

Cadences

ICON AND ABSTRACTION IN CONTEXT

THE NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

C A D E N C E S :

ICON AND ABSTRACTION IN CONTEXT

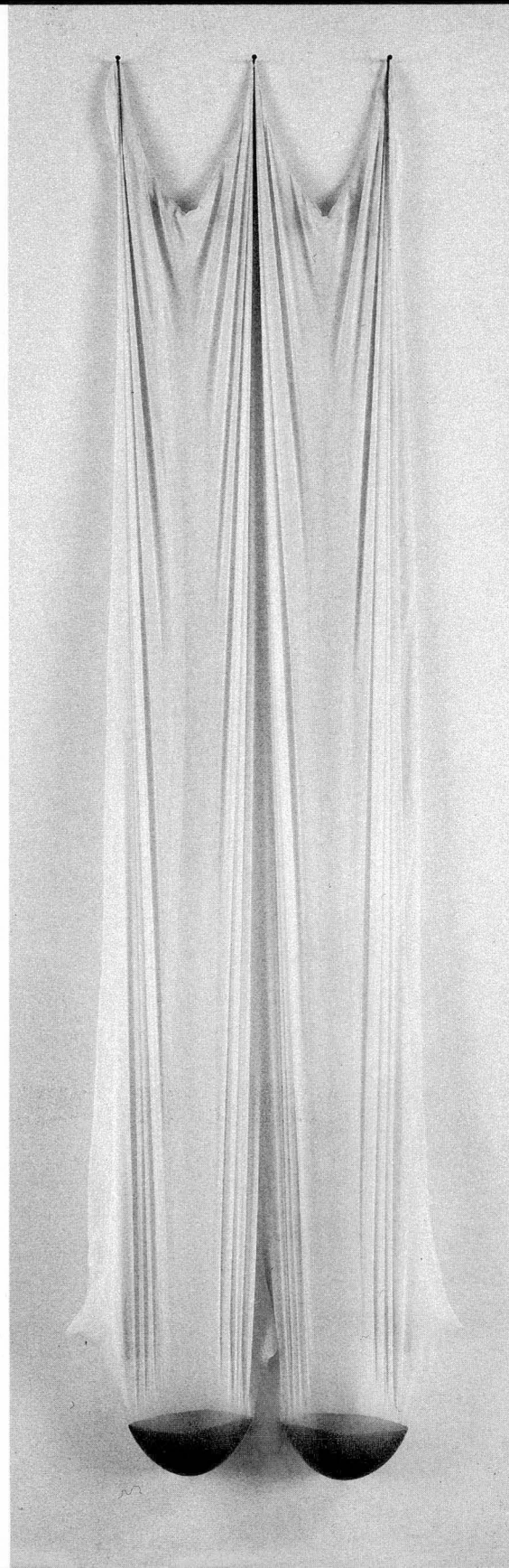
How does abstract art convey meaning? *Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context* examines this question by considering the ideas and visual vocabularies of nine artists currently working in abstraction. With references to art historical moments from Constructivism to Minimalism and Conceptual art, in which abstraction was used in opposition to dominant modes of representation, the exhibition, organized by New Museum Curator Gary Sangster, proposes that the contemporary language of abstraction is not universal. Rather, its content, like that of all art, depends upon the viewing context, the history and manipulation of the materials, and the intentions of the artist.

Cadences presents artworks that, because of their reliance on iconic geometric forms like cubes, squares, rectangles, circles, and grids, may appear quite simple and straightforward, but in fact contain a wide variety of social, cultural, or other historical meanings. Illusion plays a role in this work, where plain and unadorned forms belie their complexity and invisible structures. In Charles Ray's sculptures, liquid appears solid in a black cube. Claudia Matzko's installation also defies expectations; from a distance it appears to be a unified plane of glass, but on closer viewing reveals itself as a complicated construction of 150,000 glistening glass slide covers and dressmaking pins that is at once monumental and self-effacing. Terry Adkins takes apart outmoded, broken, or forgotten objects and materials like discarded window frames or timber construction beams. He then reconstructs them, adding subtle powdery pigments to the assemblage, creating objects with the poetic appearance of contemporary artifacts. Works by the collaborative group BP, Dana Duff, Maria Elena Gonzalez, Curtis Mitchell, Tomoharu Murakami, and Eva Schlegel are also included in the exhibition.

A fully illustrated catalogue amplifies the range of concerns that *Cadences* considers with three major essays: art historian Yve-Alain Bois touches on abstraction in early Modernism, philosopher Elizabeth Grosz considers the nature of meaning in abstract art, and Curator Gary Sangster examines the current context in which the artists in the exhibition are working. In addition, the catalogue features two-page projects specially devised or produced by each of the artists in the exhibition.

Right: Claudia Matzko, *Gravity and Grace II*, 1989, silk and lead shot.

Funding for *Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context* has been provided by the New York State Council on the Arts and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.



