

**Material Dispersion:  
Sculpture, Photography, and International Interventions in Italy, 1962-72**

**by**

**Marin R. Sullivan**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(History of Art)  
in the University of Michigan  
2012

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Alexander D. Potts, Chair  
Professor Matthew Nicholas Biro  
Associate Professor David T. Doris  
Associate Professor Dario Gaggio  
Associate Professor Rebecca Zurier

© **Marin R. Sullivan**

---

**All rights reserved  
2012**

**To KOS**

## **Acknowledgments**

This project emerged from a sustained and often fervent interest in sculpture that began, in many ways, as an employee at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas. I was hired shortly after the Center opened in 2003 and was fortunate to meet and work for an extraordinary philanthropist and collector, Mr. Raymond D. Nasher. While I doubt he was aware of the profound impact he had on me, Mr. Nasher's passion and enthusiasm for sculpture was contagious, and the daily exposure to his extraordinary collection of Rodin, Brancusi, Smith, and Serra proved a revelation.

In choosing to pursue this interest on a doctoral level, I could not have selected a more knowledgeable mentor than Alex Potts. As my professor, advisor, and chair he has deftly and patiently guided me through the last five years, both encouraging my sculptural focus and pushing me to explore beyond it. It has been a genuine privilege to learn from him, and I remain inspired by his wonderful curiosity and enthusiasm for art and the discipline of art history. Looking back now, at the end of the process, I am fully aware of the how much he has shaped who I am as a scholar, but I am most sincerely thankful to him for allowing me to become an independent and inquiring thinker in my own right.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance received from my dissertation committee throughout the various stages of this project. Matt Biro and Rebecca Zurier have been wonderful teachers, and each has provided me with sage and wonderfully practical advice during my time at Michigan. I thank Dario Gaggio for

taking interest in my work and providing an outside perspective. Special thanks go to David Doris who has not only pushed me to become a better thinker and writer, but whose kindness and support helped me through some of the more trying moments of the process.

Researching for this project took me to numerous cities across the United States and Europe, and I am deeply grateful for the assistance and support I received from the numerous colleagues and institutions I encountered along the way. The Archives of American Art in Washington, D.C. allowed me to look through all of the Robert Smithson Papers and over two visits, helped me track down original drawings crucial to my research. In New York, I was able to access key materials at the Library of the Museum of Modern Art, and the staff at DIA granted me access to their holdings related to Beuys's *Arena*. I owe tremendous thanks to Melissa Passman and Louise Neri at the Gagosian Gallery, who answered all of my questions about Kusama and provided access to her photographic archives and other research materials. The Estate of David Smith opened their door and photographic files to me. I would especially like to thank Susan Cooke for her enthusiasm, patience, and assistance, and Peter Stevens for answering my questions about Smith's relationship with Mulas.

I could not have asked for a better place to begin my research in Italy during the summer of 2010 than the American Academy in Rome. I was able to stay on their beautiful grounds as a Visiting Scholar, which proved a nurturing environment in which to begin the project in earnest. Also in Rome, I also owe most sincere thanks to Fabio Sargentini and Claudio Abate who were kind enough to meet with me and talk about their experiences in the Italian avant-garde art scene of the 1960s. The Arthur & Janet C. Ross

Library at the American Academy, the Biblioteca di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, and the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma all provided invaluable resources during my stay in Rome.

In Spoleto, I owe deepest thanks to Dr. Antonella Pesola and the Archives of Giovanni Caradente at the Civica d'Arte Moderna. It was such an incredible experience to go through Caradente's papers and handle the amazing photographs and letters related to *Sculture nella città*. Even through language barriers, Antonella was so helpful in answering my questions and providing me with more materials and resources than I ever thought would be available. In Venice, Elena Cazzaro at the Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee of La Biennale di Venezia helped me access the over twenty boxes of press materials and photographs related to the 1966 Venice Biennale. In Turin, the libraries and archives at the Galleria d'Arte Moderna and Castello di Rivoli each provided key pieces of research. In Milan, I owe special thanks to Dr. Sharon Hecker who was kind enough to meet with me and discuss my project, and the Archivio Ugo Mulas, who gave me access to all of Mulas' photographs and proofs from *Sculture nella città*. Valentina Mulas proved a knowledgeable and eager resource in discussing her father's photographic process and I sincerely thank her for her time.

During the middle of my research in Italy, I was also fortunate to spend two weeks in England at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds. They provided me with invaluable research support and a vibrant community dedicated to the study of sculpture. I would like to thank Jon Wood, Kirstie Gregory and the entire staff of the library, who made me feel so welcome. Back in the States, Nancy Holt, Smithson's widow, answered many of my questions, and Janice Dillard at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

helped me track down materials related to Smithson's second "dump" enacted in Chicago in 1969.

I was also able to work and research back at the Nasher Sculpture Center as a Curatorial Fellow during the dissertation process. My time in Dallas, both at the NSC and at Southern Methodist University, was formative for my life and academic career. My connection to the NSC and the amazing staff there remains a constant source of support. Most sincere thanks go to Stephen Ross, for his special brand of encouragement and endlessly helpful insights, and to Jed Morse who has not only proved a wonderful boss and mentor, but has also become a most valued friend. The Department of Art History at SMU not only gave me the foundational skills necessary to complete graduate level work, but also continued to nourish me as a scholar well after my time as master's student there was over. I was grateful to have the opportunity to teach in their department and present sections of this project as an invited speaker. Returning there truly felt like going home and I am forever grateful for the guidance and support of Janis Bergman-Carton, Randall Griffin, Adam Herring, and Pamela Patton.

None of my research would have been possible without the generous support of the Calvin French Fellowship Fund, the Rackham Graduate School, and the Department of the History of Art at the University of Michigan. I must especially thank Betsy Sears, who, while never my teacher, proved a tenacious and most appreciated advocate as Director of Graduate Studies. I am also deeply indebted to the greater academic community at the University of Michigan, especially my colleagues, professors, and staff in the Department of History of Art. Celeste Brusati and Susan Siegfried helped me become a more precise and astute scholar. I was lucky enough to have Debbie Fitch as

Graduate Program coordinator for almost all of my five years at Michigan and am grateful for of her assistance.

When I was deciding where to go to pursue my PhD a former professor gave me the wise advice to go to a “happy place,” and Michigan truly has been that for me – in large part due to the amazing group of fellow students. I was fortunate to meet some graduate students from the English PhD program my first semester and many, including Steve Spiess and Chris Barnes, have proven to be amazing friends and colleagues. From my own department I would like to express my earnest gratitude to both an older group of graduate students, including Ksenya Gurshtein, Kirsten Olds, Chris Bennett, and Monica Huerta, for their support, encouragement, and advice; as well as my cohort members and fellow graduate students whose paths I frequently crossed in the halls of Tappan, including Megan McNamee, Nadia Baadj, Candice Hamelin, Monique Johnson, Linda Lui, Bea Zengotitabengoa, and Anna Wieck. Their friendship and support made Ann Arbor a much more bearable place to live and work. I am certain that I could not have navigated my way through this process without Melanie Sympson and Bridget Gilman, who were not only a part of an incredible multi-state reading exchange support system, but became cherished and beloved friends.

I lived in two states throughout most of my time at Michigan, with my immediate family in a third, which means that I unavoidably neglected many steadfast supporters from afar. My brother Erin and my sister(-in-law) Rebekah had a toddler when I began and they now have two beautiful, growing boys. I am grateful for their love and for always being there when I needed them. Stephanie DelPurgatorio has sustained and supported me in so many ways over the past few years. I feel fortunate to have such a



wonderful, strong, and thoughtful woman as a friend, and I want to thank her for being there with me to turn the pages. No one has had to endure my absence, in both physical presence and the long stretches when I was entrenched writing chapters, more than my husband, Rob Foster. He has been there with me at every step, at every crisis, and has endured the countless half-drunk cups of coffee left on my desk. I could not have asked for a more wonderful partner in life, and am grateful for his often selfless and always loving support.

Finally, I must, however inadequately, express most sincere gratitude to my parents, Kathleen and Patrick Sullivan. They have supported and encouraged me as a scholar and individual unconditionally from day one. All of their thoughtful emails, late night phone calls, and perfectly timed pep talks sustained me throughout the process. My mother read every single word of every single draft along the way. Her insights were always helpful and critiques always spot on. I want to thank her for her honesty, wisdom, and time – it is to her that I dedicate this dissertation.

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
List of Figures .....	xi
Abstract .....	xix
Chapter 1 Introduction: Sculpture as Arena .....	1
Photography as Non-Medium .....	6
Material Dispersions .....	13
Chapter 2 Sculpture as (Group) Installation: David Smith and <i>Sculture nella Città</i> , 1962 .....	21
<i>Sculture nella città</i> .....	23
Disinterested Utopianism and Collaborative Patronage .....	27
The <i>Voltri</i> .....	39
Invasion or Integration .....	46
Exchanging Ghosts for Reality .....	60
Chapter 3 Sculpture as Staged Environment: Yayoi Kusama and the 1966 Venice Biennale .....	73
<i>Narcissus Garden</i> and La XXXIII Biennale di Venezia .....	75
Sculptural Environments .....	89
Performance and Photography .....	101

Remnants and Residuum .....	113
Chapter 4 Sculpture as Action:	
Robert Smithson's <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969 .....	120
The Specifics of Site .....	122
Action as Material/ Entropy as Form.....	130
Slow Dissolves.....	143
The After of Ephemerality .....	157
Chapter 5 Sculpture as Multiple:	
Joseph Beuys's <i>Arena</i> , 1972 .....	160
From Naples to New York .....	163
Supplements.....	178
Between Image and Object.....	195
Sculpture as Multiple .....	205
Coda .....	207
Figures .....	210
Bibliography.....	368

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , October 1969 .....	210
Figure 2. Installation view of the exhibition, <i>The Family of Man</i> , 1955.....	211
Figure 3. Ed Ruscha, <i>Twentysix Gasoline Stations</i> , 1963 .....	212
Figure 4. Michelangelo Pistoletto, <i>Oggetti in meno (Minus Objects)</i> , 1965/66 .....	213
Figure 5. Michelangelo Pistoletto, <i>Palla di giornali (Ogetti in meno)</i> , 1966.....	214
Figure 6. Film stills from Ugo Nespolo, <i>Buongiorno Michelangelo</i> , 1967.....	215
Figure 7. Michelangelo Pistoletto, <i>Mappamondo (World Map/ Globe)</i> , 1966-68.....	216
Figure 8. David Smith, <i>Voltri III – XXII</i> , 1962 .....	217
Figure 9. Beverly Pepper working at Italsider di Piombino, 1962.....	218
Figure 10. Eugenio Carmi working at Italsider di Cornigliano, 1962.....	219
Figure 11. David Smith with workers at Italsider di Voltri, 1962 .....	220
Figure 12. David Smith outside Italsider di Voltri, 1962 .....	221
Figure 13. David Smith working at Italsider di Voltri, 1962.....	222
Figure 14. David Smith working at Italsider di Voltri, 1962.....	223
Figure 15. David Smith holding metal pieces at Voltri, 1962 .....	224
Figure 16. David Smith, <i>Voltri I</i> , 1962.....	225
Figure 17. David Smith, <i>Voltri XVIII</i> , 1962.....	226
Figure 18. David Smith, <i>Volti VI</i> , 1962.....	227
Figure 19. Alberto Giacometti, <i>The Chariot</i> , 1950.....	228

Figure 20. David Smith, <i>Voltri XIII</i> , 1962.....	229
Figure 21. David Smith, <i>Voltri VIII</i> , 1962.....	230
Figure 22. Henry Moore, <i>Reclining Figure</i> , 1957.....	231
Figure 23. Augusto Perez, <i>Il Re</i> , 1959.....	232
Figure 24. Giacomo Manzù, <i>La grande chiave</i> , 1959.....	233
Figure 25. Henry Moore, <i>Glenkiln Cross</i> , 1955-56.....	234
Figure 26. Lucio Fontana, <i>Virginia</i> , 1961.....	235
Figure 27. Ettore Colla, <i>La Grande Spirale</i> , 1962.....	236
Figure 28. Beverly Pepper, <i>Leda</i> , 1962.....	237
Figure 29. David Smith, <i>Voltri II</i> , 1962.....	238
Figure 30. David Smith, <i>Cubi IX</i> , 1961.....	239
Figure 31. Alexander Calder, <i>Teodelapio</i> , 1962.....	240
Figure 32. Alexander Calder, Preliminary sketches for <i>Teodelapio</i> , 1962.....	241
Figure 33. Spoleto municipal bus ticket, 2010.....	242
Figure 34. Exhibition sign for <i>Sculture nella città</i> , 1962.....	243
Figure 35. Letter from Giovanni Toscano, 1962.....	244
Figure 36. Press clippings on <i>Sculture nella Città</i> , 1962.....	245
Figure 37. Lynn Chadwick, <i>Stranger III</i> , 1959.....	246
Figure 38. Germaine Richier, <i>Le Roi</i> and <i>Le Reine</i> , 1962.....	247
Figure 39. Alexander Calder, <i>Le Veuve Noire (The Black Widow)</i> , 1959.....	248
Figure 40. Hans (Jean) Arp, <i>Apparat d'une danse</i> , 1962.....	249
Figure 41. Marino Marini, <i>Cavallo e Cavaliere (Horse and Rider)</i> , 1955-57.....	250
Figure 42. David Smith, <i>Voltri VI</i> , 1962.....	251

Figure 43. David Smith, <i>Voltri VII</i> , 1962 .....	252
Figure 44. David Smith, <i>Voltri X</i> , 1962.....	253
Figure 45. David Smith, photographic proof of <i>Voltri X</i> .....	254
Figure 46. David Smith, <i>Voltri X</i> , 1962.....	255
Figure 47. David Smith, photographic proof of <i>Compass Circle (Voltri)</i> , 1962 .....	256
Figure 48. David Smith, <i>Compass Circle (Voltri)</i> , 1962.....	257
Figure 49. Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy, 2010.....	258
Figure 50. Nighttime installation view of David Smith's <i>Voltri</i> , 1962 .....	259
Figure 51. Lynn Chadwick, <i>Stranger III</i> , 1962.....	260
Figure 52. Present day installation view of Lynn Chadwick's <i>Stranger III</i> , 1962 .....	261
Figure 53. Alexander Calder, <i>Teodelapio</i> , 1962.....	262
Figure 54. Present day installation view of Alexander Calder's <i>Teodelapio</i> , 1962.....	263
Figure 55. Yayoi Kusama in front of <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966 .....	264
Figure 56. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966.....	265
Figure 57. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966.....	266
Figure 58. Lucio Fontana and Yayoi Kusama standing in <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966 .....	267
Figure 59. Lucio Fontana and Yayoi Kusama at Fontana's studio, Milan, 1966 .....	268
Figure 60. Map of the XXXIII Venice Biennale, 1966 .....	269
Figure 61. Satellite view of Italian Pavilion and Venice Biennale grounds, 2010 .....	270
Figure 62. Carlo Scarpa, <i>Il padiglione del libro</i> (Book Pavilion).....	271
Figure 63. Ay-O, <i>Tactile Room</i> , 1966 .....	272
Figure 64. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Accumulation No. 2</i> , 1962 .....	273
Figure 65. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Driving Image Show</i> , 1964.....	274

Figure 66. Yayoi Kusama and Renato Cardazzo at <i>Driving Image Show</i> , 1966 .....	275
Figure 67. Installation view of Yayoi Kusama's <i>Driving Image Show</i> , 1966 .....	276
Figure 68. Lucio Fontana, <i>Ambiente spaziale bianco</i> , 1966.....	277
Figure 69. Detail of <i>Ambiente spaziale bianco</i> , 1966.....	278
Figure 70. Yayoi Kusama interacting with <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966.....	279
Figure 71. Detail of Yayoi Kusama, <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966 .....	280
Figure 72. Yayoi Kusama with macaroni mannequin, 1964 .....	281
Figure 73. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Infinity Mirror Room – Phalli's Field</i> , 1965.....	282
Figure 74. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Kusama's Peep Show/Endless Love Show</i> , 1966.....	283
Figure 75. Lucas Samaras, <i>Room No. 2</i> , 1966 .....	284
Figure 76. Allan Kaprow, <i>Yard</i> , 1961 .....	285
Figure 77. Allan Kaprow, <i>Yard</i> , 1961 .....	286
Figure 78. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966.....	287
Figure 79. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966.....	288
Figure 80. Press clippings of Yayoi Kusama, c. 1968.....	289
Figure 81. Lucio Fontana executing an incision, 1964 .....	290
Figure 82. David Smith welding at the Voltri Centre, 1966.....	291
Figure 83. Jackson Pollock painting, 1950 .....	292
Figure 84. Yayoi Kusama, untitled photo collage, c. 1966.....	293
Figure 85. Gallery announcements for Yayoi Kusama's <i>Driving Image Show</i> , 1964 .....	294
Figure 86. Yayoi Kusama standing in her environment <i>Aggregation</i> , 1964 .....	295
Figure 87. Installation view of <i>Aggregation</i> , 1965 .....	296
Figure 88. Yayoi Kusama posing with her <i>Accumulation No. 2</i> , 1964.....	297

Figure 89. Artists at the <i>Nul</i> exhibition opening, Stedelijk Museum, 1965 .....	298
Figure 90. Yayoi Kusama interacting with <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 1966.....	299
Figure 91. Yayoi Kusama, <i>Infinity Mirror Room</i> , 1965 .....	300
Figure 92. Protestors of XXXIV Venice Biennale, 1968 .....	301
Figure 93. Closed-off gallery at the XXXIV Venice Biennale, 1968. ....	302
Figure 94. Pino Pascali in his gallery at the 1968 Venice Biennale.....	303
Figure 95. Pino Pascali, <i>Vedova Blu (Blue Widow)</i> , 1968.....	304
Figure 96. Yayoi Kusama with a reconstruction of <i>Narcissus Garden</i> , 2000 .....	305
Figure 97. Eliseo Mattiacci, <i>Percorso</i> , 1969 .....	306
Figure 98. Jannis Kounellis, <i>Senza titolo (Dodici Cavalli)</i> , 1969.....	307
Figure 99. Robert Smithson, <i>Mud Flow with Mirrors</i> , 1969 .....	308
Figure 100. Robert Smithson, <i>Spiral Jetty</i> , 1970 .....	309
Figure 101. Robert Smithson, <i>Dialectics of Site and Nonsite</i> , 1969 .....	310
Figure 102. Robert Smithson, <i>Nonsite, Oberhausen, Germany</i> , 1968.....	311
Figure 103. Robert Smithson, <i>Mirror Displacement (Cayuga Salt Mine Project)</i> , 1969 .....	312
Figure 104. Robert Smithson, <i>Site of Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969.....	313
Figure 105. Robert Smithson, <i>Hot Asphalt – Earth</i> , 1969.....	314
Figure 106. Robert Smithson, <i>Nonsite, Oberhausen, Germany</i> , 1968.....	315
Figure 107. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Lump</i> , 1969 .....	316
Figure 108. Robert Smithson, <i>Concrete Pour</i> , 1969 .....	317
Figure 109. Robert Smithson, <i>Glue Pour</i> , 1969.....	318
Figure 110. Robert Smithson, <i>Glue Pour</i> , 1969.....	319
Figure 111. Robert Smithson, <i>Partially Buried Woodshed</i> , 1970.....	320



Figure 112. Installation photographs of <i>9 at Castelli</i> , 1968 .....	321
Figure 113. Giovanni Anselmo, <i>Senza titolo (Untitled)</i> , 1968 .....	322
Figure 114. Installation view of <i>Op Losse Schroeven</i> , 1969 .....	323
Figure 115. Installation view of <i>When Attitudes Become Form</i> , 1969.....	324
Figure 116. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969 .....	325
Figure 117. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969 .....	326
Figure 118. Robert Morris, <i>Continuous Project Altered Daily</i> , 1969.....	327
Figure 119. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969 .....	328
Figure 120. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969 .....	329
Figure 121. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969 .....	330
Figure 122. Robert Smithson, <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 1969 .....	331
Figure 123. Installation of Jannis Kounellis, <i>Dodici Cavalli</i> , 1969.....	332
Figure 124. Sue Spaid, photographs of the site of <i>Asphalt Rundown</i> , 2010.....	333
Figure 125. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena-dove sarei arrivato se fossi intelligente!</i> , 1972.....	334
Figure 126. Kounellis, Amelio, Celant, and Beuys in Heidelberg, 1971 .....	335
Figure 127. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #82, 1972 .....	336
Figure 128. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #85, 1972 .....	337
Figure 129. Joseph Beuys at the exhibition <i>Strategy: Get Arts</i> , 1970.....	338
Figure 130. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #13, 1972 .....	339
Figure 131. Exhibition announcement card for <i>Arena</i> , 1972.....	340
Figure 132. Joseph Beuys and <i>Arena</i> at L'Attico, 1972.....	341
Figure 133. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , installed at <i>Contemporanea</i> , 1973 .....	342
Figure 134. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , installed at <i>Contemporanea</i> , 1973.....	343

Figure 135. View of <i>Arena</i> from above at Guggenheim Museum, 1979 .....	344
Figure 136. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , 1972, installed at Guggenheim Museum, 1979.....	345
Figure 137. Installation view of <i>Arena</i> at the Dia Center for the Arts, 1992-93 .....	346
Figure 138. Floorplan of Dia:Beacon, 2003 .....	347
Figure 139. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , 1972, installed at Dia:Beacon, 2003.....	348
Figure 140. Joseph Beuys, <i>Fond III/3</i> , 1979 and <i>Fond IV/4</i> , 1979.....	349
Figure 141. Gerhard Richter, <i>Atlas</i> , 1962-present.....	350
Figure 142. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #49, 1972 .....	351
Figure 143. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #47, 1972 .....	352
Figure 144. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #3, 1972 .....	353
Figure 145. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #26, 1972 .....	354
Figure 146. Joseph Beuys, <i>Block Beuys</i> (Raum 2) [Room 2].....	355
Figure 147. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #19, 1972 .....	356
Figure 148. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail of plate #65, 1972 .....	357
Figure 149. Joseph Beuys, <i>How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare</i> , 1965.....	358
Figure 150. Joseph Beuys, Untitled performance, 1964.....	359
Figure 151. Joseph Beuys, <i>Eurasia Siberian Symphony, 34<sup>th</sup> Section</i> , 1963.....	360
Figure 152. Joseph Beuys, <i>Arena</i> , detail plate #72, 1972.....	361
Figure 153. Yves Klein during the performance, <i>Anthropometries</i> , 1960 .....	362
Figure 154. Joseph Beuys, <i>Vitex agnus castus</i> , 1972 .....	363
Figure 155. Joseph Beuys, <i>Vitex agnus castus</i> , 1972 .....	364
Figure 156. Joseph Beuys, Still from <i>Anacharsis Cloots</i> , 1972.....	365
Figure 157. Yves Klein, <i>Le globe bleu</i> , 1957 .....	366

Figure 158. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of panel #10, 1972.....367

## ABSTRACT

### **Material Dispersions: Sculpture, Photography, and International Interventions in Italy, 1962-72**

by

**Marin R. Sullivan**

**Chair: Alexander D. Potts**

The twenty-five years following the end of WWII witnessed an explosion of experimental sculptural projects that embraced new materials and ephemeral installation tactics. These works were often large in scale and displayed in unconventional spaces. While these tendencies emerged internationally in the postwar period, Italy provided an especially active if informal network of progressive patrons, whose support was necessary to facilitate the realization of increasingly ambitious projects. This dissertation focuses on four sculptural works created in Italy by foreign artists, David Smith's *Voltri* series (1962), Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden* (1966), Robert Smithson's *Asphalt Rundown* (1969), and Joseph Beuys' *Arena – dove sarei arrivato se fossi intelligente!* (1972), to examine the emergence of these tendencies. It asserts that as materials and display became more transitory and contingent, photography became a fully integrated element, not a mere document, of the work. While diverse in scope and intent, these four

projects presented sculpture as a node, a center of transaction that was consciously dispersed through photographic components. Each fully embraced the possibilities of the photographic image while remaining committed to the making and display of three-dimensional, physical phenomena. The combined presence of sculptural object and photograph created a fragmented but conjoined work of art that offered a new model of what sculpture could be; not a singular, autonomous “thing,” but an active, dispersed arena of engagement with the physical world, with photographs operating *within* the sculptural phenomena they depict.

## Chapter 1 Introduction: Sculpture as Arena

If we admit that work ‘succeeds’ on some days fails on other days, we may seem to disregard the enduring and stable and to place an emphasis upon the fragile and impermanent. But one can insist, as many have, that only the changing is really enduring and all else is whistling in the dark.

Allan Kaprow<sup>1</sup>

If something wants to be photographed, that is precisely because it does not want to yield up its meaning; it does not want to be reflected upon. It wants to be seized directly, violated on the spot, illuminated in its detail. If something wants to become an image, this is not so as to last, but in order to disappear more effectively.

Jean Baudrillard<sup>2</sup>

In April 1969, the American artist Robert Smithson stated in an interview with P.A. Norvell, “My work is impure; it is clogged with matter. I’m for a weighty ponderous art. There is no escape from matter. There is no escape from the physical nor is there any escape from the mind. The two are in a constant collision course. You might say that my work is like an artistic disaster. It is a quiet catastrophe of mind and matter.”<sup>3</sup> This statement was not published until four years later, in the now seminal text, *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...*, an anthology edited by Lucy Lippard that sought to highlight the pervasive shift away from object making in contemporary art practice. Lippard and Smithson edited the interview together, and

---

<sup>1</sup> Allan Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Baudrillard, “For Illusion is not the opposite of reality...,” in *Photographies 1985-1998* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 199), 129-42. Reprinted in David Campany, *Art and Photography* (London: Phaidon, 2003), 236.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Smithson, “Fragments of an Interview with P.A. Norvell, April, 1969.” This text was edited by Lucy Lippard and Smithson, and subsequently published in, Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 89.

included a single photograph (**figure 1**) of the artist's first large-scale, outdoor sculpture project, *Asphalt Rundown*, completed three months prior just outside of Rome.

The image of *Asphalt Rundown* showed several tons of molten asphalt oozing down a hill in a rock quarry. This photograph presented a radically new vision of sculpture, one that unabashedly emphasized materiality and the ability to, albeit temporarily, reshape and transform the environment. Smithson's work and words seem, perhaps, unlikely inclusions in a book intended to reflect the "gradual deemphasis on sculptural concerns" and the rise of Conceptual Art at the end of 1960s. *Six Years...* expanded on Lippard's notion of dematerialization introduced five years earlier in the essay, "The Dematerialization of Art."<sup>4</sup> Co-authored by John Chandler, the text outlined what they saw as a significant shift in vanguard art practices from the emotional, intuitive approach that dominated the immediate postwar period to an "ultra-conceptual art that emphasizes the thinking process almost exclusively."<sup>5</sup> They declared in the opening paragraph: "Such a trend appears to be provoking a profound dematerialization of art, especially art as object, and if it continues to prevail, it may result in the object's becoming wholly obsolete."<sup>6</sup>

From the beginning, though, "dematerialization" was a contentious term. Lippard recognized that for many artists working at the end of the 1960s, the production of a

---

<sup>4</sup> Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art," *Art International* 12, no. 2 (February 1968). Dematerialization has become primarily associated with Lippard, especially as it relates to the work of the late 1960s and early 1970s, but as a less specific term has been employed on numerous occasions throughout the modern period. Lippard and Chandler themselves co-opted the term from an essay written by the avant-garde composer John Cage in 1966 and while the term was fully developed and used a thesis in their 1968 essay, they had used it in "Visible Art and the Invisible World," an essay also published in *Art International*, but a year prior, in May 1967. Jon Wood, David Hulks, and Alex Potts, eds., *Modern Sculpture Reader* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2007), 266.

<sup>5</sup> Lippard and Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art," 31.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

complete object had become “obsolete.” As a result, form became almost an afterthought as text and photodocuments replaced monolithic sculptures and painted canvases, and magazine spreads and 8 x 10 glossy photographs replaced the white walls and parquet floors of the gallery. The term quickly became synonymous with a diverse range of practices, loosely and inconsistently labeled and categorized as land art, performance art, and process art. Conceptual Art was, and still is, a nebulous and unfortunately homogenizing categorization, but even for artists whose work was undeniably “conceptual,” dematerialization was misleading.<sup>7</sup> Terry Atkinson, a member of the Conceptual Art collective, Art & Language, published a letter in response to Lippard and Chandler’s article. He wrote at length:

It would seem appropriate to define matter as follows: a specialized form of energy which has the attributes of mass and extension in time, and with which we become acquainted through our bodily senses. It is more than plain then that when a material entity becomes dematerialized it does not simply become non-visible (as opposed to visible), it becomes an entity which cannot be perceived by any of our senses. As far as material qualities go, it is simply a non-entity. Thus it seems to me that if you are talking about art-objects dematerializing, then you would be obliged to talk about objects which there was now no material trace; if, on the other hand, you are talking or implying, by virtue of the metaphorical license, that some artists today are using immaterial entities to demonstrate ideas, then you would be talking of ideas that had never had any material concretization. It certainly does not follow that because an object is invisible, or is less visible than it was, or is less visible than another object, that any process of dematerialization has taken place.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Conceptual Art, as used throughout this study, will reference the specific strain of vanguard tendencies emerged at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s (approx. 1966 to 1972) that primarily utilized text or photographs, while “experimental art” will be used to designate the broader, vanguard practices that emerged in the late postwar period. This date range is widely accepted, but admittedly tenuous. Conceptual practice is evident much earlier in the century with artists such as Marcel Duchamp and many of the practices begun during this six-year period continue in our present moment. Recently though, a group of artists, historians, and critics have argued for a more narrowly defined idea of Conceptual Art, exemplified by the text-based work of artists like Joseph Kosuth, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner, and Art & Language. This work is unified by its shared critique of the established structures of art and its reflectivity. As Tony Godfrey writes of this mode of Conceptual Art, “the object refers back to the subject, as in the phrase ‘I am thinking about how I think.’” Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art, Art & Ideas* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 12.

<sup>8</sup> Terry Atkinson, “Concerning the Article ‘The Dematerialization of Art’ (1968),” in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alex Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 52.



In the original preface to *Six Years...*, Lippard acknowledged that “a piece of paper or a photograph is as much an object, or as ‘material,’ as a ton of lead,” but that “for lack of a better term,” she would continue, “to refer to a process of dematerialization, or a deemphasis on material aspects.”<sup>9</sup> *Six Years...*, like any successful critical text, had a particular set of interests, “personal prejudices,” and an “idiosyncratic method of categorization.”<sup>10</sup> The book remains an invaluable overview of the experimental art practices that emerged during the period, but the story it tells, the narrative of the dematerialization of the art object in the 1960s, has unfortunately become attenuated and oversimplified. Dematerialization became entrenched as the cornerstone of the now-standard art historical narrative that exalts this moment as the end of sculpture as a specific and legitimate arena of artistic pursuit. This account depends on the equally assumptive and generalizing narrative that sculpture is tantamount to an autonomous object, and that it can be defined by one “internal logic” that has moved in a clear, linear history throughout the modern period from Auguste Rodin to the Minimalist sculptors of the 1960s.<sup>11</sup>

This study does not seek to invalidate Lippard or her conception of dematerialization, but it does assert that much of the work produced in the 1960s, and

---

<sup>9</sup> Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...* 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. For a thorough re-assessment of Lippard’s conception of dematerialization, see the essay, “Escape Attempts,” published at the beginning of the revised edition of *Six Years*, published in 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44. Krauss perhaps most famously outlined the idea of sculpture’s “internal logic.” In her examination of sculpture or the heterogeneous practices referred to as sculpture in the 1960s and 1970s, she wrote, “We had thought to use a universal category to authenticate a group of particulars, but the category has now been forced to cover such a heterogeneity that it is, itself, in danger of collapsing. And so we stare into the pit of the earth and think we both do and don’t know what sculpture is.” Krauss suggested that sculpture possesses its own internal logic, its own set of rules which is inextricable from “the logic of the monument,” and thus is a vertically oriented, figural, “commemorative representative.”

subsequently reproduced in *Six Years...*, simply does not support the narrow, singular narrative that has developed within art historical scholarship in the forty years since its publication. The works illustrating the text suggest, however, that a profound and continued investigation of materials, of the potential of substance to convey meaning, emerged alongside increasingly dematerialized, conceptually oriented practices. These works suggest nothing short of an alternative “internal logic” of sculpture, one defined by the engagement with matter and the transformation of physical space.

With its inescapable materiality and connotations of permanence and stability, sculpture did come under tremendous strain in the 1960s, and there is no denying that sculptural practice underwent significant formal and conceptual changes due to pressure applied by such developments as the rise of Conceptual Art and, later on, Postmodernism. As the American artist Robert Morris suggested in his essays on new tendencies in sculpture in the second half of the 1960s, what was under attack was not the tangible, the material, or the physical, but the fixed and the rigid.<sup>12</sup> The embrace of new, often ephemeral, materials and display tactics was not lethal to sculptural practice, but reinvigorated the medium and thus the supposed moment of sculpture’s demise, can equally be seen as a moment of liberating experimentation.

Whether sculpture, in the second half of the twentieth-century, was dematerialized or not is no longer the substantive debate that it is often assumed to be. What remains to be examined is how artists retained specific boundaries of the medium, while engaging and manipulating both registers, both its material and immaterial aspects, at once. Sculpture has always been a liminal medium. It exists in the in-between; between

---

<sup>12</sup> See, Robert Morris, “Anti Form,” *Artforum* 6 (April 1968): 33-35; Robert Morris, “Notes on Sculpture, Part 4: Beyond Objects,” *Artforum* 7 (April 1969): 50-54.

painting and architecture, the real and the illusory, the temporal and the spatial, the permanent and the ephemeral. As Alex Potts suggests:

...[T]he more radical forms of three-dimensional art in the mid and later twentieth-century have negated monumentality and permanence, in the interests of highlighting the vivid ephemerality of the living moment or of escaping the reifying logic of the collectible artifact. What gives to such striving for the ephemeral and informal a lot of its urgency, though, is precisely the continuing presence of the monumental, permanent object in the modern artistic imaginary, whether seen as a perversion, perhaps annihilation, of a truly living art, or as a curious, even archaic phantasy that exerts considerable fascination.<sup>13</sup>

This study focuses on four sculptural projects, created between 1962 and 1972. Each fully embraced the possibilities of ephemerality while continuing to make and display three-dimensional, physical forms. Though diverse in scope and intent, these projects presented sculpture as a node, a center of transaction. They provide a means to examine one of the most indeterminate and radical moments in the history of art, a long decade marked by widespread artistic and cultural experimentation that permeated national boundaries and established dogmas, and to explore how and why a distinctly sculptural forms of work continued to advance vanguard artistic practice and theory. Each work collapsed mind into matter, and transformed not only the boundaries of sculpture, but also the limitations of what constitutes a work of art.

### **Photography as Non-Medium**

Photography has always played a crucial role in the dissemination and reception of art, especially sculpture. As vanguard artists in the 1960s began to utilize non-traditional approaches, ephemeral materials and temporary installation tactics, they

---

<sup>13</sup> Alex Potts, "Introduction: The Idea of Modern Sculpture," in *Modern Sculpture Reader*, ed. Jon Wood, David Hulks, and Alex Potts (Leeds Henry Moore Institute, 2007), xiv.

became increasingly dependent on photography. The changing conditions of sculpture coincided with significant re-evaluations of fine art photography as well as a widespread embrace of photography among almost all of the divergent practices of the period. Almost all of the experimental art created in the 1960s involved photography in some capacity and the medium can be understood as a unifying characteristic.<sup>14</sup> Primarily, and especially in the case of sculptural projects, it was used to document actions or temporary phenomena. Many of these artists approached photography with the somewhat naïve view that the camera was an “opinion-less copying device,” an “indifferent mechanical eye, ready to devour anything in its sight.”<sup>15</sup> As David Company writes, “Photography was essential to conceptualism but it approached it as a non-medium...Some of the most significant art of the late 1960s and 1970s was being made in a medium about which the artists didn’t really care too much about, certainly not as guardians or spokespeople.”<sup>16</sup>

Vanguard artists gravitated toward a snapshot-like amateurism, utilizing photography in the most non-glamorous, objective manner they could. This approach concurrently began to appear in the work of fine art photographers, and gained significant support among the medium’s bona fide “guardians,” which, in the 1960s, predominantly meant those associated with the photography department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.<sup>17</sup> From the end of WWII on, with the appointment of the photographer

---

14 Jeff Wall, “Marks of indifference’: Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art (1995),” in *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2003), 254.

15 Robert Smithson, “Art through the Camera’s Eye (1971),” *Kunst & museumjournaal* 5, no. 6 (1994): 16.

16 Company, *Art and Photography*, 18.

17 Jeff Wall is one of the few writers to present a more nuanced reading of the photograph as document in experimental art practices of the late 1960s, but the majority of the literature has consistently propagated the notion that it consistently presented amateurish, objective photographic documents – for the most part, for good reason. For more contemporary discussions of photography in conceptualist-oriented practices see for example: Nancy Foote, “The Anti-Photographers,” *Artforum* 15, no. 1 (1976); Lawrence Alloway,

Edward Steichen as departmental director, MoMA increasingly highlighted the documentary and populist aspects of photography. Steichen staged exhibitions, like *The Family of Man* (1955), which showed a wide range of photographs by noted and amateur photographers alike, often enlarged and displayed in a format more akin to a magazine layout than a fine art exhibition (**figure 2**).

