



# *Cadences*

ICON AND ABSTRACTION IN CONTEXT



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*Artists:*

Terry Adkins

BP

Dana Duff

Maria Elena Gonzalez

Claudia Matzko

Curtis Mitchell

Tomoharu Murakami

Charles Ray

Eva Schlegel

*Essayists:*

Yve-Alain Bois

Elizabeth Grosz

Gary Sangster

Organized by Gary Sangster, *Curator*

THE NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, NEW YORK

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context

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Cover: Detail from Curtis Mitchell,  
*Untitled (Subway Stripe)*, 1990.  
Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

- 4 Preface  
*Marcia Tucker*
- 7 Thinking Through Abstract Objects  
*Gary Sangster*
- 29 Plates
- 49 Signs, Meaning, and Matter in Abstract Art  
*Elizabeth Grosz*
- 61 Artists' Pages
- 81 Lissitzky, Mondrian, Strzeminski:  
Abstraction and Political Utopia in the Twenties  
*Yve Alain Bois*
- 106 Works in the Exhibition
- 108 Acknowledgments

## PREFACE

*Marcia Tucker*

This exhibition is unusual in that it is concerned with a kind of work that has been almost invisible during the past ten or fifteen years. The recent decade has seen the emergence of politically motivated, critical, and media-influenced works of art as well as the prominence of a neoexpressionist, subjective mode of painting. These stylistic phenomena have overshadowed the iconic, abstract, or nonobjective idiom that continues to be employed pervasively, if not as publicly as other styles of art making.

Nonobjective works are difficult; they lend themselves least readily to interpretation. The question of their “content” has been addressed almost exclusively by means of a modernist reading in which form and content are seen as one and the same. Moreover, many abstract or iconic works, which tend toward simplicity and economy of means in their production, suggest to the viewer the need for a similar simplicity of interpretation, or indeed for no interpretation at all.

The present exhibition takes as its premise the idea that such works of art, despite their visual simplicity and elegance, participate in complex conceptual and intellectual strategies. They lend themselves to the same intricacies of analysis, rooted in the political and social realities of the world we live in, as do other more literal explorations of these themes. Most important, the exhibition proposes that all abstraction is not the same, that superficial stylistic resemblances may conceal cultural and contextual differences that are critical to an understanding of the work.

That The New Museum should undertake this project at the present time is part of our commitment to exploring the ways in which art of all kinds is relevant to the larger concerns of society; to showing work by younger, less well-known artists in addition to those who are more established; to an internationally based exhibition program; and to exploring those aspects of diverse cultural identity and heritage that affect the ways in which work is both made and seen.

Our thanks to Gary Sangster, Curator, whose vision is informed by his transposition from Australia to the United States and who has organized the exhibition with a broader view of culture than might otherwise be possible. Our entire staff, interns, and volunteers, along with the Cadences Project Team, have helped substantively to bring the many aspects of the exhibition to fruition. We extend special thanks to Debra Priestly, Registrar, Ginny Bowen, Preparator, and our crew, who are skilled in making complicated installations look simple.

We are most grateful to art historian Yve-Alain Bois and philosopher Elizabeth Grosz for contributing their excellent essays which examine the history and meaning of abstract art; to the artists' dealers for patiently facilitating our work with them; to the New York State Council on the Arts and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for their belief in our institution and its programs; and above all to the artists themselves. The integrity, intensity, and conviction of their work have provided us with an opportunity for rare visual delectation as well as with ample food for thought.

## THINKING THROUGH ABSTRACT OBJECTS

Gary Sangster

Nevertheless, art with spiritual depth and social meaning is homeless in this society, trapped in an art world dedicated to very different goals.

Lucy Lippard, *Mixed Blessings*, 1990

### I

Today, one cannot make any claims for abstract art that may not be debated, disputed, or contested. Competing claims for different meanings and interpretations of abstract art may have arrived at a cul-de-sac, where opposite points of view apparently cannot be resolved.<sup>1</sup> As its focal point then, *Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context* proposes ways in which social and political issues are addressed in artwork that retains or revitalizes an aesthetics of the senses. The work in the exhibition is neither explicitly linguistic nor representational. Neither is it based on notions of a renewed, or ever-renewable, avant-garde that employs rhetorical strategies and images as “interventions” to resist or circumvent the dominant social and political ideologies and formations of power.

If, as Lucy Lippard argues, “artists often act in the interstices between old and new, in the possibility of spaces that are as yet socially unrealizable,”<sup>2</sup> it is, in fact, the “socially realizable” that has been most evident in the art world of the 1980s and 1990s. One of the more unsettling events in very recent art history has been the visible scramble, at all levels within the art world, to gain an “iconic” celebrity that may, as much as any artwork, be spoken of, debated, or reflected upon in the pages of journals, from *Artforum* and *Interview* to *Vanity Fair* and *Spy* magazines.<sup>3</sup>

There is frequent cause to wonder about the seemingly constant availability of art or artists to the cultural and economic spaces of art production, consumption, and display—spaces of the “realizable.” In these social spaces of transaction and exchange many of the overt goals of the art world inadvertently veil or erase the traces of “spiritual depth and social meaning”<sup>4</sup> in art. It is now commonplace to ascribe to abstract art a sense of spiritual depth,<sup>5</sup> and reactively modernist to attach social meaning to nonobjective work.<sup>6</sup> In terms of public debate and dialogue, the idea of art that contains a spiritual element has been left off the art world’s critical agenda for some time, as critiques of the 1985 exhibition *The Spiritual in Art* indicate. The concept of social meaning has been grafted exclusively to art that is labeled activist, interventionist, or didactically political, as in the exemplary information-based critical artwork of, for instance, Hans Haacke, Adrian Piper, Martha Rosler, or Group Material.

Within this context, abstract art and art with intentional metaphysical and visible aesthetic dimensions seems to be currently obscured from general view or given scant attention and limited reflection. To give the benefit of the doubt to most art and artists, the tendency of much present-day art toward the conformity of rationalist literary or media legibility constitutes an apparently frank attempt to extend communication and the social reach of art out into the broader fabric of the community. However, genuine doubts remain about the presences and absences in the discussion of contemporary art that are not simply due to questions of art's cyclical styles or repetitive fashions. Nor are they purely about the proliferation of image reproduction from the mass media that has invaded the artist's studio and the museum's galleries. They are also questions about the processes by which artists use communication strategies and systematic referencing to claim territory within the space of social and political criticism. Claiming space, visibility, or a voice for one's own point of view inevitably excludes or crowds out other voices.

