

July 2, 1992

THE SPATIAL DRIVE

Organized by Laura Trippi

September 27, 1992 through January 3, 1993 (14 weeks)

The Spatial Drive explores the growing prevalence of a form of art that lies between traditional object-making and installation, work that consists of a *configuration* of objects in space, an *arrangement* of component parts. While not necessarily site-specific, such work calls attention to the character and qualities of the space of display. It tends to highlight the negative spaces that intervene within and surround the configuration. Work of this kind elicits from the viewer an awareness of spatial relations, which alter as the viewer moves, emphasizing the peripatetic nature of art "viewing," along with the function of context in providing a frame. The artwork itself actually seems to reside in the layered and shifting perceptual relations between configured objects, the viewer, and elements of the space itself.

In this way, configurative work dissolves simple subject/object relations between viewer and artwork, while the viewer takes up a particularly participatory role in "producing" the work and its contents. The parts played by exchange and of negotiation, in the production and circulation of meaning in an aesthetic context, are brought to the fore, as are qualities of the provisional and the improvisatory. Boundaries between interior space and exterior; self and other; object, viewer, and context; private and public space -- such boundaries unravel into one another, marking a fragmentation and dispersal of the "site" of the viewing subject. A renegotiation of the terms of engagement between viewer and work is set into motion.

The Spatial Drive will also note intersections between configurative work emerging from within a post-conceptual Euro-U.S. practice and work based in or informed by diverse cultural traditions. In Japan, the notion of "ma," denoting an empty parcel of time-space between other moments or volumes, structures a wide variety of art practices. In Brazil, the "aesthetics of precariousness" stems from the work of artists Helio Oiticica and Lygia Clark. In Native American systems of value and belief, emerges a decentered reverence for the land and landscape. In African American cultures, traditions of oral history have particular resonance. Works in the exhibition all incline toward a de-objectification of art that remains enmeshed in the sensory and the somatic.

The Spatial Drive will concentrate on the modulation of the terms of engagement between viewer, work, and context effected in such practices, including the role of the body, the fragmentation of the visual field, and the subversion of the disembodied gaze as the model for aesthetic pleasure. Gallery-based performances will be included, along with an off-site performance project. The educational frame will be developed to include an audience participatory aspect, as an artist's project in collaboration with Museum security and admissions staff. Two publications will accompany the exhibition. A special edition of **Blast**, a serial publication which takes the form of a container filled with a variety of unbound "editorial" material, will be published in collaboration with The X-Art Foundation. Considered as simultaneously a portable project space for the exhibition and an artwork on its own terms, **Blast: The Spatial Drive** will include artists' projects and a "pocket dictionary" on computer disk with a range of thematic entries. Including both original texts and excerpts of previously published works, *The Pocket Dictionary of Spatial Drives* will be also available as a pocket-sized, perfect-bound book. Artists in the exhibition include: Marina Abramovic, Lewis deSoto, Gretchen Faust and Kevin Warren, Fred Holland, Sonia Labouriau, John Lindell, Rei Naito, Marylene Negro, Laurie Parsons, Fiona Templeton, and The X-Art Foundation.