Steichen personally selected John Szarkowski as his successor in 1962. While Szarkowski shared Steichen's interest in a wide range of photographic practices, he aimed to establish "photography in its own aesthetic realm."<sup>18</sup> Over his nearly thirty-year tenure, Szarkowski outlined, in catalogue essays and through his careful curating of photographic works, what he saw as the medium's unique formal vocabulary and a criteria that could be applied in evaluating the aesthetic value of any photograph.<sup>19</sup> For Szarkowski, the photograph was, in and of itself, a special, distinct, and formal object, but the photographers that he championed in the 1960s and 1970s, like Diane Arbus, William Eggleston, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand, were those he saw as the modern heirs of the documentary tradition.<sup>20</sup> These photographers did not embrace the exhausted model of fine art photography promoted earlier in the century by Edward

---

"Artists and Photographers (1970)," in *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography, 1960-1982*, ed. Douglas Fogle (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2003); Francis Colpitt, "The Photograph and the Photographed," *Southern California Art Magazine*, no. 24 (1979). For a thorough and more recent overview see, Matthew S. Witkovsky, ed. *Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photograph, 1964-1977* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2011).

For a thorough discussion on the power and influence exerted by the photography department at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, see: Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," *October* 22 (Autumn 1982).

<sup>18</sup> Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," 56.

<sup>19</sup> John Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966). In one of his most influential essays, published in conjunction with the 1966 exhibition *The Photographer's Eye*, Szarkowski broke down the key elements of a photograph into five categories: The Detail, The Frame, Time, Vantage Point, and The Thing Itself. As these categories suggest, Szarkowski's approach was rooted in the greater formalist, High Modernist, debates of the postwar period.

<sup>20</sup> Company, *Art and Photography*, 23.

Weston or Alfred Stieglitz, but explored the artistic capabilities of the amateur, personal snapshot.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, at the precise moment that vanguard artists in the 1960s turned to photography as an objective, utilitarian “medium of world,” Szarkowski was attempting to merge photography’s unavoidable indexicality with what he saw as its universal aesthetic distinctiveness and value.<sup>22</sup> The discrepancy between artists *creating* photographs and artists *using* photographs played a significant role in revealing, “the conventions by which modern art photography had been characterized. It edged towards an acknowledgement of the way in which photography performs two potentially incompatible functions within the discourse of art: it is at once an art form and the artless mass medium by which all other art forms are reproduced and disseminated.”<sup>23</sup>

Artists using photography self-consciously approached the medium in the blandest way possible, as simply a means to document, to convey information, ideas, or interventions. The perfect print of Ansel Adams or the decisive moment of Henri Cartier-Bresson may have been dismissed, but the new approach employed by vanguard artists using photography still produced a prevalent formal style; a pervasive deadpan aesthetic that was unconvincingly declared non-aesthetic. Edward Ruscha was one of the first artists to use photography in this manner. Describing his photo-book project *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (**figure 3**), published in 1962, he stated:

---

<sup>21</sup> In the wall label introducing the 1970 exhibition *Photography: New Acquisitions*, Szarkowski wrote, “The heirs of the documentary tradition have redirected that idea in light of their own fascination with the snapshot: the most personal, reticent, and ambiguous of these documents. These photographers have attempted to preserve the persuasiveness and mystery of these humble, intuitive camera records, while adding a sense of intention and visual logic. Reprinted in, Phillips, “The Judgment Seat of Photography,” 58.

<sup>22</sup> Company, *Art and Photography*, 23.

<sup>23</sup> David Company, “Conceptual Art History or, A Home for *Homes for America*,” in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Michael Newman and Jon Bird (London: Reaktion, 1999), 124.

Above all, the photographs I use are not ‘arty’ in any sense of the word. I think photography is dead as a fine art; its only place is in the commercial world, for technical or information purposes. I don’t mean cinema photography but still photography, this is, limited edition, individual, hand-processed photos. Mine are simply reproductions of photos. Thus, it is not a book to house a collection of art photographs – they are technical data like industrial photography. To me, they are nothing more than snapshots.<sup>24</sup>

Ruscha’s “snapshots” are visually striking and emblematic of the kind of non-aesthetic, aesthetic that emerged in the 1960s. He maintained that any photographic manipulation, like cropping for example, was not for aesthetic reasons but because of a “consciousness of layout in the book.”<sup>25</sup> What mattered for artists like Ruscha was not the photograph’s formal function but how it would be used and seen in the greater cultural sphere. Regardless of the incongruity between the contemporary rhetoric of artists using photography to serve their specific set of purposes and the now unavoidable recognition of an endemic visual style, the photograph in experimental art practice was rarely, if ever, a standalone image. The photograph often became a collection of images, one among many, devoid of any aesthetic hierarchy, or a photodocument – a hybrid entity made by combining text, images, maps, or other diagrams. The photographic image became a crucial but not principal component of multiple elements comprising a work of art.

The photograph as document became a mandatory component for circulation and reception of a work, but it also emerged as an integral element in the work’s creation. This was especially true of sculptural projects and installations. While a large body of literature exists on the use of photography in Conceptual Art, much less attention has

---

<sup>24</sup> Edward Ruscha and John Coplans, “Concerning ‘Various Small Fires’: Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications,” *Artforum* 3, no. 5 (February 1965). Reprinted in Campany, *Art and Photography*, 223.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

been devoted to how artists deployed photography in conjunction with projects that also involved the creation of substantive material elements. For many of these cases, photography allows the viewer to reconstitute a work that no longer exists, or imagine what an installation or event might have been like to experience. With their often active, unstable materials and multiple incarnations, these works both required, and complicated, a relationship with photography.

Take, for example, the Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto's *Palla di giornali* (*Ball of newspapers*) (1966). Pistoletto first exhibited the work as a part of the *Ogetti in meno* (*Minus Objects*), carefully installed, and photographed as a sculptural group in his studio (**figure 4**). The sculpture, consisting of pressed newspapers, was shown in a more public setting shortly after its creation as a part of the group exhibition *Con temp l'azione* at the Galleria Sperone in Turin (**figure 5**). The artist Ugo Nespolo also captured the journey of *Palla di giornali* through the city streets for his film *Buongiorno Michelangelo* (1969). The photographic stills show Pistoletto outside of the gallery, rolling, carrying, and driving the work through Turin (**figure 6**). For the past forty years, the work has been shown and staged in numerous exhibitions and events, in a variety of capacities, and often modified, enlarged, and sometimes caged in an iron structure as the version entitled *Mappamondo* (**figure 7**). Each manifestation incorporated subsequent photographic elements. The resulting mass of photographs presents both a complete and fragmented view of *Palla di giornali*, calling our attention to how integral photography is to our understanding of the work, but also exposing photography's contradictory limitations.

In its transformation into an image or a group of images, *Palla di giornali*, as Jean Baudrillard suggests, never establishes a fixed identity and refuses to yield its meaning.



Something of the dynamism and contingency of these types of experimental sculptural projects is inevitably lost as it becomes abstracted and stabilized in any single two-dimensional photograph; but the subsequent translation of the project into an image remains an invaluable residuum of the dispersed and ephemeral conditions of the more experimental forms of work. The photographs convey crucial information while subverting the primacy of the rectangular image. They serve as residues for communication, reminders of “a radical art that had already vanished.”<sup>26</sup>

In the 1960s, photography and sculpture formed an unequal but symbiotic relationship. The images made in conjunction with these experimental projects were not created as autonomous photographs, uniquely titled, attributed, or appreciated. They do however, remain inextricable from the material phenomena they depict, and help the viewer to re-imagine installations, displays, or constitutions of the object that are no longer extant. The photograph may not adequately convey the intended experience of the work as it existed in its physical form, but it does create a powerful, if complicated, conception of the work; one that evades definition as a single, stable object.

The difference between more materially minded experimental projects and their Conceptual Art counterparts is that a potent suggestion of the existence of a work of art beyond the photographic image is always suggested. Even when some version of the sculptural object still exists, the presence of the photograph discloses the tension between the material and the immaterial – the how it is of the present and the how it might have been of the past. Unlike purely Conceptual Art projects, these photographs of material phenomena provoke the viewer to envision something beyond the frame, while

---

<sup>26</sup> Alison de Lima Greene, “Dennis Oppenheim: No Photography,” *Spot* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 5.

concurrently acting as a reminder that the actions, interventions, and temporary configurations they depict now only reside within it. Photographs are not objective documents, nor can they be taken as surrogates for the phenomena they show, but envisaged as an integral component of a work, they did play a crucial role in the radical reformulation of sculpture during the 1960s. The combined presence of sculptural object and photograph in these projects create a fragmented, but connected, network that offers a new model for understanding sculpture; not as a singular, autonomous object, but as an active, dispersed, and fleeting arena of engagement with the physical world.

### **Material Dispersions**

Experimental sculpture projects that were so transient as to necessitate complex photographic components also became dependent on a much larger support structure. Sculpture in the 1960s, with its expanding scale, unorthodox materials, and new modes of staging and installation, increasingly demanded a collaborative network of supplementary figures. The artist could no longer create in solitary isolation, carving or casting a distinct studio-made object. He or she became a creative director, orchestrating a highly collaborative event. Sculpture was transformed by the interconnectivity of its multiple parts and players, actively engaging the contemporary world through the matter of the everyday.

New York and the American art market continued to be the driving force of the international art world in the 1960s, but opportunities for artists wanting to work in this manner of sculptural experimentation were scarce. This tendency was not limited to American artists, however, and the period marks a significant, if brief, flourishing of a

group of international artists united by their shared approach to materials and desire to subvert established modes of art making. European galleries and exhibition spaces, curators, critics, and collectors were far more supportive of this kind of work than their American counterparts were. As the American sculptor, Dan Flavin recalled in 1972, “There are critics in New York who profess familiarity with what I do....They probably only know 25% of what I’ve done since most of the large installations have been done in Europe.”<sup>27</sup>

From London to Düsseldorf to Turin and Rome numerous group exhibitions were organized throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, bringing together artists of various nationalities with the expressed desire to have them create work that responded to the site and shared a similar experimental approach. These group exhibitions were imbued with the spirit of “action” and the work produced was predominantly sculptural, hybrid, and temporary. Even Lippard in the preface to *Six Years...* discussed what she called Europe’s “reawakening,” stating, “There is a gallery and museum structure [in Europe], but it is so dull and irrelevant to new art that there’s a feeling that it can be bypassed, that new things can be done, voids filled. Whereas in New York, the present gallery-money power structure is so strong that it’s going to be very difficult to find a viable alternative to it.”<sup>28</sup>

Italy, in particular, offers a rich context to examine not only the rapidly shifting and expanding role of sculpture in the 1960s, but also the medium’s relationship to photography. The Italian art scene of the 1960s was diverse and marked by an inquisitive,

---

<sup>27</sup> As quoted in, Phyllis Tuchman, “That wasThen, and This is Now: The View from New York,” in *Painting, Object, Film, Concept: Works from the Herbig Collection* (New York: Christie's, 1998), 21.

<sup>28</sup> Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...* 8.

self-reflexive, and intensely radical spirit. Often overlooked and marginalized in the art historical scholarship on the postwar period, Italy was a major site of contest in an increasingly globalized art world. A vibrant social and professional network produced an explosion of cultural output in film, literature, criticism, and the visual arts in Italy during the 1960s.<sup>29</sup> Umberto Eco's *Opera aperta (The Open Work)* (1962) was especially influential across a wide range of disciplines. For Eco, modern art was "deliberately and systematically ambiguous," operating at the center of a "field of possibilities," and offering a "plurality of possible readings." In short, the "open work" is a "work in progress."<sup>30</sup> Reverberating through much of the art produced in 1960s Italy was a utopian desire to break down conventions, allow meaning to be fluid, and explore ambiguity as an artistic strategy.<sup>31</sup> As Eco stated decades later, "The 1960s were extraordinary, for we thought that a revolution of the languages of art could transform the world. And this conviction brought down the boundaries between the genres, between word, image, object."<sup>32</sup>

The Italian visual art scene was particularly primed to engage foreign artists pushing the boundaries of sculpture due to the development of its own regional, vanguard

---

<sup>29</sup> Groundbreaking films by Federico Fellini, Michelangelo Antonioni, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Sergio Leone, among many others, were released throughout the decade and directly explored the implications of the new modern, postwar condition in Italy. Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, and Antonio Negri made significant contributions in literature. Criticism devoted to architecture, design, visual arts, literature, theater, and film was published in the numerous journals and magazines established during the decade including *Bit* and *Domus*.

<sup>30</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. Anna Cancogni (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 14-23.

<sup>31</sup> For example the noted Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini, remarked, "I have already said that I love shipwrecks. So I am happy to be living at a time when everything is capsizing. It's a marvelous time, for the very reason that a whole series of ideologies, concepts and conventions is being wrecked." Federico Fellini, *Fellini on Fellini*, ed. Anna Keel and Christian Strich (London: Eyre Methuen, 1976), 157.

<sup>32</sup> Umberto Eco, "You must remember this..." in *The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-1968*, ed. Germano Celant (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1994), xiv.

tendency, Arte Povera.<sup>33</sup> With its rich cultural offerings stretching back to Antiquity as well as the more modern Venice Biennale, Italy has always welcomed foreign artists, but the emergence of Arte Povera gave Italian artists equal footing to their international postwar contemporaries. Like the parallel, Postminimalist or Process art tendencies that emerged on the other side of the Atlantic, Arte Povera has always been difficult to define, especially in light of the critical stronghold of the curator and critic Germano Celant, who coined the term in 1967. As Claire Gilman writes, “What unites the artists under discussion, it seems, is not specific materials and processes, but rather the radically unstable terrain that each occupies, a terrain that exists somewhere between materiality and immateriality, or with the perpetual exchange between opposing forces or conditions.”<sup>34</sup>

Italian institutions, and the newly formed network of galleries across Italy that helped Arte Povera flourish, were active in providing new kinds of exhibition spaces, creative freedom, and financial support to both Italian and non-Italian artists alike. Also present in Italy was an extensive, collaborative patronage model in which the person or group organizing the sculptural event played a central role in the creation of the work. That so many notable sculptural projects were produced in Italy during this time speaks not only to an emerging and fluid international art scene, but also to one that was increasingly affected by the specifics of place.

---

<sup>33</sup> For a more complete discussion of Arte Povera see, for example, Germano Celant, *Arte Povera* (Milano: G. Mazzotta Editore, 1969); Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Arte Povera* (London: Phaidon, 2005); Richard Flood and Frances Morris, *Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera, 1962-1972* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2001); Robert Lumley, *Arte Povera* (London: Tate 2004); Rainald Schumacher, *Arte Povera from the Goetz Collection* (München: Sammlung Goetz, 2001). Also see Claire Gilman, ed., “Postwar Italian Art,” Special issue, *October* 124 (Spring 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Claire Gilman, “Introduction,” *October* 124 (Spring 2008): 7.

Within such a geographic and historical context, this study focuses on four primary projects: David Smith's *Voltri* series (1962), Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden* (1966), Robert Smithson's *Asphalt Rundown* (1969), and Joseph Beuys' *Arena – dove sarei arrivato se fossi intelligente!* (*Arena – where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*) (1972). Each of these case studies is distinct. They emphasize different concerns and approaches, but collectively, they constitute a rich and interconnected cross-section of sculptural practice, and thus vanguard artistic practice, of the 1960s. They share similar circumstances of production, material properties, and radical installation practices. All four questioned and complicated established definitions of sculpture while remaining committed to the creation of physical, three-dimensional objects. They provide a way to explore how sculpture became something beyond its traditional boundaries, a means to understand how sculpture became an installation, a staged environment, an action, and multiple.

All four of these projects were collaborative, constructed in a complicated network of creation, patronage, and staging; not merely exhibited in Italy, but directly shaped by the specifics of place. The Italian curator Giovanni Carandente was responsible for facilitating the creation of Smith's famous series of steel sculptures and their landmark installation in the ancient Roman arena of Spoleto for the international sculpture exhibition, *Sculture nella città* in 1962. While Smith, perhaps, seems like an unlikely choice for a study of ephemeral materials and transitory display tactics, the *Voltri* series not only marks a significant shift in his own practice in terms of siting and placement, but also serves as a prime example of a total, integrated group installation and the ability of sculpture to alter an environment. Kusama's project, created in conjunction

with the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale and consisting of hundreds of mirrored plastic spheres placed in front of the Italian Pavilion, also explored the possibilities of creating an expansive sculptural environment. The Italian artist Lucio Fontana and Claudio Cardazzo, an important Italian gallery owner, helped facilitate the creation of *Narcissus Garden*, but the work gained much of its resonance from the illustrious international setting and Kusama's shrewd insertion of herself into what was an unstable, dynamic installation.

Two pioneering Italian gallerists were also instrumental in the execution of Smithson and Beuys' projects. In the case of the former, Fabio Sargentini, the owner of Galleria L'Attico, invited Smithson to come to Rome, found a site in an abandoned quarry, and procured the machinery and materials that enabled the artist to execute the dumping of several tons of hot asphalt down a hillside. *Asphalt Rundown* was a pure, physical manifestation of process and embraced not only the specifics of site. The specifics of materials both shaped the work and caused its eventual and irrevocable disappearance. The insistence on materials and active processes was also present in Beuys' project. Created at the request of Lucio Amelio who first showed the piece in his Naples Gallery, Modern Art Agency, and was a major proponent in the work's international exposure, *Arena* is a massive, complex photo-based sculpture, a heterogeneous collection of multiple parts. Created at the beginning of the 1970s, this work serves as means to evaluate, reflectively, the developments of the previous decade as well as anticipating the legacy of this moment in more recent art practices.

Collaboration and cross-cultural dialogues in Italy were not limited to innovative patrons and organizers or novel exhibition venues. All of these projects integrated

sophisticated photographic components that documented the multiple, transitory elements of the work, and effectively solidified or fused them together. The Italians were especially conscious of both the need for photographic documentation and the complex issues it raised in determining the parameters of what constituted the work of art. Artists of all nationalities within the burgeoning international avant-garde of the 1960s turned to a small group of photographers not only to document their work but also to capture its “spirit.” Closer examination reveals that this group was predominantly comprised of Italian photographers. These included Ugo Mulas, who famously shot the majority of the photographs of David Smith in the process of creating the *Voltri* series as well as their subsequent installation in Spoleto; Gianfranco Gorgoni, whose work was frequently published in key texts from the period and includes the iconic shot of Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* (1970); and Claudio Abate and Paolo Mussat Sartor, who served as the in-house photographers at the Galleria L’Attico and the Galleria Sperone, respectively.

The collaborative process between the photographer and the artist shaped the creation of the work, its execution, and the subsequent installation(s). The material aspects of these four projects were, and have become, dispersed, and some only exist today in reconstructed form or through photographic and textual records. Each project, from the outset, was constituted in part through the extensive photographic material they generated. Photographs did not function in any of these projects as mere documents of record or publicity stills, but connected the various experimental elements of the work, from the coordinated processes of creation to the various installations and incarnations. Today, we need not just recognize the extent to which the photographs shape our impressions of the work. We also have a pressing responsibility to analyze them as an



integral aspect of sculptural practice; not to take them at face value as “objective” documentation or disconnected afterthoughts.

The resulting photographs of these projects present multiple views of the same sculpture, which after all is not a new phenomenon in sculptural practice, and establish a provocative and profound tension between the physical three-dimensional form and the haunting two-dimensional image. Through the photographic components, these works are both forever present and irretrievably lost in an unrepeatable configuration or installation. By acknowledging that the photographs operate *within* the sculptural phenomena they depict, we can gain not only a greater understanding of sculpture, but also productively complicate the established notions of what constitutes a work of art.

The diverse sculptural projects examined in this study dispensed with the long held assumption that a successful sculpture is a permanent, stable object, while refusing to abandon its profound, intrinsic engagement with materials. In embracing the possibilities of failure, disappearance, and fracture, these projects became hybrid objects, existing as both material phenomena and photographic image. They suggest an alternative way in which the work of art has been rethought through the medium of sculpture, at once beyond the limits of the object’s physical boundaries and firmly anchored to them. These works speak not of a dematerialization of the sculptural object in the 1960s, but to a multiplicity of materializations that allow us to see and experience sculpture as a series of palpable but fleeting encounters.

## Chapter 2

### Sculpture as (Group) Installation: David Smith and *Sculture nella città*, 1962

“People wanting to be told something, *given the last word*, will not find it in art. Art is not didactic. It is not final; it is always waiting for the projection of the viewer’s perceptive powers....In a sense a work of art is never finished.”

David Smith<sup>1</sup>

“Viva le sculture per la città!”

Exhibition slogan, *Sculture nella città*<sup>2</sup>

On 9 December 1962, a full two-page photograph (**figure 8**) depicting a curious installation of sculpture confronted readers of London’s *Sunday Times* magazine. The image showed ten steel works, all by the American sculptor David Smith, installed in an Ancient Roman amphitheater; modern, abstract presences, in the midst of stone ruins and crumbling arches, rendered almost solid black in their translation to photographic print. The photograph, striking in its aesthetics and mesmerizing in its subject matter, served as the anchor image of a feature written by the noted art critic David Sylvester on *Sculture nella città* (*Sculpture in the City*), an extraordinary exhibition that took place in Spoleto, Italy the previous summer.<sup>3</sup> Taken by the Italian photographer Ugo Mulas, this picture has become an iconic, integral image of one of the most impressive projects in the history of twentieth century sculpture.

---

<sup>1</sup> David Smith, from a speech, “Perception and Reality,” given at Williams College, 17 December 1951. Reprinted in David Smith, *David Smith*, ed. Garnett McCoy (New York: Praeger, 1973), 78.

<sup>2</sup> This slogan, “Long live sculptures for the city,” was printed on small bumper-sticker sized paper. It was posted all around Spoleto and handed out to people during the run of *Sculture nella città*.

<sup>3</sup> David Sylvester, “The Spoleto Experiment,” *The Sunday Times*, no. 7282 (9 December 1962).

Smith created these works, all entitled *Voltri*, after accepting an invitation to come to Italy and participate in the exhibition. *Sculture nella città* was a landmark event, but it serves, especially in American art history as it did in Sylvester's article, as little more than an exotic backdrop for one of Smith's most prolific and significant moments. While Smith's involvement was certainly crucial to the success and the lasting notoriety of the exhibition, it was equally the case that the intentions and resources of the exhibition and its organizers enabled Smith to create in a radically new manner. The exhibition established both a new, collaborative patronage model for sculptural projects and a pioneering installation program that helped change where and how sculpture could be seen.

Ultimately, Smith could not have created the *Voltri* series without the circumstances of *Sculture nella città*, and the exhibition would not have been as influential and successful without Smith's participation. It was together that they created a new model for the making, viewing, and reception of sculpture. This chapter examines what those circumstances were, and argues that what makes Mulas' photograph, and the work it depicts, so significant is the emphasis on installation as a crucial component of a new, complex, and elaborate sculptural production. The photograph depicted a temporary display, a group of sculptures in dialogue with each other, its site, and its surroundings, that fused together to create a new definition of sculpture. Smith's collection of *Voltri* served as a microcosm of the entire exhibition that presented sculpture not as isolated and complete, but multiple, contingent, and relational.

## *Sculture nella città*

*Sculture nella città* was a one-time event. It was staged in conjunction with the fifth annual *Festival dei Due Mondi (Festival of Two Worlds)*, the performing arts festival held every summer in Spoleto, a small hillside town about an hour northeast of Rome. The organizers wanted to incorporate the visual arts and asked Giovanni Carandente to curate and organize a complementary art exhibition. Carandente was a professor, curator, and, up until his death in 2009, one of the most important art historians in Italy. His desire to put together a major outdoor sculpture exhibition was sparked by his involvement with *Twentieth Century Italian Sculptors*, an exhibition held in the public gardens of Messina, Sicily in 1957.<sup>4</sup>

From the very beginning, Carandente intended to make the exhibition grand in scale and scope. *Sculture nella città* was the first large, international modern sculpture exhibition to take place outdoors in an urban environment, and he envisioned sculptures placed in the real, lived space of a city, in its streets and piazzas. Spoleto, a small Umbrian town known for its layered Etruscan, Ancient Roman, and Renaissance history, provided a dynamic backdrop for the display of modern sculpture. Carandente understood that in order to generate interest in the exhibition, he would have to assemble the most notable sculptors of the day. He paired contemporary Italian sculptors with noted, international figures like Smith, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, and Alexander Calder, who instantly raised the profile of the exhibition. Ultimately, fifty-three sculptors participated, contributing a combined one hundred and two works.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Marianne Adelman, "Sculpture in the Streets," *The Studio* 164, no. 835 (1962): 164-65.

<sup>5</sup> Giovanni Carandente, *Sculpture nella Città, Spoleto* (Spoleto: NE Editrice, 2007). There is a lot of discrepancy regarding the number of works and the participants in the exhibition in the existing body of

On a purely logistical level, the exhibition was a tremendous undertaking. Works came from all over the world; lent directly from artists and collectors or through museums and galleries, including Marlborough and Betty Parsons in New York and Maeght in Paris.<sup>6</sup> Along with the organizing committee of the Festival, works were selected with the help of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which was responsible for the selection of most of the American entries, and the British Council, which facilitated the participation of Kenneth Armitage and Eduardo Paolozzi. Carandente directly approached artists, often using photographs of possible installation sites to help facilitate the discussion. Henry Moore, for example, agreed to participate only after seeing these photographs.<sup>7</sup>

---

literature on the exhibition. The catalogue for the exhibition, as is typical, was published before the opening and did not provide an accurate sampling of the works on display. Some articles appearing in the mainstream media reported on the exhibition before its opening and like the catalogue did not report accurately on the participants or the works. For example, an article appearing in the Italian newspaper *L'Avanti* in April 1962 reported that only 70 sculptures were to be shown. As will be discussed later in this chapter, some of the participants made work shortly before the opening of the exhibition in Italy. The quantity of these works was also not known in time for the publication of the catalogue. See, "Sculture nelle strade e nelle piazze di Spoleto," *L'Avanti!* 19 April 1962. In regards to the participating artists, some confusion was created, in part, because of shipping problems. Picasso's work was not received in time and as a result, he did not actually participate in the exhibition. I take the list of participants and works published in the 2007 commemorative catalogue by Carandente and the Galleria civica d'Arte moderna di Spoleto to be the most accurate. It lists as the participants: Kenneth Armitage, Hans Arp, Kengiro Azuma, André Bloc, Alexander Calder, Eugenio Carmi, Lynn Chadwick, Eduardo Chillida, Ettore Colla, Pietro Consagra, Costas Coulentianos, Harold B. Cousins, Wessel Couzijn, Dusan Dzamonja, Kosso Eloul, Herbert Ferber, Lucio Fontana, Nino Franchina, Franco Garelli, Quinto Ghermandi, Emile Gilioli, Shamaï Haber, Otto Herbert Hajek, Rudolf Hoflehner, Robert Jacobsen, Berto Lardera, Henri Laurens, Leoncillo, Jacques Lipchitz, Seymour Lipton, Carlo Lorenzetti, Giacomo Manzù, Marino Marini, Etienne Martin, Umberto Mastroianni, Luciano Minguzzi, Mirko, Henry Moore, Eduardo Paolozzi, Alicia Penalba, Beverly Pepper, Augusto Perez, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Germaine Richier, James Rosati, Jason Seley, Pablo Serrano, David Smith, Francesco Somaini, Drago Trsar, Alberto Viani, Fritz Wotruba, and Ossip Zadkine.

<sup>6</sup> Adelman, "Sculpture in the Streets," 165.

<sup>7</sup> Martha Leeb Hadzi, "Report from Rome: Sculpture at Spoleto," *Art in America*, no. 4 (1962): 118. Patrick Dolan, President of BBDO International at the time, wrote to Carandente, "My wife and I spent some time with him [Moore] yesterday and the pictures which you sent me were most helpful in convincing Henry that he ought to participate in the Spoleto Festival." Patrick Dolan to Giovanni Carandente, 19 March 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto. Additional correspondence between Carandente and Moore discuss placement and pedestal dimensions through the exchange of diagrams and photographs of the two sites Moore selected for his work. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto.

Carandente imbued the exhibition with progressive elements that spoke to new trends in modern sculpture and made the exhibition truly novel. For him, the past was in the “outdoor museum of Italy’s Classical, Gothic, and Renaissance past,” but the future was “in the steel mills, in industry.” He wanted this exhibition to be a “modernist explosion...with an international band of sculptors serving as shock troops.”<sup>8</sup> He needed additional financial support to accomplish these goals and with Italsider, the newly formed Italian steel conglomerate, he found the means to make these practical and conceptual aspirations a reality.

The Italian government was the majority owner in Italsider, which was formed in 1961 from the merger between the Ilva and Cornigliano blast furnaces and steel mills.<sup>9</sup> It effectively commissioned ten sculptors, six Italian, three American, and one British, to create one or two works for *Sculture nella città*. Calder, Eugenio Carmi, Lynn Chadwick, Ettore Colla, Pietro Consagra, Nino Franchina, Carlo Lorenzetti, Beverly Pepper, Arnaldo Pomodoro, and Smith, did not just send pieces, but came and created at the company’s facilities spread across the Northern half of Italy, specifically for the exhibition.<sup>10</sup> The company paid for the transportation costs of the work and the sculptors, as well as all of the room and board expenses of each artist, often at four star hotels and restaurants. Italsider also covered all miscellaneous costs, including photographs,

---

<sup>8</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, *Beverly Pepper: Sculpture in Place* (Buffalo: Albright-Knox Gallery, 1986), 42.

<sup>9</sup> Francesca Valentini, “Calder. Fotografie di Ugo Mulas. 1962-1971” (Università Ca’ Foscari 2008-09).

<sup>10</sup> Carmi, Chadwick, and Franchina worked at Italsider di Cornigliano, in Genova. Calder, Consagra, and Lorenzetti’s created their works at Italsider di Savona, west of Genova. Pomodoro worked at Italsider di Lovere, northwest of Bergamo. Colla worked at Italsider di Bagnoli south of Padova. Smith was at Voltri, also just west of Genova, and Pepper at Italsider di Piombino, south of Livorno just east of the Island of Elba. See Carandente, *Sculture nella Città, Spoleto*, 145-57.

translators, telegraphs, postage, and secretarial services.<sup>11</sup> In addition to covering these expenses, Italsider opened the doors to its factories and provided all the materials and support labor. They also, in a move rarely seen in corporate commissions, allowed the artists to maintain full ownership over their work after the exhibition concluded.<sup>12</sup>

Italsider had some input into which artists were selected, but Carandente made the final decisions. As the correspondence between the organizers and other historical records show, many of the artists decided to participate based on the involvement of others. Setting off this domino-like chain of events was Beverly Pepper. Carandente first approached Pepper at an exhibition of her wood sculptures in September 1961, at the Galleria Pogliani in Rome. She recalls that he asked if she knew how to weld, to which she replied, “I didn’t say yes and I didn’t say no. I asked why.”<sup>13</sup> Carandente told her that he was organizing a sculpture exhibition in Spoleto and that he had the resources to invite about ten artists to come and work in collaboration with Italsider at their steel centers. As she stated, “When he told me that the exhibition would be seven months later, I decided that I would be able to learn welding by then, so I said yes.” She returned to her home in Monte Mario and immediately apprenticed herself to a blacksmith who made wrought-iron gates.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Unknown author, “Memorandum,” 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto. David Smith’s miscellaneous expenses totaled over 100,000 Italian lire or US\$200, which in today’s terms would be a few thousand US dollars. Werner Antweiler, “PACIFIC Exchange Rate Service: Foreign Currency Units per 1 U.S. Dollar, 1948-2009,” University of British Columbia, <http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/etc/USDpages.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> This was part of the “selling point” presented to Smith as he was deciding whether to participate. Letter from Beverly Pepper to David Smith, 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto.

<sup>13</sup> Krauss, *Beverly Pepper: Sculpture in Place*, 42.

<sup>14</sup> *Beverly Pepper a Forte Belvedere: Trent'Anni di Scultura*, (Milan: Electa, 1989), 23. Pepper also mentioned that Carandente told her “he would like to have another American welder, preferably a woman.” Pepper was the only woman to participate in the show, regardless of nationality.

At the time, Carandente told Pepper that Calder and Smith would also be participating, but since Smith did not accept until late in the spring of 1962, this “selling point” was merely suggestive of Carandente’s intentions and ambitions for the exhibition. Pepper, in fact, helped Carandente secure both Moore’s and Smith’s participation. She sent her own letter to Smith, writing that Carandente was determined to have him participate and that “though he’d be delighted to get *any* sculpture from you, he would like, in addition, for you to see your way clear to working at one the Italsider factories.”<sup>15</sup> Carandente and Giancarlo Menotti, the founder and organizer of the *Festival dei Due Mondi*, felt that Smith’s participation, because of his reputation and previous sustained engagement with steel sculpture, was critical to the success of the exhibition. After many entreaties from both, Smith arrived in Italy on 19 May 1962.<sup>16</sup>

### **Disinterested Utopianism and Collaborative Patronage**

By the opening of the exhibition in June, all of Carandente’s “Ten” had completed their work at the Italsider factories, cognizant and appreciative of such a rare opportunity. They all worked long days alongside the Italsider workers during their brief time in the factories, utilizing all the advanced industrial tools, machinery and materials. Each sculptor embraced the ability to explore scale and size, and in most cases, created the largest works of their careers, to-date. As Smith stated, “It brought out the best in all of

---

<sup>15</sup> Beverly Pepper to David Smith, not dated (1962). Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto. Pepper is also cc’ed on many of the communications between the British Council and Carandente concerning Moore’s involvement.

<sup>16</sup> Jay Jacobs, “David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto,” *Art News Annual* 29 (1964): 45. Smith wrote in his communication with David Sylvester that Menotti had finally got him to agree to participate by agreeing to dedicate one his operas to Smith’s two daughters. David Smith to David Sylvester, 12 November 1962. Reprinted in Giovanni Carandente, *Voltron* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1964), 14-15.



us. Calder did his greatest work there; so did Chadwick and Consagra and Pomodoro and Franchina – the whole Italian group.”<sup>17</sup>

Though spread all across Italy at different times throughout the spring of 1962, each was aware of the other participants, and many communicated regularly throughout the process. There was a sense that they were a part of a network of artists, an “international modernist circle,” on a “historical mission.”<sup>18</sup> As one of the “Ten”, Eugenio Carmi stated,

I have never before constructed a sculpture in one of these Centres [Italsider’s steelworks], so this has been no ordinary experience for me to create one in this environment. It is my opinion that such experiences as these are of paramount importance to the modern artist, because his work is fashioned in a more accurate ‘dimension’ which is closer to the rhythm of these present times. It is created, that is, in a new ‘studio’ which is no longer the ‘room’ of times gone by, but a workshop in the midst of men and their machinery.<sup>19</sup>

It was Carmi, in fact, who played a crucial, if far lesser known role, in Italsider’s patronage of *Sculture nella città*.<sup>20</sup> In 1956, Cornigliano, before its merger into Italsider, hired Carmi to serve as their in-house designer. He was responsible for everything from the color of their file folders to the organization and curating of the company’s international trade exhibitions. He worked closely with the editor of Italsider’s magazine *Rivista Italsider* Carlo Fedeli and the Direttore Generale dell’Italsider and general manager of the Cornigliano Centre, Gianlupo Osti, who was also directly responsible for

---

<sup>17</sup> Though not one of the ten who worked at an Italsider factory, Smith also stated, “Marini was better than he has been in years; he finally got that goddam horse of his into battle.” Jacobs, “David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto,” 46.

<sup>18</sup> Krauss, *Beverly Pepper: Sculpture in Place*, 45.

<sup>19</sup> Giovanni Carandente, “Sculptures in the City,” *Siderexport [Foreign supplement of Rivista Italsider]* 4 (December 1962): 35.

<sup>20</sup> Carmi’s involvement is no doubt played down, especially in the English language source material of *Sculture nella città*, because of Carandente’s almost monopolistic dominance of written materials and public relations concerning the exhibition. Carandente has been involved in almost every publication concerning the exhibition.

Carmi's hiring.<sup>21</sup> It was Carmi who, after being approached by Carandente in 1962, persuaded the management of Italsider not only to assist the selected artists, but, with Osti's cooperation, to assign an entire workshop and all the resources that came with it, to each artist. Some of the Ten had previously worked with iron and steel, but Carmi and Osti knew that no sculptor, not even the Americans who were thought to be highly advanced technically, would have had access to the machines, the plentiful space, and the skilled labor that Italsider could provide.

Carmi in his position with Italsider brought aesthetics to the factory. He understood that collaboration between art and industry could be mutually beneficial and that an industrial material like steel, which was still in its infancy as an artistic medium, could push forward sculptural practice.<sup>22</sup> The utopian humanism, idealistic or not, found throughout so much of the mission and objectives of *Sculture nella città* is due largely to

---

<sup>21</sup> Martina Corgnati, *Eugenio Carmi: tre miliardi di zeri, three billion zeros* (Milan: Charta, 2006), 29; Gianluca Marinelli, "L'Italsider a Taranto. Gli artisti e la grande industria, 1960-1974," *Kronos, periodico del DBAS, Dipartimento beni, arti, storia*, no. 4 (2008): 184. In the early 1950s, Carmi took a position as a graphic designer with the multinational petroleum company Esso, in Genova. It was through this experience that Osti knew of Carmi. *Rivista Italsider* was itself a unique mixture of industrial public relations and commissioned artwork, and was accompanied by a quarterly English version of the magazine, *Siderexport*. There was an extraordinary flowering of business magazines in Italy during the fifties and sixties, reflecting the massive explosion of Italian industry in the postwar period, but *Rivista Italsider* was particularly influential. Printed and edited in Genova, it was first published in December 1960 and had a circulation of over 60,000. Though at first it was principally a bimonthly instrument to spread information on the company's goals and accomplishments and to increase company morale, it quickly began to expand its scope, placing particular emphasis on contemporary art events and frequently asking avant-garde artists to design elements and contribute to the publication. It speaks to the company's interest in contemporary art prior to its involvement with *Sculture nella città*. Carmi and Italsider, also employed the photographer Ugo Mulas, whose photographs of *Sculture nella città* played such an important role in the legacy of the exhibition, for his photographic services. As Carmi stated, "My work at Italsider was very different from what one might have expected in such a situation. Everything I did for them derived from my painting.... Personally, I offered my experience of painting and the applied arts; moreover, I asked for the contribution of many other artists to create the firm's image. Their works were published regularly on the covers of the *Rivista*, thus allowing Italsider to assume a pioneering position in the world of culture."

