker and Ezamonja." Galeria Orez, The Hague. 1965.

"Zero: Mack, Piene, Uecker." Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hanover. 1965.

"Zero." Gallery of Modern Art, Washington, D.C. 1965.

"Mouvement 2." Galerie Denise René, Paris. 1965.

"Zero." Galerie Aktuell, Bern. 1965.

"Kinetik und Objekte." Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. 1965.

"The Responsive Eye." Museum of Modern Art, New York City. 1965.

"Zero." Atelier Fontana, Milan. 1965.

"Zero." Galleria del Cavallino, Venice. 1965.

"Kinetic and Optic Art Today." Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. 1965.

"Nul." Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. 1965.

"Licht und Bewegung — Kinetische Kunst." Kunsthalle Bern. 1965.

"Licht und Bewegung." Staadliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden. 1965.

Biennale. Paris. 1965.

"Inner and Outer Space." Moderna Museet, Stockholm. 1966.

"European Drawings." Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City. 1966.

"Licht-Kunst-Licht." Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands. 1966.

"Kinetic and Programmed Art." Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. 1966.

"Struktur und Bewegung." Galerie Denise René, Paris. 1966.

"Flamische Landscaft: Müllem, Uecker, Verheyen." Galerie Handschin, Basel. 1966.

Salone Internazionale dei Giovani, Milan. 1967.

"Light in Orbit, Sound, Light, Silence." Howard Wise Gallery, New York City. 1966.

"Light, Motion, Space." Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Milwaukee Art Center. 1967.

"Weiss Weiss." Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf. 1967.

Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France. 1967.

"Kinetik." Expo '67, Montreal. 1967.

"Licht, Bewegung, und Farbe." Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremburg. 1967.

"Hommage à Lidice." Galerie René Block, Berlin. 1967.

"Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts." Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. 1967.

"Focus on Light." New Jersey State Museum, Trenton. 1967.

"Konstruktivismus — Kinetik." Galerie Denise René und Hans Mayer, Krefeld, Germany. 1967.

"Light and Motion." Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts. 1967.

Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh. 1967.

"The Poetry of Vision." Rosc, Dublin. 1967.

"Richter und Uecker." Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden. 1968.

"Plus by Minus: Today's Half Century." Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. 1968.

"Lumiere et Mouvement — Environnements — Spectacles." Maison de la Culture, Grenoble. 1968.

"Environments." Kunsthalle Bern. 1968.

"Documenta IV." Museum Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany. 1968.

"Kinetik." Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands. 1968.

Thirty-fourth Biennale. Venice. 1968.

"European Painters Today." Paris. New York City. 1968.

Open Air Museum, Tokyo. 1969.

The Symposium


EARTH

Following are excerpts from a symposium on earth art held at Cornell University, February 6, 1969. Participants were Dennis Oppenheim, Robert Smithson, Neil Jenney, Günther Uecker, Hans Haacke, and Richard Long. The moderator was Thomas W. Leavitt, director of the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art at Cornell. Questioners, unless otherwise identified, were members of the audience.

Oppenheim For me this use of a terrestrial area came through a very formal concern with sculpture. I was doing the kind of sculpture that I felt came to a point of conclusion. I didn't think of any possible way of transcending it or developing its existence, except by beginning to go outside the bounds of a loft area into the use of earth. The first pieces I did were quite simple, but eventually the stimulus of a loft concern, or a concern with pictorial, sculptural values, began to diminish and I began to work outside with a good kind of intent. I'm to the point now where I see the earth as sculpture — where flying over the earth is like viewing existing painted areas or pictorial, painterly surfaces. While on the ground it is more volumatic. It's like walking through sculpture. It's less graphic, more subterranean. Any addition to the ground — any scratch or anything you add — becomes a relational addition. The limit you have to refer to in this case is always the sphere — it's always the globe — so when you dig a hole in the ground your periphery becomes the spherical shape. Now the spherical shape, of course, is relational to the cosmos. So at this point I'm concerned with an art that rides above the frequency of pictorial or compositional treatment. I have been more concerned in this case in delving into aspects that are not as visual as those sculpture has been concerned with in the past. A concern which allows the artist to enter into a continuing organization, a complex of interaction, so that he doesn't have to confine his media to studio art. That's about all I've got to say.

