

# **NEW WORK / NEW YORK**

NANCY ARLEN □ LOUISA CHASE □ RUDY HEINTZE □ F.L. SCHRODER □ DAVID WELLS

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SUSAN LOGAN AND ALLAN SCHWARTZMAN

**THE NEW MUSEUM** 1980

# NEW WORK / NEW YORK

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## THE NEW MUSEUM

65 Fifth Avenue New York, New York 10003

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The artists in our third *New Work / New York* exhibition were chosen to reflect the energy and quality of artistic expression we have witnessed through studio and office visits over the last year and a half. Kathleen Thomas, also a Curatorial Associate of The New Museum, participated in the selection process; we appreciate her assistance.

We are grateful to the following people for their assistance: Tim Yohn, for his perceptive manuscript editing; Joan Greenfield, who designed and produced the catalog under severe time pressures; Marcia Tucker, for her advice and continuing support; Cheryl Cipriani, who coordinated shipping and the installation of the exhibition; Emory Craig and Robert Price for installing the show; and the many volunteers and interns who have assisted with various logistic aspects.

Above all, we are indebted to Nancy Arlen, Louisa Chase, Rudy Heintze, Frank Schroder, and David Wells for sharing their art, time, ideas, and enthusiasm with us during all stages of planning this exhibition.

S.L. and A.S.

## PREFACE

Because the New Museum shows much work which would not otherwise have public exposure, a majority of the artists who participate in our exhibitions come from areas of the country other than New York. It is for this reason that each year we devote one exhibition to work from our own city. New York continues to be a vital and exciting center for a variety of art activities, attracting so many artists either to visit, or to live and work.

While most museums draw their contemporary exhibitions exclusively from New York galleries and studios, our *New Work / New York* show functions as somewhat of an anomaly in our exhibitions, since so much work comes from outside the city. It gives the curators an opportunity to show new art as well as to write and to draw conclusions about some of the important developments in recent work that have taken place here at the center of art activity in the United States.

The selection process for such an exhibition is, at best, difficult, since so much work of interest can be seen here. It seems, however, that artists in New York tend to group together to share ideas, methods and activities, especially when their work is not yet known and there is little, if any, response from the community at large. While this has been the case for a long time, it is interesting to note that one of the recent attitudes, stemming perhaps from this kind of exchange, is that of unpretentiousness, experimentation, and even a certain perversity in the making and presentation of the work in this exhibition. Usual questions of skill, manipulation of materials, explicit ideas or ideologies, and the preciousness of the art

object are questioned here and often deliberately negated. This attitude often results in refreshingly spontaneous and provocative work.

We are grateful, once again, to The New Museum's many devoted and energetic interns and volunteers, who have given their time and talents in order to make this exhibition possible. Special thanks to the Curatorial Associates who organized the show and spent so many hours looking at work both in the studio and outside of it, to the artists who shared their work and ideas with us, and to The New York State Council on the Arts and The Jerome Foundation who have offered support to encourage the new and emerging work which is shown in this exhibition.

Marcia Tucker



# NEW WORK / NEW YORK

The five artists selected for our third *New Work / New York* exhibition maintain distinctly individual approaches to making art; their works reflect the current diversity and vitality of this city's art community. Nancy Arlen casts brightly colored tubular plastic sculptures of simple abstract forms clamped on to the wall. Randomly, but assertively, she chooses hues and materials that amalgamate easily approachable, but enigmatic, forms. Louisa Chase makes large, vivid paintings on canvas crowded and active with fragmented representational images. Rudy Heintze constructs painted wood reliefs in which he consolidates geometric and vaguely associative forms to articulate unusual spaces, heightened in dramatic effect by somber, yet striking, color combinations. F.L. Schroder's highly textured painted aluminum pieces have strong, but subtle hues and emphasize horizontal expanses and diagonal shifts. David Wells' simple mechanized constructions of representational images in subdued tones utilize materials, objects, and pictorial themes often discovered in his neighborhood.

While these artists have little in common stylistically, they do share some similar attitudes with regard to the visual properties of their work. For example, they all stress the materiality of self-devised forms and sensuous surfaces, as well as the fragmentation produced with spatial and coloristic nuance. Their works have an immediacy and directness which reveals a reliance on intuition and impulse. Rather than outlining concepts, these five artists focus on feelings, personal concerns, and the visual influence of their immediate sur-

roundings. For all five, knowledge and skills acquired through formal training are tools for freeing themselves to develop from within, not means of heightening expertise. Borrowing and inventing as their individual directions require, their work presents a constant challenge to their audience and themselves. Rather than a manifestation of virtuosity, or cumbersome method of construction, craft for these artists is an exercise in self-involvement. With emotion and intuition as guides, they seek to externalize their own feelings of vitality. In almost a therapeutic sense, their works expand self-definition; they condense and exaggerate impulses, sensations, emotions, and reactions. Above all, these artists avoid heroic stances, monumentality or grandiose aspirations; they prefer making liveable to overwhelming objects.

**F**or sculptor Nancy Arlen, making art is an adventure in which challenge, surprise, and the ability to "let go" yield unpredictable and often startling results. Considering herself "in partnership" with the plastic resin and dyes she uses, she allows their chemical reactions and visual results to influence her esthetic decisions. After pouring liquid plastic into glass moulds, she adds pigments in varying quantities at different stages of solidifying so that the final results depend on a combination of sensitive control and fortuitous accident. Her current technique may be traced to the poured paintings she made in the early 1970s, when she created subtle, sleek surfaces and color modulations by letting diluted oil paint flow across long, narrow sheets of mylar. At the

time, Arlen had intended to make portable paintings (easily rolled and light in weight) and she continues to fabricate flexible looking work in manageable sizes, born out of a belief that art of the future will be completely transportable. The smooth surfaces, translucency, and flowing forms of her sculptures have an immediate impact, giving the impression of movement one might envision as the pace of life in the future.

Arlen seeks effects that simulate the jarring visual impact of randomly combined elements. Citing the city as her main inspiration, she notes that accidental arrangements of colors found in building and objects, are often more exciting than what any one mind could invent. In her own color combinations, she often puts together hues that she feels would not relate to each other. Her *Tutti Frutti*, more than any other piece in the exhibition, manifests this interest in disjunctive color. Although from top to bottom the colors—orange, purple, yellow and red—were poured, then joined without any unifying principle, they make a somehow cohesive, if startling, arrangement. The shape of the work aids the viewer's eye in adjusting to the different levels of color by zigzagging in and out from the wall, thus allowing more blank wall space within the segments.

Her attempt to have her work expand beyond her own control is best exemplified by the multi-component and multi-colored piece, *American*, her most ambitious work to date. Through its variability and flexibility, it supersedes any structure she could impose on it. The piece is constantly changing, with units being added and removed at various times. At last viewing, *American* consisted of twenty similarly structured units of two

slender, slightly cone-shaped forms joined together in approximate 90 degree angles. While lengths vary from twelve inches to twenty-three inches, even the largest ones tend toward an intimate scale, and can be associated with the proportions of the limbs of an arm, in that the upper portion is slightly shorter than the one attached below. Arlen includes every color and combination she could imagine, following no system or logic between individual parts. The whole is scattered over a large wall, with ample space between units, making for individual gestures within an overall movement. Constantly changing the position of the parts in relation to one another and to the wall as a whole, Arlen varies the number, quality, and relationship of the visual terms employed. Thus the piece never has a resolved state.