One response to artistic forays into the plain-speaking and didactic social arena has been a bland disregard or oblique resistance at the other side of the art spectrum. That position represents a characteristically reticent, oppositional retreat from the productive and critically motivated conjunctions of meaning and message, theory and practice, context and interpretation. It points instead toward a different genealogy of art, usually based on aesthetic universality, artistic mythology, and historical autonomy. This duality of context-sensitive versus universalizing idealist tendencies articulates a general acceptance of the split between the domain of politics and the domain of aesthetics that is an enduring enigma for the production and reception of art.

## II

Abstract art is by now a common experience for art museum audiences. One cannot deny its ubiquitous presence in museum culture, whether one accepts its efficacy within the realm of art or its significance in terms of the nature of everyday experience. Nevertheless, the fact that abstraction has maintained a strong presence in art museums and retains prominence in twentieth-century art history and criticism and the literature surrounding (and enshrining) modernism, has not alleviated the misunderstanding and debate that the appearance of abstract art consistently attracts.

The ambiguities of abstract art, emerging from the lack of a uniform response from audience to audience, can be constructed as actively disruptive, as a subversive force within the wider culture. The dominant history of art in this century is a refrain describing numerous attempts to break down or break through symbolic and representational codes within

contemporary culture. These codes have acted as purveyors of values and ideologies that were anathema to the social projects and ethical positions of many artists who sought to engage with their moment in history. Even those artists outside the more politicized and transgressive avant-gardes have recognized that their particular forms of art and their particular modes of artistic invention and creation, although "subjective and instinctual,"<sup>7</sup> were nevertheless predominantly conditioned by their historical moment.<sup>8</sup> Yet artists' engagement with the conditions of everyday life or their attempted subversion of the presuppositions of social, political, and cultural regimes has often been more than an acknowledgment, through metaphorical allegory or depiction, of the underlying historical and psychological drives that impelled their art. The Russian Constructivists have been frequently described as the clearest example of artists engaged with social experience.

In the catalogue of the recent exhibition *Art into Life: Russian Constructivism 1914–1932*, Hal Foster argues that for the Western European avant-garde, predominantly concerned with traditions of representation, "the scandal of Constructivism was that it forged connections rather than posed analogies between artistic and industrial production, cultural and political revolution."<sup>9</sup> Any interactive connections between two orders of cultural experience and expression, the real (everyday experience and practice) and the aesthetic, is threatening to a society whose organization depends on a comprehensive management of the means of production. Unless the society can work out adequate means of "damage control" to check the disruptive infractions of the aesthetic and predict their outcomes, thereby managing their consumption as well, art has the potential to remain categorically mobile and politically effective. Conversely, analogies, representations, and metaphors that are firmly locked into an established artistic corridor are ultimately more responsive to direction and susceptible to management than are actual engagement and collaboration between artists, art, and social experience.

## III

The deliberate and intentional desire to *abstract* art—to make art abstract, to present images, surfaces, and objects that are nonobjective, nonrepresentational, and nonfigurative—is not, then, necessarily an escapist fantasy, an obscure evasion of social responsibility, or a refusal to engage with meaning in the world of ideas or meaning in the world of everyday experience. Many artists, of course, have consistently made claims quite to the contrary, based on their desire for an autonomous art needing no other support or justification than its own immanence. Barnett

Newman, for instance, claimed that anyone could understand his work if only he or she could look at it “without the nostalgic glasses of history.”<sup>10</sup> Such assertions may be seen as part of the underlying intentionalist fallacy facing any artist—the sense that the conscious intention in making an artwork completely determines its meaning and function—or as a product of a particular historical moment of high or classical modernism, with its unswerving commitment to the singular creative human subject.

In the exacting circumstances of the present, abstract art need not be generally eulogized as a transcendent experience and process that replaces the known with the unknown, the mystical, or the spiritual: such a position embraces or builds on misconceptions about the history, diversity, and meanings of abstract art. Although abstract art may be correctly described, in certain instances, as transcendental or gnostic, meaning that a unique spiritual knowledge or experience is explored through the artwork,<sup>11</sup> this characterization is not a universal condition of abstract art.

In the light of these issues of politics and aesthetics, or spirituality and everyday experience, *Cadences* also explores the ongoing tension between intellectual and sensual readings of art that Fredric Jameson describes as “the implication that abstract understanding (an explanation of cause-and-effect) is a kind of poor substitute for perception, that there is a kind of interference between a purely intellectual knowledge of a thing, and some genuine, spontaneous, visionary experience of it.”<sup>12</sup> For many, this tension emerges from an assumption that whenever abstract art resurfaces, it is because of conservative impulses that try to dispel a commitment to ideas, historical veracity, and social responsibility in art. Contemporary abstract art is characterized by some critics as clinging to the humanist subject central to abstract expressionism, or performing the universalizing transcendentalism of mystic religion, or as nostalgically reiterating the decayed conventions of a modernist avant-garde. While these descriptions of contemporary abstract art may be accurate in some cases, they tend to operate within a critical terrain, already clearly charted, that has grown codified. It often fails to engage with recent art production in the terms of an emerging social and aesthetic order.

In attempting to broaden the whole context for discussion, *Cadences* focuses on a small variety of approaches to abstraction that are undertaken in direct and indirect response to the conditions affecting all contemporary artwork. The key elements of this exhibition revolve around the way in which meaning and visual language are established and exchanged, and how artists cue their audiences to meaning and possible readings of their work without making their messages obvious and didactic. Important questions arise through these cueing processes. Is it

possible or useful to determine the specific functions of materiality, presence, and aura in the construction of meaning within any artwork, and, in particular, abstract artworks? What are the difficulties of indeterminate language for different audiences, and to what extent does this difficulty entail a critical responsibility for providing verbal contextualization? What latitude of imaginative potential should govern critical writing about art within the realm of abstract art? And, finally, what kind of political efficacy and social function can these objects, meanings, and readings have in everyday experience? The response to the question of the political efficacy of abstract art should entail an ongoing examination of the site of exhibition or the site of display of the artwork—both the physicality of the space within the gallery, the museum, or the public place and the ideological and cultural milieu—for traces of their influence on how audiences come to understand art.

#### IV

It is by no means clear that art has any necessary or essential correlation in experience, whether we are looking at realist representation or abstract art. The situation is similar for language, where the meaning of any word is ultimately not fixed to the real world. As Fredric Jameson observed of the workings of language in the novel *Tristram Shandy*, “We are made to realize the incommensurability of words to experience, of models to lived experience.”<sup>13</sup> In the careful analysis of abstract art, however, it must be assumed that the art discussed and the critical writing share considerable common ground: to alleviate, if not overcome, the notion of incommensurability among systems, there must be agreements, experiences, and knowledges that are shared. In some cases, political and philosophical positions and commitments are also considered to be held in common, enabling discussion that is not contingent on a continual redefining of the terms of debate. This presumed commonality, however, proceeds on an artificial basis. This is highlighted by Isabelle Graw in her discussion of the power of the ethnographer in the interpretation and translation process of the meanings of African artifacts collected for Western European audiences. She concludes that works of art are inevitably “being constructed and invented in the very process of being written about”; they are being represented, and “there is no such thing as a transparent representation.”<sup>14</sup> Abstract art makes this dilemma completely explicit.