Smithson Well, I first got involved in the earth project situation when I was contracted to do some work for an architectural company as an artist consultant, and they asked me to give them suggestions on what to do with sculpture and things like that. I felt it was wrong to consider sculpture as an object that you would tack onto a building after the building is done, so I worked with these architects from the ground up. As a result I found myself surrounded by all this material that I didn't know anything about — like aerial photographs, maps, large-scale systems, so in a sense I sort of treated the airport as a great complex, and out of that came a proposal that would involve low-level ground systems that would be placed at fringes of the airport, sculpture that you would see from the air. This preoccupation with the outdoors was very stimulating. Most of us used to work in a closed area space. For instance, I did a large spiral, triangular system that sort of just spun

out and could only be seen from an airplane. I was sort of interested in the dialogue between the indoor and the outdoor and on my own, after getting involved in it this way, I developed a method or a dialectic that involved what I call site and non-site. The site, in a sense, is the physical, raw reality — the earth or the ground that we are really not aware of when we are in an interior room or studio or something like that — and so I decided that I would set limits in terms of this dialogue (it's a back and forth rhythm that goes between indoors and outdoors), and as a result I went and instead of putting something on the landscape I decided it would be interesting to transfer the land indoors, to the non-site, which is an abstract container. This summer I went out west and selected sites — physical sites — which in a sense are part of my art. I went to a volcano and collected a ton of lava and sent it back to New York and that was set up in my non-site interior limit.

Then what I'm doing here — I'm going to use a room and a salt mine . . . (It's out here on Lake Cayuga, Cayuga Salt Mines) — and tomorrow I'll go down there and put on an exhibition in the salt mines and arrange these mirrors in various configurations, photograph them, and then bring them back to the interior along with rock salt of various grades. As you can see, the interior of the Museum somehow mirrors the site and I'm actually going to use mirrors. Most sculptors just think about the object, but for me there is no focus on one object so it is the back-and-forth thing.

Jenney I guess my work could be classified as environmental in that I use the environment, or I function in the environment, in a sort of theatrical manner. I use in it things such as earth, or plants in some. It tends to be a sort of secondary thing as opposed to the other people's work in earth in that it is only a vehicle for the thing that I want to achieve. I don't care what the work looks like. I use things that sometimes you don't notice, like ashtrays, and basically it's just involved with interrupting the environment to the extent that you are close to the thing physically rather than visually. I did pieces that had algae and moss and electrical wires with exposed parts. I guess that's about what my stuff is.

Uecker I'm trying to find areas, zones, regions, which do not have the burden of associations. It is possible to free man from object-orientation associations. This freedom is not to be interpreted. It is total. The medium is concrete.

This zone of void or emptiness can mean a power of emancipation of a contemplative and concrete manner, for a spiritual self-realization. This can be an evolution in science, in the quiet, without spectacular drama. A region of desert is a real place of consciousness of the self. A place, like a river, where we can leave traces which will be extinguished soon. I think we arrive at this freedom without representation in the world of objects. Let us use the earth as an area close to this without dimensions. Let us try to expand perception in a more encompassing manner, in the infinite and the openness of spaces.

Haacke I would like to make it very short. I have put about a cubic yard of top soil mixed with peat into a naturally well-lit room in the Museum. It [the pile of soil] is cone shaped, like a sandcastle, and I seeded it with winter rye and annual rye seed, and hopefully by the day of the opening sprouts will come out of the ground. The shape of this mound is of no relevance. I'm not interested in the form. I'm more interested in the growth of plants — growth as a phenomenon which is something that is outside the realm of forms, composition, etc., and has to do with interaction of forces and interaction of energies and information. My comment

for the catalog when asked for a statement is "Grass grows."