Certain interests in allied fields have affected her work. Arlen has participated in various movement and performance workshops, reinforcing her interest in gesture. She also began a study of the ritual movements of Japanese Tea Ceremony, in which each action performed, like each element incorporated into her sculptures, is highly formalized and deeply significant. Arlen has also been involved in music, having played drums in a now defunct New Wave band called "Mars." For her, the kind of collaboration required in music greatly affected her work, since the idea of being one fourth of an effort relieved her of a certain amount of control, and thus eliminated an attitude of preciousness about creating.

To look at Arlen's pieces is to watch a sensual dance, and to be drawn into a confrontation with irrational and perplexing sensations. Her sculptures seem gestural without making easily readable gestures and have expressive qualities that are suggested, yet never delineated. On the other

hand, the effect of her work is carefully controlled lest it become too ingratiating: if curves become too elegant, she slices them off; if color becomes too momentarily appealing or programmatic, she alters its character with the least desirable hue. Sometimes Arlen experiments with the plastic alone, omitting color. Her *Silver Mylar* seems like a tube of cracked ice. Its distinctive light properties were created by allowing shreds of mylar to set in the plastic. Although components of most of her work are small, that is hand-sized, Arlen usually mounts them two or three feet above eye level, keeping them out of the viewer's grasp. Continually rejecting any formal logic or esthetic code, Arlen selects color and form simply on the basis of what gives her pleasure or what repels her. Accidents, strong attractions, and repulsions are at the core of her work. In her artistic anarchism, she resists analysis or coherence, stating, "you do not have to *make* art serious, it *is* serious."\*

**F**or Louisa Chase, painting is a means of "recalling" elusive experience. Her recent works, such as the *Saint Paintings* (her first predetermined series), explore multiple ways of expressing a single quality, feeling, or experience. Chase contends that moments and feelings are comprised of many facets. Examining them is like "the splitting of an atom," since examination and reflection fracture lived time and, ultimately, expand awareness. In Chase's words, "my work is a kind of psychological cubism in that everything is splattered with a different kind of organization." Fragmented images—representational and abstract—disconnect

\*All artists' quotes are from recent conversations with the authors.

from one another, and scatter throughout her canvases, each in a disparate scale. Certain images dominate: hands—interlocked, grasping other forms, or intruding from the canvas edge (perhaps a reference to the artist herself); swelling cloud-like shapes that suggest sensuality or breath; flower-like or bulbous organic forms; and curls and eddies which indicate movement and transition.

Although this vocabulary of images is limited, the artist's inventive and everchanging use of them results in individually expressive, nuanced paintings. Like the early American Limner portrait painters (who collaborated but specialized each in executing a particular part of a subject), Chase considers the parts before the whole. She poses different kinds of internal relationships in order to sift through information and to structure subject matter. The context for her images, which do not lend themselves to a consistent symbolic or literary interpretation, is the key to "reading" her work. For example, a pair of outstretched hands assumes different qualities depending on its position, scale, and gestural nuance. In *Saint Anthony*, for example, hands curve as if to stroke; in *Saint John* they hesitantly reach for a precious, radiant shell; in *Rose* they tenderly protect a small flower; in *Saint Sebastian* they drop a stone on a victim. In *Self Portrait*, two pairs of hands and arms, attached to the same body, contradict each other, one concealing the figure, the other reaching out, trying to embrace floating flowers.

For Chase, saints do not so much have a religious as a general symbolic importance, since their lives embody universal human predicaments. In her view, saints become important historic and religious figures because of the turmoil of their lives and because their special attributes can be applied more generally to ourselves. Despite the ex-

uberance and lively color of her paintings, they mostly portray martyrs; the headless figures signify their own victimization, lacking heads with mouths to offer protest.

In *Saint Anthony*, for example, a turbulent red field is strewn with disembodied arms, decapitated, neuter bodies, and plant forms. The overall activity on the canvas seems to force the central pale blue figure down to the ground, the only portion painted in white. The traditional theme of temptation becomes a contemporary portrayal of personal conflicts with eroticism. Here, hands reach sensitively toward bodies or things but do not touch; bodies appear clumsily aroused and naive; and plant forms sail through the torrid field, swelling open or constricted. As the central figure retreats to the white ground, it becomes more vulnerable, as even its safe territory is encroached upon by a large unfolding pink plant, which is perhaps in the process of turning from white to red.

Chase's imagery is particularized through colors. The red of *Saint Anthony* pinpoints its sensual theme; the black background of *Saint Sebastian* establishes an oppressive tone for its treatment of death by stoning, and intensifies feelings of accusation, restriction, and burden. Within each painting, a color or gradation of color may influence the reading of a form. In *Saint John*, various aspects of emergence and rebirth are personified by both anatomical and more abstract forms.

A curling shape, most likely an abstraction of a wave, appears in various colors and sizes. At the lower left, it appears pale blue and fluid, then toward the right, powerful and clearly defined; in the upper portions of the canvas, the swirls become delicate and nearly imperceptible, or finite and flat, in both red and green. Changes of scale and the repetition of images also contribute to the

meaning of a work, since the profusion or largeness of an image indicates importance. In this sense, Chase's paintings are like charts that result from explorations of her memory and emotions.

**F**or Rudy Heintze, art exists on the "edge between yourself and the things around you." As an artist, he arbitrates between personal and formal modes, transforming psychological states into objects and trying to "balance all extreme situations to hold a middle line." Even on a basic visual level, his large wood constructions affirm this attitude in their careful balance of disparate formal elements: angles, ovals, flatness, depth, blacks, strong colors, abstract and figurative forms, and in their seeming to veer in and out of actual and pictorial space. For example, *Aphelion* consists of a large irregular hexagon with a wedge that juts forward. This protrusion, combined with the thickness of the wood shapes, integrates the work with the viewer's space. A wooden oval attached to the hexagon contains an oblique view of a map of Africa painted red; an oval shadow painted on the wedge below it gives an illusion that the black background is a deep space which absorbs light. Heintze often creates improbable spatial situations, not only through pictorial means, but also through manipulation of color and abstract forms. The illusory depth of *Orbit* is mostly due to its dark color and the angles and creases of its forms. At the front of the piece, four white ovals on an olive green square appear to float without any use of rendering or shadow. Though particularized for each piece, pictorial space remains abstract and ambiguous.