As with poetry or music, abstract art appears entirely open to subjective interpretation and, therefore, difficult to define. But this is not the case, as literary theorist Terry Eagleton has strongly argued. These particular art forms should not be seen as “the privileged locus of all

ambiguity or indeterminacy; all language is indeterminate and this is precisely how it is fruitful and productive.”<sup>15</sup> As Wittgenstein reminds us in the *Blue and Brown Books*, “We are clearly unable to circumscribe the concepts we use; not because we don’t know their real definition, but because there is no real definition.”<sup>16</sup> Abstract art is no more elusive, difficult, or obscure than any other form of art. Yet, neither is it more accessible, universal, preordained, or susceptible to interpretation outside of any consistent agreements or systems that may frame its context. It is only by mutual agreement, or at least by the suspension of conflicting differences, that art and the writing of art may appear in any way commensurate.

One meaning of the term “cadence” is, in music, the progression of chords toward a harmonic close. Qualities of rhythm, arrangement, or order elicit from the senses a response of pleasure. The modulations of a cadence create shifts of perception, usually understood in terms of the dimension of sound but also applicable to areas of sight, tactility, and psychological expectation. In the context of this exhibition, the notion of “cadences” is intended to cause us to reconsider and reflect on our experience and place in the world, for it refers at one level to the sense of rhythmic and modal change that passes periodically through our culture as a moment of intonation or reflection, particularly at the end of a passage or period of history. Forms of abstraction were introduced into art at the beginning of the twentieth century and it is a pertinent moment at its close to reflect on the current roles of abstract art after the social, political, cultural, and technological upheavals and developments that have taken place during the past one hundred years.

The use of iconic and abstracted forms that employ such arrangements and rhythms as a primary axis or pivotal point has motivated the selection of artists and the particular works included. The idea of an “icon” is itself abstracted in this exhibition. Rather than indicating a fixed marker or image standing for religion or spirituality, the term “icon” here refers to objects and images that trace and visualize abstract thought, obliqueness, camouflage, concealment, or invisibility. It points to an intense site or space that is, and yet is not, a kind of reference. Precision is impossible here, because the exhibition is one that explores the limits of reference and meaning.

In regard to the term “context,” the exhibition as an entity—something that brings together artworks and audiences, and presents a discussion and interpretation of those works—provides an automatically assumed and self-generated physical and material context (and museum history) for the display of the work. But the exhibition as an investigation or a projection of ideas and themes—a visual and spatial research into

knowledge and images that functions within a community framework and history—also tries to uncover some of the other contexts in which abstract art may be viewed within social, as well as cultural, arenas.

## V

The exhibition consists almost entirely of three-dimensional objects or installations, with only one artist, Tomoharu Murakami from Japan, presenting two-dimensional works: specifically, a series of monochrome paintings and a suite of duochrome prints. Yet in many senses, Murakami’s work, too, may be described as objects, works that attest to the three-dimensionality of painting as a spatial entity and that, in their dense, colorless blackness, exist as psychological and existential inversions of space, or absolute voids. The works are emphatically devoid of the representation of space, of three dimensions pictured through two. They are icons of concentrated physical labor, of spiritual conception—conceived prior to intellectual thought—and of visceral meditation. The religious, meditative intensity of their production and the visual depth and density of the work are an inducement to reflect on the relative value of those physical and psychological elements of our culture.

At a most general level, *Cadences* is a grouping of artists who invest much of their attention in investigations of space. But it is not a space that is dynamically or assertively physical, nor one that suggests the ultimate and unquestioned authority of the object through its material presence in space. Rather, their work, viewed collectively, explores fields and surfaces in space and the fragmentation and reconfiguration of space. Perhaps the crucial question posed by this arrangement of art and artists is how the nature of nonfigural and nonrepresentational forms of visual language can address or explore spatial identity, spatial cohesiveness, and (to stretch a scientific analogy) distended spatial surfaces, or topologies. The nature of three-dimensional space, produced as a combination of surface, volume, and materiality, is conceived as a psychological and sentient arena, carrying deeper meaning. It actively undertakes inquiry and analysis as a social experiment coming out of a fictive “art-laboratory” and presents intuitive responses to the sensuality and the elusive aesthetics of material and form.

Without recourse to utilizing the presence, metaphors, or representations of the body or of the body in space, the collection of abstract art in *Cadences* manages to posit the body as a primary source and foundation for the work. Abstracted evidence (trace or evocation) of the body is one of many implicit associations that could be elaborated in an analysis of this exhibition, with the body here viewed as a trope for the social and political dimensions of engagement in these examples of abstract art.<sup>17</sup>



Measurement, displacement, analogy, function, affinity, surrogacy, and substitution are the kinds of operatives that initiate and elaborate the corporeal physicality, tactility, and modes of conceptualization in *Cadences*. While the body does not appear and does not materialize in any single work, it is pervasive and inchoate in both the basis and the scope of each artist's project. Thinking about the role of the "body" as a connective conceptual element, or as an abstract visceral icon threaded through these artists' work, is one way of grounding their ideas—and the material presence and realization of those ideas—within the real world of social experience. By viewing the body in this fashion, and not as a physiological object with symbolic, referential form sheared off from the strategies of abstraction, the conceptual basis of their artwork is acknowledged and maintained.

The investigative and research-oriented artwork of Dana Duff is perhaps the most laboratory-like in the exhibition. In dealing with the nature of bodily and, by extension, social functions, she explores the possibility of a "body memory" that may be thought of as a combined potential of genetic print and cellular memory<sup>18</sup> beyond the scope of intellectual, psychological, or even emotional recollection. She also positions her work precisely in the realm of social memory and experience: a series of salt-coin works, for example, recounts the history of salt as an ancient currency in the most oblique and abstract fashion. In contrast, perhaps, Charles Ray explores the psychic spatial dimensions and physical confrontation posited by the intense formality of the absolute and unadorned cube. In *Cadences*, we see one white and very solid cube, one black and very fluid, and one steel gray—conflating the complete presence and complete absence of color sensation—that is hollow and partially invisible. Ray creates a series of nonobjective tropes for the body, each dependent and conditional on the other. In creating a body from the absence and denial of a body, he sets up reverberating waves of memory, in turn dealing with bodily containment and liberation, with an anxious psychological repression and an unraveling of the unconscious, and with the aesthetics of minimalism and its sensuous counterpoint.