<sup>22</sup> Corgnati, *Eugenio Carmi: tre miliardi di zeri, three billion zeros*, 35. This approach is evident in Carmi's organization of the Italsider pavilion at the exhibition of Italian industry in Moscow in 1962 when he chose not to display sheets of steel but the work of twelve Italian artists in steel. Many remarked that this choice was Carmi's crowning achievement because he saw the potential in bringing together the "beautiful with the useful," the "apparently necessary with the apparently superfluous."

Carmi's involvement. He was very vocal about his deep faith in the role of art in society, and its capacity to express humanity.<sup>23</sup>

The enterprising approach of Carandente, Carmi, and Italsider was noticed and remarked on by everyone from the artists themselves to the press covering the show. Chadwick, for example, stated, "It is remarkable that such a thing could have been organized and it is gratifying to find industrialists such as Italsider willing to make such a fine contribution to the Arts by financing some of the works shown."<sup>24</sup> This was an exhibition meant to be an *event*, and all of the organizing parties were highly attuned to the role and need of public relations. A good deal of effort was put into getting and keeping the international press invested in the event. Italsider circulated a press release around the opening of the exhibition in June. The document spoke to the company's "particular interests in the expressions and problems of contemporary art," and extolled the importance of the exhibition by stating, "For the first time in the world, ten sculptors were able to create great works in steel working directly and freely in a factory, in close collaboration with technicians and workers."<sup>25</sup>

The collaboration was not always easy or uncomplicated, however, nor was everyone in Italsider management completely pleased. Any of the benefits Italsider received from sponsoring the exhibition were fleeting at best and came at a significant cost. Italsider's interest in the connection between industry and art progressively weakened through the mid-1960s. The company was adversely affected by, and never fully recovered from, the steel crisis of 1962, and the majority of control of Italsider

---

<sup>23</sup> Marinelli, "L'Italsider a Taranto. Gli artisti e la grande industria, 1960-1974," 191.

<sup>24</sup> Carandente, "Sculptures in the City," 33.

<sup>25</sup> Press Release from Italsider, 21 June 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto.

transferred to Finsider, its holding company based in Rome. Finsider's corporate executives did not share Carmi, Fedeli, and Osti's enthusiasm for cultural collaborative ventures.<sup>26</sup> *Rivista Italsider* ceased publication in 1965. Fedeli and Carmi were soon let go from their positions with the company. Osti was moved to the Terni factory, and Italsider would never again sponsor anything on this level again.<sup>27</sup>

In the early sixties, for however brief a period of time, the patronage of art was seen as an integral component of an exceptionally savvy public relations operation within Italsider's corporate communications. Regardless of the expectation of upper management, the company's involvement did not seem to be a strictly financially motivated decision. While the circumstances of Italsider's participation are in part buried under conflicting reports and the overall lack of accessible information common to government-controlled conglomerates, Italsider was acutely aware of the need to "humanize" the image of the company. It actively sought out ways in which to make the public more comfortable and accepting of the ever-increasing expansion of industry that occurred in postwar Italy. During this time, the country underwent drastic socio-economic change. By 1962, the country was just past the height of the *miracolo italiano*, a period that saw enormous economic growth and the mass migration of the population to the North where Italian industry, and the factory jobs it created, was centered. Italsider's decision to become involved with *Sculture nella città* must be understood within this broader historical context.

---

<sup>26</sup> Laura Rossi, "Fabbrica d'Arte: quando gli artisti entrano in officina," in *TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage) XIII International Congress* (Terni, Italy 15 September 2006).

<sup>27</sup> Corgnati, *Eugenio Carmi: tre miliardi di zeri, three billion zeros*, 41.

Relying on a new, largely American, capitalist business model, Italsider successfully merged corporate communication needs with bona fide, highbrow cultural operations. Whether through the *Rivista Italsider*, its management of films and other forms of new media, or its design of welfare and recreational programming, Italsider sought to stimulate the involvement of its workers and local communities.<sup>28</sup> *Sculture nella città* fit perfectly into the company's cultural agenda, demonstrating equal parts patronage and propaganda.

Correspondence between Carandente and Osti in November 1962 suggests that on the surface, and at least between two important figures of *Sculture nella città*, Italsider was pleased with the outcome of the exhibition and its involvement.<sup>29</sup> *Rivista Italsider* published a large feature in their 1962 August/September issue, and a text written by Carandente and published in conjunction with the exhibition in *Spoletium* was reprinted with additional photographs and extended captions in their foreign supplement, *Siderexport*, in December. Perhaps not surprising since it was an Italsider-generated publication, the text celebrated the company's involvement declaring that, "If this was not the first occasion on which Industry commissioned works of extraordinary mass and dimensions, it most certainly was the first time that such a commission was disinterestedly Utopian." Carandente continued by distinguishing Italsider's involvement from other corporations who, in recent years, had also commissioned works and projects from artists. Italsider's involvement was different according to Carandente because this

---

<sup>28</sup> Marinelli, "L'Italsider a Taranto. Gli artisti e la grande industria, 1960-1974," 183-84.

<sup>29</sup> Giovanni Carandente to Gianlupo Osti, 10 November 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto; Gianlupo Osti to Giovanni Carandente, 18 November 1962. Unknown author, memorandum, 1962, Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto. In the latter, Osti wrote to Carandente that he was pleased the interest in the exhibition continued to rise worldwide and stated that Carandente should be given the main credit for his "intelligent organization" of the exhibition.

was not a normal corporate commission to “finish off a work of architecture” but an “entirely new experiment.”<sup>30</sup>

An important and lasting part of Italsider’s humanistic public relations agenda was the democratization of the viewing and experiencing of sculpture, helping people experience and be comfortable with its contemporary manifestations. For the organizers of the exhibition, whether intentional or not, the choice of steel and thus Italsider’s involvement became more than just financial patronage. The “bold connection to technical progress” was meant to help people connect art to industry.<sup>31</sup> Materials like steel and iron were supposedly more accessible to all classes of people, recognizable not because of exalted references to high art and luxurious decorative objects, but because it was the same substance found in everyone’s cars, buildings, and consumer goods. As the review of the exhibition published in *Time* declared, “The naked use of common industrial methods to produce sculpture has stripped away much of the mystery of the craft, has humanized what had been before a less than generally appreciated art form. Last week an ironmonger who had been hired to fasten steel straps around the bases of several statues said confidently: ‘I think I’ll make some sculptures myself’.”<sup>32</sup>

The work may have been more approachable because of its materials, but it was still created through very unusual circumstances, with help of a national conglomerate and their highly trained blue-collar workers. The work generated by the “Ten” for the exhibition would not have been possible without their assistance, and the quality of their assistance was dependent on how they received the sculptors in their workshops and

---

<sup>30</sup> Carandente, “Sculptures in the City,” 31.

<sup>31</sup> Copy of letter from the Mayor of Spoleto. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto. Also reprinted in Carandente, *Sculpture nella Città, Spoleto*, 159. Translation by the author.

<sup>32</sup> “A Town Full of Sculpture,” *Time* 24 August 1962, 50.

understood their projects. Carmi recalled that the workers he encountered at Cornigliano accepted his work, which was entirely abstract, without any of the bourgeois mockery that he was accustomed to receiving as an artist working in the postwar, abstract style of painting known in Italy as Informale. He felt the workers understood his project, not because they necessarily liked the work, but because they recognized its inherent seriousness and honesty. Carmi stated, “On this point, all of the others felt, from Calder to Chadwick to Pomodoro and Smith, that the factory and the workers are no longer something external to us, a tool. They become collaborators of the artists, co-authors of the work.”<sup>33</sup>

The workers’ involvement and respect for the projects was a key aspect in their democratization, and to the success of these modern sculptures as extensions and reflections “of the people.” The workers initially were hesitant and suspicious of their imposed involvement with the artists, many of whom came into their factories from very different class backgrounds, were committed abstract artists, and had little to no experience working in such conditions. As Igea Usai, a worker at Cornigliano, stated “It is well and good, but it takes a lot of patience: to attach their crooked plates is more demanding of an engineer than having to shape an engine.”<sup>34</sup> Ultimately, the workers responded positively to the collaboration if for no other reason than they began to understand the difficulty inherent in created new forms as opposed to forms found in or copied from nature.

---

<sup>33</sup> Giorgio Pecorini, “Videro le Muse negli altiforni,” *L’Europeo* 30 Settembre 1962, 28. Carmi stated, “A questo punto anche tutti gli altri lo hanno sentito, da Calder a Chadwick a Pomodoro a Smith, lo stabilimento e gli operai non sono più qualcosa di esterno a noi, uno strumento. Essi divengono collaboratori dell’artista, coautori dell’opera.”

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

Oscar Sinigagli, a welder at Cornigliano, echoed this sentiment in an interview he gave at the close of the exhibition. He described how the workers all laughed at the sculptors who came into the factories, not knowing where to begin, roaming the halls like “souls in torment” and rummaging through the dust, randomly choosing “pitiful waste” scattered around the floors of the factories. He recalled being dismayed by their requests to go against every rule the workers were trained to follow, to make cuts and welds without squaring. “Crazy, we thought. But then, suddenly, looking at the objects we were putting together, we understood.... We realized there was a specific plan. That from all that mess came out, as if by magic, a form never seen before yet logical, beautiful.”<sup>35</sup>

Even Smith, the sculptor with the most factory knowledge and experience, described a similar process of resistant and then transformative collaboration. His first meeting with the workers, to whom he could not speak directly, was awkward and uncomfortable, largely, according to him, because he was introduced to them in “white collar.” The next day he returned in “equal garb,” but the workers initially ignored his requests to sweep the floor or move heavy objects. They changed once he began participating in heavy labor. Smith stated, “After welding, moving, sweeping, my collar was O.K. We worked together from then on great... we understood, and their desire to produce first class and to my need never failed.”<sup>36</sup>

Dress was more than just a superficial or hierarchal issue among artists and workers. Sculpture has always possessed association to physical, hands-on manual labor,

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 21. “Bei matti, pensavamo. Ma poi, d’un tratto, a guardare gli oggetti che stavamo mettendo insieme, abbiamo capito. Mica io soltanto, intendiamoci. Tutti. Abbiamo capito che c’era un piano preciso. Che da tutto quel pastrocchio veniva fuori, come d’incanto, una forma mai vista prima eppure logica, bella.”

<sup>36</sup> David Smith, “Report from Voltri,” in *David Smith*, ed. Garnett McCoy, *Documentary monographs in modern art* (New York: Praeger, 1973), 160.



but in the desire to highlight the success of these modern collaborations, this relationship was consciously emphasized. Thus, how the artist and worker were shown, their appearance, became a key visual signifier of the merging of art and industry, and was frequently emphasized in public relations communications, press coverage, and even artists' statements. The symbiosis of artist and worker was intentionally captured and disseminated through an extensive body of photographs, showing sculptor and laborer almost indistinguishable from one another; the worker elevated to status of co-creator and the artist admitted into the fraternity of blue-collar worker.

Welders could be artists, artists could be workers, and through photographs, the identities were blurred and then solidified as seemingly indistinguishable. Artist and worker alike are shown wearing the same goggles and gloves, coveralls and thick-soled boots, wielding welding torches and hammers, maneuvering large steel plates and operating large machinery (**figures 9 and 10**).<sup>37</sup> One of the most famous of these photographs, taken by the artist himself, shows David Smith with his technicians on a lunch break, their communal food spread out over one of the worktables. Smith even wrote over the photograph the name of each worker, forever recognizing their presence and role in the creation of his sculptures (**figure 11**).

The reciprocally beneficial performance of both artist and worker, no matter the level of authenticity on either side, extended beyond the workshop and the domain of personal or internally commissioned photographs. This was not a private aspect of the creative process. Photographs showing the artists working alongside Italsider laborers

---

<sup>37</sup> At least one article declared these types of photographs a concretization of the integration of art and industry and pieces of propaganda highlighting industry's patronage, which is often hidden. See, Giorgio Di Genova, "Integrazione o invasione?," *Nuova generazione* 5 August 1962.

were calculatedly disseminated to the press, with large photo essays appearing for example, in *Rivista Italsider/SiderExport* and *ArtNews*.<sup>38</sup> The latter, entitled “David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto” was a twelve-page spread devoted entirely to Smith and the *Voltri* sculptures. Of the main eight pages of the feature, three were full-page photographs showing Smith as he worked in the Voltri Centre.<sup>39</sup>

The first of the images (**figure 12**), appearing on the second page of the spread shows Smith in the center of the image, sitting on a flatbed railcar surrounded, and almost dwarfed, by a handful of completed *Voltri* sculptures bound for Spoleto. Smith slyly smiles at the camera. He wears an unbuttoned work shirt and jacket as well as a welder’s cap and thick, steel toe boots. His left hand is half tucked into his pants pocket while he holds a small cigar in his fully visible right hand, noticeably dirty from manual labor.

The second photograph (**figure 13**), taking up the third page of the essay, emphasizes Smith’s blue-collar qualities even more overtly. Framed within a doorway leading out to the industrial complex and Italian hillside, Smith is shown in a group of four men in the back of the left side of the workshop. They are all dressed in similar work shirts and caps. In the foreground of the image are pieces of *Voltri XII* and *Voltri XV* laid out on the floor and an almost completed *Voltri VI* in the center of the composition.

While widely read and respected in the art world at the time, *Art News* was not a publication that would have reached a mainstream audience, but these photographs and ones very similar, did find their way into more general press outlets. The photograph of

---

<sup>38</sup> Marco Valsecchi, “Sculture nella città,” *Rivista Italsider* III, no. 4 (August-September 1962); Jacobs, “David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto,” 45; Vittore Querél, “Scultura di venticinque tonnellate giunta a Spoleto dagli altiforni liguri,” *Giornale di Sicilia* (20 July 1962).

<sup>39</sup> Jacobs, “David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto,” 42-49, 156-58. Four partial pages at the back of the publication were devoted to additional text.

Smith sitting on the rail car for example was the opening image of Sylvester's *Sunday Times* article.<sup>40</sup>

Ugo Mulas took almost all of the photographs taken inside the Italsider Centres, including all the photographs discussed above. He had previously worked for Italsider and *Rivista Italsider* and served as the official photographer of *Sculture nella città*.<sup>41</sup> Mulas' photographs frequently showed the sculptors among the workers, comfortable amidst the fires and the machinery of the steel mills. He favored both wide, panoramic compositions often shot from high vantage points and more close-up shots (**figure 14**) that focused on the sculptor in the act of creating. Some of the most striking photographs push this latter approach even further, framing the shot exclusively on the hands of the sculptor making contact with his or her tools and materials (**figure 15**).

Mulas' photographs were among the most widely circulated images in the immediate years following the exhibition and have today become some of the most iconic shots of artistic process and creation. His strong aesthetic, characterized by dramatic lighting, beautifully balanced compositions and innovative framing techniques, no doubt contributed to editors and publishers consistently selecting his images, but Mulas' photographs can and should be read as more than just documents of a unique collaboration between contemporary sculpture and industry. They are an amalgamation of press image, documentary evidence, and public relations ammunition, becoming integral graphic fragments of the projects they depict. The photographs become inextricable testaments to the sculptures' material constructions and collaborative

---

<sup>40</sup> Sylvester, "The Spoleto Experiment," 12.

<sup>41</sup> Valentini, "Calder. Fotografie di Ugo Mulas. 1962-1971," 16. Carandente claimed to have personally invited Mulas to photograph *Sculture nella città* but Mulas' widow Antonia claimed that he came on his own. It is likely that because Mulas had already done some work for Italsider that Carandente and Italsider executives jointly contacted the photographer.

creations. This is especially true in the case of David Smith. Not only was his public image of a larger-than-life, blue-collar sculptor with taped fingers and welding tools solidified with these images, but one cannot truly understand or appreciate the accomplishment of the *Voltri* series with taking account of the photographs showing their creation in the workshops of Italsider.

### **The *Voltri***

The *Voltri* series emerged physically and conceptually from the materials he encountered at the Voltri Centre. In just one month, he created roughly a fourth of all the work shown in *Sculture nella città*. Smith's output was covered in the press in an almost exasperated tone as a maniacal artistic explosion. One critic referred to it "a creative bender of an awesome magnitude."<sup>42</sup> Another, from an Italian publication, wrote, "Smith went to Voltri and went mad. From sunrise to sunset he rummaged in every corner, ventured in the piles of scrap, aligned endless rows of broken tools, and searched the ground with his hands, on his knees, to retrieve nuts and washers."<sup>43</sup>

Smith was supposed to have worked at the Cornigliano Centre but Chadwick was already working there by the time Smith arrived, and the organizers were concerned that together they would overburden the technicians and resources.<sup>44</sup> He was instead installed at Voltri, which though it had just recently closed still had five separate and fully

---

<sup>42</sup> Jacobs, "David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto," 49.

<sup>43</sup> Pecorini, "Videro le Muse negli altiforni," 29. "Smith andò a Voltri e impazzi. Dall'alba al tramonto frugava in ogni angolo si avventuravano file interminabili di utensili rotti, setacciava la terra con le mani, in ginocchio, per recuperare dadi e ranelle."

<sup>44</sup> Carandente, "Sculptures in the City," 35.

functional workshops.<sup>45</sup> The wide-open spaces at the Voltri Centre introduced Smith to a “wholly new world,” overrun with metal scraps and discarded remnants.<sup>46</sup> He stated at length,

The first Sunday alone in these factories - functional in an era long past, abandoned only a few months - were like Sundays in Brooklyn in 1934 at the Terminal Iron Works, except that here I could use anything I found, dragging parts between buildings to find their new identity. I thought of my *Agricolas*. There was a similarity - but the language was different - and the size bolder.”

A factory stripped of its function - leaves on the floor from holes in the roof - quiet except for a bird cheep....I felt the awe and the scared air - like one returning survivor after holocaust, and as I had felt, very young in Decatur, when I went through the window in my first abandoned factory. After the first shock of its immensity and the privilege, I felt at home, and then to work.<sup>47</sup>

Smith brought with him to Italy some preparatory drawings and ideas of what he would make. He intended to work in stainless steel, continuing his exploration of “cube unities” that were evident in the *Cubi* series he had recently begun at Bolton Landing in upstate New York.<sup>48</sup> Unable to work in stainless steel, Smith instead turned to Voltri’s discarded and disused machine parts, the bits and pieces he found on the floor, for inspiration. His initial plans, however, can be seen in *Voltri I* (**figure 16**). Created shortly after his arrival it stands out from the other *Voltri* works with its rigid, flat, geometric forms stack vertically one on top of another.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Smith himself recalled that he was, almost until the last minute unsure of which factory to choose and that Voltri was selected at the suggestion of Menotti.

<sup>46</sup> David Smith to David Sylvester, 12 November 1962. Reprinted in Carandente, *Voltron*, 11.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, “Report from Voltri,” 157. Smith created a series of twenty-two sculptures from 1951-57, which he named *Agricola*. They were made from disused farm machinery parts and tools he found at Bolton Landing.

<sup>48</sup> Handwritten response written on the telegram sent by Menotti officially inviting him to the Festival. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto. Smith continued his *Cubi* series after his return from Italy and the choice not to work in stainless steel was more practical than conceptual, as the Italsider factory capable of accommodating stainless steel work was not yet functioning.

<sup>49</sup> Smith stated that *Voltri I* was “probably carried in my consciousness from Bolton...” Smith, “Report from Voltri,” 161.

Smith did visit Cornigliano to retrieve some heftier plates of steel to supplement his Voltri scraps, but he did not select pristine, new sheets of metal. Instead, he chose outcroppings, created from the irregular ends trimmed off the rolled rectangular steel plates, which Smith called “chopped clouds.”<sup>50</sup> The characteristic straight edges and irregular curved cuts of outcroppings are visible in many of the *Voltri* pieces. Though common in factories in Canada and Europe, this was the first time Smith worked with steel outcroppings and he recalled being mesmerized by what he saw as the natural growth and beauty of their variation.<sup>51</sup>

The twenty-seven works that comprise the *Voltri* series are simultaneously varied in their formal make-up but fiercely unified as group through their materials and construction.<sup>52</sup> *Voltri I-XXII* and the four smaller-scaled works (*Large Circle*, *Compass Circle*, and two *Untitled*) are unmistakably “David Smith” sculptures. They continue his penchant for welded, collaged elements, and many play on the much-analyzed tension often displayed in Smith’s previous work between abstraction and figuration.<sup>53</sup> The locale and the resources of his “Italian period,” as Smith himself admitted, played a significant

---

<sup>50</sup> E.A. Carmean Jr., “David Smith: The Voltri Sculpture,” in *American Art at Mid-century: The Subjects of the Artist*, ed. E.A. Carmean Jr. (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1978), 220.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, “Report from Voltri,” 162. The “chopped clouds” can be seen in *Voltri II, IV, V, IX, XI, XIV, XV, and XVII*.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 158. The twenty-seventh work was a small iron ballet dancer that Smith made and gave to Jori Pepper, Beverly Pepper’s daughter. This and the other four pieces named above were all created after *Voltri XXII*. They possessed a smaller scale, and were constructed from material that Smith had spread on the layout table. Because of the modest scale and intention of the iron ballet dancer and the untitled works, it is often stated that Smith created only 25 or 26 works in Italy (as he himself did in his letter to David Sylvester).

<sup>53</sup> See for example, Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Alex Potts, “Personages Imperfect and Persistent,” in *David Smith: Personage* (New York: Gagosian Gallery, 2006); Rosalind E. Krauss, *Terminal Iron Works: the sculpture of David Smith* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971).

role in how he approached these works.<sup>54</sup> Some critics have taken the idea of place and locale, specifically that these works were made in Italy, as an invitation to attribute classical and archaic sources for each of the *Voltri* sculptures and to tie his work more closely to the country's artistic patrimony.<sup>55</sup>

Similar connections or references have been discussed in regards to his previous work, but while Smith was of course aware and interested in Classical Greek and Roman sculpture, the most palpable influence and strongest connection to Italy was not its ancient history but its more recent industrialization. If the “language” of the *Voltri* works was different, it was not Latin or Greek, but vernacular, present-day Italian. What makes these works significant in regards to locale is that Smith took the specifics of his site, of the environment he found himself, and developed new forms, devoid of any obvious derivation, while continuing to explore his trademark tensions between figuration and abstraction, intention and chance, found and created objects. Smith stated that his view of his experience as Italsider's “guest” was visible in the work he produced. “This was the most productive period in my life. I am grateful to Italsider for the freedom of their mills and factories, for their interests in my work with unlimited material and their generosity. The fact that all works are called 'Voltri' is my affectionate regard for Italsider's Centre at Voltri.”<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Reprinted in Carandente, *Voltron*, 14. Smith in his letter to Sylvester stated, “I think it was climate – locale – at least it seems to me that my Italian work took on a different feeling than my USA work ever had – yet it was natural and without intention...”

<sup>55</sup> Carandente suggested this in his earliest texts, stating that Smith's work was imaginatively reflective of Scythian, Roman, and Etruscan “memories.” See Carandente, “Sculptures in the City,” Giovanni Carandente, “Sculture nella città,” *Spoletium* VIII, no. 1-2 (December 1962).

<sup>56</sup> Carandente, “Sculptures in the City,” 35. Smith expressed a similar sentiment in his letter to Sylvester. “Italsider let me roam all the factories – pick out whatever I wanted – let me work without interruption – I still do not understand how this confidence and generosity generated...I was never bothered with officials, questions, teas, social affairs or checkups – somehow word was extended that I had privileges – it was a delight and an honor – but to see whether I fulfilled their confidence – you must decide by the work – But

Smith's engagement with the specifics of place and material, with iron and steel, functions as the grounding impetus of the project. For Smith, the allure of these materials was their relatively new application in sculptural practice. Industrial steel and iron did not possess the art historical baggage of bronze or stone, but represented distinctly non-art thematics such as power, progress, destruction, and movement.<sup>57</sup> These references and concepts permeate the *Voltri* works, and help to explain why elements like wheels are present (**figure 17 and 18**).

A rare element in sculpture, especially in modern sculpture, Smith's wheels were found elements from the Voltri mills. The wheels further and forever connect Smith's sculptures to that place, but they also literally and figuratively function as signifiers of movement. As is typical in Smith's work though, the metaphor is complicated by the work's construction. Like the carts they once were, these works are caught between movement and stasis; their functional wheels convey the possibility of rolling while the steel wedges welded to the front of each work, hinders this mobility, using the force of gravity to anchor the piece to the ground. All three of the wagon-like works are capable of moving but only with the aid of human force lifting the front portion of the work. On one of these, *Voltri VI* (**figure 18**), Smith etched into the steel, "Andiamo a Spoleto" (Let's go to Spoleto!).<sup>58</sup> The only inscription on any of the *Voltri* works, this phrase is not only suggestive of the journey each of these works took from Voltri to Spoleto, almost

---

from me – I never made so much – so good so easy in such a condensed time as in my 30 day Italian phase – that was damn near a piece a day." David Smith to David Sylvester, 12 November 1962. Reprinted in Carandente, *Voltron*, 12.

<sup>57</sup> As quoted in Giovanni Carandente, "The American Odysseus of Sculpture," in *David Smith in Italy* (Milan PradaMilanoarte, 1995), 23.

<sup>58</sup> While clearly visible in photographs of the work taken at the time, Smith's declaration is almost imperceptible today. The work is currently owned by the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection and on display at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, TX.



three hundred miles away, but also of the homelessness of modern sculpture, endlessly moving around from one installation to the next.

Smith's chariot or wagon pieces are enormous in both scale and size. Unlike Alberto Giacometti's *Chariot* (1950) (**figure 19**), perhaps the other most well-known modern sculpture involving wheels, the wheels of the *Voltri* are fully functional.<sup>59</sup> Smith attributed his use of wheels to the fact that his sculptures were "getting too big to move without built-in rolling," but there is something about these dismantled carts, deconstructed and stripped down, which is also highly suggestive of modern progress and its subsequent decay as expressed materially by the presence of rust.

The repeated presence of wheels and other unique formal elements have led some to attempt categorization of the *Voltri* sculptures into four sub-groups: figures or personages which are largely abstract; vertically oriented compositions expressing a human presence; "chariots" or works with wheel elements; circle pieces; and "still-lives," which integrated found workbenches and found items welded to the tops, into the compositions.<sup>60</sup> While such a division can provide a way to see and understand specific elements Smith explored in the *Voltri* series, it also establishes artificial boundaries amongst works, which get their massive charge from the dialogues created between them, from what, as Alex Potts suggests, "they might share that each on its own fails to disclose."<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Giacometti's *Chariot* measures at only 57 x 26 x 26 1/8", depicts two thin wheels created out of bronze, set not on the ground but accompanied by two wood bases. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

<sup>60</sup> Carmean Jr., "David Smith: The Voltri Sculpture," 214-42. This approach was the organizing principle for the essay written by curator E.A. Carmean Jr., which accompanied the 1978 National Gallery of Art exhibition, *American Art at Mid-century: The Subjects of the Artist* featuring Smith's *Voltri* series.

<sup>61</sup> Potts, "Personages Imperfect and Persistent," 17.

The *Voltri* sculptures were not just made at the same time as a series in the traditional sense, but exist(ed) resolutely as a group. They emerged from the same profound exploration of materials; multiple parts welded into complete structures, themselves multiple parts of a larger group. Their force and impact is relational and can only fully be apprehended when examined or considered together. The sculptures never congeal into a complete whole or singular work, yet they are never just disparate parts.

Debate and uncertainty surround why and how Smith came to create so many works for the exhibition. As previously mentioned, each sculptor participating in *Sculture nella città*, whether through the shipment of work or by creating it in the Italsider factories, was asked to contribute one or two works. Within a week of his arrival at Voltri, Smith created a handful of works and when Carandente called during that week to check in on Smith, he was reportedly shocked to hear about the quantity of work the sculptor was producing. In retrospect Menotti and the other organizers were happy about this unexpected explosion of work, but at the time there were mixed feelings as their “tact and ingenuity were severely strained in maintaining a balance of sorts between Smith, on the one hand, and most of the rest of the world’s outstanding sculptors on the other.”<sup>62</sup>

Smith went to Spoleto to smooth over any embarrassment his “misunderstanding” might have caused the organizers, but continued to work, claiming confusion as his defense. In a letter to Harvard Arnason, he claimed that it was a misunderstanding, and that not speaking or understanding Italian, he had not realized that there was a (small)

---

<sup>62</sup> Jacobs, “David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto,” 45. A *Time* feature, published in August 1962 reported that, “three days after Smith arrived at Italsider’s Voltri mill near Genoa, Carandente telephoned to find out how he was doing, was stunned to learn that Smith had already turned out six pieces. How could the festival display six Smith’s when it was showing only two Moore’s? Unperturbed, Smith went back to work, planning to finish four more by the end of the week. Menotti was incredulous, Carandente was appalled. After a few days they phoned Smith again, were jolted to hear him announce that there were now 16 pieces cooling in the mill.” “A Town Full of Sculpture,” 50.

expected number of works.<sup>63</sup> As Rosalind Krauss noted in *Terminal Iron Works*, however, this explanation seems highly unlikely. Smith had a full-time interpreter by Italsider and was also friendly with Chadwick during his time in Italy. They both stayed at the same hotel in Genoa and often socialized together, sharing meals and enjoying the Genovese nightlife. Chances are good that they discussed “not only their ongoing work but the very unusual commission that had prompted it.”<sup>64</sup>

Regardless of the circumstances, the creation of so many *Voltri* sculptures, proved a difficult challenge for the organizers of *Sculture nella città*. Carandente had to deal with the reality of figuring out how to integrate a rapidly increasing number of sculptures into the greater exhibition installation plans. His solution to the problem was more than just curatorial ingenuity; the installation itself became an integral component of the works. Smith’s Italian work was a remarkable achievement on its own terms, as individual works they pushed his sculptural practice in new ways and to a grander scale, but it was their installation, that sealed their connection to place, space, and each other. Today the *Voltri* sculptures are spread across the world in private and public collections, but Carandente’s installation forever concretized them into a “homogenous,” “organic,” and “indivisible,” group.<sup>65</sup>

### **Invasion or Integration**

Exactly when Carandente formulated a solution to installing so many sculptures is unclear, but he described the decision to display Smith’s work in Spoleto’s Ancient

---

<sup>63</sup> The archival evidence shows that, at least in writing, there was never any discussion about expected quantities. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto.

<sup>64</sup> Krauss, *Terminal Iron Works: the sculpture of David Smith*, 51-52.

<sup>65</sup> Carandente, “The American Odysseus of Sculpture,” 22.

Roman amphitheater as a “flash of inspiration.”<sup>66</sup> Soon after, Carandente told Smith of the plan to create an “exhibition within an exhibition,” and three weeks later all but two of the *Voltri* sculptures were on display in the Teatro Romano.<sup>67</sup> The amphitheater is located in the eastern most section of the historical center of Spoleto, just off the steeply inclined Via S. Agata. Standing in the Piazza della Libertà, one of the entry points from the modern part of the city below, one can look immediately down into the Teatro and out past it into the Umbrian landscape. Now gated off and integrated into what has become a museum complex, Carandente placed one of Smith’s works, *Voltri XIII* (**figure 20**) just outside one of the entrances to the amphitheater in the Piazza della Liberta, physically connecting the main exhibition space with its immediate surroundings. Carandente did not just take a group of related works and place them in a novel location, but completely changed a space through a careful, curatorial dispersal of works.

The *Voltri* sculptures were spaced evenly across the stage, up through the seating area, and to the outermost edges of the amphitheater with only one concentrated cluster (*Voltri III, V, IX, and XVIII*) in the upper-middle seating area. The larger “wagon” and “still life” works were placed on the flat expanses of the stage and the southern edge, which had a wide-open space at the top of the seating rows. The more vertically oriented “circles” and “figures” were scattered on the narrow bands of the steps and the upper

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Carandente described his choice of installation as such: “This is solution was not, of course, part of any prearranged plan. (How could it have been? The artist was commissioned to produce whatever the *Voltri* ironworks inspired him to.) It was not even the result of any deliberate last minute museum planning. It was simply a flash of inspiration produced by the sight of the works and an appreciation of their high standard and the importance they had not just individually, but as a group in the context of the whole enterprise that was called ‘Sculptures in the City.’” The *Voltri* sculptures remained in Italy as group at Smith’s request until his death in 1965 when they were sold to various collectors and collections. Thirteen of the sculptures were temporarily reassembled for the 1978 National Gallery exhibition, *American Art at Mid-Century: The Subjects of the Artist*. Inspired by their original installation, they were placed in Tower Gallery on steps and platforms recalling the Roman amphitheater.

<sup>67</sup> Carandente, “Sculptures in the City,” 32. *Voltri I* and *II* were installed in other areas of the city.

boundaries. Each work perfectly responded to its immediate situation and the overall space, reflecting, mimicking, and sometimes richly contrasting the surroundings. *Voltri VIII* (**figure 21**), for example, was tucked into the northern uppermost corner of the amphitheater, its smooth, flat front visible from below and across the amphitheater, its fluid voluminous, ribbon-like sides accessible from the piazza and upper platform.

The twenty sculptures took over the entirety of the space; far enough away from one another to both blanket every area and maintain a certain level of individual autonomy, but close enough to create strands and angles of connectivity. Their combined presences in such an unusual and architecturally specific space completely transformed the site, and were concurrently transformed by the space's unique characteristics and attributes. Smith's sculptures were monumental enough in scale to compete with such a historically heavy place, both negating and embracing it. As Carandente stated, "A classical amphitheater is, after all, abstract space, a metaphysical void, the very opposite of the canonical conception of 'architecture'."<sup>68</sup>

A Roman Teatro is, by its typology, a site of transformation, a place of instability and action, an arena for the passage of time. While not necessarily an intention of their creator the specifics of the site, and the fact that they were positioned in this space like humans, like actors and viewers participating in some great performance, certainly brought a new, dramatic element to the works. Because of their arrangement, a person viewing the works had no choice but to share in this performance, to become a fellow audience member on the steps of the ancient amphitheater. This was not a contemplative mode of viewing like that created while standing in a white-walled gallery in a climate-

---

<sup>68</sup> Carandente, "The American Odysseus of Sculpture," 22.

controlled museum but one susceptible to, and changed by, what the time of day, the weather, the elevation, and distance of the viewer. Looking toward the west side of the amphitheater the works were framed by hundreds of years of architectural layering visible in the foundations and walls of surrounding structures. Looking toward the east, especially at the top of the theater, the sculptures were set against the expanse of the Umbrian countryside, lusciously green in the summer months. Looking down, toward the stage, one was confronted with the historical function of the space.

By all accounts, Smith was tremendously happy with the way in which Carandente chose to install his work and frequently commented on Carandente's "brilliant idea of the Forum." He was effusive in his insistence that his work was never treated better.<sup>69</sup> In one of his many letters to Carandente that addressed this issue, Smith wrote, "I am so grateful to you, Menotti, Italsider for my Italian period, it was the greatest and most prolific of my life....For the rest of my life I shall be part Italian, and although I am stupid, I shall try to learn the language."<sup>70</sup>

While the installation itself may have been unexpected, Smith's reaction to it was not surprising, as he had already been exploring group, outdoor sculpture installation at his Bolton Landing property in upstate New York. At the time of his unexpected death in May 1965, over eighty sculptures populated the fields of his property, which since 1955 served as a means for Smith to store and display his works, to create changing, ensemble installations of his work framed by the changing landscape, sky, and elements. Smith's installation practice at Bolton Landing, like Carandente's choice in Spoleto, was

---

<sup>69</sup> David Smith to Giovanni Carandente, 23 June 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto.

<sup>70</sup> David Smith to Giovanni Carandente, 28 September 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto.

prompted by immediate and necessary means, by his sculptures outnumbering places to put them.<sup>71</sup> Other modern sculptors, like Anthony Caro, Moore, and Auguste Rodin to cite just a few examples, also explored how sculpture could be affected by outdoor installation, but Smith, especially in the last ten years of his life, was increasingly mindful of site and group installation as a part of the creative process. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, he did not position his work to blend into its surroundings or help decorate idyllic, pastoral landscapes. Certainly, the terrain at Bolton Landing is beautiful, but unlike many of Moore's installation for example, Smith's sculptures stood in contrast or at least uneasy harmony to their environment.<sup>72</sup>

Most interpreters of Smith's work have failed to account for or even examine just how big a role site and relational installation played in his artistic process. Some recent scholarship has begun to position Smith within this context; as an artist no longer influenced by Clement Greenberg's absolute resistance to the virtues of "artistic ensemble" and dogmatic emphasis on autonomy and immanence.<sup>73</sup> One of the strengths and most discussed aspects of Smith's works is its ability, even in the most flat and pictorial of pieces, to generate a multiplicity of often incompatible and conflicting views. This aspect was made more evident when the works were installed in outdoor or non-museum spaces in loose and impermanent groupings.

---

<sup>71</sup> Michael Brenson, "The Fields," in *David Smith: A Centennial*, ed. Carmen Giménez (New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2006), 45. As photographer Dan Budnick, who took many photographs of Smith's work at Bolton Landing, remarked, "The fields started innocuously, out of necessity to store things....Putting pieces together, he suddenly saw their relation to one another, like pieces in the shop. He got flipped out of his mind excited."

<sup>72</sup> Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, 165.

<sup>73</sup> See for example, Brenson, "The Fields," 39-65; Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, .