Long My work will be outside in front of the Museum.

Questioner I would like to ask Mr. Oppenheim: If he is concerned with aspects that aren't as visual — I got the impression it was more the space, the more volumatic aspects of your work — what is the value then of taking a picture of it, other than just as proof that the work has been done? I mean, what aesthetic benefits can be gained from someone looking at an aerial photograph of one of your works?

Oppenheim Well, I don't think that aesthetic interaction deals with spectator looking at the abstraction at all. There is a good deal of taking of pictures. There is a good deal of recording the work as a work with cameras. It's not intrinsic; it's just a matter of removing a degree of the work from the location and using it for display. I mean I don't know why some of these people use photographs. Some of them are quite profound, but there is no need for me to photograph my work.

Questioner Would you say that the perception of the work is less important than the fact of doing it itself?

Oppenheim Well, you perceive the work while you are doing it. You carry both the perception and the process. If you think art should be carried through the channel of media and allowed to meet a larger body of people, then of course you should take pictures of it. If it's an intrinsic part of the work not to be photographed or such, then it shouldn't be an issue — it's not that important. Because a lot of these pieces are exterior and a lot of them involve time sequences that can't be dealt with inside of a continuum.

Questioner (to Haacke) Don't you identify your piece with a type of gardening?

Haacke Oh, I suppose. But the intention is very different.

Questioner I mean, you were the one who planted the seeds in the pile, weren't you?

Haacke Yes, but it could have been somebody else!

Questioner How is this different from someone going out and working in a garden? Would that be a form of earth art?

Haacke Well, I suppose he doesn't do it for the same reasons that I do.

Questioner So it's the intent that's different?

Haacke I guess so.

Questioner Those of you who did your projects outside: I would like to ask what role the effects of weather or soil or dog tracks or things like that have on what you decided to do?

Oppenheim I think you would ask that question in reference to something inside of a Museum, like on a shelf. This stuff outside can't really be disturbed.

Smithson Actually if you think about tracks of any kind you'll discover that you could use tracks as a medium. You could even use animals as a medium. You could take a beetle, for example, and clear some sand and let it walk over that and then you would be surprised to see the furrow it leaves. Or let's say a side-winder snake or a bird or something like that. And also these tracks relate, I think, somehow to the way the artist thinks — somewhat like a dog scanning over a site. You are sort of immersed in the site that you're scanning. You are picking up the raw material and there are all these different possibilities. Like it is possible to rent a buffalo herd and then just follow the traces. This is a sign language in a sense. It's a situational thing; you can record these traces as signs. It's very specific and it tends to get into a kind of random order. These tracks around a puddle that I photographed, in a sense explain my whole way of . . . going through trails and developing a network and then building this network into a set of limits. My non-sites in a sense are like large, abstract maps made into three dimensions. You are thrown back onto the site.

Questioner I would like to ask those artists who display their works in the Museum to what extent you expect spectators to interact with these works? Do you expect physical interaction from the spectators — for them to touch it? Or just stand back and look at it?

Smithson Well in my case, the piece is there in the Museum, abstract, and it's there to look at, but you are thrown off it. You are sort of spun out to the fringes of the site. The site is a place you can visit and it involves travel as an aspect too.

Leavitt (to Jenney) Do you want people to interact with the work?

Jenney Well, physically, no. I guess the only reaction I expect is that you sort of give it a chance. I think you have to go with the frame of mind that you're going to see something that maybe you haven't seen before. Most good art disorients the viewer suddenly, to the point where the artist has the viewer under his control because it's something he hasn't experienced visually or physically before. Just because I work with the physical presence of things you will, I think, interact — hopefully, physically as much as you will visually. The fact that I don't play up the visual aspect of it is just that I think it's a minor thing as opposed to, let's say, size. I govern the size and I govern the shape, but other than that I really don't care much what it looks like. And so I guess the only thing you can ask is for people to have an open mind.