Maria Elena Gonzalez's work posits the body as an icon central to the fashioning of form and modeling of surface within a socially constructed world. Her work reflects, in Freudian terms, a transgression of the "pleasure principle," an exploration beyond it. In this sense Gonzalez's abstractions and quasi-body fragments and forms are ordered with the logic of the grid, appearing as technically and conceptually self-supporting, highly crafted objects. They articulate the fetishistic conjunction of the world of art with the politics of the gaze and the body of woman. By disconnecting the parts, disassembling them into a varied array, she

questions their presumed unity and their completeness in social constructions. Then reconfiguring the components in an orderly way as separate but related entities, she generates doubt as to the possibility of reconnecting them to form any sense of a unified subject. As products of the "imaginary," her work configures the body as a fragmented, socially constructed site of gendered tension between pleasure and pain, between repression and liberation, or between desire and narcissism.

## VI

The nature of these artists' work is expressive without the latent weight of self-conscious expression or expressionism. Their work is perhaps best described as providing a clear or spare range of images, similar in many ways to other forms of abstraction, but avoiding the particular austerity and rhetorical intent of reduction found in, for instance, minimalism,<sup>19</sup> conceptual art, or *arte povera*. The hallmark of these artists is their desire to permit dramatic gesture and an aesthetic visual style to permeate their work, without pursuing a deliberate gesturality that may entail an excessive emphasis on form, physicality, or conceptualization. While their approach may echo Carl Andre's point of view concerning the nature and politics of his work, that "matter as matter rather than matter as symbol is a conscious political position,"<sup>20</sup> their work incorporates none of the assertive force of closure implied by his description.

The work of Charles Ray, Curtis Mitchell, and Eva Schlegel presents a critique of the reductive singularity of Andre's position. Mitchell and Schlegel, in particular, make sculptures that are paradoxical in presenting an evocative sense of gesturality while erasing traces of the gesture and mark. Yet the impulse and nature of their work is radically variant. Schlegel's floor and wall pieces are seductive, polished, and reflective surfaces, shiny and multihued on the wall, and with a smoothly worked metallic luster, from rubbed graphite, on the floor. Her work is preoccupied with the physical and theoretical dimensions of space and perception. The combination of the perceptual and spatial interest with the concern for surface and tactility places the aesthetic of the work within the realm of everyday experience—elevated and abstracted but equally accessible, evocative, and constructed. Mitchell's work is raw and colloquial by comparison. The forthright appearance and ordinary quality of his sculptural objects—a concrete subway square, replete with a soiled orange stripe, an artificially distressed and aged compound-wood panel, or a full roll of crumpled silver foil, completely extended on the floor—all seem to confirm the idea of an absence of gesture. At first, they appear merely the arbitrary byproducts of the sometimes harsh reality of everyday life, but on reflection, they reveal themselves to be carefully

produced and reproduced surfaces completely enmeshed with and yet entirely distinct from our familiar world. Mitchell avoids the necessity of exposing his craft and attempts to eliminate human, expressive gesture wherever possible. His strategies rely on conceptual modes of production that allow the work to proceed as an experimental self-attenuated event, one that occurs almost incidentally or almost accidentally—but not quite. For Mitchell, timing is as instrumental as material in his work, and the appearance of the arbitrary is no accident.

The work in *Cadences* concentrates on the materiality of the art and, to a lesser extent, on the physicality of its production. But this is accomplished with an open-ended sense of potential engagement with a variety of experiences in the world that an exploratory working process permits. Terry Adkins, for instance, is an artist and musician whose floor and wall sculptures are eloquent, seductively tactile, and extraordinarily crafted works, developed with a sensitivity to musical rhythms, sacred iconography, and classical geometry. The precise control of form, texture, and hue, which gives Adkins's work a self-contained logic, belies the very practical sources of discarded building material and functional objects from which they are variously drawn. Adkins takes apart and unravels (literally deconstructs) outmoded, broken, and forgotten objects and materials. He then reconstructs them, adding subtle, powdery pigments to the assemblage, creating objects with the poetic appearance of contemporary artifacts. Adkins's strategy is a kind of reverse archaeology—an embedding of knowledge, poetry, tradition, and formal aesthetics back into objects that were felt to have lacked or lost that potential. Adkins's work is a meditation on, and mediation of, value and resources in a social environment and culture that lacks the care and intelligence to maintain itself.

The work of the artists in the exhibition is strategic in terms of its awareness and reproduction of the conceptual logic of all art. Framed as it is by an impulse to refuse representation, the work takes on an aura of thought and reflection about the artists' cultural history that is engaged, consistent, and committed. At a level of specific visual language and meaning, the variations in their work are stronger than their similarities. For instance, BP and Claudia Matzko, with the single large works they have in this exhibition, could not perhaps be further apart, given their nonrepresentational correlation.

At a distance, Matzko's installation is a unified plane, made up from a fragmentation of material comprising more than 150,000 component parts. The artist presents carefully selected materials, tiny glass slide covers and dressmaking pins, as a conjunction of apparently incompatible social and cultural references—research science and women's domestic labor. The

particular elements that make up the grid in which the work consists become clearly visible only as one moves to a close encounter with the installation. The work is paradoxically epic and monumental yet almost infinitely (and literally) reflective and self-effacing. The unfixed nature of this work makes interpretation entirely mutable. By fixing our gaze onto its field but fracturing the viewer's reflection into myriad anonymous fragments, the work is both microscopic and macroscopic, enabling the viewer to see the whole as well as the fine detail continuously. At once acting as a reflective grid that bounces light onto the ceiling, and suggesting cell-formation, which by extension is a metaphor for body formations, the work generates an ethereal, unfixed, and constantly shifting image. As a two-dimensional surface that may picture space, it effects an impossible image, one that is never static and never the same, since the viewer can never remain entirely motionless. Matzko's installation is a complex dialectical examination of space and of the gaze, of representation and the nonrepresentational nature of the body, through a remarkably simple structure and aesthetic form.

By way of dramatic contrast, BP's work is the production of a collaborative group from France whose conceptual engagement with culture is a deconstructive, iconoclastic project. Their black, wet monochrome encased in a gigantic steel frame is an emphatic metaphor for painting. The central kinetic element of the piece is a constant, endless, silent flow of oil over a flat vertical plane. By allowing the viscosity of oil to serve as a time retardant to our perceptions of fluid movement and flow, BP renders the illusion that the work possesses a solid core momentarily believable. BP's strategy is to recount and recontextualize the immense diversities that surround a seemingly monocultural, monolithic, functionalist substance: oil. The group subverts the logic of the logo and the image of capital into a vast series of puns, circumlocutions, and inversions to create new and candid idioms for the conjuncture of aesthetics and capitalism. Their sculpture and installation works alternately parody and fetishize political strategy, poetic metaphor, and aesthetic display in a dazzling, provocative, virtual picture of postmodern interpolations of daily life. There seem to be myriad direct and oblique references here to issues of speed, transportation, oil, machines, modernism, capitalism, civilization, Western colonialism, or appropriation, resulting from the artists' forays into the mannerist culture of petroleum companies like B.P. (British Petroleum), Shell, or Exxon.