WINDOW ON BROADWAY BY GRAN FURY WITH PONY

In 1987 the late William Olander invited ACT UP – the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power – to create an installation in the Museum's Window on Broadway. *Let the Record Show...* exposed the political dimensions of the AIDS crisis and heightened public awareness. From the members of ACT UP who conceived and produced this window, Gran Fury was formed. Since then this collaborative AIDS activist group has continued to appropriate media techniques in public projects that seek to both inform and provoke direct action to end the AIDS crisis. In their commitment to the diverse communities of people whose lives are affected by AIDS, Gran Fury has begun working with outside groups. For the Broadway Window they are collaborating with PONY (Prostitutes of New York) to address myths and misconceptions surrounding AIDS and prostitution.

Right: Gran Fury, documentation of project in Petrosino Park, New York City, 1990. Sponsored by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Photo: Gran Fury.

Gran Fury's window installation has been funded by the William Olander Memorial Fund with the continuing support of the Jerome Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



AND 22 MILLION VERY TIRED AND VERY ANGRY PEOPLE

An Installation by Carrie Mae Weems

Carrie Mae Weems has employed dramatic tableau photographs combined with text to confront and expose embedded stereotypes concerning Afro-American culture. In this recent body of work, Weems moves into color photography, using large format Polaroid prints that continue to investigate issues of race and gender, while focusing more specifically on issues of class. The captioned photographic series fills the space with elegant but highly charged iconic images that challenge the viewer to consider his or her position in relation to ideologies of revolution. White silk banners suspended from the ceiling and emblazoned with inspirational texts, ranging from literature, folklore, revolutionary theory, and songs, further emphasize the complex layering of thought and image that form the installation's themes and undermine the ahistoricism of our time.

Right: Carrie Mae Weems, "A Hammer" from *And 22 Million Very Tired and Very Angry People*, 1991, Polaroid print.

And 22 Million Very Tired and Very Angry People has been funded in part by the Jerome Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



MANUEL PARDO : LATE 20th CENTURY STILL LIFES

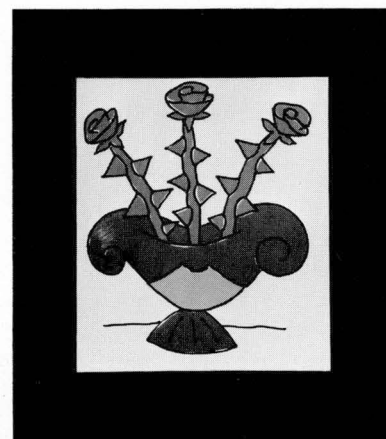
Manuel Pardo's extraordinary series of generic still-life paintings, made this past year, constitutes an examination of the nature of painting in postmodern society. Through these large-scale, heavily framed images, Pardo raises questions about how it is possible to make paintings that are both deeply engaging and at the same time challenge the act of painting itself.

These quirky, subversive paintings exist first as objects rather than as traditional works of art – everything in them is simplified and overstated. But they also raise provocative questions about the nature of art at the *fin de siècle*, and about our own expectations concerning images, decoration, taste, and aesthetic experience.

Right: Manuel Pardo, *Late 20th Century Still Life*, 1990/91, oil, canvas, and wood.

Manuel Pardo: Late 20th Century Still Lifes was funded in part by the Jerome Foundation, The Greenwall Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Cover image: Eva Schlegel, *Untitled*, (detail)1988, graphite, plaster.



SPRING 1991

EXHIBITIONS

On view from February 16 - April 7, 1991

Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context

Broadway Window Installation

by Gran Fury with PONY

And 22 Million Very Tired and Very Angry People by Carrie Mae Weems

Manuel Pardo: Late 20th Century Still Lifes

WEEKEND DIALOGUES

Museum docents are available to engage in one-to-one discussions on the current exhibitions every Sunday from 3:00 to 5:00 (except February 17 and March 31). These talks are designed to enhance visitors' understanding and enjoyment of issues in contemporary art and culture through informal conversation. Docents are prepared to answer questions, suggest resources for further information, or address any topic of interest. No appointment is necessary.

FEBRUARY

15 Friday 7:30 - 9:00
MEMBERS RECEPTION
Opening reception for Spring exhibitions

16 Saturday Noon
SPRING EXHIBITIONS
Open to the public

24 Sunday 3:00 - 5:00
WEEKEND DIALOGUES

MARCH

3 Sunday 3:00 - 5:00
WEEKEND DIALOGUES

6 Wednesday 4:00 - 5:30, free
TEACHER AND STUDENT WORKSHOP

7 Thursday Noon - 5:30
LINDA MONTANO:
Seven Years of Living Art

10 Sunday 2:00
ABSTRACTION AND MEANING:
Historical Reflections and Contemporary Contexts
Panel discussion at The Metropolitan Museum of Art
3:00 - 5:00
WEEKEND DIALOGUES

17 Sunday 3:00 - 5:00
WEEKEND DIALOGUES

24 Sunday 3:00 - 5:00
WEEKEND DIALOGUES

7 YEARS OF LIVING ART

Thursday, March 7
and Sunday, April 7
Noon - 5:30

In 1984 performance artist Linda Montano began a seven-year project based on the seven energy centers of the body, or chakras, as identified within the ancient Vedic tradition of India.