Striking in their formal cohesion and economy, Heintze's works have a terse insinuating impact; metaphors seem to be

suggested rather than detailed. Resisting verbal translation, they are devoid of narrative and are really visual analogues for physical reactions, spatial perceptions, and complex psychological states. For instance, *Godot* in shape is reminiscent of a coffin, a robed figure, or the thorax of an insect. One of the most symmetrical of Heintze's works, it is composed of a blue form skewered by a long black shape, rounded like a bud or head at the top and ending in a point. A narrow red wedge is cut into the top, and seems to function visually either as a release for the spatial compression of the piece, or as a fold opened to reveal some inner turmoil. Despite its abstractness, Heintze's work has its sources in personal experience, dreams, or his observations of daily life. In *Sidestroke* sinking in a large body of water to the bottom of a rocky gorge, then, while slowly rising, observing the steady incline of the strong surface beneath him was the impetus for his use of the extreme slant, the graded segments, and the arrowlike but biomorphic dark pink form. Another source for this piece may be Heintze's daily use of an extraordinarily long steep ramp at his local subway station.

Heintze's forms are extractions from memories, especially subliminal recollections of physical space, so that contained views of his pieces may suggest perspectives ordinarily seen around a corner or from the top of a ladder. Many of his constructions have components alluding to pathways or other directional indicators. *Sleeper* conveys diverse spatial orientations with relatively few forms. Its basic shape, an obtuse triangle, appears precariously balanced, as if it might list to the right at any moment. At the same time, this long form sits only a few inches from the floor and, as it were, approaches stability. The angle to the right, which has the strongest directional

pull, is attached to a small stair-like form, which complicates and varies the upward thrust of the piece. Within a recess at the center of the construction are two elongated blue mounds, anatomical or topographical in form. In addition to indicating variable depths and positions, individual forms suggest motion, even gestures, as they seem to penetrate, open, fold, swing, float, fall, and slice. Heintze's predilection for matte black makes for the elusive nature of his space, whereas his color helps to specify the identity or quality of a shape, making it passionate, passive, or descriptive. By Heintze's combination of odd perspectives, abstract forms, and emphatic color, the viewer is at first disoriented; but then adjusts to and ultimately participates in his uniquely constructed vision.

**F**.L. Schroder's use of expansive horizontal and strident transversals reflects a fundamental concern for appropriating and transforming actual space within the bounds of the painting format. The actuality of his materials creates dynamics ordinarily made by illusionistic conventions. Recently, his long time interest in the manipulation of extended horizontals, modular segments, and paint physicality has expanded to include a forceful play of diagonals and intricate contortions of thick dripping paint and scraped metal surfaces. His spatial shifts are created by arranging, then welding aluminum channels into configurations that have diagonals pivoting around a center-point of a horizontal bar and lying on slightly different planes. The work's materiality is emphasized not only through the functional connotation and assertiveness of the aluminum channels, but also by the unusual paint textures and the coalescence of odd striking colors.



The proportion of Schroder's paintings, with the channels two to three inches wide and five to twelve feet long, require the viewer to have either unusually keen peripheral vision or walk along the piece to examine each section in turn. His paint texture and long channels suggest paths, graph lines, canals, and veins. However, their placement slightly above eye level perpetuate feelings of inaccessibility and domination, as the pieces either guard the wall like blockades on a highway or animated forms in flight. The fragmentation of the pieces, which are broken by either transversals, highly textured clusters, slanted, sliced ends, or painted modules, lends a sense of rhythmic velocity to them. *Automatic Pilot* suggests feigned movement, expressed in a long stream of horizontals painted Prussian blue and silver; movement is also enforced through the paint activity, which toward the center appears more agitated, as marbled globs of silver and black suggest a carefully guided flight gone haywire.

Schroder collaborates with other visual artists in a group called "Youth-In-Asia." He sees music as a "kinetic extension" of his visual work, with a complementary energy; music provides a direct experience for certain means of expression not incorporated into his sculpture. Playing electric bass guitar in the band, he experiments improvisationally, directly translating "severe hand gestures into oblique sounds" with little concern for consistent structure within a given piece.

Increasingly, Schroder has become involved in the intricacies of controlled accident by allowing thickly sprayed paint to drip, blob, and streak, or by sanding and scraping off layers to reveal the metal surface underneath. He amplifies the inherent properties of the materials he employs. The reflective

qualities of metal and metallic paint create a subtle range of color and light, making ambiguous the spatial orientation and paint materiality of certain segments. Schroder amplifies subtle dualities of his materials. For instance, *Entry*, despite its active title, and assertive materiality seems quite gentle and soft. Its metal undersurface, thin layers of paint, and pale colors, reveal a sensual delicacy. The aluminum channels have been coated first with pink, then with black enamels which subsequently have been sanded or scraped off in patches and streaks. The pale pink seeps through the black as if to reveal a soft, organic underside to this construction. Schroder's current methods and color achieve intense, subtle effects. In *Purple Pitch*, the color recalls the richness of liturgical vestments and vessels. Sections of the piece alternate between rich purple and copper, either highlighted by silver or muted by black. Schroder has varied the surface by scraping down parts, leaving only streaks of color and allowing other sections to be bumpy and dappled with thick coats of spray paint. The irregular, sprayed enamel texture makes recessed areas jump into view, while more dominant forms, larger in area, are subdued by their smooth lush texture. Schroder's methods are not used to analyze or show art in process, but to capture fluctuations integral to his materials in their "raw" state.

**D**avid Wells is a gleaner; his mechanical sculptures combine found objects with self-portraits or images which resemble old toys. Since he moved to New York in the summer of 1978, his interest in junk, abundant in his neighborhood, has given his work its structure and tone. The scrap fans and motors, furniture parts, household items, and other materials used in his pieces are culled

from remnants left in his storefront studio or from the streets and empty lots of the low-income area of Manhattan where he lives and works. Wells does not consciously seek out and join particular items in advance, but tries to amalgamate things intuitively and spontaneously. The recurring image of female "gleaners" in his work reflects his own method of making art. In the same spirit, he visits a library weekly and peruses the shelves for books on urban planning, the decorative arts, Victorian playthings, Modern Art, or anything else that strikes him. Although his reading does stimulate his creativity, Wells asserts that his pieces do not directly translate any concepts, since for him, these are best conveyed verbally; or, as he puts it, "words are better written."

*Thrashing Machine* typifies Wells' approach; its components are remnants of the original pale blue wall units of his storefront. To these, he has attached a rough sketch of the piece and a motorized pole that twirls a worn-out broom embellished with two "gleaner" cut-outs. At one end of the piece is a pile of blue plastic saucers, at the other a switch which controls the speed of the broom's revolutions. When it reaches top speed, the saucers crash to the floor. Despite its seeming importance, Wells says he did not really plan this effect, but included the saucers for their particularly ugly shade of blue. An oblique and ironic reference to Wells' former occupation as a ceramicist is made by the use of the surprisingly unbreakable dishware and the spinning pole. The twirling broom reaches a frighteningly fast speed, making increasingly loud noises and wide circles outward. However, when it reaches a blurring velocity, it stops easily and gently if anything comes into its path (due to a slip mechanism in the motor). The apparent danger of the device is illusory.