## VII

*Cadences* raises key questions facing audiences of these current modes of abstraction. Why has abstract art reemerged at this point in time? Is this

form of abstraction an unexpected or unusual departure from previous abstract art? And what are the cultural conditions that suggest it may be understood differently from or seen to have a meaning that is different from other recent forms of abstraction? Discussing these questions runs the risk of positing a return to a modernist critique of representation and cultural power, a return to the “heroic” avant-garde that is no longer possible, or, alternatively, run the risk of presenting abstraction as an elevated form of nostalgia for the individuality and originality of subjective artistic expression. It is a risk that is valuable in the face of the present crisis of meaning.

If the artists in *Cadences* share common ideas or strategies, those commonalities are based on a conceptual impulse to explore the potential energy of substances—not only traditional art materials like paint, graphite, canvas, wood, or metal but also other materials such as salt, soap, oil, cement, or newspaper ink. Concentration on vision and phenomenology is one element of their concerns; an emphasis on everyday materiality is another. The nature and appearance of the selected material, and therefore the experience of these abstract works, is closely tied to our experience of the world.

These artists are concerned with processes of reference and evocation that are grounded in the selection, manipulation, and permutation of utilitarian and fine-art materials. Through this combination, the work sits somewhere between Marcel Duchamp’s inflections of the ready-made and Yves Klein’s alchemical transformations of materials, but it affirms neither. The work more closely echoes the poetic and political transformational processes of artists such as Joseph Beuys or Robert Rauschenberg, where traditional categories of painting and sculpture are not discarded but are reworked into a closer relationship with everyday experience than is normally allowed for in abstract art. In *Cadences*, there is a subtle compositing of materials and techniques. Elements of the found object are dislocated and combined, industrial fabrication and hand-worked craft are brought together, fragmentation and disjunctions are set in rhythm with seriality and repetition, and change and alteration through chemical reactions and artificial physical erosions are set against fixed and decisive surface finishes. There is an underlying sense of the real throughout this work, but it does not derive from a representation of reality or a replication of the appearance of the world. Instead, the work ascribes to the real through the use of materials—substances and molecular surfaces that are either modified or left unaltered—to project meaning that is not overly codified or circumscribed according to preexisting aesthetic rules.

The exhibition primarily consists of nonrepresentational combinations of materials and methods of treating them that acknowledge

the practical, technological, or scientific basis of the production of those substances. The artists’ work recognizes craft, technique, and material in an integrative manner, without fetishizing the artwork or the physicality of its presence through an elaborate or concentrated finish. The work frequently closes in on the brink of representation without acceding to it. The nature of this work may be described as a kind of “abstract-realism,” which is both nonobjective and evocative of the real world (with neither term, *abstraction* nor *realism*, being used in an art-historical sense). The “real world” in this sense is a world of production and composite structure rather than the world of products and the multiple commodity.

## VIII

When a composite approach to art making and cultural criticism is advocated, there are always traps to be avoided. In combining analysis of social experience with an aesthetics of the senses, the danger is that art and criticism will be seduced back into, or collapsed into, a conservative celebration of individualism, already currently enjoying a political revival. Such a celebration, reiterating historical and theoretical “liberal humanism,” construes creativity in the arts and individual subjectivity in general on a sublime level, beyond reach of the real world; that is, as genius. Art and artists in this view are seen as otherworldly, divinely inspired, and abstract art in particular is often considered as “out of this world” (in both the positive and negative senses of the phrase). This revival has the dangerous and willful tendency, if not the belligerent intent, of purporting to take art out of the social arena altogether while retiring it to a “higher” plane—a move whose masked social and political agenda might be characterized, as it was by Max Raphael in the 1930s, as “[degrading] art into a substitution for religion.”<sup>21</sup>

The current urgency of social conditions, and the predicament of culture within those conditions, has been stimulated by recurring political and economic crises and the increasingly complex sophistication of communication technologies. These crises and facilities have created a dynamic and mobile environment where individual perceptions about society undergo an insistent barrage of variable information, of unfixed sights and sounds, and at the same time are subjected to an unpredictable constant of potential danger and violence. If social theorist Paul Virilio is right, we live in a continual state of siege, within “pure war,”<sup>22</sup> by which is meant not the kind that is declared but an unremitting state of socially and politically induced low level anxiety and paranoia.

To begin discussing the relationship between aesthetics and politics at first might seem a naïve and inappropriate response. Yet, perhaps inconceivably to some, there isn’t a place that aesthetics can’t reach or

touch, especially within the vagaries and tensions of the present moment. According to Virilio, this state of siege itself operates according to an aesthetic structure, one of relentless discontinuity: "This aesthetic of interruption which structures contemporary consciousness is, in fact, a cinematics. For cinema, art of the continuous, paradoxically gets all its energy from interruption."<sup>23</sup> If we live in a world of stoppages, interruptions, and discontinuities, it should not surprise us that there is much of the world we cannot understand, that we cannot make connections necessary for its coherent understanding. This fragmentation of social experience along the lines of montage, collage, and "the cinematic" may also explain how many of our perceptions appear to us now as *déjà vu*, as fragments of prior experience and images, rather than as nostalgic memory for our forgotten past.

## IX

In the spaces of "interruption" that Paul Virilio describes as a contemporary social and psychic condition—spaces that similarly separate the artist and the audience—there is a void that faces the writing of art (meaning both writing about art in the narrow sense and the practices of art production, which together constitute the "writing" of the field of art at large). This void between artist and audience is critical to the meaning of art, as it oscillates between an open-ended confusion and an endless unfolding of possibility and potential. The dilemma of communication through art, and about art, which reaches an abstruse level in abstract art, lies precisely in what can be agreed upon from the start of the exchange, how far these agreements can be stretched, and to which audiences the work of art and the writing of art can be addressed.

Mimetic structures, for example—like those found in painting, photography, or sculpture—are widely accepted as a form of this cultural agreement. They have achieved an almost universal acceptance as one form of evidence for the definition of art. These structures of representation—once rare and unusual experiences within, for instance, the cultural contexts of ritual, religion, or myth—have become commonplace and widely distributed throughout Western culture. During the twentieth century, the dramatic increase in the availability and distribution of structures of representation has generated consistent experimentation and critique from artists. Abstraction has often figured prominently in these developments, because nonrepresentation easily aligns with the perception of art as a mysterious, elusive, and complex aesthetic and social experience—as a transformational channel—that posits and explains things that otherwise cannot be translated or reduced to words.