Each year of the project—planned to end on the artist's 50th birthday—corresponds to a different chakra, which in turn has an analogous focus on an area of the body, as well as a related color, tone, and spoken codes. Once a month, Montano sits in the Museum's Mercer Street Window meeting with visitors to discuss art and life.

PANEL DISCUSSION

ABSTRACTION AND MEANING:

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS

Sunday, March 10, 2:00 at Uris Center Auditorium, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street). Free with Museum admission.

The Museum joins with The Metropolitan Museum of Art to present this panel in conjunction with both *Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context* and *Kazimir Malevich, 1878 - 1935*, on view at the Metropolitan. The panelists are artists Terry Adkins and Dana Duff, whose works are included in *Cadences*, art critic Eleanor Heartney, and New Museum Curator Gary Sangster. It will be moderated by Lowery Sims, Associate Curator of Twentieth-Century Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. No reservations are necessary.

TEACHER &

"Abstraction and Ideas: What Does It Mean?"

March 6, 1991 4:00 - 5:30

This free workshop, held in *Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context* with Education Curator Susan Cahan and High School Programs Coordinator Zoya Kocur, provides an opportunity to think about recent art and culture with other teachers, students, and Museum staff. For more information, or to register, please call the Museum.

STUDENT WORKSHOP

\$PENT:

CURRENCY, SECURITY, AND ART ON DEPOSIT

A group exhibition at Marine Midland Bank, 599 Broadway at Houston Street. Through March 1, 1991. Organized by Luis De Jesus, Curatorial Intern.

\$pent investigates how some contemporary artists, raised on television, glamorous advertising campaigns, and tabloid headlines, approach issues of consumerism. The exhibition brings together work by 14 artists to focus on ideas of money, power, exchange, and trust in response to its setting in a bank. For more information, call (212) 219-1355.

Made possible with the support of Marine Midland Bank. The Curatorial Internship is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts.

LOCATION

583 Broadway, between Prince and Houston, New York City 10012

HOURS

Wed., Thurs., and Sun.: Noon-6:00
Fri., Sat.: Noon to 8:00
Mon., Tues.: closed

PHONE

Recorded info: (212) 219-1355
Offices: (212) 219-1222

APRIL

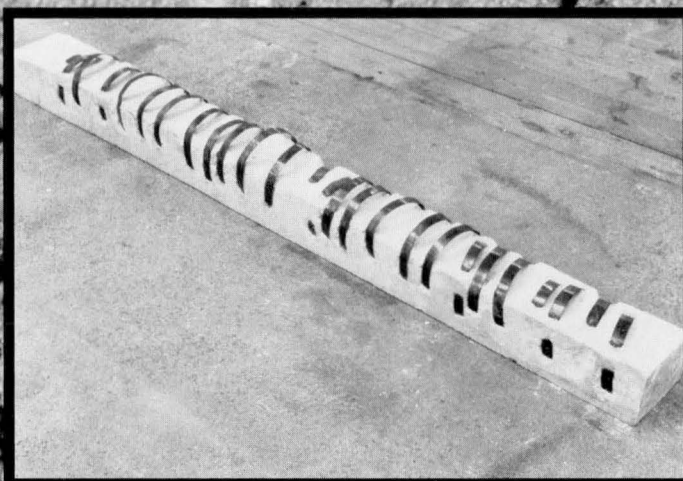
7 Sunday Noon - 5:30
LINDA MONTANO:
Seven Years of Living Art
3:00 - 5:00
WEEKEND DIALOGUES

6:00
SPRING EXHIBITIONS
close

20 Saturday Noon
PREVIEW WEEK begins
Donated works for Benefit Auction on view through April 28

28 Sunday 6:00
PREVIEW WEEK of donated work for Benefit Auction closes

29 Monday
1991 BENEFIT PARTY AND AUCTION
6:00 - 8:00
Cocktails & Silent Auction
8:30
Dinner Dance & Live Auction



Terry Adkins, *Word*, 1986, copper, plaster.
Adkins's work is included in *Cadences: Icon and Abstraction in Context*.

1991 BENEFIT PARTY & ART AUCTION

As the Museum enters it's 14th year, we will celebrate with the 1991 Benefit Party & Art Auction.

The event begins with the Preview Week - April 20 through 28 - with over 100 important contemporary artworks on view at the Museum.

During this week, bids may be left on any of the artworks. The Party & Art Auction take place Monday evening, April 29 with cocktails and silent auction at the Museum followed by the live auction and dinner dance at the Manhattan Center. Tickets are \$75 for cocktails and silent auction only, and \$300 for the entire evening, including the dinner dance and live auction. Join us in celebrating the Museum's 14th year!

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, N.Y.
PERMIT NO. 1816

The New Museum
OF CONTEMPORARY ART

583 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
10012

Background photograph: 1990 Benefit Party & Art Auction. Photo: Catherine McGann

SPRING 1991