Despite his pragmatism and the use of actual objects, Wells' fascination with illusion is clear, not only in the use of representational images, but also in his playful deceptions and fictions. Like the *Thrashing Machine*, in which nothing actually gets thrashed, the *Running Machine* has four self-portraits frozen in movement. Only a prone figure maintains a spinning motion and, although it suggests activity, it moves nowhere. Another piece, the *Baboon Tea Cup Caddy*, fills a fictional household need—mechanically displaying and storing cups and dessert plates. All of Wells' work has pointless results, and fixed, hindered, structured, or unconstructive movement. These effects stem from Wells' fondness for the more absurd qualities of everyday life. In fact, they are as engaging and amusing as the contraptions in a penny arcade.

Wells' figures embody key aspects of his artistic fiction. The most extreme example of self-portraiture is *David Nebuchadnezzar Wells*. Here the persona of the fierce Babylonian conqueror humorously exaggerates Wells' artistic exploitation of his neighborhood, especially a vacant lot which has offered an endless tribute of garbage to his creative projects. More mundane, the other likenesses show the artist, in his ordinary winter attire of dark clothing and cowboy hat, as an icon of himself, stoic and invariable. The most iconic figure of all, however, is the gleaner, whose origins Wells traces to Millais' gleaners and a civilian figure in his childhood collection of lead soldiers. The cut-out female gleaners—structurally delicate but suggestive of hardiness—are associated in Wells' mind with the nineteenth-century Romantic view of peasants as paragons of endurance and spirituality. Although the figure of the gleaner affirms his own romanticism, which is linked to the earli-

er version, Wells downplays the connection by keeping the figure in small scale. "Too much romanticism can be dangerous," he has observed, "since it will cause you to miss what's going on around you."

Wells' work, in its construction and mechanical nature, is actively engaged in the present. Avoiding personal taste, he allows colors and materials indigenous to his current surroundings to dominate his art. His works, like the *Nodding* and *Running Machines*, analyze and elaborate upon simple gestures and the use of common objects, such as brooms, cups, dishes, appliances, and furniture. Scrutinizing any and all activities, he presents unsynthesized fragments in exaggerated detail. For him, making art is a tool for visualizing and sifting out the endless stimuli of his daily life.

**T**he five artists in this exhibition strive to excite, energize, and give pleasure to their audience through the directness and sensuousness of their work. A current tendency, evident here, is the adaptation of novel or entertaining qualities to serious art, in order to fuse public and private concerns. In his or her own way, each of the artists puts forth the notion of making art as "playing," as each relies on his or her resourcefulness and inventiveness for unexpectedly seductive or humorous imagery, materials, and methods. Rarely has there been such a close marriage of serious artistic invention with mechanistic or subliminal gaming, and playfulness in the working process is no longer taken as a sign of amateurism. Nancy Arlen and F.L. Schroder gamble with materials, constantly manipulating, combining, and recombining until desired effects—usually those most unfamiliar and least expected—occur. Louisa Chase traverses momentary experience through imagery and pursues the most

ambiguous, or playful, psychological games. David Wells tinkers with simple motors, discarded parts of furniture, and scrap to produce machines of a lighthearted yet profound nature. Rudy Heintze plays with his own ability to reflect and to detach simultaneously in a single work, as he confronts the viewer with a puzzle, whose fitting together helps unleash, paradoxically, the mystery in his work.

These entertaining and playful aspects assert visual strength; they allure and captivate the public. Like the perspective painters who use *repoussoirs* to visually and conceptually draw a viewer into a painting, the artists in the present exhibition, in distinctly different ways, entice us with immediate, seductive techniques. Arlen and Chase use shockingly vibrant, exciting colors as well as latent eroticism in their imagery. David Wells' images are inspired by romantic genre painting; his placement of shapes and forms on fragile supports has a charm akin to naive American tin toys and sculptures. To allure, Rudy Heintze refines the venerable, seemingly effortless mastery of craft, while Schroder develops dazzling effects through the turbulent junction of an "oil and water" mixture of paint on aluminum. The openendedness of their works ultimately extends subjective interpretation and personal significance.

The work in the present exhibition experiments with materials and means of presentation, and asserts an irreverence towards the preciousness of the art object. F.L. Schroder applies paint in an almost slap-happy manner; Nancy Arlen has specifically chosen a material, plastic, which epitomizes expendability and versatility. While Arlen herself prefers a few possible spatial orientations for each work, she does not deny the viewer's ability to interject his or her own

notions of situating the work, aided by the metal rotating mounts. The work is a marker for a series of possibilities and has no restricted definition once it enters the world. While Rudy Heintze's reliefs appear finely crafted, he minimizes construction time so that most of his energy and concentration are devoted to refining his ideas. For David Wells, materials and means are determined by expediency, with a resulting precarious, makeshift appearance in his sculptures, often through the use of thin wooden legs and flexible tin supports (which also lend anthropomorphic qualities and a certain vulnerability to his work). In addition, he attaches handles to most of his works to maximize function and suggest transportability. Louisa Chase works on canvas not out of any overriding respect for the medium, but because it provides her with the most flexible, yet controllable space. Chase shifted from making objects to paintings two and a half years ago because, according to her, "I needed a psychological/ambiguous space I didn't get with objects. Since painting has a more established language you must deal with, it gets down to relationships which I find most interesting."

These artists share an interest in visual fragmentation: Chase's splayed images, Arlen's amputated forms, Wells' disjunctive constructions, Heintze's sliced structures, and Schroder's divided lines produce these sometimes grating results. Arlen's clashing colors, Heintze's dizzying compositions, or Schroder's haphazard painting application keep the viewer off-balance; conclusions cannot be drawn, and expectations cannot be fulfilled. Even though each artist works within a rather limited sphere, none uses a methodical, logical, or serial approach. Arlen's obsession with color and light compels her to never repeat a color formulation

and to experiment with any possible combination of different hues, and often draws her to the least predictable solutions. In her amalgam of form and color, Arlen strives for an intensity and dynamism that make irrelevant the judgement of "beautiful" or "resolved." Rudy Heintze uses matte black primarily as a background color, while the other colors can be associative or disruptive. He consistently uses a few colors per piece, usually applied in broad, flat areas to define separate forms. In contrast, David Wells restricts color to a purely functional, extremely subdued role. The color of his structures is usually unchanged from the found state of his materials. In a contrary approach, Louisa Chase injects her color with as much expression as her forms. Her varied palette activates, but neither accommodates nor contradicts the form painted. In earlier work, white functioned as a neutral background color, but as her paintings grow more specific about moods and experiences, color creeps in for background themes and white becomes an indicator of prominent elements. In his earlier work, F.L. Schroder applied enamels in mostly primary colors to cover his aluminum surfaces, but in the last year he has begun to work with the colors and surface of the metal by applying thin or uneven layers of spray paint and then sanding parts off, to let metallic reflection modify his color. As a result, the colors have become more lyrical and moody, allowing for greater drama.