The problem of reductivism or translation is fundamental to making connections between abstract art and our experiences in the world. The translation of ideas from one form to another for the sake of clarity, accessibility, or communication need not entail a process of simplification or popularization; where it does, then misalignments of meaning and limitations to the scope of content and substance can be the result. This quandary is articulated succinctly by Terry Eagleton in terms of making complex meanings popular or accessible: "Popularization involves a putting of the complex into the simple, but such a move is instantly deconstructive, for if the complex can be put into the simple, then it is not as complex as it seemed in the first place; and if the simple can be an adequate medium of such complexity, then it cannot, after all, be as simple as all that."<sup>24</sup> The incongruity of abstract art, which often is manifested in the simplest of objects and forms, is its intransigence toward "simple" explication and discussion that is not reductive and unifying. It should not be assumed that the term *abstract art* implies a sense of coherence or unity. The field of nonobjective art is wide and variant, and no single language or set of agreements can encompass all forms of abstraction. One of the main problems with formalist criticism, for instance, is its attempt to unify the discussion of abstract art into a central frame of reference—the material and form of the artwork—while avoiding the context of the work.

One important context that influences a discussion of current art is the accumulation of art theory and discourse throughout the art world. The language of art has become a jumble of competing frames of reference, competing specializations, and competing knowledges. It is perhaps no small claim that art has never before needed so many footnotes to be understood. This does not mean that art has become more complex or intellectual, or more obscure. It is still the case that extremely profound, exacting visual experiences in art frequently emerge from spare and uncomplicated forms and artistic approaches. The expansion of "art discourse" means, instead, that the point of view through which we look at art and the "discontinuity" of our experience have never before been so unthreaded or unraveled by practical, theoretical, and methodological discussion and dissection.

Recognizing the complexity of audiences and their cultural and social diversity has dramatically altered how it is possible to approach a work of art. The whole landscape of cultural order has recently been reconfigured; as Lucy Lippard notes in *Mixed Blessings*, "The conventional notion of good taste with which many of us were raised and educated was based on an illusion of social order that is no longer possible (or desirable) to believe in. We now look at art within the context of disorder—a far more difficult task than following institutional regulations."<sup>25</sup> This means that the

complexity of historical and cultural differences of a given audience should be discussed and considered prior to, or in conjunction with, embarking on an exploration of the language and the meaning of any artwork.

In one sense, the museum is a primary site that entails a direct interaction with the work of art where a construction of audience may be located. That interaction is continually compromised, though, by common assumptions that the museum is an objective site, free of value judgments. Seeing museums as ideological institutions of construction (rather than “deconstruction”) is fundamental to the experience and understanding of exhibitions. Art museums play key roles in the establishment and maintenance of cultural and social form rather than advocating or participating in an operative critique—although they may serve as vehicles for just such a critique.

The elements of museum exhibition practice that are spatially homogenizing, historically discretionary, and selectively authoritative (or canonizing)—all inherent hallmarks of the museum’s institutional status and its archival and documentary responsibilities—actually impede critical and self-reflexive impulses on the part of artists, curators, and essayists or critics. This effect tends to make the contemporary art museum a schizophrenic environment through which to present contemporary art and therefore a contingent rather than a complete, normalizing, or appropriate environment, as well. The effect for the audience is that the museum now represents elements of “the aesthetics of discontinuity” that closely reflect other aspects of culture. For example, the museum’s procession of revolving exhibitions, its production of epic, spectacle exhibitions, and its role as a cultural “backdrop” to social and political events other than museology and the display of art, all emphasize the institutional frame the museum provides. This tends to obscure the contemporary meaning of artworks rather than to clarify and articulate meaning.

## X

The question emerges, then, that if the museum as an institution is too circumscribed to encompass a deconstructive impulse, can exhibitions or individual works accomplish this critical aim? Can the forms of visual dialogue desired within the art museum context be both dialectical and critical? It might be expected that the productive dialogue between artworks on display should stimulate new questions, ideas, and experiences for the audience (both the sophisticated art audience and the wider public). But this assumption contains recurring problems. It is the modernist expectation that art should constantly stimulate new thinking

(or subvert “old” thinking), challenge assumptions, and provoke authority that lies behind the continuing “myth of originality.”<sup>26</sup> This myth, embedded within the widest discussions about value and meaning in art, belies the variety of confirming and reinforcing roles art has served at other junctures of history. Contemporary artists have ceased to believe this myth, and many have replaced it with an analysis of art’s commodity status as a way of provoking new ideas about social experience.<sup>27</sup>

To stimulate “new thoughts” is also a highly difficult and doubtful enterprise in the present conditions of a double inflation: an inflation of images and of the art market. As critic Henri-Pierre Jeudy recently noted in describing the current context for reflection about art, meaning has become contaminated by an “arbitrary supremacy of references,”<sup>28</sup> and value is now in triple jeopardy from the expectations of the critical audience, the art market, and the artist’s desire to service that market and audience. With these pressures bearing on the artwork, the inflation of references has led directly to a collapse of meaning, and although there is a constant supply of images from the artist, these images serve almost exclusively as commodities, contrived to fit a single style in such a way that “[the] artist’s trademark is subject to the hysterical compulsion of its upkeep.”<sup>29</sup> As for the potential for challenge and provocation through art, Jeudy concludes negatively that “no hope for subversion is possible.”<sup>30</sup> The fact that this disempowering attitude is widespread in the art world is cause for serious reflection. In response to the complex and difficult situation for artists and for audiences, forms of abstraction are reemerging and being explored that seek to reanimate meaning, to focus on aesthetic experience, and to cast doubt on the sense of inevitability that art must always be ineffectual in dealing with the politics of contemporary experience.

## XI

Within the field of abstract art the recent practice of simulation in painting is an example of an intelligent critical strategy undertaken by artists to confront the question of meaning. In “Signs Taken for Wonders,” Hal Foster presented a decisive account of the recycling of abstract painting during the early 1980s. In this argument Foster makes a convincing case for viewing certain models of abstract painting not as abstraction at all, in any strict sense of a critique of representation, but as a simulation of one mode of modernism. In this strict sense “simulationist abstraction” is a form of representation because it presents a replication of an image, a gesture, or a form of other models or examples of abstraction (from art or other fields). In this case study, “simulationist abstraction” is treated not as a separate category of art or as an artistic paradigm but as a strategy in the service of the newer artistic paradigm of “simulation.” Abstraction, along with any

other artistic mode, can become a subset of simulation (which is perhaps the most colonizing and controversial artistic strategy to emerge as a successor to Pop art).