Questioner What is the validity of setting up an abstraction of earth when earth is with us all the time?

Leavitt On that point I think we must remember that the artist, in every case, is not acting like a photographer; he is not going out and finding a beautiful spot in nature and simply recording it. He is actually altering it. He is changing it somehow. And it is this human presence which makes it into a human production and justifies its presence in a museum rather than just so much earth being piled in it.

Questioner I wonder if any of the earth artists know about ancient constructions that were done by Incas in Peru, Indians in Mexico — stick figures and other things. I wonder if we can get some reactions on these?

Long Well, England is covered with huge mounds and converted hills and probably you know Stonehenge, although that is one of the least impressive of all the things. In fact, most of England has had its shape changed — practically the whole place, because it has been ploughed over for centuries — rounded off.

Leavitt (to Long) Does this affect *your* work at all? Does this part of it interest you?

Long (Pause) Yes.

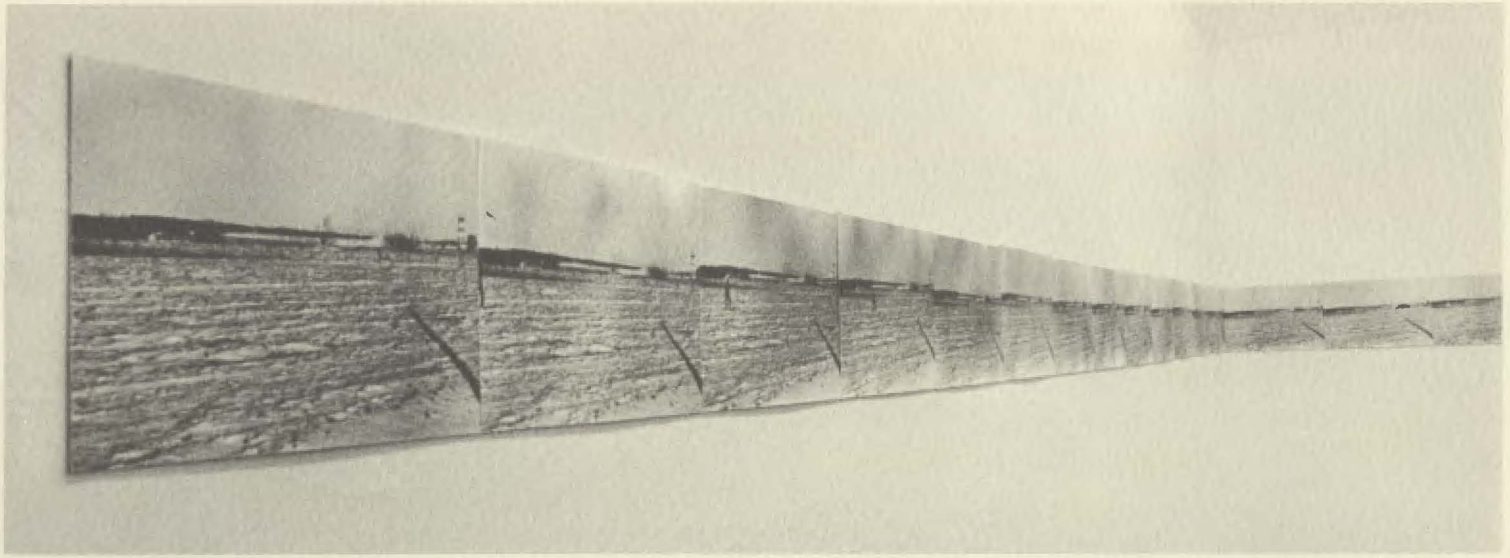
Questioner What kind of problems do museums actually present for you? Because it seems, from what Mr. Smithson said — the businss of site and non-site — the Museum would be a hell of a place to put earth work. Do any of you resent this because it's the only place you really have the opportunity to exhibit, this and galleries etc., or do you really accept this, or do you not care?