Sculptural, illusionistic, and literal space are combined in all these works with little concern for consistency, even within a single work. For example, David Wells combines actual furniture parts with drawing to suggest volume, while at the same time he uses cut-outs to assert flatness. While his pieces exist as discrete objects, they incorporate

the larger space within which they are situated by virtue of their potential and actual movement. Rudy Heintze heightens an illusion of vast space by painting clearly articulated forms a single overall color. His use of channels and linear paths, combining interior and closed forms, activates real space by orienting his structures to suggest the greatest potential for movement. Though they utilize simple, clearly defined structures, Nancy Arlen's sculptures produce contradictory spatial effects. Most pieces loop or angle towards the wall, suggesting sanctuaries, but rarely form closure. Yet Arlen's forms are aggressive, implying expansion, which their translucency dilutes. Schroder ruptures the horizontal continuum in his pieces by diagonal transversals, yet the work's assertive objectness is obscured by illusionistic painterly devices. The rather shallow space within which he manipulates his linear dynamics creates situational subtle changes. Chase's interwoven brush strokes deny suggested depth, even though forms vary radically in scale. She flattens forms to linear equivalents, allowing color to define the boundaries around and between things. Her long time fascination with the circus (several years ago she participated in a trapeze workshop) has left its mark in the festive and humorous qualities of her paintings; her images float or spin in undefined space, like trapeze artists caught in midaction.

This current stylistic fragmentation is a redefinition and elaboration of the questioning of context, intention, and meaning of art that took place in the 1960s. Much of the work of that time avoided accessibility, evidence of the artist's hand, participation in actual and illusionistic space, and dependence on subject matter. The artists in this exhibition may support or ignore these ques-

tions, indulging in the freedom following upon such seeming constraints. Sometimes they even reincorporate such previously rejected elements as image, seductive or pleasing materials, referential space, and personal metaphor into their work. Each of these artists takes a different approach to the questions of the art object's marketability and relationship to the audience, what is essential to art, and how or what art communicates. They explore rather than question or define the nature of meaning, the pleasure of esthetic response, the neutral or subversive character, or the self-evident or metaphoric qualities of art.

The individualistic approaches of these artists exemplify a current concern for controlling the situation within which the work is exhibited. By making work that looks so different from other work, or by creating idiosyncratic spaces within which the work is activated, they challenge the viewer to deal with their art on its own terms, rather than in context of the style or attitude of a school. A concern for a singular and assertive appearance and self-sufficient content have become paramount for some of today's artists. By addressing their own lives and vantage points as departures for visual exploration, and by employing formal devices as means, rather than as issues, their works achieve comprehensive autonomy; they are accessible without sacrificing complexity. These artists synthesize art, life, experience, and address the audience in ways that neither restrict nor regulate. In their searches for the most vital and direct expression possible, the artists in *New Work/ New York* are driven by impulses to lend visible form to visions which can only be called unique.



## NANCY ARLEN

Nancy Arlen  
*Tutti Frutti*, 1979  
Polyester  
16 × 24 × 9  
Collection of Barbara  
Gladstone, New York

Ken Showell

*The infiltration of light makes the sculpture a specific fusion of color and form, rather than a shape that is a color.*

*The configuration results from a hierarchy of clarity, a directness of intention.*

*My sculpture has more to do with the specific visual sensations generated through the course of the work than with a dialectic with past art.*

Nancy Arlen

Born in New Jersey, 1947. Moved to New York City, 1967. Attended New York Studio School (1967–1969). Moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1965. Attended Philadelphia College of Art (BFA 1971). Moved to New York City, 1971.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Solo

1979 Nancy Lurie Gallery, Chicago, Illinois

Group

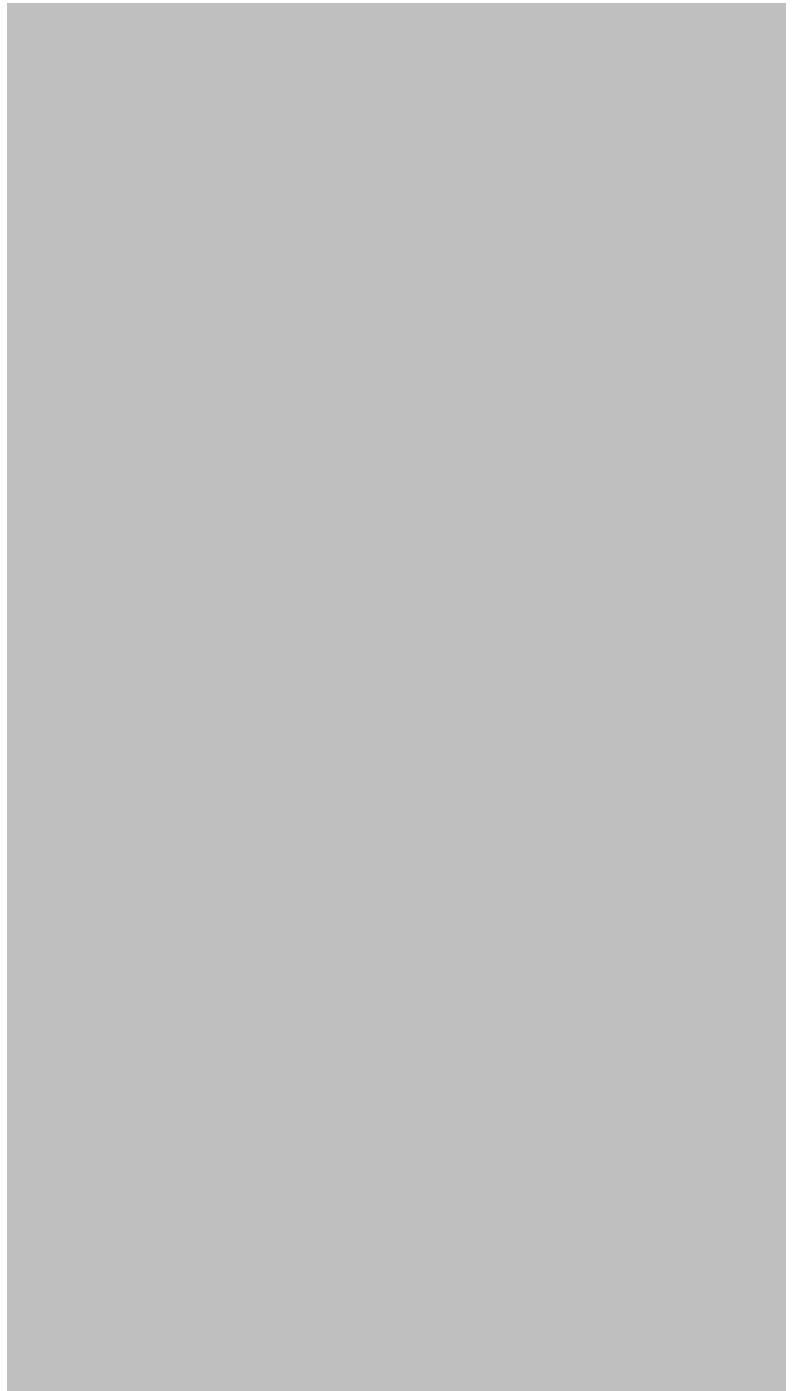
1979 "Review and Preview," Nancy Lurie Gallery, Chicago, Illinois