The wider social implication Foster draws in his argument is that “the duplication of events by simulated images is an important form of social control” and “in fact, simulation together with the old regime of disciplinary surveillance, constitutes a principal means of deterrence in our society (for how can one intervene politically in events when they are so often simulated or immediately replaced by pseudo events?).”<sup>31</sup> The complicity of simulated abstraction (or other forms of simulated art) with a repressive, simulationist mode of social and cultural management highlights the contemporary loss of contact between art and audiences that marks the collapse of art’s potential for thought-provoking communication. If art is committed to relaying images and messages as they appeared in their initial form with no alteration—simulating them entirely—then this functions as a *narcissism of strategy*, a strategy that can only make rhetorical points. It is a narcissism that makes the object, or the physical manifestation of art, redundant, because it is so completely analyzed and represented to the audience as a fetish.

In the face of the massive inflation of images, the advent of simulation has challenged the necessity of naming categories for art by formulating a subsuming category. The breadth of association encompassed by simulation art may be another unifying or homogenizing impulse that attempts to inscribe meaning within a world that is subjected to the “aesthetics of interruption.” Because both the value and the sign of an image or an artwork is irrevocably arbitrary, categories and style labels no longer provide the critical keys to understanding a work of art and its place within art history. An understanding of the context of art’s sources, production, display, and reception is now, more than ever, indispensable to discovering its meaning.

## XII

Unless art has lost all potential to function within the arena of communication as a critical, disruptive, or subversive mode of social practice and creative endeavor, it can be argued that other forms of abstraction can emerge, just as other forms of representation can emerge, to address and redefine this sense of “simulated politics” and the anxious condition of “discontinuity.” The type of abstract art that can maintain these active and meaningful functions demonstrates a consciousness of history without specifically referring to it. It provides resistance to the nostalgia for modernism’s sense of artistic autonomy, so that it is not implicated in the predicament of self fulfilling and dehistoricized

modernist abstraction, which proceeds from a nostalgic sense of interaction with a unified political or aesthetic spectrum. It also resists the complicity of simulation that Foster speaks of, a complicity that is characterized by the self-conscious sense of artifice and absence of cultural identity that accompanies postmodernist abstraction (as simulation).

The central impulse to developing the project of *Cadences*, an exhibition that looks selectively at a small variety of abstract art, has been twofold. First, the exhibition seeks to examine artwork that—undeterred by the arguments of authoritative art criticism or art history that abstract art may be a redundant, outmoded form—is open to the possibility of reanimating, with a dimension of social awareness, the reduced or collapsed language of abstraction. Second, the exhibition aims to explore a dialogue about the aesthetic directions and parameters of abstract art as it functions within the wider social and cultural trajectory of museum exhibitions. In *Cadences* abstraction is a result of the dialogue between impulse and strategy, where the artists’ social awareness and experience in the material world provide the impulse for their work, and a nonrepresentational aesthetic of sensuous materiality informs their strategies.

## Notes

1. See, for instance, the debate in the Letters column of the *New Art Examiner*, (October 1987): 1, 6, 14, between the Artists Discussion Circle and Kevin Maginnis, under the title, “A Spiritual Debate,” that discusses two exhibitions: “The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985” versus “The Non-Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1985–????.”
2. Lucy R. Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in Multicultural America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), p. 8.
3. See Carter Ratcliffe, “Longo’s Logos,” *Artforum* 28, no. 5 (January 1990): 105–10. Since the persona of Andy Warhol has exerted such a profound influence on the depiction of artists through the media as celebrities who can operate within the narrow channels of the translation of culture from low to high, and, in reverse, from high to low, some very successful artists have self-consciously sought to exaggerate and enhance their reputation within the art world by engendering controversy or notoriety and by operating on an epic scale or in an overtly controversial manner, as in the art practices of, for instance, Robert Longo, Jeff Koons, or Mark Kostabi. The strategies, intentions, and politics in their work are radically different, and their work generates widely varying opinions.
4. Lucy R. Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*, p. 11.
5. See *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Abbeville Press, 1987).
6. See *Art into Life: Russian Constructivism 1914–1932*, exh. cat. (Seattle and New York: Henry Art Gallery and Rizzoli International Publications, 1990).
7. Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 219.

8. Henri Matisse, "Statements to Teriade, 1936," in *Matisse on Art*, trans. Jack Flan (New York: Phaidon, 1973), p. 74. In this passage Matisse uses the humanist term *civilization* rather than the more general term *history*; nevertheless, his awareness that his work is not just affected or influenced but literally *produced* by the historical moment is acute: "Our senses have an age of development which does not come from the immediate surroundings, but from a moment in civilization. We are born with the sensibility of a given period of civilization. And that counts for more than all we can learn about a period. The arts have a development which comes not only from the individual, but also from accumulated strength, the civilization which precedes us. One can't do just anything. A talented artist cannot do just as he likes. If he used only his talents, he would not exist. We are not the masters of what we produce. It is imposed on us."
9. Hal Foster, "Some Uses and Abuses of Russian Constructivism," in *Art into Life: Russian Constructivism 1914–1932*, p. 244.
10. Barnett Newman, "The Sublime is Now," in *Theories of Modern Art*, ed. Herschel N. Chipp (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 553.
11. Donald Kuspit, *Ford Beckman: Gnostic Painter; The New Suprematism of Surface and Light*, exh. cat. (New York: Tony Shafrazi Gallery, 1990).
12. Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 54–55.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
14. Isabelle Graw, "German Colonialism," in *Durch* (Graz) no. 8/9 (1990): 80. The extension to this argument is a brief discussion of the power, authority, and responsibility of all speakers, whether artists or writers: "Various adulterants (partiality, selectivity, the associated sociopolitical area, the observer's style, etc.) will always creep in to vitiate every description. Any text in the field of art criticism will tell us more about the situation of the author, and about the power relationships that accompany and are reflected in the situation, than it will tell us about the object described."
15. Terry Eagleton, "The Critic as Clown," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cathy Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 624.
16. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 25.
17. Judith Barry, "Dissenting Spaces," in *Damaged Goods: Desire and the Economy of the Object*, exh. cat. (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986), p. 49. Although Judith Barry equates politics in art with "resistance," she recognizes the necessity for the continuing conjunction of physical space and textual analysis in the discussion of art. This conjunction should leave the way open for other perspectives on the body in space to be introduced, such as *nonrepresentational* systems: "Yet all resistance does not necessarily occur in space; rather it takes place through the agency of discourses, discourses that mark, channel, and position the body through and in other perspectives (read as representational systems)"
18. See Susan Allport, *Explorers of the Black Box: The Search for the Cellular Basis of Memory* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986).
19. Anna C. Chave, "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," *Arts Magazine* (January 1990): 44–63.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
21. Max Raphael, *The Demands of Art*, trans. Norbert Guterman (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1968), p. 207.
22. Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War*, trans. Mark Polizotti, Foreign Agents Series (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), p. 35.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
24. Eagleton, *The Critic as Clown*, p. 619.