Smith, as Michael Brenson suggests, was “profoundly concerned with relations – part to part, part to whole...vertical to horizontal, finding to inventing...industry to landscape...,” and this concern with relations did not stop when it came to his installation and viewing practices.<sup>74</sup> Sculpture more than any other medium sets up a highly unstable environment. Smith became increasingly successful at manipulating that fact. His mode of seeing was not a traditional one but exploited the tensions created by a mobile viewer, walking amongst his work in a shared environment, both near and far from the work.<sup>75</sup> This approach, while begun years before coming to Spoleto, was reinforced when he saw his work installed together in the amphitheater.

The relational installation of Smith’s works, as well as Carandente’s curatorial masterstroke, was not confined to the Teatro Romano. Smith’s installation in the arena, his “exhibition within an exhibition,” functions as a concentrated microcosm of what was occurring all around the city of Spoleto. Carandente’s decision to use the amphitheater, while especially effective, was not out of line with his overall installation program for *Sculture nella città*. The success of the exhibition came from not only the quality of participating sculptors or the unique nature of Italsider’s involvement, but also from Carandente’s novel installation practices and acute awareness of an entire city and tourist population of mobile viewers.

*Sculture nella città* also was notable because of the kind of sculpture integrated into the urban fabric of the city. Carandente made a conscious decision to place modern, mostly abstract sculpture, within an environment layered with ancient, medieval, and renaissance architecture; aware of the possible jarring contradictions this approach could

---

<sup>74</sup> Brenson, “The Fields,” 47.

<sup>75</sup> Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, 165.



create. This was evident from the earliest planning stages and in his correspondence with artists took great care to discuss installation and placement. After learning that Moore was sending his *Reclining Figure* (**figure 22**), Carandente wrote to the sculptor asking him for advice on how to best “show it off” in the Piazza del Duomo and enclosed rough sketches of four possible bases on which to place the work. He closed the letter by stating, “We have kept in mind the idea of harmonizing with the Etrusco-Mediaeval background of the location.”<sup>76</sup>

The synchronization Carandente achieved with the installation of the works was, as he put it, an “unhoped for” result of the “happy blending of town and sculpture.” He stated, “Corners of Spoleto which, both architecturally and urbanistically, as well as historically, were perfectly balanced *without* works of modern sculpture are now equally well balanced *with* these works. It is almost as if these forms had always been there.”<sup>77</sup> Expected or not, this effect was achieved through his careful curatorial decisions. The attention to detail was meticulous. Most of the works had specially constructed pedestals made from local tufa stone, and all had label cards placed nearby. At much added expense an extensive light system was implemented, illuminating every work positioned throughout the city, sometimes to quite dramatic effect (**figure 23**).<sup>78</sup>

Carandente formally and conceptually placed works in specific areas of the town where they would stand in either greatest contradiction or congruity with their environment. He placed one of Manzù’s “cardinal” sculptures, *Cardinale* in front of the entrance to the Spoleto Cathedral (**figure 24**), and Moore’s *Glenkin Cross* (**figure 25**) at

---

<sup>76</sup> Giovanni Carandente to Henry Moore, 25 April 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto.

<sup>77</sup> Carandente, “Sculptures in the City,” 31.

<sup>78</sup> “Sculture nelle strade e nelle piazze di Spoleto,” n.p. The results of this can be seen in numerous photographs taken of the exhibition, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

the uppermost corner of the town overlooking and mimicking the vertical bell towers dotting the vista below. Fontana's *Virginia* (**figure 26**), a relatively small polished bronze egg with one of his characteristic cuts was placed, perhaps humorously, in the center of the fountain in the middle of the Piazza Fontana. Colla's futuristic looking spire, *La Grande Spirale* (**figure 27**), stood in the dead center of an intersection, its base framed by white painted traffic circles.

Works were tucked into loggias, hung from steel cables over streets, and balanced on platforms emerging from the sides of buildings (**figure 28**). They were semi-hidden in dark corners, emerging suddenly like ghostly presences, and placed at the tops and bottoms of steep staircases. They framed and were framed by architectural elements of the historic city, its piazzas, historic churches, and Renaissance government buildings. As one reporter noted, "Each sculpture was significantly related to the piazza in mood and form, but none detracted from the eloquence of the space itself."<sup>79</sup>

As previously mentioned, not all of the *Voltri* sculptures were installed in the amphitheater. *Voltri I* and *II*, works that Smith claimed had traveled conceptually with him from Bolton Landing and thus did not fit as well with the other eighteen *Voltri* works that followed, were placed in two separate locations within in the town. *Voltri I*, set on a stone pedestal that mirrored its stacked cube form (**figure 16**), was in the north part of Spoleto, in the Piazza Campello, in front of a stepped passageway. *Voltri II* (**figure 29**) was just off the Viale Matteotti, one of the main roads that winds its way up the hill into the historic center. The sculpture's thin, circular form perfectly balanced on a circular stone pedestal, reminiscent of an ancient temple column.

---

<sup>79</sup> Leeb Hadzi, "Report from Rome: Sculpture at Spoleto," 118.

Smith, before agreeing to come and work at Voltri, sent *Cubi IX*, via the Museum of Modern Art in New York, as his entry into the exhibition. *Cubi IX* is made out of polished steel and stands almost nine feet tall. Carandente elevated the work an additional six feet with a tufa block pedestal and installed it in the Piazza Garibaldi in the lower town (**figure 30**). The work was placed directly in front of the campanile, or bell tower, of the San Gregorio Maggiore, an eleventh-century Romanesque church. The bell tower has large exposed bricks at its base, a formal parallel Smith himself noted in his praise of Carandente's placement: "Professor Carandente had an innate feeling for mounting and choosing sites. The most diverse sculpture related, as if belonged in all styles of architecture.... Its [*Cubi IX*] stainless cubes in a different way held with the soft variables of the church wall stones."<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps the most memorable single work of *Sculture nella città* and one that greatly benefitted from its placement was Calder's *Teodelapio* (**figure 31**). In the years following the exhibition, Calder became infamous for this type of large public sculpture. It is now almost impossible to go a major city and not see a painted steel Calder sculpture in front of some building, placed in a plaza, or tucked into a park. As site specificity became a more important element in art production in the later twentieth century, Calder's work was often criticized for the fact it had been studio created, enlarged in some steelworks, and plopped down in some urban space, indifferent to its surroundings. He was the only sculptor out of the ten selected by Carandente to work at the Italsider factories who was not actively involved or even present for its creation.

---

<sup>80</sup> Smith, "Report from Voltri," 163

*Teodelapio* was Calder's first large-scale urban sculptures, named on a whim by the sculptor after an Umbrian duke. After receiving a series of somewhat vague instructions and drawings (**figure 32**) from Calder, Carandente sent the maquette to Italsider's Savona Centre, where workers enlarged it twenty-seven times. Made from eleven-millimeter thick steel normally used to build the hulls of ships, technicians used two massive cranes to weld the pieces together on site, near the train station in Spoleto.<sup>81</sup> Carandente offered one possible and effusively diplomatic interpretation of Calder's choice not to work onsite. "This modern creator," he stated, "seemed to want to submit himself to the industry of the executors and they, in their turn, did not even once misinterpret the fantastic vision that the artist wished to realize in his work."<sup>82</sup>

Calder did end up traveling to the exhibition, however, after significant problems arose during installation. The technicians set the steel plates on reinforced, subterranean concrete pedestals, welding them together as they went. Nearing completion, they decided that the work was unstable and would not stand up to the high winds common in Spoleto.<sup>83</sup> A telegram was quickly dispatched to Calder dispatched a telegram, which read, "Come quick, danger." After unsuccessfully trying to get Carandente on the phone, Calder traveled from the United States to Italy, sending in advance a return telegram that read, "Love Danger. Coming Quick."<sup>84</sup> Calder decided to add steel reinforcements to the piece, and after attaching some cardboard versions to the small model, worked with the technicians to stabilize the structure.

---

<sup>81</sup> For a detailed account of the making and installation of *Teodelapio*, see Giovanni Carandente, *Teodelapio: Alexander Calder* (Milan: Charta, 1996).

<sup>82</sup> Carandente, "Sculptures in the City," 37.

<sup>83</sup> Giovanni Carandente, *Una città piena di sculture: Spoleto 1962* (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992), 11.

<sup>84</sup> Telegram from Alexander Calder to James Ohnson Sweeney in Spoleto, 24 July 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto.

Beyond its significance as Calder's first monumental outdoor project, *Teodelapio* remains a key example of how sculpture can be affected by the characteristics and needs of its site. The work almost immediately became the symbol of Spoleto. Its outline still appears on the city's municipal bus tickets (**figure 33**). Calder's international notoriety contributed to this status as did the fact the work was given as a gift to the city shortly after the close of the exhibition, but its placement and relation to site was equally if not more important. After the sculptor decided to make an object, or stabile, rather a mobile, Carandente decided that the original site chosen for Calder's work was inappropriate. He selected instead an area in front of the city's train station. Carandente sent letters to Calder containing descriptions and photographs of where the sculpture was to be installed, with specific instructions that it needed to cover the entire intersection in the piazza in front of the train station.

Working off Carandente's specifications, Calder altered his design, making the arches higher so that vehicles could pass underneath it.<sup>85</sup> *Teodelapio* became both the figurative and literal gateway for visitors to *Sculture nella città*. A sign for the exhibition, listing all the participating artists, was placed next to the work, and the entire town (**figure 34**), both the modern lower area and the medieval one up the hillside, was visible through its grand steel arches. As one reporter noted, "As soon as you exit the station in Spoleto, you find yourself in front of the first surprise: a colossal iron sculpture by

---

<sup>85</sup> Alexander Calder to Giovanni Carandente, 27 March 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto. Also see, Robert Osborn, "Calder's International Monuments," *Art in America* (March - April 1969). Calder wrote to Carandente, "I think after all, I would like to make the object for Spoleto – but you say 'it is to cover a crossroads entering the town.' Do you want some like that [with an arrow to a rough sketch]? And if so how big would it have to be, and how high (clearance) and what the surrounding buildings?"

Calder, about fifteen meters high, dominating the square.”<sup>86</sup> *Teodelapio* made a powerful first impression and provided an effective introduction to the conceptual framework of the exhibition: largely abstract, massive in scale, made of industrial materials, and fully incorporated into the folds of the urban space.

*Teodelapio*, like all of the sculptures in *Sculture nella città*, was an unavoidable presence for anyone living or visiting Spoleto in the summer of 1962. Whether this presence was a harmonious integration or a cacophonous invasion was a popular debate amongst the citizenry, press, and anyone involved with the exhibition.<sup>87</sup> The response of the citizens and public was mostly supportive and enthusiastic, and there were no major problems or incidents during the run of the exhibition.<sup>88</sup> As Achille Morasso, an Italsider technician who worked beside the “Ten” in the factories and also installed many works in the streets recalled, “Even in Spoleto people laughed at first and some complained. But after two weeks, when they saw it finished, they came to ask if we had more sculptures, because they wanted one for under their window or at the door of their shop.”<sup>89</sup> The public reception was so positive that, at the request of the town, whether because it became a substantial tourist draw, the weather was good that summer, or the exhibition

---

<sup>86</sup> Di Genova, “Integrazione o invasione?,” “Appena si esce dalla stazione di Spoleto, ci si trova davanti alla prima sorpresa: una colossale scultura in ferro di Calder, alta circa quindici metri, sovrasta il piazzale.”

<sup>87</sup> This question, “integration or invasion,” was not only asked in one form or another in almost every piece of press coverage on the exhibition but was also the title of an article in an Italian publication.

<sup>88</sup> None at least were publicized or discussed in correspondence. The only possible exception discovered in the course of my research were seven photographs in the Archivio Ugo Mulas showing what looks like Paolozzi's *Figure* knocked over, whether by accident or vandalism, its base in pieces and the sculpture face down on the pavement. Di Genova, “Integrazione o invasione?,”

<sup>89</sup> Pecorini, “Videro le Muse negli altiforni,” 29. “Certo, l’operaio brasatore Achille Morasso, che oltre ad avere lavorato un po’ con tutti in stabilimento è andato a Spoleto a montare le sculture per strada, è di parere opposto. ‘Anche a Spoleto,’ dice, ‘la gente in principio rideva e qualcuno protestava. Ma dopo due settimane quando hanno visto che s’era finito venivano a chiederci se non ne avevamo proprio più di statue, perché ne avrebbero voluta una sotto la finestra di casa o davanti alla porta della bottega.’”

was genuinely appreciated, *Sculture nella città* was extended an extra month, through the end of September.<sup>90</sup>

*Sculture nella città* was not without its critics. Much of the public debate over the value and success of the exhibition centered around an issue usually confined to the art world: abstraction versus figuration. Press coverage frequently noted the works' abstraction and modern forms; with some deciding the exhibition was just a collection of chaotic, anti-aesthetic bric-a-brac and some declaring it a triumph of the abstract over the figurative, or at least a balancing of "power."<sup>91</sup> Looking back over almost fifty years of art history, the works in question hardly seem avant-garde enough to generate such controversy. While the participating artists were some of the most notable sculptors of their day, they could now be characterized as representative of a waning high modernist approach to sculpture. In light of the developments within sculptural production of the 1960s, it would be easy to examine the collective group of sculptures exhibited in *Sculture nella città* and dismiss them as conservative, abstract sculptures, which earlier in the century might have been vanguard but by then was already passé. Chadwick's abstract winged figures and Pepper's metal ribbons or even Smith's collaged, steel personages can be collectively understood as emblematic of a kind of sculpture whose moment was already over.

To interpret the exhibition and its resulting work in this way, however, is to overlook how modern and cutting edge many of the pieces would have seemed at the

---

<sup>90</sup> Giovanni Carandente to David Smith, 30 August 1962. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d'Arte moderna, Spoleto.

<sup>91</sup> "Una Galleria d'arte in nelle vie di Spoleto," *Il Quotidano* 6 June 1962. "La mostra di artiste plastiche...è ritenuto da qualcuno una specie di 'bric-a-brac' un confuso quanto anti-estetico ammasso di opere un ricettacolo di falliti e chi più ne ha più ne metta. Mentre altri già l'annunciano come un trionfo dell'astratto sul figurativo, o più cautamente come il tentativo di un 'equilibrio di forze'."

time as well as the aspects which makes it significant and which situates it as much in the sculpture that came in the later sixties as in the preceding decades. If we understand the developments of sculpture in the sixties as a breakdown of a dominant and centuries old model invested in object autonomy, as a shift to a paradigm which emphasized the relational and bodily aspects of the “sculptural event,” then *Sculture nella città* can and should be understood as emblematic of a crucial transitional moment.<sup>92</sup> The strength of the exhibition was that it presented a progressive way to install, view, and experience sculpture; one that showed how sculpture can be activated, not completed, with its installation. *Sculture nella città* made explicit sculpture’s unique ability to share and change real space.

*Sculture nella città* was an especially aggressive example of how sculpture could be integrated into “real space,” and much of the skepticism at the time came from entrenched opinions of what constituted “good” sculpture. A subtext of the exhibition was the appeal that this was art accessible to everyone; physically since it was placed in the open-air, in the middle of town, which welcomed festivalgoers every summer, without guards or an admission charge, and philosophically, since it was created from the materials of the present, from the everyday materials driving industry.

Giovanni Toscano, the mayor of Spoleto addressed this issue in a letter he wrote on 22 May 1962 and distributed throughout the city (**figure 35**).<sup>93</sup> After outlining the basic facts of the exhibition and extolling its significance, he explained to his constituents

---

<sup>92</sup> See for example, Krauss, *Beverly Pepper: Sculpture in Place*, 64; Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981); Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*,

<sup>93</sup> Copy of letter from Giovanni Toscano. Giovanni Carandente Papers, Biblioteca Carandente, Galleria civica d’Arte moderna, Spoleto. Also reprinted in Carandente, *Sculpture nella Città, Spoleto*, 159. Translation by the author.



that the works temporarily populating their streets and squares represent the “various tendencies of contemporary sculpture,” with some revealing a “bold connection to technical progress,” some “the humanistic conception of man.... Understanding these sculptures,” he stated, “may seem to many the exclusive privilege of connoisseurs. In reality the enjoyment of works of art, ancient and modern, is the heritage of men....” The letter was concluded by reminding the citizens of Spoleto, how the exhibited work was of “inestimable value,” and that it was everyone’s civic responsibility to guarantee its safety.<sup>94</sup>

### **Exchanging Ghosts for Reality**

Overall, the reception of the *Sculture nella città*, from the citizenry of Spoleto to the international press, was overwhelming positive. The exhibition was extensively covered in major and minor French, English, American, Italian, and Arabic newspapers, and periodicals. Most of the coverage focused on the exhibition’s originality, its success in combining the modern with the ancient, and the quality of the work presented. While some subtly, and not so subtly, expressed suspicion that people could or would understand the presence of contemporary “public” sculpture in such a novel location, the photographs accompanying their articles and essays were a key component in successfully conveying and concretizing the message and intentions of the organizers of the exhibition. *Sculture nella città* was not the first to utilize photography’s essential and obvious role in the dissemination of art, but for an event so integrally related to a

---

<sup>94</sup> The organizers did insure the works in the exhibition for one billion lire, which in 1962 would have roughly translated to 1.6 million US dollars. “Sculture nelle strade e nelle piazze di Spoleto,” n.p.

particular place and conceptually dependent on its installation practices, the photographs served a key role in consolidating the connection between the sculptures and their site.

Countless photographs appeared in the years following the exhibition in publications such as *Time*, *Life*, *The Sunday Times* (**figure 36**), *Domus*, *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, and *Il Tempo*. Today, those photographs allow us to “exchange ghosts for reality once more, and to evaluate at leisure a daring experiment in the technique of sculpture exhibition.”<sup>95</sup> Even at the time, there was a realization that the “daring experiment” was fleeting, that the works would be dispersed and disconnected. As one reporter stated, “For those who saw the show, the city will always be haunted by shades of metal, wood, and stone, which stand in places once occupied by the sculptures of Moore, Marini, Smith, Richier, and 48 other artists.”<sup>96</sup>

For those that did not see the show, the photographs circulated in the international press, showing every aspect of the exhibition from the creation of the works in Italsider’s workshops to installation of the sculptures in the streets of Spoleto, allow us to take full account of the life of the sculptural object. These images enable us, fifty years later, to see the sculptures through contemporary eyes, and, more importantly, to gain a small sense of the power generated from the combination of sculpture and site. The thousands of photographs functioned primarily as publicity images and historical documents, but they also manipulate, to both positive and negative effect, our understanding of the exhibition.

Like those taken in the Italsider workshops, many of the photographs selected and printed for publication were by Mulas. He took over twenty-five-hundred photographs of

---

<sup>95</sup> Leeb Hadzi, “Report from Rome: Sculpture at Spoleto,” 116.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

the exhibition, shooting every work multiple times, and was intimately involved in the selection and look of the final images that were circulated.<sup>97</sup> The photographs Mulas took and distributed in conjunction with *Sculture nella città* are more than a documentary record of a historically significant exhibition. As a group, they stand as a testament to the integration of sculpture into real, lived space. They have the look of being taken by both a paid chronicler with a critical, outsider eye and a local spectator or a citizen of Spoleto familiar with every nook and cranny of the environs. Key to the success of Mulas' photographs is the way in which he framed the work in relationship to each other, their site, and their installation. Carandente expertly installed the works, but it was Mulas' style and approach, his ability to notice the dialogue between the sculpture and the site, that solidified the intended effect. As Mulas stated,

There were works that merged spectacularly with the environment... alternatively there were some sculptures so new, so disconnected from any cultural reference to give the opposite impression: as if an extraterrestrial object had been placed by chance in one of those old piazzas. The city in other words became a reactant, absorbing some sculptures and expelling others from its fabric.<sup>98</sup>

Examining Mulas' contact sheets of the images taken of *Sculture nella città*, three distinct approaches or categories emerge. There are the close-ups of the sculptures or

---

<sup>97</sup> Valentina Mulas confirmed that the selection process was important to her father and that he maintained complete control over the dissemination of the images. Interview with the author, 16 June 2010, Archivio Ugo Mulas, Milan. There are approximately 101 4x3 medium format contact sheets and 37 6x6 35mm contact sheets at the Archivio Ugo Mulas in Milan. The 35mm sheets are largely comprised of shots of the artists and event organizers, often in social situation as well as personal family photographs and basic architectural shots of the town. There are numerous notations and crop markings on the contact sheets and suggest that Mulas went back and forth in decisions on some of the images, which often were identical save for a few elements.

<sup>98</sup> Mulas as quoted in Giovanni Carandente, "1962/2002 Sculture nella città, la mostra di Spoleto nel reportage storico di Ugo Mulas e di altri importanti maestri della fotografia internazionale," (Spoleto: Palazzo Racani Arroni, 2002), n.p. "C'erano opere che si fondevano scenograficamente all'ambiente...oppure altre sculture così nuove, così sganciate da qualsiasi riferimento culturale, da dare impressione opposta: come se un oggetto extraterrestre si fosse posato, per azzardo del caso, in una di queste vecchie piazze. La città, in altri termini, diveniva un reagente, assorbiva certe sculture, ne espelleva altre dal proprio tessuto."

images where the sculpture is the only element in focus (**figure 37**). In these photographs, the sculpture is almost always in the center of the composition. There are also photographs that emphasize the installation, the relationship between the sculpture and the surrounding architecture or environment (**figure 38**). In these images, the sculpture is rarely centered, but made to appear a part of the urban fabric. Finally, there are images that show people interacting or sharing the space of the sculpture (**figure 39**). The sculptures are often not centered in these photographs either.

In each of these categories, Mulas imbued his photographs with the fabric of Spoleto. His photograph of Arp's *Apparat d'une danse* (**figure 40**), for example, shows the semi-abstract bronze sculpture in the immediate foreground, cropped right at the base and just off center, framed by the Spoleto Duomo and its piazza in the background. The work, with its thick black outline, dominates the image but is also positioned in a way to blend and correspond with its surroundings. The top curve of the sculpture cradles the main circular stained glass window of the cathedral and the circle in the center of the composition mirrors the circular windows of the façade. The horizontal open u-shaped curve at the base of the sculpture mimics the vertical arches of the church's loggia. Even the hairstyle and dress of the woman climbing the stairs in the left side of the frame is connected through visual parallels with the work.

Mulas filled his photographs with architectural details as well as with the quotidian details of everyday Italian life. His photographs are populated with bicycles, Fiats, and Vespas; with clergy, children playing in the streets, and old women out on evening strolls (**figure 41**). These elements, especially the inclusion of people, add a certain local charm to the photographs, but they are also crucial to the aesthetic success of

the photographs and the lasting success of the exhibition, providing a sense of scale and reference point to the sculptures' presence. In the photographs, the people and the sculpture are placed on equal terms, each occupying the same space, both fleeting presences caught and frozen forever within a photographic frame.

While Mulas' shots of the installation throughout Spoleto prove helpful in visually constructing the space occupied by the sculptures and examining them together as a group, Mulas' photographs Smith's *Voltri* group installed in the Teatro Romano became his most published and recognized images. Mulas' photographs of individual works were shot head on, emphasizing the work above everything else, but his photographs are distinguishable in part because they embrace, and do not shy away from, sculpture's innate three-dimensionality and surrounding environment.

Like his images from inside the factories, Mulas' photographed the *Voltri* installation from numerous innovative and often dramatic angles. Mulas expertly framed the sculpture within their surroundings, often with their environment shown *through* their constructions. The town in the background is visible through the crevice between *Voltri VI*'s two plates (**figure 42**). The opposite side of the amphitheater can be seen through the ribbon-like curves of *Voltri VII* (**figure 43**), mimicking the ancient columns in the background and the Umbrian landscape through the hole of *Voltri X* (**figure 44**) itself seen through a hole in the amphitheater wall. Mulas also took advantage of the outdoor setting and the artificial lighting at night, photographing the individual works and the entire group installation in the amphitheater at different points throughout the day, and capturing the sculptures in striking shadows and spotlights at night.

Mulas' photographs are not just beautiful images. Their characteristically arresting aesthetic helped bring attention to *Sculture nella città* and the work exhibited, but they are significant because they did not try to mask the materiality of sculpture. The photographs capture the substance of the work, the installation, and the environment in flat, two-dimensional images, showing the dialogue and relationships between those various components. His photographs relish and operate in the dynamic tension between the objects they depict and the haunting images they create.

Smith thought highly of Mulas and his approach to photographing sculpture, a remarkable response considering that, throughout his career, he was suspicious of photographers and their ability to capture his work.<sup>99</sup> As a result, Smith consistently and almost exclusively photographed his own work from the mid-forties on, escalating his practice around 1950 when he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and used a third of the prize money to buy photographic equipment.<sup>100</sup> He was not precious about the photographic process. He never printed his own photographs and freely distributed the prints for the purposes of reproduction.<sup>101</sup> Smith's own photographs are the ones that most frequently illustrate the books and catalogues on his sculpture, and yet this aspect of

---

<sup>99</sup> David Smith to David Sylvester, 12 November 1962. Reprinted in Carandente, *Voltron*, 14-15. Smith, in his letter to Sylvester, described Mulas visiting the Voltri Centre to "record part of the progress" and that his "photos are great." Sylvester used Mulas' photographs to illustrate his *Sunday Times* article. Outside of Mulas, the only other photographer he consistently used or praised was Dan Budnik who shot many photographs of Smith and his work while at Bolton Landing. See, Dan Budnik, M. Knoedler, and Co, *Seeing David Smith: Photographs by Dan Budnik* (New York: Knoedler & Co., 2006).

<sup>100</sup> Joan Pachner, "David Smith's Photographs," in *David Smith: photographs 1931-1965* (New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 1998), 112.

<sup>101</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, "David Smith's 'New Vision'," in *David Smith: photographs 1931-1965* (New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 1998), 11.

his creative practice has been largely overlooked or dismissed as background material or straightforward documentation.<sup>102</sup>

Smith's complex understanding of his own sculpture, how he saw and wanted others to see his work, becomes visible through his photographs and had much in common with Mulas' approach. Some critics have interpreted Smith's photographs as a means to pictorialize his work. Smith often spoke of the pictorial aspects of his work, which certainly were emphasized through his photographic style, characterized by the sculpture photographed in the landscape, from below, and framed by the sky, often so blown-out it appears as a completely neutral, blank background.<sup>103</sup> In this view, the photographs allowed the work to exist as an image not just an object, ensuring that "despite their remarkable physicality," his works "would always seem there as well as here, both immediate and elsewhere, beyond possession and yet controlled by him."<sup>104</sup>

Smith's photography, however, is about more than pictorialization. It also highlights a kind of temporary, irresolvable viewing intimately connected to the work's physical location. Smith often took his photographs in series, as he walked around the work, ending up with a group of photographs of one sculpture each presenting a different

---

<sup>102</sup> In the last decade or so scholars have begun to examine this aspect of his practice and shed light on its significance. This research is greatly indebted to these studies. See for example: Brenson, "The Fields," 39-65; Krauss, "David Smith's 'New Vision'," 7-11; Pachner, "David Smith's Photographs," 108-20; and, Potts, "Personages Imperfect and Persistent," 7-19. As Joan Pachner writes, "...it is Smith's own photographs that have most often been used to illustrate books on his sculpture. Despite their familiarity, they have in a sense remained unseen. These very personal images, however, express Smith's complex understanding of his own sculpture, especially his tendency to emphasize its pictorial aspects, and his insistence that it be seen in the context of nature." Pachner, "David Smith's Photographs," 109.

<sup>103</sup> One of Smith's peers Henry Moore, who also frequently photographed his own work outdoors on his English country estate, also enthusiastically promoted this approach. He stated, "The sky is one of the things I like most about 'sculpture with nature'. There is no background to sculpture better than the sky, because you are contrasting solid form with its opposite space. The sculpture then has no competition, no distraction from other solid objects. If I wanted the most fool-proof background for a sculpture, I would always choose the sky." Moore, *Henry Moore: Sculptures in Landscape*, (London: Studio Vista, 1978), 9.

<sup>104</sup> Brenson, "The Fields," 43.

and, because of the nature of Smith's work, conflicting view. Instead of presenting an ultimate document of the work, his photographs create a fragmented, multiple, and forever incomplete image of the work. Each photograph was a connected part of a greater whole but also suggested, as Smith stated, that "a work of art is always completed by the viewer and is never seen the same by two persons."<sup>105</sup>

Smith's photographs also stress the importance he placed on the location of his pieces. He wanted to ensure that the landscape would always be connected to the work, a dream made reality through photography.<sup>106</sup> In the case of the works he created at Bolton Landing, this was intimately connected to the desire to see his work remain in the fields of his property. Smith continued his photographic practice in Italy, however, taking hundreds of photographs of his work while working in the Voltri Centre, as they were being moved to Spoleto, and after their installation in the Teatro Romano. His Italian photographs exhibit his characteristic style and approach. The sculptures are shown framed against the sky, taken from a low angle, and in the foreground to increase their sense of scale, and like some of Smith's earlier shots of his work placed in the fields of Bolton Landing, leave just enough "extraneous" context in the shot to connect it to its site.

While he might not have been particular about the photographic prints, he was meticulous in keeping records, always retaining the negative, usually medium format film, attached to its proof. Smith's proofs emphasize the materiality and physical presence of the work. His cropping marks were deliberate and clever, cutting out superfluous sky and background information that might distract from his sculptures. The

---

<sup>105</sup> Smith as quoted in Pachner, "David Smith's Photographs," 113.

<sup>106</sup> Brenson, "The Fields," 42.



strength of his photographs did not come from the dynamic relationships between site and work like Mulas', but from the emphasis on the fragile tension between the material presence of the work and the graphic nature of the image. In cutting down the extra sky that might have visually dwarfed the sculpture, or cropping the bottom in a way that stressed the physicality of the object, his photographs connected the weight and presence of the sculpture to its site.

Take for example one of Smith's photographs of *Voltri X* and its corresponding proof (**figure 45 and 46**). Placed on the uppermost ledge in the amphitheater, the photograph shows the circular sculpture in the center of the composition, framed in Smith's characteristic style by the sky and landscape behind it. The proof has an abundance of cloudless sky above the work and a good portion of the stone wall of amphitheater below it. The crop marks suggest more focus on the work but the bottom crop has the significant result of grounding the work to the roughly textured rocks jutting from the lower left corner of the frame. Instead of looking like small object perched on a stone wall, it achieves a sense of monumentality and weight in the final photograph.

A similar effect is created in Smith's photograph of *Compass Circle (Voltri)* (**figure 47 and 48**). Photographed outside of the steel mill in Voltri, Smith centered the work in between two rows of massive pillars, perfectly receding toward the vanishing point of the composition like a Renaissance painting. In his proof, more of the environment was visible to the left and right of the sculpture and more of the base the work was sitting on visible underneath. One of the smallest pieces Smith created in Italy, the work as photographed from below and in between the giant architecture of modern industry gains a towering presence that would not necessarily have been conveyed by the

piece in person. Smith's cropping choices strengthen the monumentality of the work. He removed much of the Voltri complex visible in the right side of the proof and trimmed the base of the work. As a result the work stands triumphant, grounding the entire composition without any suggestion of support, framed by its surroundings but not subservient to them.

Smith's proofs are invaluable to understanding how he wanted his work to be seen and underlines the importance of photography in his overall sculptural practice, but his cropping process would not have been evident to a large audience nor would his photographs have been widely seen beyond the insular art world. While the resulting prints populate countless exhibition catalogues and monographs on his work and retrospectively help reconstruct Smith's approach to installation and viewing, most of the photographs of Smith's *Voltri* work that appeared in more mainstream press outlets were by Mulas or press photographers covering *Sculture nella città*.<sup>107</sup> As Mulas was hired as the official photographer of the exhibition, this is perhaps not surprising. Smith was not the only artist involved and his photographs, largely taken for personal use, would not have been a natural choice for publicity purposes.

Regardless of whether Smith or Mulas took the more aesthetically pleasing or effective photographs, or for that matter, who the photographer was, all of the photographs published in the years immediately following the exhibition expressed a

---

<sup>107</sup> Pachner, "David Smith's Photographs," 114. Pachner notes that while some Smith's photographs in the late forties were criticized for their inclusion of landscape and even declared by the artist "not good enough for newspaper reproduction," by the 1950s Smith was providing most of the images for magazine articles as well as all the image for his 1957 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She writes, "Smith took some pride and pleasure in the fact that it was through his own photographs that images of his work were disseminated to the world at large. Anyone who wanted to reproduce his work had to go through him." Pachner also notes that by the early Sixties, and with the rise of Smith's fame, other photographers like Mulas and Dan Budnik joined Smith in photographing his work.

clear and unified message. *Sculture nella città* was a group exhibition, installed outdoors, and for the first time integrated into the fabric of urban environment. While photo essays in *Time* or *Life* included images of individual works, they were always in dialogue with the images of other works, sharing the page just as they had shared the streets of Spoleto. To again return to the *Sunday Times* feature and Mulas' photograph of Smith's work installed in the Teatro Romano, the power of the image lies in the dialogue created among many works, just as the power of the exhibition came from the multiple sculptures not the singular object.

The photographs created in conjunction with *Sculture nella città* remain more than simply documents of an important event. They changed and continue to change the experience and perception of the exhibition. As we have seen with both Smith's and Mulas' approaches, photography is capable of distorting scale, a characteristic both used to make the work exhibited in *Sculture nella città* seem more grandiose and monumental. On a more subtle level, the photographs, depicting the works frozen forever in their installations, manipulate the connections and dialogues between the works and between their sites, creating an ephemeral collective entity.

Standing in the Teatro Romano today, empty now save for some ancient column fragments and newly installed security railing (**figure 49**), the space feels larger than it appears in Mulas' wide-angled daytime installation shots (**figure 8**) and conversely smaller than his theatrical, expansive nighttime shots (**figure 50**). Without the aid of beautifully arched passageways and dramatic angles (**figure 51**), Chadwick's *Stranger III*, which still stands in the same location it did in 1962 (**figure 52**), garners little notice. Calder's *Teodelapio*, shown in Mulas' photographs at sunset with streams of sunlight

coming through its legs (**figure 32**) or alone in the piazza, bathed in morning light (**figure 53**) can also greet today's visitor to Spoleto as a glorified parking lot cover (**figure 54**)

The photographs offer, infinitum, a particular vision of "sculpture in the city," a particular moment of time that has inextricably connected the sculptures to this site and to each other. More than anything else, the photographs complete and authenticate Carandente's curatorial vision, Italsider's patronage, and Smith's achievement. The photographs captured the new way of seeing and experiencing sculpture that the exhibition presented. They show that the installation and the interaction of the work with audience were not afterthoughts but integral aspects of sculptural production.

The photographs of Smith's work installed in the Roman amphitheater for example are not more important than the work itself or Carandente's choice to install them there, but they are equally important. The photograph acts as a physical and temporal seal, the last piece in a complicated and extensive process of sculptural production and creation that was no longer confined to the sculptor or sculpture alone. Because of the photographs, one cannot think of the *Voltri* sculptures without thinking of them together, as a group, in an ancient arena in the context of the exhibition.

*Sculture nella città* has become largely forgotten in the annals of modern art history, save for its role in the creation of one of the most significant sculptural projects of the twentieth-century. The combination of an innovative curator, a successful collaboration between art and industry, and a radical installation and photographic program, enabled Smith to create the *Voltri* group; but the exhibition also stands as a crucial event during a moment when sculptural practice began to embrace site, display, and ephemerality. These circumstances make the exhibition a precursor to the now

ubiquitous international art fairs and biennales, public sculpture projects, and site-specific installations. The one hundred and two sculptures displayed for four brief months in the summer of 1962 were presented not as dead, finished objects to be admired from a distance for their formal attributes, but as a collective living presence wonderfully altered by changing conditions and contradictory surroundings, as something, to return to Smith, never finished.

### Chapter 3

#### Sculpture as Staged Environment: Yayoi Kusama and the 1966 Venice Biennale

It was a tremendous relief to become attuned to the world around me, and to participate directly in it – really as an action artist and not merely metaphorically in as one. Once that became possible for me I saw a way out of the canvas, the gallery, the stage.

Allan Kaprow<sup>1</sup>

Created for the XXXIII Venice Biennale in 1966, everything about Yayoi Kusama's *Narcissus Garden* (**figure 55**) was unusual. The work represented no country and was not installed in a national pavilion. Consisting of fifteen-hundred mirrored factory made plastic balls, the work was dispersed outside on a small lawn in one of the busiest areas of the Biennale, directly across from the massive Italian Pavilion. Formally and conceptually experimental, *Narcissus Garden* was a sculptural environment that also incorporated capricious elements like the spectacle of the Biennale, the viewer, and the presence of the artist into its constitution. In a large-scale international exhibition defined by hard nationalistic divisions, *Narcissus Garden* was an independent, if officially sanctioned, work that sought to move beyond established geopolitical and artistic boundaries.

Highly orchestrated and unavoidably problematic, *Narcissus Garden* was comprised of multiple, variable elements that functioned more as a total sculptural environment than a singular, static object. One of the least critically analyzed works of Kusama's oeuvre, the piece also suffers from one of the most uniformly succinct and

---

<sup>1</sup> Allan Kaprow and Richard Schechner, "Extensions in Time and Space: An Interview with Allan Kaprow," *The Drama Review: TDR* 12, no. 3 (Spring, 1968): 155.

limiting interpretations. Discussed only as a guerilla proto-performance piece, the work's implications as a deliberately constructed sculptural environment that successfully synthesized numerous strands of experimental art practices of the 1960s have been overlooked. On a logistical level, *Narcissus Garden* involved significant collaborative efforts; a necessity for a work intricately entwined into the context of one of the biggest, international art events and dependent on a complex, bureaucratic system of governmental officials, curators, critics, dealers, and collectors. On a conceptual level, it wove together the presence of the object with the presence of the artist, creating an unstable, dynamic environment, which integrated and relied on staged photographic elements.