Nancy Arlen  
*Black*, 1979  
Polyester  
25 × 24 × 14  
Courtesy of the artist

Nancy Arlen  
*Silver Mylar*, 1979  
Polyester and mylar  
22 × 18 × 14  
Courtesy of the artist



Ken Showell



Ken Showell

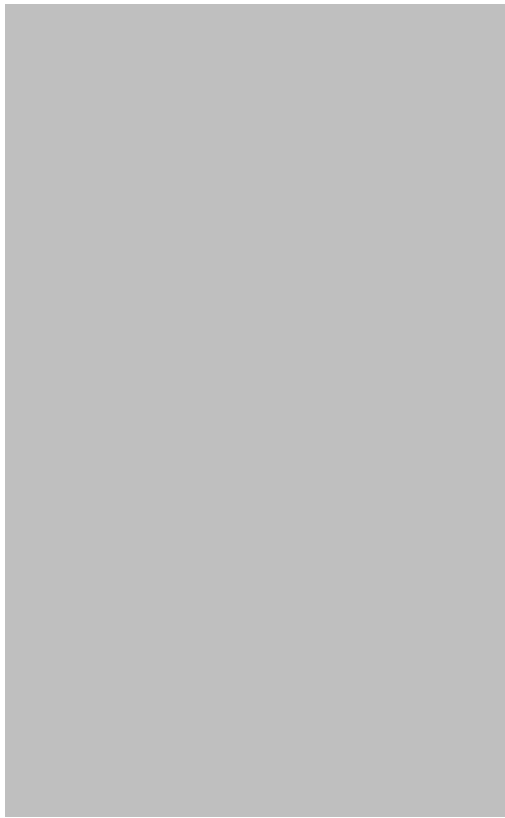
Nancy Arlen  
*American*, 1979  
Polyester and mixed media  
Dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist

Nancy Arlen  
*Phosphorous*, 1979  
Polyester  
31 × 18 × 6  
Courtesy of the artist





## LOUISA CHASE



Ken Showell

*Painting for me has been a constant search to hold a feeling tangible. Recently, the images have become more figurative, their structure or language internal. One moment is shattered into many moments, one place into a thousand places. Their relationship and scale determine the nature of experience, a psychological cubism in which all the directions are at once being that experience, the complexities of one feeling.*

*The paintings of the lives of the saints are archetypal, they are the lives of every man; for example, the desire of Saint Anthony is coupled with the feeling of letting go. The meaning does not lie with the image, but within the complex myriad of relationships, the half-step transition between one image and the next.*

Louisa Chase

Born in Panama City, Panama, 1951. Moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1958. Attended Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York (BFA 1973), Yale University Summer School of Art at Norfolk (1971), and Yale University School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut (MFA 1975). Moved to New York City, 1975.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

#### Solo

- 1975 Artist's Space, New York, New York
- 1977 Woods Gerry Gallery, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island  
"Circus of Spheres," Edward Thorp Gallery, New York, New York
- 1978 "Circus of Spheres," Edward Thorp Gallery, New York, New York
- 1978 "Circus of Spheres," Swarthmore Art Gallery, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

#### Group

- 1973 Bevier Gallery, Rochester, New York
- 1974 Webb and Parsons Gallery, Bedford, New York
- 1975 List Gallery, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island
- 1976 Edward Thorp Gallery, New York, New York  
Brockton Art Center, Fuller Memorial, Brockton, Massachusetts  
Johnson Gallery, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont
- 1977 Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island  
"Space Window," Woods Gerry Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island  
"Six Artists," Drew University Gallery, Paterson, New Jersey
- 1979 "Two Decades of Abstraction," Tampa Bay Art Center, Tampa, Florida  
Max Protetch Gallery, New York, New York  
"Painting of the Eighties," Grey Art Gallery, New York University, New York, New York

Louisa Chase  
*Saint Anthony*, 1979  
Oil on canvas  
72 x 78  
Courtesy of the artist

Louisa Chase  
*Saint Francis*, 1979  
Oil on canvas  
72 x 78  
Courtesy of the artist

Ken Showell

Louisa Chase  
*Rose*, 1979  
Oil on canvas  
78 x 72  
Courtesy of the artist



Ken Showell

Louisa Chase  
*Saint John*, 1979  
78 x 72  
Collection of Laura and Saul Skoler



Louisa Chase  
*Saint Sebastian*, 1979  
Oil on canvas  
72 x 78  
Courtesy of the artist

Ken Showell





## RUDY HEINTZE

Born in Washington, D.C., 1941. Attended George Washington University, Washington, D.C. (BFA 1964, MFA 1967). Moved to Salisbury, North Carolina, 1966, Columbus, Ohio, 1971. Moved to New York City, 1975.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

#### Solo

1974 George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

#### Group

- 1975 Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Ohio  
University of Kentucky at Lexington  
"Selected Models for U.S. Federal Building Commissions," Museum of Contemporary Art, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 1978 Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York  
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York
- 1979 Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York  
Bevier Gallery, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York

Nancy Whyte

*The self connected to events  
now past  
transfigured into new patterns*

*Awakening only to continue a dream  
The strength of a vision  
an unreal world  
whose material is that of reality  
seen again  
transformed*

*Multifaceted space  
penetrating and encompassing all things  
It is real, expansive  
beyond our grasp  
It is magical  
We are present in the optical distortion  
the shift from two dimensions  
to three dimensions  
and vice-versa  
enhancing the sensation of  
space and object*

*Abstraction may not be the issue  
if transformation is strong enough  
The subject as original focus  
translates into abstract  
physical forms*

*Physicality is a spatial reference  
and can be intensified  
heightened to extend our awareness  
of the presence of forms  
Density and energy make their  
sensual imprint*