25. Lucy R. Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*, p. 7. In mapping the territory of new art in multicultural America, Lippard presents us with a series of challenges that describe her own mixed feelings about recent history, education, and social and cultural events. Conventional ideas are discarded in favor of a more lateral approach to thinking about the state of art and the context in which art is produced and received. Lateral thinking, however, is not to be confused with forward thinking, originality, or innovation; rather, it is meant to describe how we can rethink and reconsider a wide range of images, artifacts, community activities, and archival material that can be inscribed in our culture or make a mark within our culture, in a revised and (perhaps) surprising or startling form.
26. Rosalind E. Krauss, "Notes on the Index: Part 1," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).
27. Refer to such exhibitions as *Damaged Goods: Desire and the Economy of the Object* (The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1986), or *End Game: Reference and Simulation in Recent Painting and Sculpture* (The Institute for Contemporary Art, Boston, 1986).
28. Henri-Pierre Jeudy, "The Aesthetics of Meaning Contamination," in *Lusitania: A Journal of Reflection and Oceanography* 1, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 55.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. Hal Foster, "Signs Taken for Wonders," in *Art in America*, vol. 74, no. 6 (June 1986): 91.

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

### Terry Adkins

*Particular Zither*, 1990

Steel, iron, wood, and plaster

12½ × 108 × 6"

Courtesy of Ledisflam Gallery, New York

*Recent Pair/Archangel/Magus*, 1987

Wood and pigment

3 pieces, 39 × 6 × 15" each

Courtesy of Ledisflam Gallery, New York

*Parker Gray*, 1990

Wood and tempera

133 × 95 × 7½"

Courtesy of Ledisflam Gallery, New York

*Bucolic Measure*, 1990

Wood and pigment

133 × 7 × 14"

Courtesy of Ledisflam Gallery, New York

### BP

*Untitled*, 1990

Sheet iron, motor oil, and electric pump

58½ × 117 × 7"

Courtesy of Galerie Jade, Colmar, France

### Dana Duff

*New Currency*, 1988

Salt and chromed steel

18½ × 34 × 2"

Collection of Eileen Cohn, New York

*Pure*, 1989

Grease, lye, borax, formaldehyde, and glass

18½ × 34 × 2"

Collection of John Morace, New York

*Snow White*, 1991

Commercial soap, aluminum, and glass

Oval, 28 × 23 × 1½"

*Salt/Comb*, 1987

Salt, copper, and wood

32½ × 32½ × 3"

Collection of Saul and Ellyn Dennison,

Bernardsville, New Jersey

### Maria Elena Gonzalez

*Nursing Missile*, 1990

Plywood, wood putty, and lacquer

11¾ diameter × 11½"

Courtesy of the artist

*Bowl*, 1990

Plywood, wood putty, and lacquer

14¾ diameter × 2"

Courtesy of the artist

*C'S TS*, 1990

Plywood, wood putty, and lacquer

13 × 12 × 4"

Courtesy of the artist

*Untitled (upside down wishbone)*, 1990

Plywood, wood putty, and lacquer

12 × 12 × 10"

Courtesy of the artist

*Untitled*, 1990

Plywood, wood putty, and lacquer

12 × 12 × 2½"

Courtesy of the artist

*Untitled*, 1990

Plywood, wood putty, and lacquer

12 × 12 × 2½"

Courtesy of the artist

*Pod*, 1991

Plywood, wood putty, graphite, and lacquer

22 × 48 × 22"

Courtesy of the artist

### Claudia Matzko

*Untitled*, 1991

Glass and pins

144 × 216"

Courtesy of Wolff Gallery, New York

### Curtis Mitchell

*Untitled (Foil)*, 1990

Aluminum foil

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

*Untitled (Water)*, 1990

Flakeboard and water

96 × 48 × 1"

Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

*Untitled (Subway Stripe)*, 1990

Cement, dirt, and subway stripe

3 × 34 × 34"

Courtesy of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York

### Tomoharu Murakami

*The Stations of the Cross*, 1989

Set of 14 prints from 2 stones

25½ × 19" each

Courtesy of James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica

*Untitled*, n.d.

Oil on linen

64¾ × 52½"

Courtesy of James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica

*Untitled*, 1986–87

Oil on linen

36 × 29"

Courtesy of James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica

*Untitled*, 1983–85

Oil on linen

36 × 29"

Courtesy of James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica

### Charles Ray

*Ink Box*, 1986

Steel, ink, and paint

36 × 36 × 36"

Collection of Newport Harbor Art Museum,  
Newport Beach, California

32 × 33 × 35 = 34 × 33 × 35, 1989

Aluminum

34 × 33 × 35"

Collection of the artist

Courtesy of Feature, New York

### Eva Schlegel

*Untitled*, 1990

Oil on plaster

6 pieces, 19½ × 19½" each

Courtesy of Shoshana Wayne Gallery,

Santa Monica and Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna

*Untitled*, 1990

Graphite and plaster

5 pieces, 39½ × 38½" each

Courtesy Shoshana Wayne Gallery,

Santa Monica and Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna



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*Gary Sangster*

108 | Since coming to the United States a year ago and subsequently working on a number of exhibitions, I have had many reasons to thank various people for their assistance and attention. In particular, many people have expressed their interest in and enthusiasm for this exhibition. My thanks and acknowledgments must go firstly to the artists included in *Cadences*, their dealers, and the lenders to the exhibition who have all been extraordinarily supportive of this project. These include Shoshana Blank and Pascale Rawley of Shoshana Wayne Gallery, Los Angeles; Eileen Cohn; Saul and Ellyn Dennison; Karin Graff, Director of Galerie Jade, Colmar, France; Lori Ledis and Robert Flam, Directors of Ledisflam Gallery, New York; John Morace; Andrea Rosen, Director of Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York; Sandra Starr, Director of James Corcoran Gallery, Los Angeles; Josie Browne of Max Protetch Gallery; Betsy Severance, Registrar of Newport Harbor Art Museum; Hudson, Director of Feature, New York; Brian Butler and Sharon Macklin, of Burnett Miller Gallery, Los Angeles; Jamie Wolff, Director of Wolff Gallery, New York; and Shigeru Yokota, Director of Shigeru Yokota Gallery, Tokyo.

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