

THE NEW MUSEUM

65 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK 10003 (212) 741-8962

FINLEY FRYER: The Cat Band
Installations, July 28 - August 18, 1979

DAVID SAUNDERS: Scope

FINLEY FRYER (b. 1952)

Finley Fryer, an artist graduated from the University of California at Davis, is also a musician and composer who plays piano, banjo, fiddle, and guitar. He has always loved various kinds of animals as well. His work is devoted to images of cats, performing music while confined within various invented instruments.

The Cat Band began two years ago with drawings and watercolors of The Cat Organ. Some of the watercolors started to look three dimensional, thus necessitating a realization in sculptural terms. With the proplike figures, the dramatic subject matter and presentation, and a direct indebtedness to other artistic traditions, his work became deliberately theatrical.

Different facets of Fryer's life have directly entered the work. He was introduced to stained glass techniques when he got a job restoring church windows. The contrast of spending most of his time in churches, and then entering the "real" world, presented extremes which effected his work. The relationship between the band and the windows is one of separate yet supportive entities. As a whole, the piece forms a structured madness far removed from the mundane necessities of an outside world.

DAVID SAUNDERS (b. 1954)

David Saunders has long been involved with experimentation with materials and process. He graduated from the Kansas City Art Institute with a degree in sculpture, but he has also done painting and ceramics. His interest in diverse materials and spatial contexts is in keeping with the heterogeneous aspect of current art, and is evident in Scope, Saunders' installation for the present exhibition.

By combining elements from both literary and painting traditions, he creates in Scope a contemporary version of a pastoral scene, in which real components mingle with artificial ones. Hay and leaves literally and figuratively constitute the ground. Live fish and plants encompass the figure representing life, a Lady Bountiful, painted on the underside of an artificial pond in the middle of the installation. The image was inspired by the water nymph, a traditional character in Celtic myths. In spirit, Scope is reminiscent of the playfulness of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream.

Saunders' approach parallels the attitude of the medieval troubadours, who did not consider themselves inventors, but "finders" of themes, tales, and songs which they adapted according to their impulses and the lyrical sense which they inspired. In his fascination with the pastoral, Saunders, a maker, preserver, and discoverer establishes bonds with the romantic tradition and an essential experience of nature.

This is the second of a series of installations specially executed for The New Museum which will appear throughout the summer.

August 25 - September 15

PHYLLIS BRAMSON
GUNDERSEN CLARK