*Each piece  
an event  
beyond ritual  
occupying the fourth dimension*

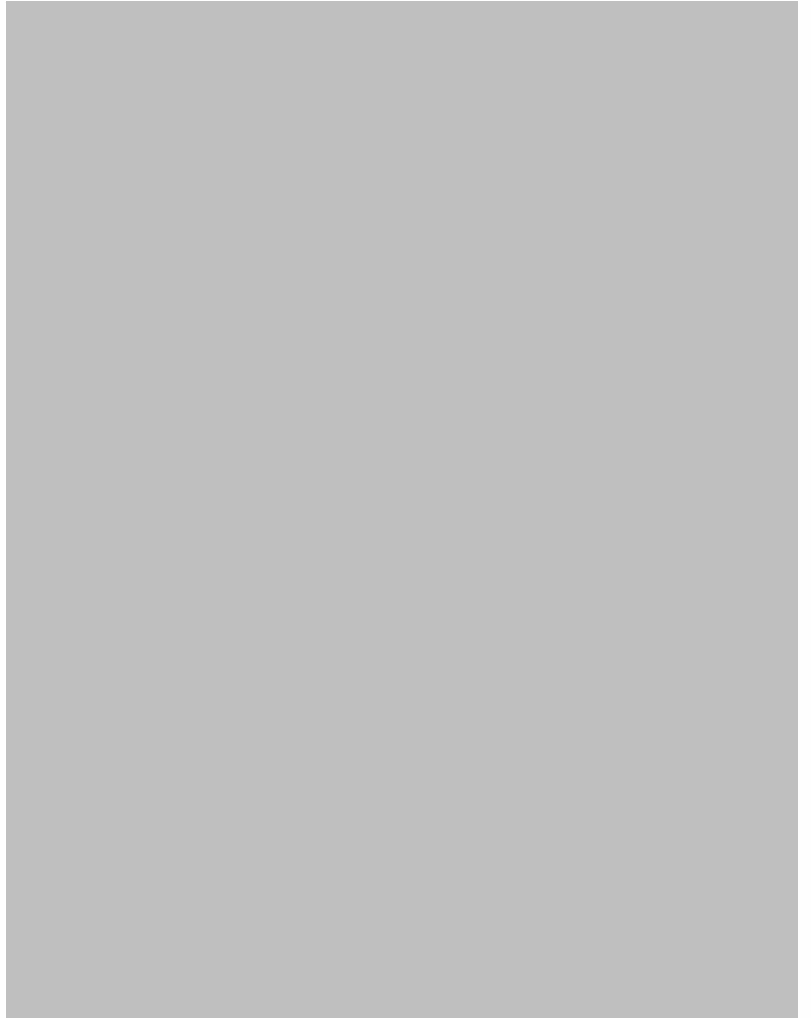
*The Self reappears  
in solitude  
yet somehow closer*

Rudy Heintze



Ken Showell

Rudy Heintze  
*Aphelion*, 1979  
45 × 36 × 14  
Acrylic on wood  
Courtesy of the artist

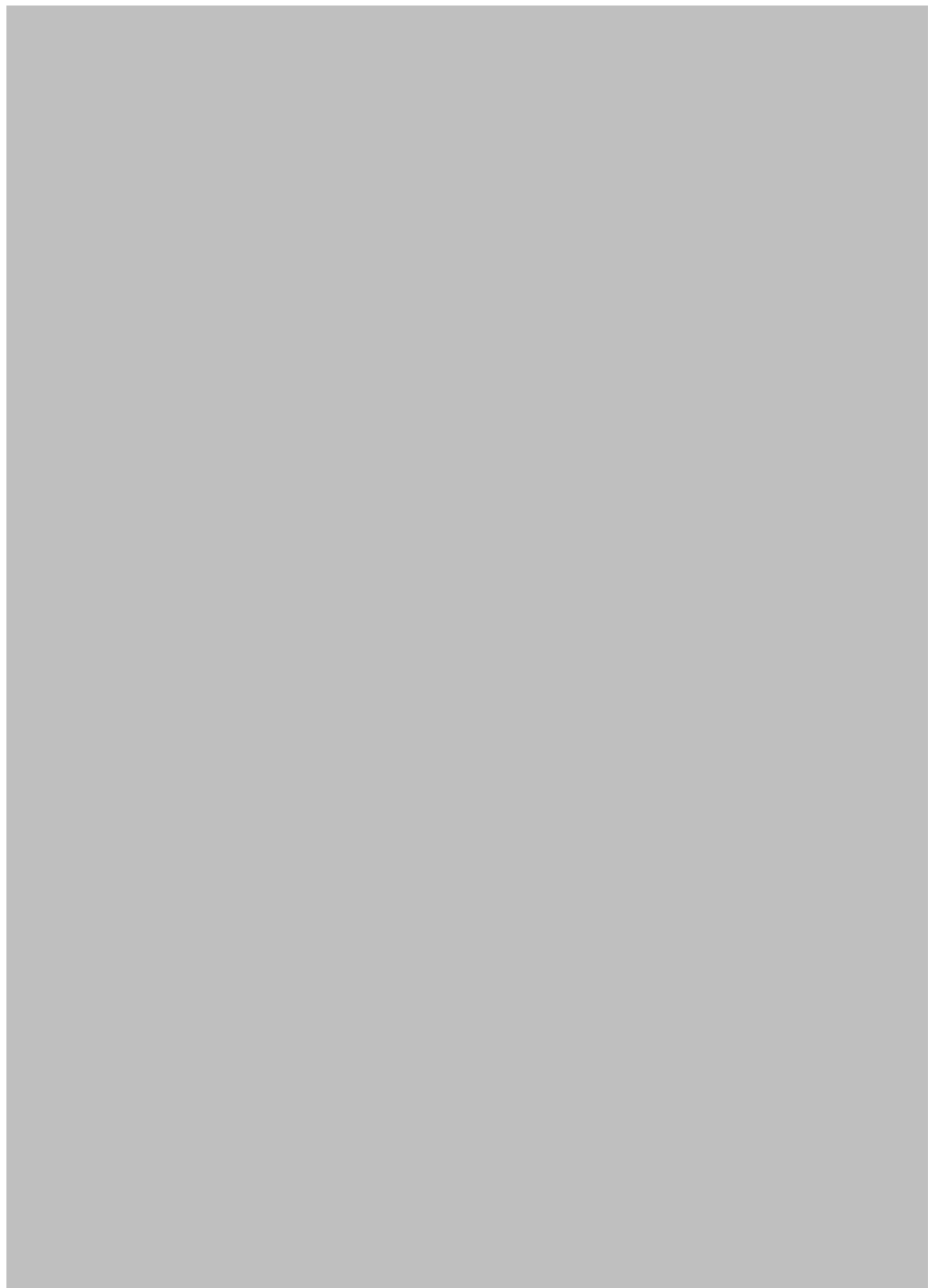


Rudy Heintze  
*Sidestroke*, 1979  
Acrylic on wood  
36 × 36 × 3  
Courtesy of the artist



Ken Showell

Rudy Heintze  
*Sleeper*, 1979  
Acrylic on wood  
110 × 20 × 3  
Courtesy of the artist



Rudy Heintze  
*Sentinel*, 1979  
Acrylic on wood  
79 × 29 × 5  
Courtesy of the artist

Rudy Heintze  
*Untitled*, 1979  
Acrylic on wood  
47 × 48 × 4  
Collection of IT&T, New York



Geoffrey Clements

## F.L. SCHRODER



Richard Prince

*Personal statement: visual statement*

F.L. Schroder

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, 1950. Moved to Chicago, Illinois, 1951, Geneva, Switzerland, 1967, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1971, and New York City, 1973. Educated at Temple University (1971–72), Tyler School of Art, Rome Program (1972–73), and Cooper Union, New York, New York (1973).