Seen in the greater context of the 1966 Biennale, Kusama's previous work, and the experimental art practices of her contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic, *Narcissus Garden* becomes a key project in the greater shift in avant-garde artistic production in the 1960s. Art began to move away from the rectangular two-dimensional frame of painting into the sculptural, three-dimensional space of the everyday as artists sought to engage the world beyond the gallery space. These artists presented a new, complex, and often paradoxical idea of sculpture; both expanding outward into real space and contracting inward to merge the artist with his or her work.

This environmental turn created an arena for the collision of sculpture and performance; a constantly shifting configuration of three-dimensional objects and fleeting interventions staged by the artist. With *Narcissus Garden*, Kusama not only fused these strands of experimental art practices of the mid-1960s, but also pushed them further. By installing the work outdoors, incorporating a performance component, and manipulating

photography to suit her needs, Kusama created a staged environment that combined sculptural objects with the presence of the artist in a constructed, but indeterminate space.

### ***Narcissus Garden* and La XXXIII Biennale di Venezia**

The XXXIII Venice Biennale opened in June of 1966. Within the bucolic setting of the Giardini Pubblici, with its lush summer landscape and lively thoroughfares, Kusama installed *Narcissus Garden*. The work both responded to its location and was shaped by it. The circumstances of its creation, installation, and success were intricately connected to and dependent on the institutional space of the Biennale. As one of the largest and most respected international art exhibitions, the Biennale gave Kusama access to an audience and exposure to critics and press that she never could have achieved on her own. It also allowed her to create dialogues with her contemporaries and position herself as an innovative, progressive artist.

The main physical component of *Narcissus Garden* was the mass of fifteen-hundred silver orbs. Lightweight and basketball sized, they were easy to hold and move. Their mirrored surface both invited the viewer to engage with the object up close and reflected their surroundings from afar. The material property of these sculptural objects, repeated in such a high quantity, invited numerous, transient elements to become a part of the work and through the orbs' indelible presence in photographs, indistinguishable from it. Natural elements, viewers, and the presence of Kusama herself all changed, albeit fleetingly, the composition of the work, sometimes captured for a moment in photographs but more frequently lost forever save in the memories of those there to observe it.



Kusama became a part of *Narcissus Garden* at the opening of the exhibition in June. The intervention lasted only one day, but it became the foundation for almost every published photograph of the work. She interacted with the crowd, playfully engaged with the mirrored balls, and distributed sheets of paper printed with a statement from the noted critic and art historian Herbert Read.<sup>2</sup> In what has become the most critically emphasized aspect of the work, Kusama also began to sell off individual orbs. This was advertised on a sign Kusama temporarily installed in front of the wooden platform entrance to the Padiglione del Libro, which read “YOUR NARCISIUM [sic] FOR SALE, one piece \$2/ NARCISÌZZATI al pezzo L. 1200 (**figure 56**).”<sup>3</sup> The combination – a petite Japanese woman dressed in a shiny gold kimono peddling pieces of high art sculpture – proved irresistible to visitors and members of the press alike. Her impromptu action quickly attracted so much attention and controversy that Biennale officials asked her to desist, which she promptly did.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Transcribed from the original flyer in Kusama’s personal archive, this statement was published in *Yayoi Kusama, 441a mostra del Naviglio*, (Milan: Naviglio, 1966). It read:

I discovered Kusama’s art in Washington, several years ago, and at once felt that I was in the presence of an original talent. Those early paintings, without beginning, without end, without form, without definition, seemed to actualize the infinity in space. Now, with perfect consistency, she creates forms that proliferate like mycelium and seal the consciousness in their white integument. It is an autonomous art, the most authentic type of super reality. This image of strange beauty presses on our organs of perception with terrifying persistence.

The exact day of Kusama’s “performance” and the subsequent photographs is not known, but as reports and published photographs appeared toward the end of June 1966 and with the increased press presence during the opening, it seems likely that this is when it took place. The statement by Read was originally published in response to her 1964 *Driving Image Show* at the Castellane Gallery in New York. Read and Kusama corresponded between 1962 and 1963, largely in regards to recommendations made by Read on behalf Kusama for various grant programs. He also received and kept numerous photographs of her work throughout the 1960s. Herbert Read Papers, University of Leeds.

<sup>3</sup> There was another sign (**figure 55**) placed within the installation which functioned as a kind of label card which presumably remained with the work until the closure of the Biennale and read:

NARCISSUS GARDEN  
KUSAMA

<sup>4</sup> Just how many balls sold, who bought them, if those buyers were allowed to keep them, and almost all aspects of this commercial exchange remains undocumented in visual or textual form.

Perhaps because of the attention she has received from scholars interested in this apparent anti-capitalist aspect of her “performance,” in recent years Kusama has played up the importance of the sale in interviews. She told Germano Celant in 2005, “The staff at the Biennale were shocked to see me doing this and told me not to sell my art there, so I asked them, ‘What’s wrong? This is Pop art.’ There were lines of people waiting to buy, and I think the staff was really confused.”<sup>5</sup> In an interview from 2000 she said, “Yes, what was most important about *Narcissus Garden* was my action of selling the mirror balls on site, as if I were selling hot dogs or ice cream cones. I sold the balls from *Narcissus Garden* at \$2 each.”<sup>6</sup>

Looking through the lens of experimental sculptural practices though, *Narcissus Garden* is equally, if not more radical, for its unique and dynamic physical constitution as it is for the performance component. The work’s impact came from the combination of its multiple parts, from the expansive carpet-like covering of fifteen-hundred reflective orbs arranged in an unrestrained manner, changed by the interaction of unknown, innumerable variables. The mirrored balls moved when people walked through them, and picked them up, unable to resist their enticing tactility. Numerous photographs show both Kusama and visitors holding and playfully throwing the balls (**figure 57**).

One of these (**figure 58**), published in *L’Espresso* on 26 June 1966 shows Kusama with the Italian artist Lucio Fontana, both smiling and surrounded by the plastic balls. Fontana sits on one of the platforms of the Padiglione del Libro, his feet completely hidden amidst the sea of silver. He holds an orb in his lap, and looks up towards Kusama,

---

<sup>5</sup> Germano Celant, “Yayoi Kusama,” *Interview* June 2005, 80.

<sup>6</sup> Laura Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 19.

as she tosses one into the air.<sup>7</sup> The focus is all on the ball, suspended, and blurred mid-motion, visually enclosed in the black background of the Padiglione as it simultaneously strives to burst through the top of the photographic frame on its seemingly infinite journey upward.

This photograph is not only significant because it shows the contact of the artist with her work or with another avant-garde artist of the time. Fontana was more than a friendly bystander or notable colleague caught looking at *Narcissus Garden* in a photograph. He was a key collaborator in the realization of the piece. Kusama and Fontana first met a year earlier at the opening of the group exhibition *Nul: negentienhonderd vijf en zestig* at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. The show brought together artists from the loosely affiliated groups, Gruppo T, Gutai, Nul, and Zero. Kusama was not an official member of any, but her work shared formal and conceptual similarities, fitting in easily with their kinetic, spatially oriented approaches.<sup>8</sup>

From 1965 to 1966, Kusama exhibited more in Europe than the United States, frequently crossing paths with Fontana, and forming crucial connections with European dealers.<sup>9</sup> Both Kusama and Fontana showed at the group exhibition *Zero Avanguardia* at

---

<sup>7</sup> Camilla Cederena, "Quel dito dipinto di blu," *L'Espresso* 26 June 1966. Courtesy of the La Biennale di Venezia, Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee, Porto Marghera, Venice, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Lynn Zelevansky, *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County of Museum of Art, 1998), 177. Kusama exhibited her *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show*, which was listed in the catalogue as *Aggregation – Rowboat*. The piece which was originally shown in 1963 at the Gertrude Stein Gallery in New York was given its own gallery, became one of the most popular works in the exhibition, and was donated to the Stedelijk Museum by the artist after the closing.

<sup>9</sup> Kusama had first exhibited in Europe as a part of the *Monochrome Malerei* group show in 1960 at the Städtische Museum in Leverkusen, but the years in between the *Nul* show and the 1966 Venice Biennale marked an especially busy and successful period in her career. Udo Kultermann who would not only prove to be an important champion of Kusama in subsequent years, but also of Fontana curated the *Monochrome Malerei* show. Kultermann included Fontana in *Monochrome Malerei* but also put on a solo exhibition of Fontana's work at the Städtische Museum in 1962, which almost cost him his job due to the lack of positive critical reaction to Fontana's work. For a more complete account of this, see Enrico Crispolti and Jan van der Marck, *Lucio Fontana* (Brussels: La Connaissance, 1974).

the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice that proved an especially important show for Kusama. Fontana was also included in the exhibition and the owner of the gallery, Renato Cardazzo, was acting as Fontana's exclusive dealer.<sup>10</sup> Kusama's contact with Fontana was an important contributing factor to Cardazzo staging Kusama's first solo exhibition at his sister Milan gallery, the Galleria d'arte Naviglio six months later. *Yayoi Kusama: Driving Image Show* opened at the end of January 1966, and while it included sculptures already shown in the *Nul* exhibition as well as the exhibition of the same name held at the Castellane Gallery in New York in 1964, Kusama created eight new works during her two-month stay in Milan prior to the opening.

By the opening of the Biennale, Kusama and Fontana had formed a close friendship. She prepared for her Milan show with Fontana's help, working out of his basement studio on the Corso Monforte. A photograph taken from this period (**figure 59**) shows a laughing Fontana lifting a watering can over an unidentified object in Kusama's right hand as they both stand amongst her painted shoes, mannequins, and suitcases in his studio. Kusama recalled their relationship positively: "He spoke highly of my work; he was very kind to me. He was like that, encouraging the development of younger artists. His work is also wonderful, both his paintings and his sculptures."<sup>11</sup>

Kusama's time in Milan strengthened relationships with both Fontana and the Cardazzo family, who were some of the most influential art dealers and supporters of avant-garde art in Italy during the immediate postwar period.<sup>12</sup> Both would prove key

---

<sup>10</sup> Renato Cardazzo took over both the Galleria d'arte Naviglio and the Galleria del Cavallino following the death of his brother Carlo Cardazzo.

<sup>11</sup> Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Carlo secured an exclusive arrangement with Fontana upon his return from Argentina in 1947 and helped the artist realize his *Ambiente spaziale a luce nera* (*Spatial Environment in Black Light*) at la Galleria d'arte Naviglio in 1949. He also held the first European exhibition of Jackson Pollock's paintings in 1950. For a

collaborators in the creation and execution of *Narcissus Garden*. Claudio Cardazzo at the Galleria d'arte Naviglio suggested that Kusama put together a proposal for an outdoor installation at the 1966 Venice Biennale, and Fontana helped Kusama with financial and fabrication logistics, lending her \$600 to cover the costs of the mirror balls and connecting her with Italvalmet, the factory in Florence that made them.<sup>13</sup>

The involvement of the Cardazzos is also crucial to understanding why and where Kusama was allowed to install *Narcissus Garden* at the Biennale. Most descriptions of the work simply note its location as the lawn in front of the Italian Pavilion, today the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in the Giardini. A closer examination of photographs of Kusama's installation shows, however, that the mirrored balls of *Narcissus Garden* were arranged around three sides of the small Padiglione del Libro d'arte (Book Pavilion), which, along with the Netherlands Pavilion and the Italian Pavilion, was situated in the north corner of the Biennale grounds (**figure 60 and 61**).

In 1950, the Cardazzos, who also owned the publishing house Cavallino, commissioned the famed Venetian architect, Carlo Scarpa, to build the Padiglione del Libro d'arte, a small pavilion dedicated to the display and sale of art and artist books for the XXV Venice Biennale (**figure 62**).<sup>14</sup> Scarpa, given complete freedom by his patrons, wanted to “make a book for books,” and created the structure specifically for the small

---

full account of Carl Cardazzo's influence and activities see Luca Massimo Barbero, *Carlo Cardazzo. A New Vision in Art* (Milan: Electa, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Akira Tatehata, “Reconsidering Yayoi Kusama,” in *Yayoi Kusama: I want to live forever* (Milan: Federico Motta, 2009), 25. Kusama stated that, Kusama stated “He [Fontana] died before I could pay him back,” but she did give him a suitcase covered with her phallus-like soft objects in return for lending her the money. Zelevansky, *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*, 179-80; Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, 11; Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, 11; Bhupendra Karia, *Yayoi Kusama: a retrospective* (New York: Center for International Art, 1989), 87.

<sup>14</sup> Scarpa was the resident architect of the Venice Biennale in the postwar period, and he designed structures as well as gallery spaces, including collaborating with Fontana for his *Ambiente spaziale bianco* environment in 1966. He previously worked for Carlo Cardazzo on the new space for the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice.

space in between trees across from the Italian Pavilion.<sup>15</sup> Because of the Cardazzos' involvement with the commissioning and creation of the Padiglione del Libro, not to mention their stature within the Venetian and Italian art world, they retained a certain amount of influence and control over its programming – so much so that Renato Cardazzo was able to give Kusama the space to realize her proposed project at the 1966 Biennale.<sup>16</sup>

Through her connections and collaborations with key figures in the Italian art world, Kusama gained official, if unconventional, entrance to show her work at the Venice Biennale. *Narcissus Garden* was successful, in part, because of where it was installed, both in terms of the work's prime location on the grounds and the greater context of the Biennale. At any other venue, *Narcissus Garden* simply would not have had the same charge or generated the same amount of controversy. Since its inauguration in 1895, the Biennale has served as an important global stage for contemporary art and a site for cross-cultural artistic exchanges. Both celebrated as a venue for experimental practices and accused of being nothing more than a backdrop for glamorous, bourgeoisie commercialism, it has always been a magnet for criticism and controversy.

The Biennales of the 1960s proved especially effective barometers of the changing, international art scene. In 1964, Robert Rauschenberg won the Grand Prize at the XXXII Biennale, signaling for many, the transfer of power in the art world to New York and the dominance of American Pop artists. The XXXIV Biennale in 1968 erupted

---

<sup>15</sup> Renato Cardazzo remembered Scarpa stating, “faro un libro per i libri.” Renato and Carlo's father Vincenzo Cardazzo owned the company undertaking the construction of the project, which caught fire in 1984 and was completely demolished in 1988. For a full account of the architectural project and Scarpa's involvement with the Cardazzos see, Dario Assante, *Carlo Scarpa: Il Padiglione del Libro all Biennale di Venezia, La Galleria del Cavallino, 1942 e 1949* (Venice: Cavallino, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, 63.

when unrest over the “American cultural colonialism” originating at the 1964 Biennale collided with the student unrest occurring throughout Europe and the United States.<sup>17</sup>

In comparison, the 1966 Biennale was a relatively staid event. There was a special exhibition dedicated to the Italian Futurist artist Umberto Boccioni. A group of mostly Informale painters, as well as Alberto Burri, Nino Franchina, and Fontana, represented Italy. Another Pop artist, Roy Lichtenstein, represented the United States, along with a small group of post-painterly abstractionists: Helen Frankenthaler, Ellsworth Kelly, and Jules Olitski. France displayed a retrospective of Victor Brauner in addition to the work of Nouveau Réaliste Martial Raysse. Other notable artists included Anthony Caro (Great Britain), Oyvind Fahlstrom (Sweden), Ay-O (Japan) and Julio Le Parc (Argentina) who won the Grand Prize for painting.<sup>18</sup>

The XXXIII Biennale lacked the large-scale, international incidents and controversies of the preceding and following years. Instead, the debates focused on the art and in particular, on the emergence of a strain of experimental sculptural practices that pushed against the established frame of painting. The Biennale of 1966 provided a stage for artists to enact, and make palpable, explorations of the intersections of sculpture, site, and performance; to create unique, fleeting, and charged sculptural environments. What was debated and most controversial in the press was the array of kinetic, participatory, and environmental work. This work drastically departed from the traditional definitions

---

<sup>17</sup> For a more complete history of the Venice Biennale in the postwar period see: Lawrence Alloway, *The Venice Biennale, 1895-1968: from salon to goldfish bowl* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1968); Philip and Enzo di Martino Rylands, *Flying the Flag for Art: the United States and the Venice Biennale, 1895-1991* (Richmond, VA: Wyldbore and Wolferstan, 1993); Enzo Di Martino, *The History of the Venice Biennale, 1895-2005: visual arts, architecture, cinema, dance, music, theatre* (Venice: Papiro Arte, 2005); Nancy Jachec, *Politics and painting at the Venice Biennale, 1948-64* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

<sup>18</sup> For a full list of participants see *Catalogo della XXXIII Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte Venezia*, (Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1966).

of sculpture and painting exhibited in past Biennales. Hilton Kramer, writing for the *New York Times*, stated:

Traditional modes of painting and sculpture appear for the most part to be in a state of decay. But painting and sculpture as such play a distinctly minor role in this Biennale. In the foreground, displaying the most audacious energies and inevitably making the most emphatic impact, are the various modes of collage, construction, and 'environment.' The art of painting has, at best, a fugitive status in this enormous exhibition.

Like Kramer, many critics either dismissed this work altogether or labeled it a crass denigration of the "high art" expected at an exhibition of the Biennale's caliber. Reporters and critics taking the first route were left with little else to discuss, and simply labeled the Biennale an overall dud. Those taking the latter approach used the 1966 Biennale as an opportunity to defame this mode of experimental art, and their reviews mirrored the larger debates occurring in art criticism at the time. Norman Narotzky, from *Arts Magazine*, reported on this divisiveness:

'Conservative,' 'less exciting than the last one,' 'no impact,' 'weak and insipid,'\* were some of the comments around the XXXIII Venice Biennale. From another angle, a well-known dealer expressed his opinion this way: 'I am so glad that this year's Biennale has turned away from mere novelty to solid work.'

\* Except for Kusama, whose way-out exhibition of mirror-balls adorned the garden outside the Italian pavilion.<sup>19</sup>

One consistent theme that emerged in the press was the Biennale as midway or carnival. The more positive described a festive atmosphere "condensed in a colorful blur of op art dresses with drunken patterns"; the more negative referred to some works as nothing more than hoaxes and diversions more commonly found at an amusement park.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the "elephantine carnival art" and "festival of nonsense" inside the

---

<sup>19</sup> Formatting as originally published. Norman Narotzky, "The Venice Biennale: Pease Porridge in the Pot Nine Days Old," *Arts Magazine* (September-October 1966): 42. This article also contained a photograph of Kusama crouching amongst the silver orbs of *Narcissus Garden*.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, Joan Silleck, "Venice Amused," *The Daily American* 29 June 1966; Joan Silleck, Riccardo Barletta, "Una Biennale per gli occhi," *Prospetti*, no. 2-3 (June-September 1966).



Giardini, other outside, unofficial art events occurred concurrently with Biennale, contributing to the spectacular atmosphere.<sup>21</sup> One of these, *Gondola Happening*, by Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman, took place on the Grand Canal and involved the artists cruising around in a gondola with a quickly assembled orchestra playing the music of John Cage.<sup>22</sup> While never described directly as carnivalesque, *Narcissus Garden*, a work repeatedly compared to the selling of “hot dogs and ice cream cones,” easily fits into this context.<sup>23</sup> *Newsweek* perhaps best summed-up the overall scene in its review of the Biennale:

‘If every pavilion were dumped into one big pile, you’d have a helluva time figuring out what went where.’ So spoke one of the art’s biggest international wheeler-dealers last week in Venice as the 33rd Biennale, the oldest and grandest of the international art festivals, opened in Napoleon’s Public Gardens. If that gentleman was having trouble telling the wheels from the deals, it was a sure sign that the titanic art fair, more than 3,000 works by 220 artists from 37 nations, was more than ever a giant midway dispensing thrills and sensations in the new, international polyester style which has exploded from Second Ave to the shadow of Mount Fuji.<sup>24</sup>

Ay-O and Le Parc garnered the most attention, largely because of their lack in producing anything resembling painting. This was especially true in the case of Ay-O’s *Tactile Room* (**figure 63**) which, based on the sheer amount of press coverage, was the most controversial and discussed work at the 1966 Biennale. The work consisted of a

---

<sup>21</sup> Giulio Obici, “Uno spillo mette in crisi la Biennale di Venezia,” *Paese Sera* 5 July 1966.

<sup>22</sup> Lucio Cabutti, Denis Curti, and Marisa Vescovo, *I giocoliere elettronico: Nam June Paik e l’invenzione della videoarte* (Turin: Hopefulmonster, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> The repetition of the phrase that officials objected to her selling art “like hot dogs and ice cream” is especially interesting since the origins of the quote are unknown. It seems to largely originate in scholarship with the 1989 retrospective catalogue as an unattributed quote, see Karia, *Yayoi Kusama: a retrospective*, 87. Kusama herself does mention the phrase, suggesting it is what the Italian Authorities told her she could not do at the Venice Biennale. Yayoi Kusama, “Garden of Narcissus,” shown as “Artist’s Statement on *Narcissus Garden* (1966),” in the Tate Modern exhibition, *Yayoi Kusama*, 9 February – 5 June 2012, London.

<sup>24</sup> “Merchants of Venice,” *Newsweek* 27 June 1966. The last paragraph of the review read: “And tiny Yayoi Kusama in her garden of silver balls said happily, ‘everybody loves balls,’ as she sold them for \$2 apiece.’ Old Surrealist master Matta gazed at the citizenry dipping their digits into Ay-O’s crannies and proclaimed, ‘We’ve come to the *buco del culo* – the dead end of art.’”

wall sized canvas, dotted with holes that invited viewers to insert their hands only to be surprised with electric shocks, various liquid substances and powders, foam rubber, and the playing of Beatles' songs. One hole, containing a pin, had to be plugged with a cork after Biennale officials received strenuous complaints from a German doctor concerned with possible spread of Hepatitis and other health risks. After numerous removals of the tape and cork covering the whole, officials placed a guard in front of the work for the remainder of the Biennale.<sup>25</sup> As Kramer wrote, "The emphasis on this year's Biennale has been on theatrical installations, Kinetic 'environments', and pop art sideshows."<sup>26</sup>

Even those critics, who like Kramer disparaged artists like Le Parc and Ay-O, acknowledged that their work was representative of a bigger trend emerging at the Biennale. This "interesting phenomena" may have been visible in "great" and "mediocre" artists alike, but as one critic pointed out in regards to Fontana's environmental entry, *Ambiente Spaziale*, the emphasis was now on the viewer entering the space of the work itself, on space being as important as what was in it.<sup>27</sup> Some of the more progressive critics tried to make sense of this new artistic landscape of the spatial and environmental. In contrast to Kramer's reading, Pierre Restany began his review for *Domus* by questioning whether this Biennale would further develop "the new trend started in 1964 – a closer and more accurate survey of the young generation and experimental research work in contemporary art," or fall back into the academicism of Biennales past. In response, he wrote:

---

<sup>25</sup> See for example, "Uno de fori di Ay-O chiuso per consiglio medico," *Il Gazzettino* 5 July 1966; "Doctor Adds His 'Touch' to Artist's Work," *Montreal Star* 5 July 1966; "Venice Biennale Work Hard to Put a Finger On," *New York Times* 5 July 1966; and "Merchants of Venice," 33.

<sup>26</sup> Hilton Kramer, "Le Parc Takes Painting Prize for Kinetic Works at Venice," *New York Times* 19 June 1966, 84. The byline for this article sums up Kramer's opinions succinctly: "Biennale Turns Out as a Dismal Survey of Mediocre Contemporary Work."

<sup>27</sup> Barletta, "Una Biennale per gli occhi," 262.

The 1966 session gives a clear answer. The liveliest part of the show consists in the international display of synthetic, pluri-dimensional art forms dealing with space and architecture, motion, light and sound...

The 1966 biennale clearly marks the opening of a new chapter in contemporary art history. Easel painting as a language, as a reference to dogmatic aesthetics is obsolete, and not only easel painting strict sensu, but also any kind of old-spirited way of painting....A new art, as an attempt to reach a new dimension of expression involving several complementary and complex elements is coming to birth.<sup>28</sup>

Restany's was one of the few reviews or articles that specifically mentioned *Narcissus Garden*. Today, statements emphasizing the subversive performance aspect of the work appear regularly, often without citations of supporting specific contemporary sources.<sup>29</sup> Kusama did generate a certain amount of controversy when she attempted to sell the balls, but looking back through the profuse press coverage of the 1966 Biennale yields few direct references to *Narcissus Garden* or Kusama and almost no feature articles.<sup>30</sup> Scholars today may use choice phrases to proclaim that in a Biennale described as "weak and insipid," "Kusama's 'way out exhibition of mirror balls' caused less of a visual sensation than an outright scandal," but the fact that there were more published photographs of the installation than textual descriptions of the performance or the work is

---

<sup>28</sup> Pierre Restany, "La Biennale Vista da Pierre Restany: 'L'Homo Ludens Contro L'Homo Faber'," *Domus*, no. 441 (August 1966).

<sup>29</sup> Examples include: "By the time the Biennale organizers and the police came to stop her, her performance had already attracted such a wide range of international media that she became the most famous artist at the Biennale;" and, "The news stories about the *Narcissus Garden* caper that appeared in an array of international publications expressed shock at the artist's crass reminder of the economic undercurrent of international exhibitions like the Venice Biennale." See respectively, Midori Yoshimoto, *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 69. Hoptman, *Yayoi Kusama*, 63.

<sup>30</sup> An article in *L'Europeo* directly referenced *Narcissus Garden* in the title but only devoted the first short paragraph to the work. Irene Brin, "Milledue cadauna (Twelve Hundred a Piece)," *L'Europeo* 23 June 1966. Other than that, I have not come across a feature article, even after looking through all of the contemporary press coverage kept at the archives of La Biennale di Venezia, Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee, Porto Marghera, Venice, 2010. For an artist not widely known by the public and without the backing of an exhibiting country, she did receive a decent share of press coverage, but contemporary analysis of *Narcissus Garden* makes it seem as though it was the most discussed work of the Biennale. I hope to emphasize Kusama's importance at the Biennale, but also to point out that attention must be given to the reality of the contemporary coverage.

significant. The material components of *Narcissus Garden* caused quite a sensation in its own right, even though largely overshadowed by the scandalous selling of the silver balls. The striking visual effect of the work, with its impressive expanse and Kusama playfully throwing the orbs into the air, became the dominant photographic representation of the work in any published form.

This liveliness is too often disregarded in readings of *Narcissus Garden* that exclusively take it as an ultra-serious, pseudo-Marxist critique of the capitalist art market rampant at a Biennale that still had a sales office on premises. While this reading enticingly situates Kusama's practice with other avant-garde attempts to eschew the market, as well as an early precursor to the institutional critiques that would emerge in the 1970s, it perhaps too quickly dismisses Kusama's well-documented desire to make a mark and gain financial success within that art world. This reading also lessens the tension and complexity Kusama created by combining both approaches in a single work. She wrote of the work in 1966,

I wanted to sell the balls at two dollars apiece and was actually doing a rushing when the Italian authorities clamped down on me.... I think that art should be within the price range for the masses rather than for a few wealthy individuals. Instead of retreating from society, which is always unhealthy, the artist becomes a part of the working economy and sells art within the reach of all.<sup>31</sup>

*Narcissus Garden*, including its accompanying performance, was indeed a radical work, but it must be understood both within the context of shrewd artistic self-promotion and changes occurring in sculptural production at this time.

The narcissism on view, and for a very short-lived moment on sale, in *Narcissus Garden* was no doubt that of the international art world, satisfied with another gluttonous

---

<sup>31</sup> Yayoi Kusama, "Garden of Narcissus," shown as "Artist's Statement on *Narcissus Garden* (1966)."

Biennale, but it was also Kusama's, and any viewers' who stopped to peer into one or many of the convex mirrors. As Restany wrote, "The people gathered to examine these spheres, seeing their own faces, deformed and reflected into infinity."<sup>32</sup> The work's criticality is just as powerful if seen as a self-reflexive one; as an exchange between the self and the self's reflection, mediated through an object, or between the viewer and environment reflected back in distorted and dizzying terms. Kusama stated, "The silver ball is also representative of the moon, of sunshine, of peace. In essence, it symbolizes the union of man and nature. When people see their own reflection multiplied to infinity they then sense that there is no limit to man's ability to project himself into endless space."<sup>33</sup> In short, the meaning like work itself, was multiple and slippery, endlessly and humorously reflective and layered.

*Narcissus Garden* was a complex, changing work, emblematic of the "new chapter" described by Restany and of art made effective through the combination of its multiple parts and registers. Kusama, like some of the other artists at the 1966 Biennale, created a total environment by redefining the boundaries of a given space, and through the insertion of her own presence as an extension of the work. *Narcissus Garden* was not simply a performance or a short-lived event, nor was it just a sculptural installation. It was an active, engaged, and indeterminate hybrid work. Other guerilla-style works and temporary art events have since been staged around and in direct confrontation with the Venice Biennale, but *Narcissus Garden* remains unprecedented in the exhibition's

---

<sup>32</sup> Restany, "La Biennale Vista da Pierre Restany: 'L'Homo Ludens Contro L'Homo Faber'," 37. "La gente raccoglieva queste sfere leggere, vi vedeva riflesso il proprio viso, e deformato il riflesso all'infinito. Ciò piacque molto. Il pubblico si mise a comperare queste sfere-specchio a due dollari l'una e Kusama fece degli ottimi affari, finché le autorità della Biennale non posero il veto."

<sup>33</sup> Yayoi Kusama, "Garden of Narcissus," shown as "Artist's Statement on *Narcissus Garden* (1966)."

history; as both a subversive, fleeting event and an experimental, if officially sanctioned, sculptural installation.

### **Sculptural Environments**

*Narcissus Garden* may not have been the most written about work at the 1966 Biennale, but it remains a significant work for Kusama as well as the larger experimental practices occurring in the postwar period. With its reflective materials, *Narcissus Garden* was inextricable from its environment. To understand fully how *Narcissus Garden* was emblematic of a greater shift in artistic practice of the mid-1960s, it is necessary to examine what was at stake in the move toward “environment” and to establish how its terms altered and expanded the definition of sculpture.

Artistic tendencies exploring an encounter with real, unpredictable everyday space simultaneously emerged in the late 1950s and 1960s in both Europe and the United States. Kusama’s work bridged gaps between the sometimes-divergent approaches on the international scene and possessed two important qualities common to experimental work on both sides of the Atlantic. First, she attempted to create a new space, a total environment made up of multiple parts constituting the work. Second, Kusama consciously inserted her own presence into that environment, during the creative process as well as the display and installation of the work. The new space created was permeable and activated by the viewer.

Like many of these spatially minded artists, Kusama began her career as a painter. Shortly after arriving in New York from Japan via a short stay in Seattle, Kusama shifted her attention to sculpture and environments in 1962. Her first sculptures, entitled

*Accumulations*, were made of stuffed fabric phallic-like forms affixed to found objects, often pieces of furniture. *Accumulation No. 1* and *Accumulation No. 2* (**figure 64**) were shown in a group exhibition in September 1962 at the Green Gallery in New York that also featured Robert Morris, Andy Warhol, and Claes Oldenburg, who also became known for his own soft, hand sewn Pop-infused fabric sculptures.

By 1963, her *Accumulations* and *Compulsive Furniture* sculptures were beginning to coagulate into organized installations. Kusama combined various foreign objects covered in nubby protrusions and blanketed entire surfaces with additional visual, tactile, and auditory elements. Kusama's first room-size installation was *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show* at the Gertrude Stein Gallery in December 1963, but the full scope of her sensory-overloaded environments Kusama created throughout the mid-1960s came to fruition with her *Driving Image Show*.

First exhibited in April 1964 at the Castellane Gallery in New York, *Driving Image Show* integrated the rowboat shown in *Aggregation* a year before as well as other key *Accumulation* furniture and object pieces. Kusama's installation altered the entire gallery space. Paper leaves decorated the walls, pasta-covered mannequins stood amongst the semi-functional household items, and smaller sculptures adorned painted tables. Dried macaroni coated the floor, popping, crackling, and changing into a fine powder under the weight of visitor's feet. At the opening, she let loose two dogs, also covered in macaroni, into the space.<sup>34</sup> While today, photographs (**figure 65**) give us some sense of the claustrophobic spatial configurations, we can only imagine the cacophonous, visually overwhelming experience of walking into the work.

---

<sup>34</sup> Zelevansky, *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*, 174.

Donald Judd in his review of *Driving Image Show*, described it as an environment, “rather than one image,” in which the viewer sees the various protuberances “collectively, as she [Kusama] intends, before they are seen individually.” “It is a miscellany of strange and related things, a result of Kusama’s work, not a work itself.”<sup>35</sup> Kusama presented a group of sculptures, expertly installed together. The overall sensation is more akin to haphazard accumulation, a stuffed closet or messy art studio. The efficiency of Kusama’s environments came from her reconfiguration of space and the creation of interconnections between various elements present. The strength of the work does not lie in the individual pieces but in what each gained in the presence of the others.

Kusama, over the next three years, reinstalled and reconstructed, in a variety of forms, under the same or alternative titles, sculptural components from *Driving Image Show*. They appeared in numerous exhibitions in Europe in 1965 and 1966, including solo shows at the Internationale Galerij Orez in The Hague (May 1965), the aforementioned Galleria d’Arte del Naviglio in Milan (January 1966), and the Galeri M.E. Thelen in Essen (April 1966). For the Milan show, she included more mannequins, but this time painted them with her trademark net patterns and dots instead of covering them with pasta. Some of the mannequins also held watering cans.<sup>36</sup> A photograph (**figure 66**) taken at the opening of the Milan exhibition shows Kusama in her gold kimono, standing with Renato Cardazzo, behind an adult female and child mannequin. Architectural elements of the gallery were still visible but components, including various

---

<sup>35</sup> Donald Judd, “In the Galleries: Yayoi Kusama,” *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 10 (September 1964): 68-69.

<sup>36</sup> These are the same mannequins and items seen in the photograph of Kusama and Fontana in the latter’s Milan Studio mentioned in the previous section of this chapter. See **figure 59**.



soft sculptures and crushed dried pasta, covered almost all of the wall space and floors. At the center of the gallery (**figure 67**) was a concentration of boldly patterned soft protuberances, spread across the floor and stuffed into buckets and women's shoes.

At the Essen incarnation of *Driving Image Show*, Kusama subtitled five elements as "Sex Obsession," "Food Obsession," "Compulsive Furniture," "Repetitive Room," and "Macaroni Vision." She also integrated a television set, painted blue, which aired the local German news and played music by the Beatles. Ed Sommer, a critic for *Art International*, commented on the multiplicity and environmental aspects of the exhibition, noting, "Perception was troubled by the painted network, as the separate, distinguishable things tended to dissolve in their all-over texture."<sup>37</sup> He went on to criticize Kusama for not taking the environment far enough into the realm of a total environment:

The walls and the ceiling and even a section of the room remained untouched by Kusama's transmuting webs. By this confinement, the alienated world was hindered in encroaching upon the beholder's perceptual habits and tended to be reducible to a display of nicely though somewhat casually decorated objects. The spectator, standing in front of the limited scene, was not challenged enough to experience the combined elucidation and blurring of a quite usual state of things by their obtrusive new superficies: the surroundings called for an escape and return to a more conventional threshold.<sup>38</sup>

The various installations of *Driving Image Show*, however, established Kusama's interest not only in creating a unique, "obsessional" world, but an environment in which the viewer was one element in a many making up the overall context of the work. With each subsequent installation, Kusama further complicated what constituted the "work," building layer after layer of slightly varied configurations affected by the presence of the

---

<sup>37</sup> Ed Sommer, "Letter from Germany," *Art International* 10, no. 8 (October 1966): 46.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

artist, viewers, and various pre-existing elements. As Udo Kultermann, the curator who included Kusama in his *Monochrome Malerie* exhibition suggested, the piece presented art as a total ensemble, not an individual work. For Kultermann, *Driving Image* was a crucial work in the development of the international avant-garde tendencies of the 1960s, described by the French artist Yves Klein as “a new, unlimited, un-fixated, non-compositional, and non-problematic art.”<sup>39</sup>

In the late 1950s and 1960s, artists in Europe connected to Nouveau Réalisme, Zero/Nul, and Gruppo T began to explore space and environmental constructions. As the critic, Brian O’Doherty wrote of the phenomenon, “As modernism gets older, context becomes content. In a peculiar reversal, the object introduced into the gallery ‘frames’ the gallery and its laws.”<sup>40</sup> Even Fontana, who chronologically fits into the earlier generation of artists, moved toward the environmental in the later years of his life, developing the theories of Spatialism and creating a variety of *Ambiente Spaziale*.

For the 1966 Biennale, Fontana installed *Ambiente spazial bianco* (*White Spatial Environment*), a completely altered and created space within the Italian Pavilion. Through the dramatic egg-shaped archway (**figure 68**), Fontana constructed a white space, which beckoned visitors to enter. Once inside, viewers were confronted with a maze-like arrangement of large three-sided rectangular structures, each revealing one of the Fontana’s monochrome “tagli” or “cut” works installed inside (**figure 69**). As Fontana’s official entry representing Italy, which garnered him one of the top prizes at

---

<sup>39</sup> Udo Kultermann, “Focus: *Driving Image*,” in *Yayoi Kusama*, ed. Laura Hoptman (London: Phaidon, 2000), 87.

<sup>40</sup> Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986), 15.

the Biennale that year, the work collapsed medium-specific boundaries and played off the tension created by the intersection of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

*Ambiente spazial bianco* was not about painting hanging on a wall, but the “reality of space as a form of matter and a container of energy.”<sup>41</sup> In this regard, Fontana’s interest in the younger generation of artists like Piero Manzoni, Klein, and Kusama seems natural. For Fontana, the 1960s represented a period of both “crisis and evolution,” a liberating moment when art was “no longer thought of in terms of brushes and painting and restricted to canvases and frescoes.”<sup>42</sup> Both Fontana’s and Kusama’s entries at the 1966 Biennale were attempts to engage the viewer within a total environment, an altered space where the “context” became a crucial element of the “content.” That Kusama, a young, female, Japanese artist based in America, found acceptance with European artists speaks to the burgeoning international avant-garde in the mid-1960s. Her infiltration is equally remarkable when one considers that at the time tendencies in the United States and Europe were seen as “opposed traditions.”<sup>43</sup> A tension evident in the last interview Fontana gave before his death in 1968:

---

<sup>41</sup> Crispolti and van der Marck, *Lucio Fontana*, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Tommaso Trini, “The Last Interview Given by Fontana (19 July 1968),” *Studio International* (November 1972): 164.