Smithson I think that's a part of the sad thing — that most museum people aren't conscious of their museum, and they just take it for granted that artists are working in some garret and turning out objects. But I think they have to think about the limits of their spaces and how to extend them beyond the walls of confinement. But I think there is really no discrepancy between the indoors and the outdoors once the dialectic is clear between the two places.

Oppenheim There is a suggestion in this type of art that overrides the fact that it's being displayed in this show. I think that if the sculpture were to remain in the archives and the lofts for the next thirty years or more, it would become a malignant kind of thing. I think that when artists began to see walking down a street as having an aesthetic or sculptural aspect, things began to open up a bit. I don't know if any of the artists here are after pure breakdown of some feeble limits. I don't think that's the impetus. But I would like to see someday an art so closely knit with a societal framework that there is no concern with viewing, no concern with recognizing, no concern with making posters, but an art that is inside our head and inside our total system so that it will be out of the caves of the Manhattan lofts and spread across a vaster area.

Questioner I get the idea that maybe your art is not so much to create an object out of earth as it is just to interpret earth and show others what earth is. Is that correct?

Jenney I think I use earth with every poetic aspect that it can be possibly given — like the fact that things grow in it and that we walk on it and houses are built in it and so on. I just use it basically because it's nice stuff. No, really! Dirt is reasonably cheap, so you can use a lot of it. One of the major aspects of using earth is that you can do it almost anywhere. You can do it on a scale that sculpture hasn't been done on in the past. I think basically it's just for its convenience. I don't think of the intrinsic value of art. You have to remember the separation between art and a work of art. The work of art is only a statement that will last a certain



amount of time. I think another interesting thing about doing earth works that some of you may have missed is that no sculpture is eternal; that physically it all falls apart and does so at various speeds. Some things last for only a minute, and others last a long time. I think basically the only reason that earth is being used is because it hasn't been used and because of its availability.

Questioner I'm not an artist, and I would like to know if the experience of actually digging in the earth is better for me than seeing the show?

Jenney No, man it'd be a drag! One of the really nice things about this show, I believe, is that it was like everybody that's in earth is in it. Like I did something with earth in it and like that got me in the show. That's like having a show compiled of everybody that was born in the spring. In other words they do have something in common in that they use a similar vehicle. I think our expressions are basically different. I think the main reason this show happened was because people in England and Holland and Germany and different parts of America were doing it at the same time. Like two guys discovering Neptune.

Questioner I understand that some of the work connected with the show is not going to be done inside the Museum or even in the Museum galleries. If so, where are the locations going to be?

Leavitt We probably should distribute a map to people who come to the exhibition so that they will be able to locate all the works that have been executed outside the Museum vicinity. We'll do that.

Sharp Some of them are very far away, and you probably wouldn't want to go there because it would require maybe, well, a forty-minute walk through the woods and then back. And

besides the single work which represents each artist, some of the artists are doing other works for themselves.

Questioner Some of today's art is really dedicated to the masses. Do you feel this is important?

Jenney I don't care too much about people coming to see it. You can't really concern art with masses because if you do you end up with television. You might be conscious of art as being a social barometer of what's happening. Well, again, it seems like the arts are always ahead of society. The artist exposes things before society realizes they should be exposed. Pop Art was a good example. You exposed something to a lot of the American society that was possibly known by a few people, and then suddenly it became a type of media for informing people. But there are very few people that understand art, very few people in the middle classes, certainly, who do, so you really shouldn't bother to educate them too much.

Questioner I should like to know what some of the earth artists see as the imaginary limits of their work. If you had unlimited stakes, and unlimited machines, what would you like to do?

Long Just the same things that I'm doing now. I don't work with limitations.