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1979 "14 Painters," Lehman Gallery, Lehman College, New York, New York  
Special Project, PS 1, Long Island City, New York

F.L. Schroder  
*Automatic Pilot*, 1979  
Enamel on welded aluminum  
33 × 106 × 4  
Courtesy of the artist



Ken Showell

F.L. Schroder  
*Entry*, 1979  
Enamel on welded aluminum  
32 × 85 × 4¼  
Courtesy of the artist



Ken Showell



F.L. Schroder  
*Placoid*, 1979  
Enamel on welded aluminum  
12 × 114 × 2 $\frac{7}{8}$   
Courtesy of the artist

Ken Showell



F.L. Schroder  
*Purple Pitch*, 1979  
Enamel on welded aluminum  
31 × 126 × 6 $\frac{1}{2}$   
Courtesy of the artist

Ken Showell



F.L. Schroder  
*Purple Pitch*, 1979 (side view)  
Enamel on welded aluminum  
Courtesy of the artist

Ken Showell



## DAVID WELLS



Born in Ogdensburg, New York, 1955. Moved to Wenatchee, Washington, 1962, Whittier, California, 1964, Badin, North Carolina, 1966, Massena, New York, 1967, Rastede/Oldenburger, Germany, 1972, and Potsdam, New York, 1974. Attended State University of New York, College at Potsdam (BFA 1978). Moved to New York City, 1978.

### SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

#### Solo

1979 "Inventions," Fashion Moda, Bronx, New York  
Group

1977 "University-Wide Exhibition," State University of New York at Albany

1977- "Selection '77," University-Wide Program on the Arts, on tour in New York State

1979 "Urban Animals," Fashion Moda, Bronx, New York

### *WORK*

*AS A UNIT MEASURE OF ENERGY IN ACTION ON PHYSICAL SUBSTANCE*

*AS OFTEN UNRELATED*

*AS A WORD ABUSED BY THE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC*

*AS A COMMON MEANS OF REPRESSION*

*AS AN ACTIVE TOOL AGAINST OPPRESSION*

*AS TOO EASILY ROMANTICIZED*

*AS THE COMMON REALITY*

*AS THE IMPRACTICAL AGENT IN MY WORK.*

David Wells

David Wells

*Nodding Machine*, February 1979

Acrylic, hemp, motor, oils, plaster,  
polyurethane, sand, tin, watercolor on  
xerox, and wood

30 × 8 × 48½

Collection of the artist

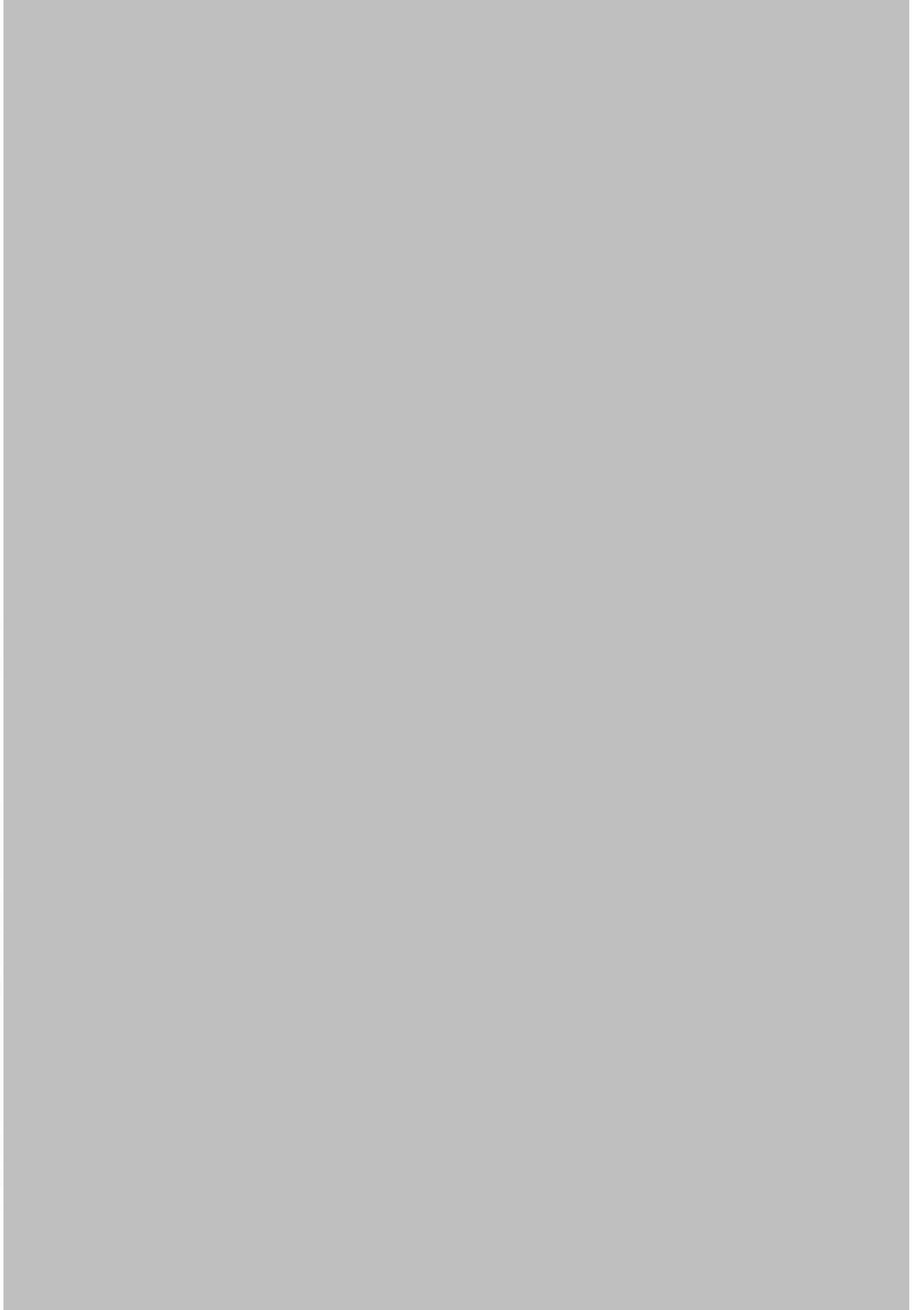
David Wells

*Humpback Box*, February 1979

Cardboard, motor, polyurethane, tin,  
watercolor on xerox, and wood

28 × 5½ × 50½

Collection of the artist



David Wells

*Running Machine*, March 1979

Acrylic, dust, hemp, motor, oils, plaster,  
polyurethane, sand, tin, and wood

44 × 7 × 31

Collection of the artist



David Wells

*Baboon Tea Cup Caddy and Cookie Carrier*,  
May 1979

Brass hooks, cardboard, motor assembly,  
paper, polyurethane, pottery, and wood  
 $14\frac{1}{2} \times 7 \times 13\frac{1}{2}$

Collection of David and Laura Sears,  
New York

David Wells

*David Nebuchadnezzar Wells*, August 1979

Acrylic, broom latex, motor and drive  
assembly, oils, plaster, sand, and wood  
 $24 \times 17 \times 79$

Collection of the artist

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