<sup>43</sup> Kultermann, “Focus: *Driving Image*,” 89.

They used to say that I ripped up canvases, destroyed things, and wanted to break the rules. But that's not true.... Once an American in Venice said to me, 'You're the spatialist but you don't understand spaces...Look, if it comes to that, I come from South America, and we have the Pampas which is twice the size of Arizona. I am not interested in the kind of space you are talking about. Mine is a different dimension....I say dimension because I cannot think what other word to use. I make a hole in the canvas in order to leave behind me the old pictorial formulae, painting and the traditional view of art, and I escape symbolically, but also materially, from the prison of the flat surface. Pollock got there *after* the spatialists,...He was looking for a new dimension of space, but all he could produce was Post-Impressionism, because he threw paint *onto* the canvas, although he wanted to go *beyond* the canvas.<sup>44</sup>

The debates on who was the most progressive or experimental was the legacy inherited or at least felt by the artists of Kusama's generation on both sides of the Atlantic. By the mid-1960s experimental approaches were creating more dialogue than debate, at least as it was manifested in the work. European artists like Hans Haacke, Günter Uecker, and Gianni Colombo were exploring the possibilities of mirrored surfaces and spaces, motorized objects and works incorporating active elements like water, air, and light.<sup>45</sup> For critics like Ed Sommer who covered the European galleries, Kusama's work easily fit within the context of these optical and kinetic approaches. Her work, like those of her European contemporaries was an "exercise in the semantics of monosurfacing and multiplied elements."<sup>46</sup>

With its multiple components, *Narcissus Garden* shared many formal characteristics with other experimental work that used reflective materials and dynamic environments. Photographs of the installation (**figure 70**) show the expansive sea of

---

<sup>44</sup> Trini, "The Last Interview Given by Fontana (19 July 1968)," 164.

<sup>45</sup> All of these artists participated with Kusama in the Nul exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in 1965. For a thorough and insightful essay Kusama's connection to the European avant-garde see Laura Hoptman, "Down to Zero: Yayoi Kusama and the European 'New Tendency'," in *Yayoi Kusama: I want to live forever*, ed. Akira Tatehata (Milan: Federico Motta, 2009). First published as Laura Hoptman, "Down to Zero: Yayoi Kusama and the European 'New Tendency'," in *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1998).

<sup>46</sup> Sommer, "Letter from Germany," 46.

silver balls through the columns of the building's external structure, tucked deep into trees in the background, and reflected in the Pavilion's windows, intensifying their visual impact even further. A closer examination of the mirrored balls (**figure 71**) shows the trees, grass, and surrounding structures reflecting back, their surfaces changing with the moving bodies of visitors and the cloud cover in the sky.

As a sculptural, environmental installation, *Narcissus Garden* was on view for the entire three-month run of the Biennale, not just the day that Kusama was present, and thus susceptible to the elements. An article in the Venetian newspaper *Il Gazzettino* states that already by July the sun was having a disastrous effect on the “shiny patina of the unique expanse of balloons constituting the work” and that some were slowly taking on a “café latte” coloring. The newspaper reported that Kusama wrote to her representatives at Cardazzo's Galleria del Cavallino, imploring them to turn the balls several times a day when there was a lot of sun.<sup>47</sup>

At first glance, the mass-produced glossy shine of the mechanically fabricated balls of *Narcissus Garden* seem disparate from her earlier laborious and handmade *Accumulation* sculptures and *Driving Image* environments. As early as 1963, however, Kusama incorporated mirrors into her sculptural works. A vanity mirror in an *Accumulation* sculpture (**figure 72**) was the only part of the original piece of furniture not covered by her soft phallic forms. Interested in the ability of the mirror to expand and manipulate space, Kusama eventually created rooms with walls and ceilings constructed

---

<sup>47</sup> “I raggi solari stanno procedo un effetto disastroso sulla ‘delicata’ patina lucente della singolare distesa di palloncini che costituisce l’opera d’arte, le palle stanno lentamente acquistando il colore dei caffelatte. La Kusama disperata ha scritto dall’America una lettera alle commesse della Galleria del Cavallino rivolgendo loro un accorato appello: ‘Vi prego, quando c’è molto sole girate i palloncini più volte al giorno.’ “Uno de fori di Ay-O chiuso per consiglio medico,” n.p. Courtesy of the La Biennale di Venezia, Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee, Porto Marghera, Venice, 2010.

solely out of mirrors. The first of these, *Infinity Mirror Room – Phalli’s Field* (**figure 73**) appeared in her 1965 exhibition *Floor Show* at the Castellane Gallery, which also showed sculptural components from the *Driving Image Show* and additional *Accumulation* pieces.

Kusama covered the floor of the *Infinity Mirror Room* with red polka-dot soft sculptures, creating an endless field of protruding forms. Though the experience was still mediated by the presence of a sculptural object, *Infinity Mirror Room* was the perfect physical manifestation of Kusama’s desire to create a world where the viewer became totally immersed in the environment. She pushed this idea to even further extremes in March of 1966 with *Kusama’s Peep Show/Endless Love Show* (**figure 74**), which removed any freestanding objects, using just lights and mirrors to create the environmental effects. As she wrote in a promotional brochure, “My *Endless Love Show* of 1966 combined ideas of mechanization, repetition, obsession, compulsion, dizziness, and unrealizable, interminable love.”<sup>48</sup>

While Kusama’s use of mirrors and creation of kinetic environments helped situate her work within the European scene, it is also related to similar investigations into the environmental and spatial across the Atlantic. American artists, working in many different modes including George Segal, Edward Keinholz, and Oldenburg, turned to large-scale sculptural installations that filled gallery spaces with a multiplicity of elements or created a total immersive environment. Lucas Samaras’ *Mirrored Room* (1966) (**figure 75**) makes for an easy formal comparison with Kusama’s *Peep Show* and her greater exploration with reflective surfaces and environmental installations.<sup>49</sup> One of

---

<sup>48</sup> Zelevansky, *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*, 179.

<sup>49</sup> Samaras exhibited his mirror room shortly after Kusama’s *Peep Show* and many have questioned the striking resemblance between the two works. Kusama became increasingly paranoid during this period of

the most direct and useful comparisons, however, is with Allan Kaprow, who provides a reference point in terms of artistic production, and offers a theoretical framework.

Kaprow was a pioneer in radical experimental practices in the United States and became known for his Happenings, which he defined as “events that, put simply, happen.”<sup>50</sup> Both Kaprow and Kusama’s work from the early to mid-1960s was playful and comprised of multiple parts. Both wanted to engage in the art of “everyday life” and invited active, physical, viewer participation. In addition to his artistic practice, Kaprow wrote extensively and helped to validate Kusama’s work within the context of the international avant-garde when he included her work in his landmark 1966 publication, *Assemblages, Environments, and Happenings*.<sup>51</sup>

Published in the same year as the installation of *Narcissus Garden, Assemblages, Environments, and Happenings* examined the new avant-garde tendencies occurring in the late 1950s and early 1960s. For Kaprow, like Fontana, the traditional boundaries of painting, drawing, and sculpture were antiquated, too concerned with the “assumed sacrosanct unity and permanence of its medium.”<sup>52</sup> The way out for Kaprow was through the more flexible categories of assemblage and environments, which he saw as connected to previous modernist avant-garde tendencies like Cubism and Abstract Expressionism,

---

fellow artists stealing her ideas, and between the Samaras incident and the shared arrival at soft sculptures by Kusama and Oldenburg, she seems to have had good reason. Her status not only as a woman but also as foreigner often made things difficult in a New York art world still dominated by male artists. As Kusama’s friend and fellow artist, Carolee Schneeman described the scene at the time: “You had to shut up and affiliate yourself with really interesting men. . . . You could be an artist, but you were a kind of cunt-mascot. You had to be good-looking.” She stated more directly of Kusama: “She had tremendous will and never, ever accepted the hierarchical values which she entered as a stranger. She never thought Oldenburg was more important than she was, just because he was getting collectors and galleries. . . . And she never let anyone treat her as if she wasn’t absolutely the most critical artist they could. . . . encounter.” *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>50</sup> Allan Kaprow, “Happenings in the New York Scene (1961),” in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 16.

<sup>51</sup> Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, & Happenings* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1966).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

but pushed beyond the boundaries of painting, into real space.<sup>53</sup> Both assemblages and environments were rooted in the same principles, but differentiated by size. Assemblages are something walked around, while environments must be actual spaces one can enter.<sup>54</sup>

The problem, for Kaprow, was that traditional modes of art, whether in the theatre or in painting, were forever confined by the rectangular frame. Assemblage provided a starting point for breaking down boundaries into the space of the everyday, but with its typically small size, it remained confined to the gallery – and the solution to the problem did not lie within the four walls of the gallery. Art should be active, engaged, and open to change and chance. For Kaprow, like O’Doherty and Kultermann, this kind of work had the power to change and give shape to its surrounding space, to divide it into parts and not simply fill a small area in the white cube of a gallery.<sup>55</sup>

Materials and the environment were not afterthoughts but functioned as “primary images.” Kaprow wrote, “The environment is not a setting for a play (if you want to use that theatrical allusion) which is more important than the people; the accented or oblique activity within the environment is the event. There is an absolute flow between the event and environment.”<sup>56</sup> This “flow” is evident in Kaprow’s *Yard* (1961). Filling the courtyard space attached to the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York with an accumulation of used, discarded tires, *Yard* was not a work meant to be seen from the distance of the doorway. Photographs of Kaprow with his infant son (**figure 76**) or his 1967 installation of the work at the Pasadena Museum (**figure 77**) show how viewers

---

<sup>53</sup> Kaprow also devotes space in his essay and the illustrations in his book to the phenomenon of Happenings, which, for him, emerged directly out of Assemblage and Environments. The performative aspects of Happenings will be discussed in further detail in the next section of this chapter.

<sup>54</sup> Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, & Happenings*, 159.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 164. Kaprow continued this discussion by stating, “The shrine may expand to larger proportions, thus becoming a chapel or grotto. This was true of my earlier work and applies to Yayoi Kusama.”

<sup>56</sup> Kaprow and Schechner, “Extensions in Time and Space: An Interview with Allan Kaprow,” 154.



interacted with the work, climbing over, sitting on, and standing in the tires. The photographs make evident the length that Kaprow went to transform existing spaces into something else entirely, whether wrapping existing sculptures in black tarps, hanging additional fabric on the outside walls, or adding temporary outdoor lighting.

An environment, more than anything, is “a process of interaction.”<sup>57</sup> Kaprow cautioned that an environment could still be, and often was an “untouchable, static display piece.” When confined to the space of the gallery, environments did not break away enough from staid gallery traditions, which limited the “interactivity between art, the public, and nature.”<sup>58</sup> In order for an environment to achieve its maximum potential, it had to move beyond the box, out of the frame, and away from the “abstract” space of the white cube. In this regard, *Narcissus Garden* is not only Kusama’s most successful environment, but also one of the most successful and experimental environments of the period. Though still within the institutionalized context of the Biennale, Kusama exhibited the work outdoors, in a highly unstable setting.

Like Kaprow’s *Yard*, *Narcissus Garden* relied on the visual and spatial effects created by the conglomeration of nearly identical objects, but Kusama also picked a material that pushed the environmental effects even further. In an interview published shortly after the installation of the work, the artist stated, “My 1,500 mirror-balls reflect the green grass of the garden, and symbolize the union of man and nature. People stop

---

<sup>57</sup> As quoted in Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, xi. Kaprow wrote this phrase in the margin of his copy of John Dewey’s *Art as Experience* (1934) which was an influential text to many American postwar artists.

<sup>58</sup> Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments, & Happenings*, 182.

and stare as if hypnotized at the surrounding human beings in movement... The visitors' spirits soar as they see images of themselves multiplied to infinity."<sup>59</sup>

### **Performance and Photography**

While succeeding as a sculptural environment, the performance component of *Narcissus Garden* played an important, if temporary, role in activating the viewer and the surrounding space. Kusama, like Kaprow and many of their contemporaries, saw performance based actions as a means to push even further beyond the boundaries of the gallery. Shortly after her return from Italy, Kusama devoted most of her artistic efforts to a series of increasingly outlandish performance-based actions or happenings that sought to obliterate the environment and herself.<sup>60</sup> Performed in various locations around New York City between 1967 and 1969, these public, mostly outdoor, happenings mixed nudity, sexual acts, and anti-Vietnam props. They garnered Kusama an abundance of press coverage but little that helped her high art reputation.

Kusama may have talked about self-obliteration, but how she chose to present and disseminate her work suggests a contradictory intention. Her happenings of the late 1960s were unmitigated, explicit expressions of a performative mode that had always been present in her work. Examining the photographs taken of *Narcissus Garden* at the 1966 Biennale, one cannot help but notice that Kusama is present in almost every one reprinted in the press and subsequent publications. Happily posing with a silver orb in her gold

---

<sup>59</sup> Kusama, as quoted in Gordon Brown, "Yayoi Kusama," *D'Arts* 7, no. 1-2 (1966). "Le mie 1500 sfere riflettono l'erba verde del giardino, esprimendo simbolicamente l'unione dell'uomo con la natura. Il genere si ferma come ipnotizzata da quei 1500 riflessi del Sole nel cielo e dell'ambiente circostante in movimento. Nelle bilie i riflessi riflettono i riflessi. Vedere l'immagine del proprio viso moltiplicata all'infinito colpisce la sensibilità di quelli che si fermano a guardare; è come se essi intuissero che non vi sono limiti alla capacità dell'uomo di proiettare se stesso nello spazio."

<sup>60</sup> Many of her happenings used obliteration in the title.

kimono (**figure 78**) or lying on her back in a red leotard, immersed in a sea of silver balls (**figure 79**), Kusama both blended into the greater environmental expanse of the work and refused to relinquish her presence as creator; a paradox concretized through the photographic image. Rather than a hindrance to seeing or understanding “the work,” Kusama’s ubiquitous presence in the photographs of her sculptures and environments from the 1960s force us to more fully consider the multiplicity of her work, to realize that her enacted and deliberate performance and the subsequent photographs are not supplementary information but integral components of it.<sup>61</sup>

Not merely representative of Kusama’s “lust for publicity,” her relationship with photography is crucial to understanding her overall practice.<sup>62</sup> From the very beginning, she was extraordinarily conscious of the need for self-presentation and paid close to attention to how and where her work was disseminated in the press. Throughout the 1960s, she sent out letters and photographs to museum directors, curators, and galleries.<sup>63</sup> She hired established, professional art photographers as well as some of the most renowned photographers working in the New York scene at the time. A widely published image (**figure 80**) taken by Peter Moore, a noted photographer from the 1960s who shot Fluxus projects as well as happenings, shows the floor of Kusama’s studio strewn with press clippings of her work from 1958-1964.<sup>64</sup>

This photograph was not the result of a random studio visit or a snapshot taken by the artist. Kusama carefully managed the photographic reproduction of her work. Initially

---

<sup>61</sup> Laura Hoptman writing on Kusama’s *Infinity Net* states, “So consciously did Kusama want the viewer to make the connection between her physical self and her work that, to the annoyance of some researchers, it is difficult to find a photograph of [it] that does not also include the artist herself.” Hoptman, “Down to Zero: Yayoi Kusama and the European ‘New Tendency,’” 63.

<sup>62</sup> Hoptman, “Down to Zero: Yayoi Kusama and the European ‘New Tendency,’” 54.

<sup>63</sup> Karia, *Yayoi Kusama: a retrospective*, 78.

<sup>64</sup> Courtesy of the Gagosian Gallery Kusama image database.

intended for promotional purposes, photographs depicting her work, and by extension herself, were different from much of the press materials distributed by other artists. Kusama's photographs are too elaborately orchestrated to be simple documents or publicity stills. If taken as such her continued presence would have hindered more than helped advertise the "work." These photographs did help her gain exposure in the art world, but they also served as extensions of the artist and her work.

Much of the analysis on the photographic aspect of Kusama's work has tended to emphasize its exceptionality, understandable when seen through the lens of Kusama's status a young female, Japanese artist working in New York in the 1960s presenting herself, often nude or in sexually suggestive poses, in highly staged photographs. Kusama's desire to equate her physical self with her work, however, was a common tactic among many artists creating experimental work in the 1960s. The increasingly high profile presence of the artist, captured and forever integrated into the constitution of the work is visible, for example, in the now iconic photograph of Kaprow's *Yard* that shows the artist, pipe in mouth, staring up at the camera from amongst his haphazardly strewn tires. Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, and Pino Pascali were among the many of Kusama's European contemporaries who consciously featured themselves in photographs of their work.

The emphasis on the primacy of the artist in the creative process through photography had already begun with the previous generation of artists. One only need think of Ugo Mulas' iconic photographs of Fontana in the act of slicing a canvas (**figure 81**) or Smith combining two sheets of metal with his bare hands (**figure 82**), or even Hans Namuth's photographs of Pollock throwing paint on the canvas on his studio floor

(figure 83), to realize that the person and presence of the artist was quickly becoming an inseparable aspect of his or her work. These images were not simply portraits or self-portraits, but attempts to expose and connect the process of making to the maker.

The Namuth photographs, published in 1951 as a part of *Art News* series highlighting the making of art in an article entitled “Pollock Paints a Picture,” focused “on the act - the process of art-making - instead of on the static object.”<sup>65</sup> As Rosalind Krauss notes, the other photographs from this series were “organized around the more conventional view that ‘painting’ a picture was in fact a minor aspect of ‘creating’ a picture,” but the Pollock photographs presented a radically different vision of the artistic process. Krauss continued:

Pollock's paintings would only be misapprehended were they to be judged as autonomous aesthetic objects; they had to be seen through the living frenzied gesture that produced them. Thus the Namuth documents of this gesture became appended to them in both the popular and critical imagination; they became part of this 'life' this 'biography' that the pictures dragged behind them.<sup>66</sup>

Namuth’s photographs of Pollock or Mulas’ photographs of Smith connected the act to the object, expanding the configuration of the work. These photographs successfully cemented artist and work only after their distribution. By the mid-1960s, artists like Kusama and Pascali no longer limited the performance or their presence to the process of creation. Artists no longer held paintbrushes or welding tools, but showed themselves interacting with their objects, equal occupants in a shared space. Very few of the published photographs of Kusama ever show her physically making art. Instead, we

---

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Rose, *Pollock Painting* (New York: Agrinde Publications, 1980), n.p. For the original text see, Robert Goodnough, “Pollock Paints a Picture,” *Art News* 50, no. 3 (May 1951). This series, published throughout the 1950s, also included sculptors, e.g. Rosamund J. Frost, “Lipchitz Makes a Sculpture,” *Art News* (April 1950); and Elaine de Kooning, “Davd Smith Makes a Sculpture,” *Art News* 50, no. 5 (September 1951).

<sup>66</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, “Reading Photographs as Text,” in *Pollock Painting*, ed. Barbara Rose (New York: Agrinde Publications, 1980), n.p.

are shown the performance, almost after-the-fact; a performance that does not result in a “finished” work of art but is the work of art, or at least an aspect of it. In *Narcissus Garden*, unlike Kusama’s later happenings, the performance becomes one element, along with the sculptural objects and site, in a complicated and ever-expanding network; each dependent on the others to generate meaning within the created environment.

Unlike the earlier examples of photographs taken by Mulas or Namuth in which the photographer’s vision added to the power of the image and by extension the artist, Kusama was the driving force in the creation of her images, regardless of who was behind the camera. As in her sculptural configurations, Kusama wanted notoriety through any means, and was intent on achieving it on her own terms.<sup>67</sup> One of the photographers she hired was Rudy Burkhardt. Like Namuth, he made his reputation photographing Pollock. A fine art photographer in his own right, Burkhardt also worked as a staff photographer for *ArtNews* and became one of the most sought-after photographers among avant-garde artists in New York during the 1950s and 1960s. He photographed Kusama in her studio and during various exhibition installations, claiming Kusama told him exactly how to compose the image.<sup>68</sup>

The collaborative relationship between artist and photographer is further complicated in the well-known images where Kusama shows herself nude and in sexualized poses. One of these (**figure 84**), taken by the noted fashion photographer Hal Reiff, depicts Kusama lying on her *Accumulation No. 2* sculpture, her head propped up with her left hand, her face looking directly at the camera, framed by her long black hair.

---

<sup>67</sup> Zelevansky, *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*, 23. Kusama’s photographs flirted with provocation, but, in the end, did not get the results she desired. Her “sexual allure” and coy poses may have generated a certain amount of media attention, but it also opened the door for those inclined not to take her seriously.

<sup>68</sup> Burkhardt, interviewed in 1995 by Lynn Zelevansky. *Ibid.*, 20, n. 46.

She is nude save for a pair of stiletto heels, which she further emphasizes both by posing her legs kicked back behind her, almost cross-legged and by contrasting them, like her hair, against the blinding white background of her sculpture.

Scholars have examined this photograph, rightfully, in the context of gender politics and the representation of femininity; but more is at play here than simply an uneasy manipulation of pin-up aesthetics and sexual stereotypes. Kusama did not use the photograph as is, but used it as the foundation for a photo collage, adding a photograph of a dried pasta strewn floor to the bottom half of the image. Taking further ownership of the image, Kusama printed and distributed the photo collages, not the straight photograph. She repeated this process, creating countless collages during the mid-1960s that combined images of herself, various sculptural elements, textures from her environments, and even previously made collages.

For the poster announcing Kusama's *Driving Image Show* at Castellane in 1964 (**figure 85**), she made sure to include her own image, reproducing a pre-existing collage and repeating it four times on the top. Kusama created the collage using a photograph taken by Peter Moore at her studio depicting the artist in front of one of her *Accumulation* pieces, holding one of her macaroni dresses in front of her body. Only Kusama's head, hands, and feet are visible behind the paper-doll-like construction. The back of a disembodied head, probably one of her macaroni mannequins, peaks out from the right corner of the mirror. She once again inserted a photograph of a pasta-covered floor at the bottom of the collage. For the *Driving Image* poster she included the macaroni mannequin, repeating the image five times, including one in the top center in which the entire lower body is visible. To this top strip of repeating forms, Kusama overlaid

photographs of additional *Accumulation* pieces and extended pasta floor over the bottom two-thirds of the composition.

All of Kusama's photo collages function as extensions and expansions of the spaces she created in her environmental installations. The flat surface of the photograph allowed her cover every inch, to create a total environment that fully realized what she attempted to convey in her three-dimensional installations. The collages transferred the intended experience of her sculptural environments into a two-dimensional image. As Lynn Zelevansky writes, "Kusama wanted her work to invade and conquer the world like an epidemic. Her collages present fantasy environments, akin to the *Driving Image Show*, except that their flattened spaces are so densely layered and packed with art that they would be impossible to realize in the physical world."<sup>69</sup>

In addition to staging photographs in conjunction with her sculptural projects and further creating environments through photo collages, Kusama also integrated photographs into the physical fabric of her installations. Her first environment, *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show*, initially shown at the Gertrude Stein Gallery in 1963, was comprised of a large rowboat and oars entirely covered with her white phallic soft sculptures. On the walls behind the sculpture, Kusama arranged ninety-nine identical photographs showing the rowboat from above in a grid pattern. Like her photo collages, the photograph here serves to mimic the repetitive elements of the sculpture, merging the real and the reproduced in one total environment. Jill Johnston, in her review of the *Aggregation* exhibition for *ArtNews* from 1964, wrote:

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 22-23.



The photographs do not simply play tricks with the spectator by way of startling him when he sees the real thing; they are actually a reiterated extension of the boat, suggesting an infinite expansion of the image, expressing the same feeling of indefinite reiteration that Kusama seems obsessed with in the assemblage itself. The power of both the real image and the photographs is an accumulative act of repetitive insistence.<sup>70</sup>

Kusama repeated this configuration for the Stedelijk *Nul* exhibition in 1965, but as a photograph of Kusama (**figure 86**) standing in the corner of the room in a conservative wool skirt and top shows, she also chose to paper the floor with the photographic images of the boat. The floor at the Gertrude Stein Gallery was black, providing a strong contrast to the white boat and black and white images on the walls. In the two years between the installations, Kusama increased the “totality” of her sculptural environments and the floor images in Amsterdam added to the overall effect. In a photograph taken during the installation (**figure 87**) showing a partially visible Kusama reaching into the rowboat, a woman bends over, staring down, not at the boat everyone else looks at, but the images underneath her feet.

For the Stein exhibition, and in contrast to the intense frontal photograph against the wall at the Stedelijk, Kusama hired Burkhardt to photograph her with the installation, including the sculptural boat. In what would be her first nude photograph, she stands behind the rowboat dominating the foreground, dramatically lit in contrast to the dark background. With her back to the camera, her hands and lower torso hidden from sight, Kusama looks over her right shoulder. This image was the publicity still for the exhibition and whether or not it was Kusama’s or the gallery’s idea is unknown. What is

---

<sup>70</sup> Jill Johnston, “Reviews and Previews: Kusama’s *One Thousand Boats Show*,” *Art News* 62, no. 10 (February 1964): 12.

certain is that it was a drastic departure from the vast majority of exhibition press materials distributed at the time and even today.

While perhaps lacking the overt sexuality of the Reiff photograph taken a year later, the presence of the artist's body and posed in such a dramatic fashion was a deviation from the standard gallery practice of showing the artist casually posed with their work or in the midst of the creative process.<sup>71</sup> On further review, however, this type of performance is not that different from Kaprow standing in the middle of his tires or Smith sitting on a train car, surrounded by his *Voltris*. All feed into a certain image or myth the artist was trying to, or at least complacent with, creating. As Kusama was intent on achieving maximum exposure, it does not seem too great of a leap to assume that the choice of pose and lack of clothing was a conscious one on her part.

Kusama's presence became an important element in the photographs of *Narcissus Garden* as well. Perhaps because of its expansive spatial configuration or the enormity of its context, *Narcissus Garden* became one of Kusama's most photographed works. There are photographs of Kusama in three different outfits: the plain skirt and top worn in the Stedelijk photograph; the red jumpsuit from the *Infinity Mirror Room* photographs; and the gold kimono.<sup>72</sup> The latter, worn by Kusama in the majority of *Narcissus Garden* photographs is perhaps the most problematic and encumbered of the three.

The gold kimono first appeared in a photograph (**figure 88**) taken in her studio in 1964 by the noted Japanese photographer, Eiko Hosoe. Draped in the kimono's loose fabric, she kneels on *Accumulation No. 2*, whispering into a telephone while looking into

---

<sup>71</sup> Yoshimoto, *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York*, 63.

<sup>72</sup> See Figure 21 in Zelevansky, *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*, 51. Photographs from 1966 Biennale of Kusama wearing the plain skirt and top are extremely rare. I have only found one reproduced.

the camera. She also wore it to the opening of *Nul* exhibition at the Stedelijk in 1965. In the photograph showing the participating artists (**figure 89**), Kusama, in her glittering gold kimono, stands out in the center of male artists like Haacke, Fontana, and even her compatriots Jiro Yoshiro and Michio Yoshiwara, all clad in dark suits. While no doubt intended to highlight her femininity it also stressed her “otherness” as a Japanese artist. The gold kimono made her “exotic” and allowed her to both play into stereotypical cultural expectations and set herself apart. The kimono itself was an exaggeration. Kusama specially ordered it, and with its unusual fabric choice, it would have stood out even in Japan.<sup>73</sup>

The photographs of *Narcissus Garden* that feature Kusama in the gold kimono show the artist in a variety of poses, but the majority of images portray the artist holding an orb in some capacity. Whether handling the objects together with visitors, throwing the silver balls while the sleeves of her kimono billow in the movement, or simply standing within the environment with one in between both hands in a gesture of presentation (**figure 90**), Kusama’s performance entailed much more than just a transgressive art sale. Her performance and engagement, captured in these photographs, helped solidify the parameters or intended experience of the work as a whole, and palpably linked herself, her physical presence, with the work.

Following the controversial sale of the silver balls, the Herbert Read handout, and kimono-clad performance, Kusama staged an additional photo shoot in the red leotard. These photographs (**figure 79**) primarily show Kusama lying on her back in the grass, her arms and legs spread, with the silver balls pushed aside to accommodate her body and

---

<sup>73</sup> Yoshimoto, *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York*, 62.

outlining her contour. Her pose is strikingly similar to the *Infinity Mirror Room* photographs with the silver balls replacing the red polka-dot protrusions, and similarly emphasize Kusama's desire to be both the singular creator of the work and fully enmeshed within it. The red leotard photographs, like all of the photographs taken of *Narcissus Garden*, further support the reading of Kusama as calculating press savvy artist, who produced elaborately orchestrated, multiple component hybrid sculptural projects.

Kusama extended self-promotion to every facet of her appearance and work. Whether nude, in a skintight red leotard, or an ostentatious gold kimono, Kusama presented herself in ways sure to grab attention. Many of her photographs and photo collages toyed with images of femininity taken directly from the mass media and Hollywood, a tactic that artists of the next generation, like Cindy Sherman, would utilize to great effect. The difference is that Kusama's presence within these photographs was not a performance in and of itself, done for the sole purpose of capturing it as a photographic image. She always presented herself *with* or *within* her sculpture. Her nude or provocatively dressed body may have drawn more attention to the photograph, but this effect often served as a distracting or enticing veneer to what was really at play. In the photo collages and photographs, Kusama becomes a part of the work, fused into her created environments, made even more "total" through the transfer from three to two dimensions. With photographs, Kusama was able to collapse spatial boundaries, to layer, repeat, and build up textural and sculptural elements to a level where they became suffocating and manifold.

Mirrors and mirrored surfaces became integral components in the construction of these spaces; a way to both expand outward and reflect inward, for Kusama to more fully integrate herself into the environment. The surfaces of mirrors always remain untouched and uncovered in her work. Seeing the mirrored aspects in person would result in a dynamic, fluid viewing experience, glimpses caught in fleeting instances. Captured in a photograph though, they statically show the presence of the artist as well as the presence of things unseen in the photographic frame. In a crudely done photo collage, depicting Kusama holding a macaroni shirt in front of her body (**figure 72**), the mirror of her “accumulation” dresser frames her head in the upper center of the composition, reflecting back to the viewer a space that is elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> A photograph taken in Kusama’s studio with elements from the *Driving Image Show* depicts Kusama wearing a brocade shirt mimicking the texture of one of her rotelle pasta covered mannequins standing next to her. They both hold hairbrushes as they turn away from the camera, but their faces reflect back through the centered mirror, again provided an additional register of space in an already encrusted environment.

The reflective effects increase in Kusama’s later environments like *Infinity Mirror Room*. A photograph of the installation at the Castellane Gallery (**figure 73**) shows Kusama in her red jumpsuit lying amidst her polka dot-covered soft forms, the wall of mirrors diagonally bisecting the image.<sup>75</sup> Positioned with her head against the mirror, Kusama’s body is doubled, reflected in the space of the installation not included in the foreground of the photograph. Another photograph of the same installation (**figure 91**),

---

<sup>74</sup> Untitled photo collage courtesy of the Hebert Read Papers, University of Leeds.

<sup>75</sup> Lawrence Alloway, “Art in Escalation, The History of Happenings: A Question of Sources,” *Arts Magazine* December 1966 - January 1967. This photograph was widely published in reviews of the exhibition and was even the lead image to an article by Lawrence Alloway on happenings, though the accompanying caption identified it as an environment at the Thelen Gallery in Essen.

taken by Hosoe, created a similar spatial effect without focusing on the mirror but through double exposure. Kusama looks back toward the camera, her right leg extended and then doubled, disembodied in the upper right hand corner of the frame.

Like these earlier works, the mirror played a fundamental role in the meaning and construction of *Narcissus Garden*. Balls constructed from a non-reflective metal or plastic would not have created the same effect, and the photographs would not have been as important. Very few images depict the work without Kusama, but all, perhaps unavoidably, accentuated its reflective and environmental properties. The photographs were taken from a variety of angles, and showed the breadth of the sculpture. Shots where the mirror images are visible in the spheres' surfaces reflect outward, showing space not present in the photographic frame and multiplying the elements of the work.

Photography became a crucial element Kusama's work in the 1960s. It of course helped Kusama to promote herself and her work, but more importantly, photography solidified the connections between the physical object, the site, and the presence of the artist. Photography helped convey the complexity, instability, and multiple components of what constituted the work, and in turn became a part of the piece itself.

### **Remnants and Residuum**

In 1968, in the wake of Kusama's environments, Kaprow's happenings, and Fontana's "ambiente," the art world reconvened for another Biennale. The revolt against boundaries and tradition that dominated the previous two Biennales collided with the revolt of students and workers that gripped both sides of the Atlantic in the summer of '68. In the two years since Kusama installed *Narcissus Garden*, the environment had

changed. Cultural debates had become political ones and the Biennale was now declared an “instrument of the bourgeoisie to codify a policy of racism and cultural underdevelopment for the commercialization of ideas.”<sup>76</sup> The opening of the XXXIV Biennale quickly became marred by chaotic protests and increased police presence (**figure 92**). Many artists, expressing solidarity with the demonstrators, turned their paintings toward the wall (**figure 93**) or withdrew altogether, and some of the large-scale historical exhibitions never opened. Shortly before closing, the organizing committee decided to award prizes regardless of the circumstances.

The Italian awards went to two artists very much continuing the environmental work of Fontana and Kusama: Gianni Colombo and Pino Pascali. The latter had tragically died in a motorcycle accident just a month before the close of the Biennale. Though Pascali officially, if begrudgingly, withdrew his work from the Biennale shortly after it opened, he had installed an elaborate sculptural group (**figure 94**) in his designated gallery in the Italian Pavilion.<sup>77</sup> Collectively known as *Ricostruzione della Natura* (*Reconstructions of Nature*), this loosely connected series of works, made in the last eight months of Pascali’s life, were all made with faux fur, woven steel wool, or synthetic industrial brushes. For the Biennale, he selected seven of these extremely tactile works and arranged them in the gallery. *Penne di Esopo* (*Aesop’s Quills*), *Cesto* (*Chest*), *Stuoia* (*Mat*), and *Ponte levatoio* (*Drawbridge*), constructed from the steel wool, covered parts

---

<sup>76</sup> Statement from a leaflet handed out by student protestors. Reprinted in Di Martino, *The History of the Venice Biennale, 1895-2005: visual arts, architecture, cinema, dance, music, theatre*.

<sup>77</sup> Pascali published an artist statement in *B’it* in June 1968. “What can I say, is this a defeat? It is a defeat, because, as artists, we have lost the freedom to exhibit when and where we see fit. The Biennale was created by the kind of people who have always been the revolutionaries. In reality, it is a rotating space where every Italian painter sooner or later gets the chance to exhibit. It is not a shrine or anything of the kind.... There is no question that the structure of the Biennale doesn’t work; but this is an issue which ought not to be resolved with the students on one side and the police on the other.” Reprinted in Christov-Bakargiev, *Arte Povera*, 262.

of the floor and walls. Occupying the majority of the space were the large standing works covered in the acrylic fur, *Pelo (Fur)*, *Contropelo (Against the Fur)*, and *Solitario (Solitaire)*.

Like Kusama, Pascali was interested in creating connections with the placement of his sculptural groups and transforming the gallery space into a whimsical environment. He declared, "I do not believe you make shows *in* galleries, you make the gallery, you create the space."<sup>78</sup> For the *Ricostruzione della Natura*, Pascali created "a new world where nature itself appeared to have been industrially modified or 'reconstructed' in accordance with the artist's own playful aesthetic."<sup>79</sup> Many people discussed Pascali and his sculptural environments in terms of spectacle, performance, and showmanship. While he received his training in theatrical design and made his presence felt in his work, his practice was still built around his sculpture and environments. He stated:

People talk about the notion of spectacle with regard to my work, but I think that's incorrect: I do a show and my gesture is exactly the same as that of other sculptors who do shows. If someone does a show he automatically creates a spectacle, but not in the theatrical sense; sculptures aren't actors, and they're not stage decorations. The theatre is the theatre because it has the living man; if it doesn't have the living man, it's no longer theatre because it becomes something else.<sup>80</sup>

Pascali, like Kusama, created work activated by the presence of the viewer and enhanced by the staging and performance of the artist. His environmental spaces were always grounded in the primacy of the sculptural object, but he also always made a point to pose and interact with his work in photographs that would be distributed for publicity

---

<sup>78</sup> *L'Attico 1957-87: Trent'anni di pittura, scultura, musica, danza, performance, video*, (Milan: Mondadori, 1987).

<sup>79</sup> Robert Brown, *Pino Pascali: Ponte*, The Italian Sale, 20th Century Art (London: Christie's, 2008), 14, 18.

<sup>80</sup> Carla Lonzi, "I Pretend to Make Sculptures. Interview with Pino Pascali, 1967," in *Arte Povera from the Goetz Collection*, ed. Rainald Schumacher (Munich: Sammlung Goetz, 2001), 153.



purposes. He adopted various costumes – soldier, rustic primitive or all black-clad artist – and playfully engaged his sculptures. Fabio Sargentini, a close friend and owner of Galleria L’Attico, recalled Pascali at the opening of the first exhibition of *Ricostruzione della Natura* at his gallery. “He was dressed in black, all black, that was his costume, his uniform. There was no masquerade for this show....He liked to be a performer himself and was appreciated as a great performer. Well, he was a great performer, but more as a *tableaux vivant*, in conjunction with his work.”<sup>81</sup>

Like Kusama’s gold kimono, the majority of photographs show Pascali in his “black uniform” standing and playing with his work. One of the most striking of these photographs (**figure 95**) shows Pascali with his *Vedova blu (Blue Widow)*, a later *Ricostruzione della Natura* piece in the shape of an enormous spider covered entirely in bold, blue artificial fur. Taken by the Italian photographer Claudio Abate at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome in the summer of 1968, Pascali humorously contorts his body under the arched legs of his sculpture, activating the work and its space.