Oppenheim I would like to be involved in something for which I would require a good deal of help. To spend the rest of my life developing things that are within my grasp really saddens me. I would hope eventually to pursue ideas that require some form of additional data and such. Now if we take some of the aspects of this art — and some of its aspects seem to be compelling — the issue of earth is really very far off. There are very few artists here that see earth as being as important as what they *do* to earth. In the same way I see the aspect of what seems to be occurring here, and may eventually spread, as an exponent of a large art which would involve the artist in organizations, which would allow him to be part of the process, to be part of a vaster interlacing of complexes, where the artist could hold a post, for instance, at the New York Advancement Commission, where artists could be directing media, and artists could be partaking in a vaster area of media.

Questioner How would that differ from architectural planning?

Oppenheim Well, I'd say it was totally different from architecture in that it came from a different place. It didn't come or wasn't extrapolated from planning or traffic control. The concern of this would be aesthetic.

But to answer your question more directly, the alternative to a studio art for me would be an art that mixed in with the societal process.

Questioner Do you feel that working in expanded areas and then having to work within a limited field, like a museum, is at all parallel to site and non-site?

Smithson I don't really think it matters where you are. You will always be faced with limits of some kind. I think that actually it's not so much expanding into infinity, it's that you are really expanding in terms of a finite situation. I mean, there is no romantic urge towards the never-never land or something. I think that artists are now very conscious of strict limitations and they see them very clearly and can expand them in terms of other limitations. There's no way you can really break down limitations; it's a kind of fantasy that you might have, that things are unlimited, but I think there's greater freedom if you realize that you have these limits to work against and actually, it's more challenging that way. If you have a large corporation (I think Dennis was getting toward this) you would say that these people are imposing limits on you. Not really. If you are perceiving what is there, you are in control of your own limitations. It doesn't matter where you are. So in a sense you are always expanding — the upper limits are always going out — like taking a larger and larger area or smaller and smaller area. It doesn't really matter which way you go.

Questioner (to Jenney) You said you don't care what it looks like. There's not any aesthetic value that you place on it?

Jenney Of course it has aesthetic value. I mean the fact that you don't look at it or the fact that I am not concerned with the way it looks eliminates problems for me — it really does. I think artists, sculptors, have ignored a whole world of three dimensional existence by removing something from its ordinary environment. I think rockslides, things like that, events that took place, that have happened already and that there is evidence that something happened — I think that is good enough, and certainly you had nothing to do with what happened when it did happen. You know what I mean?

Questioner It seems like what you do depends on your saying that you did it. Don't you mind that some people can't recognize that it is so?

Jenney First of all, where do you look? You don't see art in the street,

you really don't. Art is always removed to a certain extent. Like the fact that I'm putting this in a room of the Museum and suddenly it becomes a little removed. It's removed enough as far as I'm concerned.

Haacke Well, on the point of how it looks. I believe we are still carrying this heavy burden of "visual" art. When the term "aesthetics" was brought up in this discussion, it was immediately coupled with the looks of something. I believe art is not so much concerned with the looks. It is much more concerned with concepts. What you see is just a vehicle for the concept. Sometimes you have a hard time seeing this vehicle, or it might even not exist, and there is only verbal communication or a photographic record or a map or anything that could convey the concept.

Jenney (to Haacke) Say if you've got a whole pile of wood and not much dirt, would you consider using cinder blocks to fill up the spaces so you don't have to use so much dirt, or is it important that the whole thing consists of dirt?

Haacke I guess the guideline would be what is the most efficient thing to do. If the rye that I seeded could have grown on cinder blocks, then it wouldn't have mattered if I used cinder blocks.

Jenney No, I mean the space. What if you only had half a yard of dirt and you wanted it a yard size, right? Would you fill the inside with rocks?

Haacke It could be done. It's not that important.

Jenney The reason it is the size it is . . .

Haacke It is an economic consideration, in view of what is to be achieved. What, from an agricultural viewpoint is the most efficient, and what is the viewpoint that causes most effectiveness, and so on.