Ugo Mulas took many of the photographs of Pascali, in his studio and with his work installed in galleries, and as one of the main photographers associated with the Venice Biennale, took the installation shots of Pascali’s entry in 1968. Mulas described shooting both Pascali and Pascali’s work, and that for him, there was no separation between the two. Mulas also acknowledged that one of his photographs of Pascali’s sculptures would always be less interesting than the sculpture itself, but that he saw his role as helping the viewer to gain a fuller understanding of Pascali’s work. The photographer, according to Mulas, had the unique ability to show the “irreplaceable

---

<sup>81</sup> “A Conversation with Fabio Sargentini.” Brown, *Pino Pascali: Ponte*, 27.

environment of the artist.” As he stated, “To photograph a sculpture means to see the sculpture, it means giving it a space, a spotlight, and a point of view; to photograph a sculpture is like translating a piece of literature from one language to another.... You have to use another language in order to complete the interpretation.”<sup>82</sup>

Both Pascali and Kusama found ways to manipulate the translation between two and three dimensions. They attempted to create real spaces out of their imaginations, and it was through their interactions, with their objects, in their environments, that these spaces became energized. The point was no longer to show a “finished” work, but one that was fully, if fleetingly, realized; as if the presence of the artist, not in the mode of creator but of participant, was the last, necessary piece of the puzzle. The photographs concretized the multiple and various moments of inception. They combined the transitory meeting of all elements of the work, the performed staging, the sculptural object, and the environment. The photographs did not document a happening or a full-fledged performance, but visually translated the ephemeral moment when the artist and work became one.

Works like *Narcissus Garden* or the *Ricostruzione della Natura* mark an important shift in sculptural and artistic production in the mid-1960s. They presented sculpture as multiple, fleeting constructions, comprised of various, variable parts. In the forty years since their original installations, each has been reinstalled and reconfigured, adapted to the specifics of new spaces and subsequently created different environments.

Kusama’s career has seen a resurgence in the last twenty years, resulting in the re-

---

<sup>82</sup> Ugo Mulas, *Ugo Mulas. Immagini e testi*. (Parma: Istituto di storia dell'arte, 1973), 73-4. “Fotografare una scultura vuol dire leggere la scultura, vuol dire darle uno spazio, una luce e un punto di vista; fotografare una scultura è come tradurre un brano di letteratura da una lingua in un'altra, passare dalle tre dimensioni alle due dimensioni del foglio fotografico e quindi si deve usare un altro linguaggio e quindi si compie un'opera di interpretazione.”

installation of *Narcissus Garden* in a wide variety of museum galleries and outdoor locations.<sup>83</sup> The original silver orbs are no longer extant, the circumstances of their demise unknown.<sup>84</sup> New silver balls are remanufactured for each installation in numbers determined by the site. Kusama no longer attempts to sell them off individually though, on a few occasions, she has once again donned a red jumpsuit and immersed herself in their expanse (**figure 96**).

Kusama was never shy about reinstalling her work. She used her sculptural components repeatedly in a variety of exhibitions and formats. Pascali also, had already shown some of the pieces together before being installed at the Biennale. Work is made and work travels. There is nothing new in this practice and if anything has become more entrenched within contemporary art practices, but something is lost or altered in the process and needs to be accounted for in historical analyses of work like Kusama's, Kaprow's, or Pascali's. This issue was already on Pascali's mind in 1967 when he stated:

Once your things are taken by the gallerist and you arrange them in a gallery, they become something else, they become, perhaps in a negative but inevitable way, paintings. They become a kind of cemetery in which these things really are tombs but at the same time are the simulacrum, the altar, the Bluebell, whatever you want: they become the object that enacts this spatial itinerary in the gallery.<sup>85</sup>

What becomes so extraordinary about the photographs made in conjunction with staged environments of the mid-1960s is that the work remains alive within them. They act as residuum of these beautiful, brief moments where everything came together to both present a different kind of art object and deny any kind of singular consensus. These sculptures may still exist in some physical form; on view in museums, locked up in

---

<sup>83</sup> A version was installed, for example, in Central Park in New York as a part of the 1997 Whitney Biennial.

<sup>84</sup> Louise Neri, director of the Gagosian Gallery (which represents Kusama), in conversation with the author 20 April 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Lonzi, "I Pretend to Make Sculptures. Interview with Pino Pascali, 1967," 153.

private collections, or separated from the rest of their group. They have been and will continue to be recreated, but while they are reconfigurable, they are also determinedly unrepeatable. The subsequent reiterations are but continuations in ever-expanding constitution of a work they can never truly replace or reproduce.

## Chapter 4

### Sculpture as Action: Robert Smithson's *Asphalt Rundown*, 1969

Once set in motion, a work survives apart from its physical body. Indeed, the art object tends more and more to dissolve into its reproductions and to fixed opinions regarding its meaning.

Harold Rosenberg<sup>1</sup>

My work is impure; it is clogged with matter. I'm for weighty, ponderous art. There is no escape from matter. There is no escape from the physical nor is there any escape from the mind. The two are in a constant collision course. You might say that my work is like an artistic disaster. It is a quiet disaster of mind and matter.

Robert Smithson<sup>2</sup>

On the morning of October 15, 1969 the American artist, Robert Smithson, with the help of Roman gallery owner and art dealer, Fabio Sargentini, created *Asphalt Rundown* (**figure 1**). The work was a seemingly straightforward if unique act: several tons of hot, oozing asphalt poured from the back of a dump truck down a hillside in a disused area of the Cava di Selce, a rock quarry approximately 18 kilometers southeast of Rome, near the Roma Ciampino Airport. Perhaps because of its simple form or because, made in a remote location over forty years ago, the work has now succumbed to erosion and disappeared, *Asphalt Rundown* remains one of the least discussed works in Smithson's oeuvre.

Closer examination of *Asphalt Rundown* reveals, however, that the work was neither a clear-cut, one-off dump of materials, nor an anomaly within Smithson's career or the greater experimental practices of the international avant-garde of late 1960s. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Harold Rosenberg, "The Art Object and the Esthetics of Impermanence," in *The Anxious Object* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 95.

<sup>2</sup> Smithson as quoted in "Fragments of an Interview with P.A. Norvell (1969) in Robert Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 194.

work gave Smithson the opportunity to explore and to push the boundaries of sculpture, to both question the permanence of the object and solidify its condition as a profound exploration of material. *Asphalt Rundown* was not simply a temporary installation of a sculpture in an unusual location or a work made outside. It was action and “entropy made visible,” a complete synthesis of foreign, moving matter with the substance of the earth.<sup>3</sup> The constitution of the work was determined by the particular circumstances of its site; engaging at such a primordial, intimate level that its specificity, the contours of the eroded landscape, the particular slope of the hill, and the resources available on that particular place on that particular day, determined the entire form of the work.

The specific conditions of *Asphalt Rundown* left the work vulnerable to change, chance, and eventual disappearance, concepts Smithson embraced and which served as the foundation for his artistic theory of entropy. Smithson operated in dialectics, in the ambiguous spaces between the visible and the invisible. The destruction of *Asphalt Rundown* was inevitably contained in its creation, and like other works from the late 1960s that pushed beyond the white walled frame of the gallery and explored process, *Asphalt Rundown* was, and remains, dependent on the two-dimensional image for its dissemination and continued proof of physical existence. The photographs of the work both proclaim its material reality and serve as constant reminders of its absence, offering two realities of the work, one past and one present, that are irreconcilable.

---

<sup>3</sup> Nancy Holt as quoted in Bob Fiori. *Rundown*, 13 min.; color film; from The Estate of Robert Smithson, QuickTime <http://www.robertsmithson.com/films/txt/rundown.html> (accessed January 2011).

## The Specifics of Site

Choosing to display and create a sculptural project in a remote and unusual place like the Cava di Selce was still novel in 1969, but it was not the first time Smithson had worked at a site of industrial excavation. Mines, quarries, pits, and ruins were the preferred locations for his projects in the late 1960s. For Smithson, these types of alternative sites offered a radically new way in which to create art, providing a way out of what Allan Kaprow referred to as “enframing spaces.”<sup>4</sup> Smithson wanted to move away from the “predictable installations” and “the typical idea of exhibitions in a museum.”<sup>5</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, Smithson began to explore the “palpable experience of the measureless, the indeterminate, the use of non-rigid materials, [and] process,” tendencies that as Kaprow stated, would be nearly impossible “in a gallery and museum boxes or their equivalents.”<sup>6</sup>

The Cava di Selce proved an especially rich physical and historical location for the creation of *Asphalt Rundown*. The quarry’s close proximity to Rome, a place Smithson called a “junk heap of history,” provided “a historical background of debris,” that sites in the United States could never match.<sup>7</sup> The selection of this site, however, owes more to practical logistics and Smithson’s involvement with Sargentini, than it does to any particular artistic conceptualization or conscious choice. Sargentini invited Smithson to Rome for a solo exhibition at the new space of his gallery, L’Attico.

---

<sup>4</sup> Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, 93.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Baker, “Talking with Robert Smithson (1970),” in *Robert Smithson: Spiral Jetty, True Fictions, False Realities*, ed. Lynne Cooke (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 151.

<sup>6</sup> Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, 94. Kaprow’s “The Shape of the Environment,” was originally published in the Summer 1968 issue of *Artforum* as a response to Robert Morris’ important essay, “Antiform,” which was published two months earlier in the same publication. Kaprow and Smithson discussed the limitations of the museum and of gallery space in their 1967 text, “What is a Museum?” Republished in Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*,

<sup>7</sup> Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 293, 304.

Smithson's travel and exhibition schedule in 1969 was extremely full, and as a result, he was only in Rome for about a week.<sup>8</sup> Smithson wrote in advance of his arrival, asking Sargentini to scout for suitable and available quarries or industrial locations.<sup>9</sup> Sargentini was responsible not only for choosing the specific site, but also for procuring all of the necessary raw materials, machinery, and human resources. He was more than the commissioning patron of *Asphalt Rundown*. Following a model of collaborative patronage established in Italy earlier in the decade, Sargentini became a crucial, participatory force in the creation of the work.

Sargentini met Smithson while on his first trip to New York in April 1969, through John Weber, the artist's representative at the Virginia Dwan Gallery.<sup>10</sup> Then only in his twenties, Sargentini was one of a handful of European dealers that opened enterprising, progressive galleries in the late 1960s and supported vanguard artists.<sup>11</sup>

With the ascendancy of the New York as the prime location of the international art

---

<sup>8</sup> Just days before the opening, Smithson flew to Rome directly from the art fair *Prospect '69* in Düsseldorf, and within a week of *Asphalt Rundown* and the indoor works' creation, was back in New York. *Prospect '69* was conceived of and organized by Konrad Fischer and Hans Strelow in Düsseldorf from September 30-October 12, 1969. Robert Smithson's Engagement Calendar, 1969, Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt Papers, 1905-1987, Roll 3832, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

<sup>9</sup> There is no record of this correspondence in Smithson's papers, but both Sargentini and Smithson's widow, the artist Nancy Holt, confirm this chain of events. Fabio Sargentini, in discussion with the author, May 2010; Nancy Holt, email message to author, February 28, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Smithson's widow, Nancy Holt, and Sargentini himself confirmed Weber's role in facilitating introductions to artists like Smithson and Sol LeWitt during Sargentini's trip to New York in April. Fabio Sargentini, in discussion with the author, May 2010; Nancy Holt, email message to author, February 28, 2011. John Weber began his career at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York, where he organized the show *Environments, Situations, Spaces*; notable as the venue for Allan Kaprow's environment *Yard*. Weber went on to work for the Dwan Gallery, where he worked from 1968 through its closure in 1971. He then went on to open his own eponymous space, where he continued to represent the Estate of Robert Smithson. In 1969, he was married to the Roman art dealer Annina Nosei who was well connected within the European art world. It was through her that he originally met Sargentini. For a more detailed history of Weber's role in the late 1960s art scene and his involvement with Robert Smithson, see the Oral History interview with John Weber, 2006 Mar. 21-Apr. 4, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

<sup>11</sup> Between 1966 and 1968, galleries like Art & Project in the Netherlands, Wide White Space in Belgium, Konrad Fischer and Galerie Ricke in Germany, Galerie Sonnabend in France, and Sperone and L'Attico in Italy, opened. They gave solo exhibitions to artists like Smithson, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, and Sol LeWitt, often their firsts, and shared the same stable of artists, exchanging information and splitting logistical costs. Through these artists, the Europeans developed connections to gallerists in New York like Leo Castelli, John Weber, and Virginia Dwan.



market in the postwar period, these European galleries provided an alternative and often less commercial environment for artists to create and show their work.

Art dealing is, at its core, a for profit endeavor, but these new, emerging European galleries proved more open and flexible; an appealing aspect to a group of loosely connected artists unified, in part, through “a strong desire to subvert the perceived commodity-fetishism of the art world,” if not the world in general.<sup>12</sup> Sargentini and his European contemporaries played key roles in the opening and supporting of experimental spaces, and like their curatorial counterparts in museums, were responsible for helping to establish a strong, flourishing network among vanguard artists in Europe at the end of the 1960s. Sargentini’s approach was not just about developing new ways to show or sell art. The creation of new spaces and alternative sites directly encouraged and facilitated new possibilities in sculpture, including large-scale, ephemeral, and site-specific work. This was especially evident in Sargentini’s L’Attico space (**figure 97**), a converted parking garage on the Via Beccaria in Rome.

While today, the image of a large, open, industrial space or loft has become synonymous with, if not a cliché of, modern gallery spaces, Sargentini’s gallery was an absolute novelty when it opened. In an era where the New York galleries had yet to migrate south to the wide, white spaces of SoHo, most galleries there were in storefronts, small office spaces in skyscrapers, or private townhomes and apartments.<sup>13</sup> L’Attico was massive in comparison, with ramps, multiple levels, and as the curator Harald Szeemann

---

<sup>12</sup> Robert Lumley, “Between Pop Art and Arte Povera: American Influences in the Visual Arts in Italy in the 1960s,” in *Across the Atlantic: cultural exchanges between Europe and the United States*, ed. Luisa Passerini (New York: P.I.E.P. Lang, 2000), 181.

<sup>13</sup> Sargentini recalled becoming especially aware of the uniqueness of his space on his trip to New York in the spring of 1969. While this period coincides with the establishment of new kinds of gallery spaces in New York, like Leo Castelli’s use of a warehouse space he owned, Sargentini remembered being shocked that all of the galleries were in skyscrapers. Sargentini, in discussion with the author, May 2010.

remarked, had walls and a floor that “have seen other things.” For Szeemann, who visited the space just after it opened in January 1969 while on a scouting trip for the landmark exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, Sargentini had created the “best gallery space” of the era and singlehandedly made Rome a destination for vanguard art practices of the late 1960s.<sup>14</sup>

Szeemann’s claim was perhaps justified in light of the inaugural exhibition produced at L’Attico. Jannis Kounellis, a young Italian artist represented by Sargentini and associated with the Arte Povera tendency, decided almost immediately after hearing about the new space that he wanted to install twelve large and very alive horses as a sculptural installation. The resulting exhibition, *Dodici Cavalli* (**figure 98**), was, for practical reasons short-lived, but it became one of the most significant exhibitions not only of Sargentini and Kounellis’ careers but also of the entire period. The work would simply not have been possible in a more traditional gallery. Sargentini’s new space perfectly accommodated large-scale, ephemeral sculptural works that used unconventional materials.

For Kounellis, as it was for Smithson, Sargentini’s patronage amounted to more than providing a radically new kind of space for the display of art. Sargentini tried to give complete creative freedom to the artists that showed in his gallery, pledging his support and resources for their creative endeavors. The opportunity to experiment proved especially significant in the case of Smithson, who had initially intended to create an indoor piece for his solo L’Attico show. Prior to his departure for Italy, Smithson had

---

<sup>14</sup> Republished in Christian Rattemeyer, *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969* (London: Afterall Books, 2010), 186. Szeemann wrote this after visiting in Rome on January 13, 1969 in his exhibition diary while planning *When Attitudes Become Form*, which would open in Bern two months later.

made a series of drawings (**figure 99**). Closely related to other works he created around the time, they show piles of mud, mirrors, stones, and natural debris arranged within a gallery space.<sup>15</sup>

Smithson did realize a variation of the mud and mirrors project depicted in his preparatory drawings, but none of the sculptural components survives. There is almost no mention of the project in the large body of Smithson scholarship, and no photographs exist showing the indoor installation.<sup>16</sup> Exactly how and when the idea came about to move outdoors and create *Asphalt Rundown* is unknown, but it is clear that the focus for both the artist and the dealer quickly shifted to the outdoor project. Even though the work was far less accessible or profitable, Sargentini placed all of his efforts and full support behind *Asphalt Rundown*, not the indoor installation.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> One of the more complex drawings for the indoor installation, entitled *Mirror Project, Rome*, is in the Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt Papers in the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institute. The drawing, on gridded blueprint paper, shows four separate components in the space of the gallery. Five mirrors (4' x 4' x 1/8 thick) in line, leaning on a wall with mud poured over them (with a notation of mud to be mixed in washtub). Nine mirrors 1' x 4' x 1/16" with mirrors inserted vertically into a supporting pile of roots, vines, sticks, etc. Eight mirrors (10" x 10" x 1/8) with "mirrors arranged back to back in rectangle, shored up by stone and soil, perhaps volcanic ash." A "split tree with two 2 1/2' x 2 1/2' mirrors jammed into split, need steel wedges and sledge hammer and saw" with a notation of the top of the tree being either limbs or roots with that portion leaning up against the wall. It seems clear that Smithson initially intended this to be a site/nonsite project since he has written on the drawing, "Outside: Materials to be gathered for four sites in Italy. Mirrors to be set up on sites, then [sic] mapped and photographed. Would like to visit bubbling mud pools. Mirrors may take different shapes on outdoor sites. Photos of outdoor sites displayed on walls."

<sup>16</sup> Robert Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 178-79. Robert Hobbs, who organized the first retrospective of Smithson's work at Cornell University in 1981, devoted two paragraphs to this project and reproduced one drawing in the accompanying catalogue *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*. Hobbs listed the project as *Mud and Mirrors*. The included drawing is entitled *Mud Flow with Mirrors*. While Hobbs suggests this project was very much in line with other projects Smithson was making around this time, he discusses it as a separate exhibition made "during the time Smithson was creating *Asphalt Rundown*."

<sup>17</sup> When asked why no photographic documentation exists for the piece, Sargentini stated that he did not even ask his in-house photographer, Claudio Abate, to photograph the installation because he considered *Asphalt Rundown* to be the "important" work. Fabio Sargentini, in discussion with the author, May 2010. Nancy Holt also confirmed the creation of the mud and mirrors installation but had no recollection of the circumstances of its creation or why no photographs were taken of the piece. Nancy Holt, email message to author, February 28, 2011.

*Asphalt Rundown* was a precocious act, a complete break from the traditional means by which to create and display art, but while it may have been physically outside the white walls of the gallery, it remained beholden to, and entrenched in, the greater “enframing space” of institutional context.<sup>18</sup> This is not to dismiss the significance of Smithson’s choice to intervene directly into the landscape or the site-specificity of the work, but to acknowledge that a work, paid for, facilitated by, and effectively commissioned through an established dealer, in conjunction with an exhibition at his gallery, can hardly be thought to exist outside of an institutional framework.

Smithson, more than most of his contemporaries, understood the impossibility of completely circumventing the greater, established institutional context. Even in his later large-scale outdoor works like *Spiral Jetty* (**figure 100**) in which Smithson was the primary creative and organizing force, he welcomed, if not needed, the support of dealers and patrons.<sup>19</sup> He chose instead to embrace the unavoidability of the art world structure, the unyielding existence of the gallery, and the ambiguity created by the back and forth between what was visible and what was invisible. His solution to the problem was the development of his site/nonsite dialectic in 1968 (**figure 101**), which necessitated the artist visiting a particular location, or site, and transporting some physical, natural element from that place to the space of the gallery, or nonsite. This concept bifurcated the

---

<sup>18</sup> Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 47. Both Kaprow and Smithson acknowledged this sentiment in “What is a Museum?” Kaprow stated, “For instance, I must often make social compromises in my Happenings, while, similarly, you and other who might object to museums nevertheless go on showing in them.”

<sup>19</sup> In the case of *Spiral Jetty*, Smithson scouted for the site, facilitated the lease of the land and the hiring of labor and machinery, and hired a photographer and a filmmaker to shoot the work. Even this work, while made under much more independent circumstances was still financially supported by Smithson’s New York dealer, Virginia Dwan and Douglas Christmas of the Ace Gallery of Vancouver and Los Angeles. As Hobbs writes, “Approximately \$9,000 (not including the many expenses incurred) was spent on construction of the Earthwork alone by Virginia Dwan...and another \$9,000 was provided by Douglas Christmas...for a film of the work. Later, Smithson traded a number of early works to Dwan and Christmas for the sole ownership of the *Jetty* and film.” Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, 191. Today the Dia Art Foundation maintains the work.

work of art into two separate, but mutually dependent parts, and expanded the display space across temporal and spatial boundaries.

Neither *Asphalt Rundown* nor Smithson's "mud and mirrors" project functioned like the previous site/nonsite "indoor earthworks" that he completed in New Jersey, New York, Amsterdam, and Germany, prior to the exhibition in Rome (**figure 102 and 103**). His two Rome projects were not directly related to each other and did not articulate the site/nonsite structure that allowed Smithson to mirror two locations simultaneously. Smithson did not collect the mud and rock shown inside of L'Attico from the Cava di Selce, and there was no mediating text explaining the significance of the quarry or corresponding photographs showing the action of the rundown installed inside the gallery.

While breaking from the characteristic site/nonsite structure, Smithson's two Rome projects were not disparate or disconnected, either to each other or to his previous work. The site/nonsite dialectic served as an enacted artistic philosophy as much as particular group of works, a means with which to explore the process in which art was displayed and viewed. Smithson wrote of the nonsite, "Without appeal to 'gestalts' or 'antiform,' it actually exists as a fragment of a greater fragmentation. It is a three-dimensional *perspective* that has broken away from the whole, while containing the lack of its own containment."<sup>20</sup> Neither *Asphalt Rundown* nor the indoor installation had a fully realized nonsite, but the gallery announcement card (**figure 104**) made for Smithson's exhibition at L'Attico suggests a similar tension created by dual creation of these two projects.

---

<sup>20</sup> Robert Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects." *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (September 1968): 44-50; Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 111.

The card showed only a cropped, horizontally oriented map of the rock quarry where *Asphalt Rundown* was enacted. Two columns of text on the bottom of the card gave, respectively: the name of the artist, the opening date of the exhibition, and the address of the gallery; and a caption, which read, “Site of Asphalt, Run Down (Cava di Selce),” which was also circled on the map. As an object meant advertise and disseminate information about an exhibition, the gallery announcement provided little in the way of explaining the scope or specifics of Smithson’s work. The announcement card publicized *Asphalt Rundown*, but visitors to the gallery would have been greeted by the mud and mirrors project, with no consequent reference, textual or photographic, concerning *Asphalt Rundown*. Further, unless you had a solid knowledge of the area surrounding Rome, the fragmented, rotated image on the front of the card offered little in the way of usable directions on how to find the work or any identifying information about the nature of the work if you did.

The gallery card was a disconnect, a notice of both the existence and inaccessibility of *Asphalt Rundown*. The work was seen by few people during or after its creation, and, in a move that made Sargentini’s support of the work that much more remarkable, was unsellable.<sup>21</sup> With its unusual form and site, *Asphalt Rundown* can easily be brushed off as a radical but anomalous gesture within Smithson’s career or

---

<sup>21</sup> Sargentini made little to no money from the exhibition. Unlike some of Smithson’s previous site/non-site exhibitions, no photodocumentation, maps, or texts were created for the gallery installation in Rome, and while Sargentini hired Abate to shoot the work, the sale from these photographs and any related reproductions would have been small.

Sargentini got his start as a dealer working with his father at the original location of L’Attico near the Piazza de Spagna. The gallery showed mostly postwar Italian expressionist or Informale painters. Fabio Sargentini became friends with a younger generation of Italian artists like Kounellis and Pino Pascali, and wanted to show work that was more contemporary. This led to a rift with his father, but also spurred him to open the separate L’Attico garage space on Via Beccaria. For a more detailed history of Fabio Sargentini and his involvement with the L’Attico gallery see the gallery’s website [www.fabiosargentini.it](http://www.fabiosargentini.it) as well as Fabio Sargentini, *Album: 9/68 - 2/71* (Rome: L’Attico, 1971); Giancarlo Politi and Fabio Sargentini, *Fabio Sargentini* (Milan: G.Politi, 1990).

simply a crucial transitional work suggestive of the artist's later large-scale land art projects of the 1970s; but contained in this singular work is the duality present in his site/nonsite work. With *Asphalt Rundown*, Smithson created a multiplicity of enframing spaces: embracing the ambiguity created by institutional patronage, manipulating the work's relationship to site to maximum artistic effect, and conflating the visible and invisible.

### **Action as Material/ Entropy as Form**

The form of *Asphalt Rundown* owed much to its specific site, but its adhesion to the contours of the landscape was achieved through Smithson's choice of material. *Asphalt Rundown*, as its title suggests, consisted of several tons of asphalt, a material that like the work's site, Smithson selected for its physical characteristics, historical connotations, and potential for total erosion. Smithson's writings and drawings (**figure 105**) from throughout the 1960s express a sustained interest in oozing, overflowing, primordial black matter, from the bubbling tar pits of the prehistoric era to the industrial remnants of modern mines and steelworks.<sup>22</sup>

Smithson was influenced by the writings of the early twentieth century philosopher, T.E. Hulme, and in particular, his essay "Cinders," in which he wrote that, "all the world is a plurality"; a plurality consisting "in the nature of an ash-heap," and "in

---

<sup>22</sup> Holt states that Smithson loved the Rancho LaBrea Tar Pits in Los Angeles and the notion of trapped dinosaurs as well as the places where substances like tar and lava oozed out of the earth. Nancy Holt, email message to author, February 28, 2011. Hobbs also points out that the Museum of Natural History in New York, a place Smithson often visited as a child and returned to as an adult to film footage for his *Spiral Jetty* film in 1970, there was a display known as the "asphalt group" located in the Hall of Mammals. The film showed now-extinct mammals trapped and buried in tar pits, embedded in the asphalt. Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, 175-76.

cinders that are always in flux.”<sup>23</sup> The materials Smithson chose in the late 1960s were unorthodox and unified by their transformative properties. Slag, asphalt, mud, cement, cinders, and lava, whether found in nature or industrially created, were all by-products or remnants of dynamic change. The substances Smithson utilized in his work from this time were leftovers; matter that in the face of great combustion or deterioration somehow had survived. What was important about these malleable substances was not only their physical composition but that they were suggestive of this transformation.

Existing naturally in the earth, asphalt is a by-product of coal refining. The first appearance of asphalt in Smithson’s oeuvre appeared not in a sculptural work, but in photographs taken by the artist while in Germany, preparing for a solo show in December 1968 at the newly formed Galerie Konrad Fischer in Dusseldorf. Asked by Fischer to come and create a work for his gallery, Smithson decided to visit the Ruhr industrial district and the steelworks of Oberhausen with the German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher to scout for materials for his piece. While there, he took numerous close-up photographs with his Instamatic camera of pools of asphalt and the material residues of the barren industrial landscapes.<sup>24</sup> Smithson included a selection of these photographs (**figure 106**) in the central work of the Galerie Fischer exhibition. He also showed a

---

<sup>23</sup> T.E. Hulme, “Cinders: A Sketch of a New Weltanschauung,” in *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Routledge, 1924), 219, 22.

<sup>24</sup> *Bernd & Hilla Becher, Robert Smithson: Field Trips*, ed. James Lingwood (Turin: Hopefulmonster 2002), 74. Lingwood writes, “Oberhausen was a site which Bernd and Hilla Becher already knew well. They had begun to work there in 1963 (photographing the blast furnaces at Gutehoffnungshütte West), and continued between 1967 and 1969, this time concentrating on the other blast furnace, Gutehoffnungshütte Ost. Fischer was intimately familiar with the area since his grandfather's family had owned the entire complex as part of one of the oldest and largest steel companies in Germany, Hanel & Lueg. Although Smithson had made several excursions to Quarries and mining areas as well as distressed industrial sites in his native New Jersey, the journey to Oberhausen was his first prospecting visit to an industrial site in Europe.”



single, found piece of asphalt that he collected from the landscape around the steelworks, titling it *Asphalt Lump* (**figure 107**), and simply placing it on the floor of the gallery.

When he again selected asphalt for his Rome project, Smithson manipulated the dynamic possibilities of the material. *Asphalt Rundown* is a pure expression of materiality, its form, and meaning, bound intimately to its particular substance, but it was also an unstable work, which never settled into a finite state. Asphalt became the crucial element of *Asphalt Rundown* not only because of its rich historical and physical connotations, but also because of how the material responded to the technique and process of dumping and pouring. Smithson described *Asphalt Rundown* as “Dumping...that’s gone into the sense of a kind of...alluvial action, fluvial massing. I’m interested in sort of subsuming a kind of just mass, and mass that moves from a central point and fans apart.”<sup>25</sup> The asphalt both molded, and was molded by, the earth it covered and seeped into, but it also changed as the ground underneath it eroded and the elements altered its surface. The work functioned as a nearly perfect physical manifestation of entropy.<sup>26</sup>

Smithson first introduced the term entropy into his artistic language in his 1966 essay, “Entropy and the New Monuments.” He co-opted the term from the field of physics for a review of new approaches to sculpture practiced by some of his American contemporaries like Robert Morris and Donald Judd. He wrote, “In a rather round-about way, many of the artists have provided a visible analog for the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which extrapolates the range of entropy by telling us energy is more

---

<sup>25</sup> “Four Conversations between Dennis Wheeler and Robert Smithson (1969-1970).” Republished in Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 215.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Hobbs described *Asphalt Rundown* as a “casting of erosion” and a “grand tribute to entropy.” Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, 174.

easily lost than obtained, and that in the ultimate future the whole universe will burn out and be transformed into an all-encompassing sameness.”<sup>27</sup>

Looking back, the text reads more like an outline of the artistic strategy for Smithson’s own work than that of his minimalist colleagues. He was beginning to formulate how matter could embody a palpable experience of time; to literally express it, not just represent it. Smithson, though, was more interested in time’s breakdown, the conflation of past, present, and future. He continued, “Time becomes a place minus motion....A million years is contained in a second, yet we tend to forget the second as soon as it happens.”<sup>28</sup>

The specific choice of material in *Asphalt Rundown* allowed time come into play in multiple registers. There is the suggestion of the historical, prehistoric time of the material’s origins. There is the time of its initial dump from the back of the truck, the time of its suspended gravitation as it stops just short of the bottom of the quarry, and the slow decay and destruction of the material over the protracted time of almost forty years.<sup>29</sup> Responding to an interview question concerning the elements of destruction in his work in January 1969, Smithson stated, “It’s already destroyed. It’s a slow process of destruction. The world is slowly destroying itself. The catastrophe comes suddenly, but slowly....I prefer the lava, the cinders that are completely cold and entropically cooled off. They’ve been resting in a state of delayed motion. It takes something like a

---

<sup>27</sup> Smithson, Robert. “Entropy and the New Monuments.” *Artforum* 4, no. 10 (June 1966): 26-31; Republished in Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> “Four Conversations between Dennis Wheeler and Robert Smithson (1969-1970).” Republished in *ibid.*, 216. Smithson stated in discussing *Asphalt Rundown*, “You can see in my work that the art is always against itself...That’s sort of isolated like a petrified river...so there you have that sense of something very definitively in time, yet the moment gives you that sense of timelessness.”

millennium to move them. That's enough action for me. Actually that's enough to knock me out."<sup>30</sup>

Smithson continued to explore entropy and erosion in the work created after *Asphalt Rundown*. Emboldened by his experience in Rome, he realized two other pours in late 1969, although both were much smaller in scale. Smithson created *Cement Pour* (**figure 108**), for Jan van der Marck's exhibition, *Art by Telephone*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in November. All of the projects in the exhibition were "telephoned" in and as such, Smithson never saw the work in person. As late as September, he intended to create a work to be entitled *Hello* that would be comprised of talking parrots. Fresh off his experience at L'Attico, he changed course and instructed van der Marck to find a suitable embankment to pour concrete from a Ready Mixer.<sup>31</sup> He wanted the site to be directly on the shore of Lake Michigan where the concrete could build up into a kind of jetty, but the staff of the museum was unable to find a patron willing to let this occur on their property and instead found an industrial location where cement trucks came to discard leftover concrete.<sup>32</sup>

In December, Smithson traveled to Vancouver to participate in Lucy Lippard's exhibition *955,000*. Shortly before the exhibition opened in January, Smithson decided to create *Glue Pour* (**figure 109 and 110**), which involved orange glue dumped from a metal barrel on a hillside of dirt. The decision to use glue was last-minute as the

---

<sup>30</sup> Liza Bear and Willoughby Sharp, "Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, and Smithson," *Avalanche*, no. 1 (Fall 1970).

<sup>31</sup> Correspondence between Robert Smithson and Jan van der Marck, 3 September 1969, *Art by Telephone* exhibition archives, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. In a letter written from England, Smithson informed van der Marck that he was very busy "working on shows for the ICA, Prospect, and Rome," but that "Since most people answer the telephone by saying 'hello,' I should like to build a work around that word. Find parrots that say 'hello,' put them in a 6-foot square birdcage (use chicken wire and raw wood), title the work Hello. I'll be back in N.Y.C. mid Oct."

<sup>32</sup> Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, 179.

catalogue did not make any explicit reference to the piece and included only a roughly drawn preparatory sketch of a truck perched on the top of the hill dumping material with instructions to use either mud, cement, or asphalt.<sup>33</sup>

Smithson also intended to create a “mud flow” in January 1970 during his visit to Kent State University as an invited guest of a student-funded arts festival that also included Kaprow and the critic/poet John Ashberry. When the weather caused the ground to freeze making a mud “flow” impossible, Smithson wanted to abandon the project altogether, but after some persuasion by the students, he turned his attention to a dilapidated structure sometimes used by the groundskeepers on the campus and created *Partially Buried Woodshed* (**figure 111**). He dropped twenty truckloads of dirt on the wooden roof until it cracked under the weight. Though lacking the fluvial flow of the previous three “pours,” this work continued Smithson’s interest in the dumping of raw material and the active processes of destruction and entropy.

Like *Asphalt Rundown*, all of these related works were made under the auspices of exhibitions and with collaborative, logistical support. The materials utilized, whether asphalt, mud, or glue, were both intentional on Smithson’s part and selected based on what the organizer of the exhibition could procure, but regardless of the circumstances of their selection, they made action palpable, and, in their “state of delayed motion,” the primary focus of the work. While Smithson’s choice of materials and his notions of entropy are unique, they were not without parallel in the art world of the late 1960s. His approaches not only connected the heterogeneous body of his own work, but also

---

<sup>33</sup> Lucy Lippard, *955,000: an exhibition* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1970); Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, 182.

resonated with a loosely connected group of artists, on both sides of the Atlantic, similarly experimenting with materials and active processes.

The Italian art critic Tommaso Trini recalled translating “Entropy and the New Monuments” shortly after it was published, stating that it made an enormous impact on a group of young Italian artists he was championing, a group that would soon come to be associated with the label *Arte Povera*. “Smithson’s article caused a great deal of discussion,” wrote Trini. “Through it we discovered primary structures, but also a different way of talking about the art of artists.”<sup>34</sup> More of a curatorial construct of the critic Germano Celant than a bona fide movement, *Arte Povera* was comprised of a loosely connected group of artists predominantly working in three-dimensions.

One of the earliest and most characteristic exhibitions associated with the group was *Con temp l’azione*, held in Turin in 1967. The title of the exhibition was a play on words, translated as either “contemplation” or “with time action.” The work shown was sculptural in nature, investigated process, and utilized materials not common in high art practice. Like Smithson, and as suggested by the title, there was an interest in the idea of “action,” a word that appeared across the artistic, cultural, and political landscape throughout the end of the 1960s. As the curator, Daniela Palazzoli wrote in the catalogue, “Art is another form of activity. It is a constitutional function of action....It is not the things themselves which are important, but that which is added to the things. The things are no longer for themselves. They are for what they produce. For the relationships they establish.”<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Tommaso Trini, “Robert Smithson: un libro,” *Domus*, no. 599 (October 1979): 53.

<sup>35</sup> Daniela Palazzoli, *Con temp l’azione* (Torino: Christian Stein, 1967). Republished in Germano Celant, *Arte Povera = Art Povera* (Milan: Electa, 1985), 39.

While the development of Arte Povera was concentrated in Italy, the interest in action and process was a unifying element amongst experimental artistic practices across national divisions. All normalizing labels, whether Arte Povera, Postminimalism, Process Art, Conceptual Art, or Anti-Form, have their shortcomings, used as they were by critics to describe a tendency that was too heterogeneous to be classified as a bona fide “movement.” Smithson and his colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic, while not subscribing to any specific “-ism” or categorization, simultaneously began to explore the space in between maker and material. This type of work was horizontally oriented, mixed a wide, irregular array of materials, and was fiercely indeterminate. Artists chose materials not for what they could accomplish in their finite state, but for their varying states of viscosity and their potential for physical change. As Robert Morris wrote in 1969, “The attention given to both matter and its inseparableness from the process of change is not an emphasis on the phenomenon of means. What is revealed is that art itself is an activity of change, of disorientation and shift, of violent discontinuity and mutability, of the willingness for confusion even in the service of discovering new perceptual modes.”<sup>36</sup>

This exchange of artistic ideas and approaches occurred not only through the network of progressive galleries, but also through the numerous group exhibitions that occurred between 1967 and 1969. These events brought together artists, curators, and dealers of various nationalities with the expressed desire to create work that shared a

---

<sup>36</sup> Originally published in Robert Morris, “Notes on Sculpture, Part 4: Beyond Objects,” *Artforum* 7 (April 1969): 50-54. Republished in, Robert Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: the Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 68-69.

similar experimental approach and investigation of materials.<sup>37</sup> One of the earliest was *9 at Castelli* (**figure 112**), which was organized by Morris in December 1968 and held at a warehouse space owned by the dealer Leo Castelli on the Upper West Side in New York.