Jenney Wouldn't it have been more efficient then to grow grass on a flat plain?

Haacke It could have been done but then you couldn't have walked around it. That aspect would have been lost and in this case we have a room that has natural light on two sides and artificial light and no light on the other two sides. The result is most likely to be that grass will grow toward the natural light and will be much longer on that side and will be meager on the side that is facing the artificial light, or will be much shorter. These are ecological phenomena which I am very much interested in.

Questioner Do you wish the concept to be developed through association? Why do you use the medium of earth?

Haacke It is the material in which growth takes place.

Jenney I think you are really mistaken if you think of art in terms of fact. The fact that he put a pile of dirt in a room and threw seeds on it doesn't make it art. The art that we are doing can mean pretty much more than that. I think that you can remove the piece and the thing that remains is art. That's the thing that most people don't understand. Historical breakthroughs are like the fact that I

don't care what my piece looks like. I'm not concerned with expanding the boundaries of good taste at all. If the thing has a certain amount of presence, then I think basically that's it.

Oppenheim Most of the art here is implying dialectic, implying a thing other than what takes place in front of your eyes, and I think you are going to reach an impasse if you attack this with a traditional aesthetic. Because I do feel we've left to the wayside the kind of art you are speculating upon now, and I think that to understand the gap between your sensibility and what may take place here you are going to have to redefine for yourself what it is all about.

Questioner Could any of you comment for younger artists out here on the rather obvious implications of this work being either salable or collected?

Oppenheim Well, I'll just say a few things about that. I think that's a very positive configuration of this art. I think that the mobility, the salability, the commercial aspects of past art are weaknesses, and that if you involve those aspects you are open to a considerable restriction.

Smithson I think we've come to the point where the artist's time is also valuable in terms of process. In other words there always has been the idea that there is a class of people who are going to value certain objects and sort of wrest them from the life of the artist. Now the process that the artist goes through is very valuable, just like anybody else — most people's time is considered valuable — so that the usual way out was to say that art is timeless, and therefore the artist is left alienated from his own time. So for the artist in

this kind of art there is a positive step towards an integration of the artist with his own time. The trouble with the way the whole art system is set up now is that it exploits the artist out of his right to his art; his time is taken away from him under the pretext that his work is eternal. But eternities are all artificial or they are fictions in a sense. There is nothing wrong with those fictions per se. But that some group should have control over those fictions and claim that they are their property is wrong. So that in terms of my own work you are confronted not only with an abstraction but also with the physicality of here and now, and these two things interact in a dialectical method and it's what I call a dialectic of place. It's like the art in a sense is a mirror and what is going on out there is a reflection. There is always a correspondence. The reflection might be the mind, or the mirror might be the matter. But you always have these two things. They form a dual unity and to say that one is better than another is to go around like a squirrel in a cage. Just like you have two poles in the earth — the North Pole and the South Pole — and you are not going to put the North Pole on the South Pole. And yet there is a correspondence between the two — it might be at the equator, say. So that dialectic can be thought of that way: as a bipolar rhythm between mind and

matter. You can't say it's all earth and you can't say it's all concept. It's both. Everything is two things that converge. This range of convergence is really the great area of speculation, and I think artists are getting a firm grip on this. I mean, they've been relegated to the garret for some time now, and it's just that they know what material is, and they know what the degree of abstraction is, and the two somehow blend, and I think that this starts a fruitful dialogue, something that can be very open ended.

Leavitt I think also in pragmatic terms that what is implied with this type of art, and also many other types, incidentally, is a new kind of support for the artists — not based upon possessiveness and also not based upon the idea of an art object. It becomes then perhaps the support of research or the support of interesting activity — whatever may be given — rather than the acquisition of something for the home or museums. It implies a whole different orientation of support, which, I might say, probably will be necessary if this direction is to flourish. The direction has come first, this is proper.

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