<sup>38</sup> Often thought to be a defining exhibition of so-called Postminimalist or Process Art, *9 at Castelli* was the first exhibition to include work by Italian artists like Giovanni Anselmo and Gilberto Zorio alongside American artists like Richard Serra and Bruce Nauman.<sup>39</sup>

Like much of the experimental work created at the time, the works on view in *9 at Castelli* eschewed pre-formed images and instead focused on materials and process. Morris selected the pieces based on ideas outlined in “Anti Form,” an essay he published earlier in the year. As he wrote, “Random piling, loose stacking, hanging, giving passing form to the material. Chance is accepted and indeterminacy is implied.”<sup>40</sup> Though none

---

<sup>37</sup> One of the earliest and most interesting of these exhibitions to explore the use of new materials, alternative spaces, and the concept of action was *Arte povera + (più) azioni povera*. Held October 2-4, 1968 in Amalfi, on the southern coast of Italy, the exhibition brought together the British artist Richard Long and two Dutch artists, Ger van Elk and Jan Dibbets, with Arte Povera artists. The event organized by the collector Marcello Rumma and curated by Celant, included an exhibition, a series of individual actions, a soccer game-cum-group action between critics and artists, performances, and a group discussion on the last day. Utopian in concept, it was seen by many as a short-lived realization of a desire to unite art and life. The artworks were installed in a public, outdoor location, the former arsenal, and artists went out into the town to implement their “azioni” or actions, often involving public participants. For a full list of participants, works, and curatorial impetus see the exhibition’s catalogue. Germano Celant, *Arte povera più azioni povere* (Salerno: Rumma Editore, 1969).

<sup>38</sup> *9 at Castelli* was held from December 4 – December 28, 1968 and included work by Giovanni Anselmo, William Bollinger, Eva Hesse, Stephen Kaltenbach, Bruce Nauman, Alan Saret, Richard Serra, Keith Sonnier, and Gilberto Zorio. Morris also invited Joseph Beuys, but the German artist refused to participate. For more on the circumstance of Beuys’ lack of participation, see Chapter 5. Castelli used the space mostly for storage. It was unfinished and without any climate control. There were broken windows and being as though the exhibition took place in winter in New York, the space was very cold. No catalogue was published but for contemporaneous reviews and installation images see Richard Armstrong and Richard Marshall, *The New Sculpture 1965-75: Between Geometry and Gesture* (New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 1990).

<sup>39</sup> Like many exhibitions that are retrospectively understood as “landmark,” *9 at Castelli* was seen by very few people during its run. The Italians work was only on view for the latter part of the exhibition though since it was delayed at Customs. For reproductions of installation images and reprints of contemporary reviews of the show see *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Robert Morris, “Anti Form,” *Artforum* 6, no. 8 (April 1968): 33-35. Republished in Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: the Writings of Robert Morris*, 46.

of the participating artists officially adopted the label “antiform,” the work shown was certainly representative of Morris’ ideas. For example, Anselmo showed *Senza titolo (Untitled)* (**figure 113**), a work comprised of rectangular steel container filled with water and cotton that over the course of the exhibition slowly absorbed the liquid, altering its form. The presence of Anselmo and Zorio’s work alongside their American contemporaries made it clear that while perhaps unclassifiable, new art shared a concern with actively exploring process, materials, and action. Anselmo wrote, and the parallels to Smithson and Morris are evident:

I, the world, things, life, we are situations of energy and the important thing is precisely not to crystallize these situations, but keep them open and alive in terms of our living. Since all manners of thinking or being must correspond to a manner of behaving, my works are really the physification [sic] of the force behind an action, of the energy of a situation or event, etc., and not its experience in terms of annotation or signs, or just still life.<sup>41</sup>

Many of the artists took these exhibitions as opportunities to experiment in the purest sense, without the goal or pressure of a creating a “completed,” permanent art object. The two most notable were the twin European exhibitions of March 1969. *Op Losse Schroeven* opened first at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (**figure 114**). The second, *When Attitudes Become Form (Works-Concepts-Processes-Situations-Information)* (**figure 115**), opened a week later at the Kunsthalle Bern.<sup>42</sup> Today they have taken on a mythical importance, especially *When Attitudes Become Form*, but even at the time, those involved sensed that the two shows “marked a defining moment.”<sup>43</sup> Discussing the exhibition, Serra stated, “What was interesting for me was that I hadn’t seen a lot of the Europeans....For that reason the exhibitions were an eye-opener....I

---

<sup>41</sup> Anselmo, as quoted in Celant, *Arte Povera*, .

<sup>42</sup> For a full history of both exhibitions see Rattemeyer, *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969*,

<sup>43</sup> Richard Serra in conversation with Lucy Steeds on 13 November 2009. *Ibid.*, 264.



don't think there was a continental divide. We all shared a common language and sensibility. With our generation, there was a possibility for a dialogue between European and North American artists. That was not true of a generation before."<sup>44</sup>

Though conceived and organized separately, the two exhibitions showed many of the same artists and had strikingly similar curatorial programs.<sup>45</sup> Both Wim Beeren, chief curator at the Stedelijk Museum and Harald Szeemann, director of the Kunsthalle Bern, traveled extensively in preparation for the exhibitions, meeting with dealers and artists across Europe and the United States. The organizers also played an active role, helping artists to realize their work. Szeemann referred to himself not as a curator, but as an *Ausstellungsmacher* or "exhibition maker," and this distinction is perhaps appropriate for many of the curators, organizers, and gallerists of the period who saw themselves as invaluable collaborators.<sup>46</sup>

The spirit of "action" was present in every aspect of these exhibitions. The artists created *in situ*, making work that was predominantly sculptural, and extremely ephemeral. As Serra stated, "Those shows seem radical in terms of demonstrating the potential for a new kind of work that was not primarily image-based. Most of the artists in those 1969 shows were in some sense involved with - I'm not saying it was political but - the potential for a new way of thinking about what art can be."<sup>47</sup> Imbedded in Serra's statement is the assertion, shared among most of the artists at the time, that art no

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>45</sup> For a complete list of participating artists see *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form. Works, concepts, processes, situations, information*, ed. Harald Szeemann (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1969); *Op losse schroeven: situaties en cryptostructuren*, ed. Wim Beeren (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1969). All of the artists from *Op Losse Schroeven* except Marisa Merz and Olle Kåks, were also shown in *When Attitudes Become Form*. The latter showed almost twice as many artists, including more artists that would come to be associated with a text based Conceptual Art as well as artists more commonly associated with a previous generation like Yves Klein and Claes Oldenburg.

<sup>46</sup> Rattemeyer, *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 265.

longer had to be limited to the space of the canvas, made with paint and bronze, or created in the confines of the studio.

The collision of process and image making was heightened but not unique to vanguard artists at the end of the 1960s. Although on different terms, this debate had begun earlier in the postwar period, most notably with the work of the New York School and Jackson Pollock. Writing in 1960, Harold Rosenberg labeled Pollock and his Abstract Expressionist colleagues as the “American Action Painters,” emphasizing their innovations in the process of creating more than the final painted product. Rosenberg declared, “At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act – rather than a space to reproduce...What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event.”<sup>48</sup>

Pollock lurks like a specter throughout the work and critical texts of the late 1960s, serving as both a starting point and a provocation. Kaprow, Smithson, and Morris, along with other artists of the following generation, radically explored and expanded Pollock’s “arena,” but they also responded to his profound engagement with material and process. Smithson wrote that Pollock’s art was a “physical metaphor without realism or naturalism,” and that it tended “toward a torrential sense of *material* [sic].”<sup>49</sup> For Morris, Pollock was the only Abstract Expressionist to “recover process” by profoundly rethinking the “role of both material and tools in making.”<sup>50</sup> Pollock had moved away from the paintbrush, and for Morris that was nothing short of a radical move toward

---

<sup>48</sup> Harold Rosenberg, “The American Action Painters (1960),” in *The Tradition of the New* (New York: De Capo Press, 1994), 25.

<sup>49</sup> Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 110.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Morris, “Anti Form,” *Artforum* 6, no. 8 (April 1968): 33-35; Reprinted in Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: the Writings of Robert Morris*, 43.

acknowledging the “physical properties of paint.”<sup>51</sup> Smithson responded to Morris, writing in the *Artforum* issue published five months later:

Here tools are undifferentiated from the material they operate on, or they seem to sink back into their primordial condition. Robert Morris (*Artforum*, April 1968) sees the paintbrush vanish into Pollock’s ‘stick,’ and the stick dissolves into ‘poured paint’ from a container used by Morris Louis. What then is one to do with the *container*? This entropy of technique leaves one with an empty limit, or no limit at all.<sup>52</sup>

Many scholars have remarked that *Asphalt Rundown* is a radical comment on the act of painting; another step in the “entropy of technique” and a monumental, outdoor “action painting” that pushed the Abstract Expressionist “drip” beyond the canvas.<sup>53</sup> Smithson’s work can, and should, be seen in this context of influence, but while Smithson may have merged material and tool, the action of *Asphalt Rundown* was very different from Pollock’s. Smithson’s material responded to the laws of thermodynamics and gravity not the movement of the artist’s hand. *Asphalt Rundown* did not possess the build-up of repeated extractions of paint from a container, but was a solitary action created entirely at the hand of the physics and material properties of asphalt. It was a singular flow, one very long drip, emerging from one singular point, slowly moving toward its eventual entropic disappearance. In short, it was not a drip at all, but a dump; never meant to be a permanent record of individual gesture captured in the framed arena of the canvas.

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Smithson, “A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects,” *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (September 1968): 44-50; Republished in Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 102.

<sup>53</sup> While this now serves as a common interpretation of the work (see for example the introduction by Jack Flam in *ibid.*) it was first put forward by Robert Hobbs. Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*, 176.

## Slow Dissolves

Over the past forty years, *Asphalt Rundown* has undergone drastic physical changes. The asphalt has completely eroded away, destroyed by the conditions of the site that shaped its form. *Asphalt Rundown* is now only accessible through photographs and a few minutes of film footage shot by Smithson and his wife, the artist Nancy Holt, at the time of its creation. Of the handful of photographs taken around the time of its creation, two have become the most widely disseminated and reproduced: one taken by the Italian photographer Claudio Abate in black and white film (**figure 116**) and one taken by Smithson in color slide film (**figure 1**).

Smithson's photograph is often reproduced in black and white (**figure 117**), and when done so the two photographs become almost indistinguishable from one another. Both show the dump truck, perched, with its bed fully raised, at the top of the hill in the background. Looking at these two photographs, one becomes aware of the intimate connection between the work's material and location, of the contours of the weather-beaten earth and the space surrounding the black chasm of asphalt in the center of the image. At the same time, closer inspection of the photographs reveals little about the work's specific location. Like the gallery announcement card, these photographs present insufficient information. The landscape is strikingly nondescript; the commonplace rocks, the sparse weeds, and the blank horizon present a hill that could be anywhere.

The focal point of both photographs is not the site, but the action taking place within the site. The inclusion of the truck does not serve as a contextual clue, but a sign of process, emphasizing the mode of the work's creation. Both Smithson and Abate focused their lenses on the mass of black asphalt, which begins at the ridge of the hill a

few feet below the truck and extends almost to the base, piercing and grounding the composition, ironically playing with the notion of a vanishing point. They each show the flowing matter, *in media res*, bleeding through the crevices and folds of the earth, frozen in a moment of transformation: immediately after the dump but just before the asphalt reached the end of its surge.

These two photographs have become the defining images of the work, documenting its existence for posterity, but they also withhold as much information as they provide, creating a disconnect between the work depicted and the image presented. The photographs of *Asphalt Rundown* show the physical being of an intensely material sculptural project, a work unbridled in the outdoors, at the will of only gravity and thermodynamic process, but they also unavoidably frame the work into a contained, composed image. As Rosenberg remarked, photography creates multiple existences that separates the work of art from its physical body. Regardless of the original form of the work, its ghostly presence was now circulated in reproductions, books, and magazines, “*as a picture* far from its durable being of paint and canvas,” or in this case rock and asphalt. This divide prompted Rosenberg to ask, “Is the work of art still a *thing*, or an image of thing, waiting for the spectator's taste to respond to it? Or is it rather a quantity of energy released into the whole configuration or arena of a contending world?”<sup>54</sup>

Photography allowed Smithson to have it both ways. While uneasy with photography's ability to “steal away the spirit of the work,” he fully embraced the medium's ability to invent multiple realities, to present something both indexically real and physically unseen.<sup>55</sup> The separation between the physical constitution of the work

---

<sup>54</sup> Harold Rosenberg, “Preface (1960),” in *The Tradition of the New* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>55</sup> Bear and Sharp, “Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, and Smithson,” 67.

and its afterlife as an image described by Rosenberg in reference to the paintings of the “Action Painters” links Smithson and Pollock’s work far more profoundly than the formal technique of “dripping.” The radicality of Pollock’s paintings did not lie simply in his drips, in the depiction of the material residue of his gesture, movement, and process, but in the tension created by the inability to reconcile the knowledge of how they were created and the containment of that dynamic action within the frame of the canvas.

Unlike Pollock’s paintings, however, this tension was further complicated in the case of *Asphalt Rundown* as its physical body slowly and permanently disappeared. Like many of his fellow artists working outside the confines of the gallery, in remote locations, or with perishable materials, Smithson realized that photography was both vital to the longevity and greater exposure of the work, and, for the exact same reasons, was only able to convey a fraction of the experience of the work. Many of Smithson’s contemporaries were not as enthusiastic or accepting of this fact. Some, like Carl Andre, made proclamations writing off photography altogether. He stated, “The photograph is a lie. I’m afraid we get a great deal of our exposure to art through magazines and through slides, and I think this is dreadful, this is an anti-art because art is a direct experience with something in the world and photography is just a rumor, a kind of pornography of art.”<sup>56</sup> Some were apathetic about photography but were more practical or open about its role. Dennis Oppenheim, who showed with Smithson in many of the group exhibitions in 1969, wrote, “You operate on a truly large scale, but when photographs represented the work, everything closed down into a pictorial configuration. You were always making

---

<sup>56</sup> Andre as quote in, Godfrey, *Conceptual Art*, 302. For a more thorough analysis of Andre’s use of photography as well as the impact, more generally, on minimalist sculpture see, Alex Potts, “The Minimalist Object and the Photographic Image,” in *Sculpture and Photography: Envisioning the Third Dimension*, ed. Geraldine A. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 181-96.

excuses for poor documentation, saying what you were doing was an advanced art, and there were only a few ways to communicate it. But in reality the work was gone, and there was nothing to see. That was the way I wanted it.”<sup>57</sup>

Whether artists fully embraced it or not, photodocumentation became a necessary “residue for communication,” and a ubiquitous element in experimental sculptural projects of the late 1960s.<sup>58</sup> Some, like Smithson and Morris, frequently made this tension an integral component of their work. For his exhibition at the Leo Castelli Gallery in March 1969, *Continuous Project Altered Daily* (**figure 118**), Morris changed the materials, which included chemicals, metals, asphalt, dirt, and water, every morning before opening the gallery to the public. These changes were photographed daily for three weeks, and the subsequent, printed images hung on the wall the following day. Each day Morris changed the physical constitution of the work so drastically that it resembled nothing of “work” displayed in the accompanying photographs. The exhibition ended with the removal of a thousand pounds of raw material, which Morris tape-recorded. Visitors to the gallery on the last day of the exhibition were greeted by only the sounds of the work’s dismantling and three weeks of accumulated photographs.<sup>59</sup>

Smithson, more than any of his contemporaries, exploited the tension between the creation of a physical, ephemeral sculptural work and the necessity of its transformation into a two-dimensional photographic image. As Morris wrote in regards to Smithson’s work and his use of photography, “Defined space implies a set of tangible, physical limits, and these can be measured and photographed. The distances between these limits

---

<sup>57</sup> Dennis Oppenheim and Alana Heiss, *Dennis Oppenheim: Selected Works, 1967-1990* (New York: Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum, 1992), 139.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Lucy Lippard referenced this project as *Robert Morris: Aluminum, Asphalt, Clay, Copper, Felt, Glass, Lead, Nickel, Rubber, Stainless, Thread, Zinc*. Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...* 93.

can be measured as well. But photography never registers distance in any rational or comprehensible way.”<sup>60</sup> For Smithson, the photograph was yet another dialectic, both a material to be used and a trace of an “on-the-spot experience.”<sup>61</sup> Photographs of sites appeared very early on in his site/nonsite projects, displayed, on equal terms, alongside bins of slag and piles of rocks. He stated, “Photography squares everything. Every kind of random view is caught in a rectangular format so that the romantic idea of going to the beyond, of the infinite is checked by this so that things become measured. The artist is contorting, distorting his figures instead of just accepting the photograph.”<sup>62</sup>

Smithson’s photographs, especially of his large outdoor works, took a massive work, in both concept and size, and reduced it down to a contained, compact square. Smithson used photography as means to transport the experience of an elsewhere and the active processes of dynamic materials into the static space of the gallery or the pages of a book. The photographs allowed him to make “very solid real material – raw matter” nonexistent and impossible to know. He stated, “Photographs are perhaps even the most extreme contraction...and it shrinks everything down. That fascinates me.”<sup>63</sup>

These photographs give a sense of what Smithson wanted to emphasize and how he viewed his own work, but he did not present them as autonomous fine art objects or the end product of a ephemeral action. Smithson was “fascinated” by the possibilities of photography but thoroughly disinterested in the aesthetics of the medium. He frequently photographed his own work, but was more than happy to let others do so as well. He

---

<sup>60</sup> Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: the Writings of Robert Morris*, 204.

<sup>61</sup> Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 236. Smithson wrote, “I am interested in the photograph as a material as well as on-the-spot experience. One is sensate and one is more an arrested moment.”

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>63</sup> Patricia Norvell, *Recording Conceptual Art: early interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelau, Smithson, and Weiner*, ed. Patricia Norvell and Alexander Alberro (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 128.



deemphasized the aesthetics of documentation of his work, but cared enough to hire a noted photographer, Gianfrano Gorgoni, to shoot his seminal outdoor work, *Spiral Jetty* in 1970.

When Smithson did choose to photograph his own work, he most often used his Kodak Instamatic, not necessarily because he liked how it looked, but because it was convenient to use and produced images easily adaptable for lectures, texts, and enlargements.<sup>64</sup> While possessing a distinct aesthetic, Smithson's photographs did not intentionally aestheticize the depicted work. They were snapshots, emphasizing the process and material of the work. He photographed all of his projects before, during, and after their creation. Rarely did Smithson attempt to provide a "total image," and frequently took multiple shots to emphasize the material properties and process of the work.

Smithson's iconic image of *Asphalt Rundown* was one of many that he took on the day of the work's creation. This series of square color snapshots shot with the Instamatic and 126-roll slide film, show the work from the moment the asphalt was loaded in the back of the truck to after the completion of the initial action, after the truck pulled away and everyone else left.<sup>65</sup> During the dump, Smithson was on the top of the hill, where he photographed at close range the asphalt pouring from the back of the truck (**figure 119**). As the material moved down the hillside, so did Smithson (**figure 120**),

---

<sup>64</sup> Robert Smithson, *Robert Smithson: Slideworks*, ed. Guglielmo Bargellesi-Severi (Verona: Carlo Frua, 1997), 172. Neither 35mm slide film nor the Kodak Instamatic is a hallmark of professional photography. Kodak introduced the line of instamatic cameras in 1963. It featured cartridge loading 110 film and was an easy-to-use point and shoot camera. By 1970, over fifty million Instamatic cameras had been produced. For a full history of the development of the Instamatic, see Douglas Collins, *The History of Kodak* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1990).

<sup>65</sup> Claudio Abate, in discussion with the author, May 2010. Abate remarked that the whole process of the dump took around thirty minutes but that Smithson stayed around well after everyone else left the site.

capturing the asphalt so that it diagonally sliced the frame of the photograph from halfway down the hill, with the rear tire of the truck visible in the uppermost right corner.

A handful of other photographs show the work without the truck, after the completion of the dump. Two photographs show the entire rundown from below, one just to the left with one of the side streams of asphalt reaching the bottom of the frame, and one head-on, from a little farther away (**figure 121**). Smithson also took close-up images on the hillside, from extreme angles that focus on the asphalt as it interacted with the earth. One depicts the work, as it appeared looking straight down from the top of the hill where the asphalt was dumped (**figure 122**). The weed-covered floor of the quarry is barely distinguishable in the background, and the glistening mass of black asphalt and the sun-parched, rocky clay soil merge into an almost abstract buildup of allover texture.

These images are typical of Smithson's approach to photographing his projects. He focused not just on documenting the material existence of the work but attempted to highlight how the key physical characteristics of the work functioned. Photographs, for Smithson, were a "momentary stop in the process" or a suspension of time, something implicated with a work whose form, from the moment of its creation, was constantly undergoing some form of transformation.<sup>66</sup> They depict the work not as a terminus, but as a series of frozen moments that separated or disconnected the work from its reality, something they still do today. All of Smithson's photographs of *Asphalt Rundown* captured a moment, one fragmented reality of the work that when put together create a complex, multiple view.

Although Smithson was intent on visually capturing and conveying many angles and aspects of his projects, their complexity ended up, often for reasons well outside of

---

<sup>66</sup> Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 235.

Smithson's control, congealed into one, singular image easily disseminated and consumed. Smithson photographed a dynamic, changing work but the photographs of *Asphalt Rundown* most often published and distributed were the singular images that best showed and frame the entirety of the work and worked effectively as graphic images. Smithson was more than capable of documenting his own work photographically and manipulating the limitations of photography in conjunction with his work, but he was not a professional photographer. This is visible in comparing the two iconic images of *Asphalt Rundown*. While Smithson's is remarkably similar, Abate created a stronger photographic image.

The focus in both photographs is clearly on the work, but every compositional decision Abate made worked to frame the work in the center of the composition. Both Smithson and Abate took their photographs from nearly the same location on the quarry floor. The same small patch of weeds is visible in the immediate foreground of both images. Abate positioned himself slightly higher and used a wider lens which enabled him to capture more of the landscape while perfectly balancing the symmetry of the space surrounding the work. Smithson took his image from immediately behind and to the right of the weeds. Abate, however, was more directly in front of the work, which not only allowed him to compose a head-on image of the work, but also perfectly aligned the angle of the truck directly with the angle of the asphalt on the hillside. In Abate's image almost the entire interior of the raised bed of the truck is visible, its pitch-black rectangular shape contrasted against the blown out white sky that takes up the upper one-third of the photograph.

Abate had plenty of experience photographing projects like *Asphalt Rundown*. Sargentini had hired him to serve as the staff photographer at L'Attico, where he became close with many of the artists whose work he photographed, including Arte Povera artists like Pascali and Kounellis. Sargentini, like many gallerists at the time, used photographs to publicize the projects he sponsored and the artists he represented. He wanted Abate to photograph as much of the creative process as possible, requesting him to be present before and during every installation so that he could not only distribute the images of the work on display in his gallery to art and general press outlets, but also use them for his in-house publicity materials and art journal *Cartabianca*. Because Sargentini distributed the images so widely, so quickly, Abate gained a reputation among artists as a photographer who captured the “essence” of the work within its particular context. He did not photograph the “scene” but focused his efforts on singular works by individual artists.<sup>67</sup> As Kounellis stated, “Claudio photographed a great many of my early works, with sensitivity and attention to detail, carefully assessing the space they occupied and capturing the drama and tension underlying the different moments of formal disruption present in the work.”<sup>68</sup>

Abate consistently created some of the most notable images of experimental sculptural projects of the period, photographs like those showing Pascali (**figure 95**) and Kounellis playfully engaging with their sculptures. In one of the latter, Abate captured the installation of Kounellis' *Dodici Cavalli* on January 14, 1969 (**figure 123**). Abate photographed Kounellis riding in on one of the horses and the horses as they were

---

<sup>67</sup> Achille Bonito Oliva, *Installation and Performance Art: Claudio Abate, fotografo* (Milan: Photology, 2007), 17.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

brought into the space, but it was his image of ten of the twelve horses tied to three walls of the gallery space, that became the iconic photograph (**figure 98**).

The image shows the horses in a U shape, lined up around the walls of L'Attico. The photograph is symmetrical, with the horses balanced on the right and left sides of the composition, framing the work to look almost like a stage set. The ceiling beams run through the middle of the image bringing further balance but also compressing the space with an additional theatrical flourish. Two rows of reflecting lights on the floor lead our eyes to the blank rear wall where two dark horses are centered, creating a distinguishable vanishing point. As he would do ten months later with *Asphalt Rundown*, Abate dramatically framed what was a nebulous, dynamic work into an easily consumable image.

While Abate was close with artists like Kounellis and accustomed to photographing avant-garde projects, the photographer recalled that at the time, he did not “get” the significance of *Asphalt Rundown*.<sup>69</sup> Sargentini, as was the norm, requested the photographer’s presence at the creation of the work, but, as Abate stated, the dealer had to force him to go.<sup>70</sup> Regardless of his opinions of the project, he was at the quarry for the dumping of asphalt, visible in Holt’s film footage, rapidly taking photographs at the base of the hill. Unlike Smithson, Abate’s goal was to create a singular image, composed with his characteristic one-point perspective, which could perfectly capture the scope of the project.

---

<sup>69</sup> Claudio Abate, in discussion with the author, May 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.; Fabio Sargentini, in discussion with the author, May 2010. Both Sargentini and Abate recall Sargentini showing up to Abate’s home very early on the morning of *Asphalt Rundown*’s creation and dragging Abate out of his bed, giving him two espressos, and putting him in a car. Abate in particular remembered Sargentini grabbing him by his ears.

Abate's photographs of *Asphalt Rundown* and *Dodici Cavalli* were both aesthetically successful and are frequently taken to be a perfect document of the works they represent. Sargentini immediately distributed them to the press and published them in his gallery publications. In every publication on Arte Povera or Land Art, these are the images reproduced. Photography, of course, serves here as an invaluable and obligatory tool for accessing works that are no longer accessible; but Abate's photograph of *Asphalt Rundown*, like Smithson's photographs, inevitably, provide only a partial description of the work. No matter how successfully the photograph captures the location and the essential elements of the work, it will never be more than an *image* of something else, of something lost and ungraspable. A photograph cannot communicate the smell of asphalt as it hit the earth or horse excrement that slowly built up in the gallery. It cannot offer the cacophonous noises of machinery or live creatures. Photographs do not express the anxiety that one must have felt standing in a room with horses that could have bucked at any moment or tons of hot asphalt dumped into open space, and it does not possess the resources needed to communicate the comedy, lightheartedness, and absurdity of these works.

In addition to the photographs, Smithson was intent on filming the creation of *Asphalt Rundown*, one of only a handful of pieces that had any aspect translated to the moving image. While this might further contribute to the anomalousness of the work, it also, at first glance, suggests a possible solution to the problem of conveying and properly disseminating works that were remote, ephemeral, and concerned with the possibilities of action as sculptural form. Film can capture the active processes of a work, like *Asphalt Rundown*, in a way that still photography never could.

The film footage of *Asphalt Rundown* begins with a group of men, including Smithson and Sargentini, talking near the machinery at the top of the hill and then walking through the landscape as they survey the location of the dump. The camera pans the expanse of the site before fixing its gaze on loud, jarring bulldozers moving earth and the elaborate set-up of machines making the asphalt. The footage shows the asphalt as it is loaded into the bed of the truck, slowly oozing into a sparkling accumulation. Holt, who shot the film, then moves to the floor of the quarry and shoots the action from below.

The film allows us to see the process of the work's creation, the asphalt as it slowly seeps out of the left corner and then the right corner of the truck. Then in the moment of greatest drama, the truck fully extends, the final wave of black material quickly escapes causing the group of men at the top of the hill, including Sargentini and Smithson, to move away quickly. Abate comes into the frame, rapidly shooting the work and within a matter of seconds the pour has stopped noticeably flowing. For a split second, the film footage zooms in to the asphalt and we realize how much it is still moving. The camera focuses on the bottom of the pour as the asphalt seeps into the cracks of the earth and amasses in a primordial puddle, before quickly cutting back to the wide shot so we are left looking at an image that looks remarkably similar to Abate and Smithson's iconic photographs.

The filmed footage successfully conveys the action inherent in *Asphalt Rundown* and allows us to experience the dynamism of the moment the asphalt is dumped, in real time. By filming the initial action, Smithson documented the work without partaking in photography's "momentary stop in the process." Through its moving images, we are able

to better experience the spectacular rush of asphalt flowing down a hillside outside of Rome in 1969, to hear the cranks and clicks of the truck, but in the end, the footage serves as little more than just a document, a singular view of the work. Unlike Smithson's previous experiments with film and video, or his elaborate, complex, and intricately edited and narrated film made in conjunction with *Spiral Jetty* the following year, this footage is just that, raw footage.<sup>71</sup> Smithson did not distribute or edit any of the footage while he was alive, and did not present it as a fully developed aspect of the work. Looking back forty years, the footage is an amazing historical document, which helps us better understand the work, but even with its dynamism and ability to convey the action of the piece, we still end up in the rectangular frame, with the truck bed fully extended and the asphalt dumped on the hillside.

Whether still or moving film, *Asphalt Rundown* was both dependent on photographic documentation and endlessly complicated its medium specificities. There are numerous photographs and reproductions of *Asphalt Rundown*, but there was only one sculptural work, one monumental intervention. The work of art could be communicated through a two dimensional image, but one should never forget that it exists, or existed, independently of its documentation. The image of the work is the best of the worst-case scenarios, simultaneously vital to our understanding of the work and completely inadequate to convey their intended experience or material reality. As Oppenheim stated, "Some of my pieces, like the snow pieces, were about temperature,

---

<sup>71</sup> Nancy Holt as quoted in Bob Fiori. *Rundown*, 13 min.; color film; from The Estate of Robert Smithson, QuickTime <http://www.robertsmithson.com/films/txt/rundown.html> (accessed January 2011). The film known as *Rundown* that is widely available through YouTube and the website of the Estate of Robert Smithson was created posthumously in 1993 and shows drawings, stills, and footage relating to Smithson's "pours" created in Chicago and Vancouver in addition to the footage taken of *Asphalt Rundown*. Credit for the film is given to Bob Fiori (Also Robert Fiore or Bob Fiore) the filmmaker who helped Smithson and Holt shoot the film, *Spiral Jetty* in 1970. The color film runs for thirteen minutes and includes a voice-over by Nancy Holt and a previously taped audio track of an interview with Smithson.



the fact that it was freezing...the visual quotient is not as strenuous as you think. What am I suppose to do? Carry around ice cubes, asking people to put their hands inside the bag?"<sup>72</sup>

The meaning of *Asphalt Rundown*, after all, was not just about dumping asphalt down a hillside – if it was, watching a film showing that action would be completely sufficient. The photographs made in conjunction with the work are not mere documentation. The photographs function as the crux of *Asphalt Rundown*, not because the materiality of the work did not matter, but because they are what, in the end, activate the work beyond the initial dump. The images created a continuous and irresolvable back and forth; a space similar to that create in Smithson's site/nonsite dialectic. As he stated:

What you are really confronted with in a nonsite is the absence of the site. It is a contraction rather than an expansion of scale. One is confronted with a very ponderous, weighty absence...the making of the piece really involves collecting...There is this dialectic between inner and outer, closed and open, center and peripheral. It just goes on constantly permuting itself into this endless doubling, so that you have the nonsite functioning as a mirror and the site functioning as a reflection. Existence becomes a doubtful thing.<sup>73</sup>

Smithson's photographs question the existence of the thing that is depicted. The radicalness of the work lies not only in the choice to use nontraditional materials or work outdoors, but in the destruction inherent in its creation, in the realization that what the photograph is reflecting is no more; a meaning that is only understandable when seen in conjunction with the evidence of its one time existence. The photographs freeze the work in a suspended present, untouched by the future that would bring its inevitable disappearance. The photographs of *Asphalt Rundown* present the illusion of a finished or

---

<sup>72</sup> Oppenheim and Heiss, *Dennis Oppenheim: Selected Works, 1967-1990*, 145.

<sup>73</sup> Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 193.

a nearly finished piece, but in reality, they represent one manifestation of a work, which would never look that way again, a work that was never envisioned as stable entity.

### **The After of Ephemerality**

Smithson fully embraced the entropic, inevitable destruction of all physical things in his work. Like so many of the works created *in situ* or exploring action as material in the late 1960s, *Asphalt Rundown* was subject to the elements and to completely unforeseen factors. As Pollock had done two decades earlier, Smithson embraced the notion of chance and relinquished control over so much of his work, to elements both consciously and unconsciously beyond Smithson's artistic hand. He chose to create in an active arena and in doing so accepted the repercussions.

Unlike *Cement Pour* in Chicago that quickly disappeared when it was subsumed into the working cement dump it was enacted in or *Glue Pour* in Vancouver that, with its water soluble glue, was washed away with the first rain, *Asphalt Rundown* was a work doomed for destruction over a much longer period. Smithson wrote, "My interest here [with *Asphalt Rundown*] is to root it to the contour of the land, so that it's permanently there and subject to the weathering. I'm sort of curious to see what will happen to this. But at the same time, the density of the material will make it- it's not a completely ephemeral piece, so it should last for quite some time."<sup>74</sup>

The ephemerality of *Asphalt Rundown* is protracted, remaining active through and beyond its photographic records. Smithson, unlike Kaprow or Morris, did not romanticize the shift to outdoor spaces or the use of untraditional, process-oriented materials. He realized there was no escape from the structures of the art world, that there was no escape

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 225.

from the frame, but he did attempt to create ways to engage and manipulate those structures, to push the boundaries of the frame. The creation of *Asphalt Rundown* may have occurred on an October morning in 1969, but it has no completion date. Even as its material slowly eroded away and even now on that hillside, which no longer bears any trace of asphalt (**figure 124**), the work remains active in the space created between the photographs of its realization and the knowledge of its physical disappearance.

There is something deceptively simple about those two iconic photographs taken by Smithson and Abate, photographs that show a glaringly, straightforward work, a singular act created when a truck dumped a load of asphalt down a hillside in a quarry outside of Rome. The work, from the moment it was created, existed through the space of those photographs. Few people saw it *in situ*, there were no accompanying essays written by Smithson, no corresponding text, maps, or nonsite elements on view at L'Attico, and little to no contemporary press coverage. The significance and lasting impact of *Asphalt Rundown* has built slowly over the past forty years as these two photographs began to appear in exhibition catalogues, retrospective anthologies of late sixties vanguard practices, and survey texts on Arte Povera and Land Art, including Kynston McShine's *Information* (1970), Celant's *Conceptual Art, Arte Povera, Land Art* (1970), and Lippard's *Six Years...*(1972).<sup>75</sup> The potency of the work grew and was continuously made in retrospect, through the strength and dissemination of these photographs alone, often with little to no mediating text.

---

<sup>75</sup> While there was very little coverage of the work in the general or art media, the work began to be reproduced in significant publications from 1970 onward. See, for example, Kynaston McShine, *Information* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970); Germano Celant, *Conceptual Art, Arte Povera, Land Art* (Torino: Galleria civica d'arte moderna, 1970); Lippard, *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972...* .

For Smithson, photographs were “maps, little entropic bits that siphon off moments of experience. That arrested moment is constantly upsetting, it keeps haunting you.”<sup>76</sup> The photographs of *Asphalt Rundown* and the other two pours created in 1969 intently focus on the material nature of these works, on the hemorrhaging of glue, cement, or asphalt on the earth. Like the photographs of so many ephemeral and process-oriented works from the late 1960s, these images convey so vividly the power of such a straightforward act, but they also serve as material reminders of something, to return to Oppenheim, “lost forever.” These photographs are ghosts, calling out from the past and struggling in vain to adequately convey the radicality of these sculptural acts.

*Asphalt Rundown* is, and remains, unyieldingly indeterminate. While it may have not have fully instantiated Smithson’s site/nonsite structure, *Asphalt Rundown* did share the artistic philosophy behind it; a physical manifestation, thriving in its dialectical nature, and serving as a reminder that what is visible and what is real are deceptively not straightforward. It was specific to a generic location, to a place beyond the confines of the gallery walls but not beyond its frame. *Asphalt Rundown* was an independent, vanguard action that was also dependent on Smithson’s patron and dealer, and was a fiercely material three-dimensional work that remains inextricably connected to its two-dimensional representations. With *Asphalt Rundown*, Smithson successfully achieved a collision of mind and matter, a work literally clogged down by its material constitution and unequivocally connected to its site through its photographic phantoms.

---

<sup>76</sup> Baker, “Talking with Robert Smithson (1970),” 156.

## Chapter 5

### Sculpture as Multiple: Joseph Beuys's *Arena*, 1972

I am neither interested in making works for commerce nor for the pure pleasure of seeing them. It is getting much harder to make things. But one is forced to translate thought into action and action into object.

-Joseph Beuys, 1969<sup>1</sup>

Every object has two parts: what it is, and what it means. What is visible and what is invisible. The other half, the invisible, is elsewhere; and that leads one to look further in search of the other half.

-Ute Klophaus, 1981<sup>2</sup>

On June 15, 1972, a solo exhibition by the German artist Joseph Beuys opened at the Modern Art Agency in Naples, Italy. The show featured one work, *Arena-dove sarei arrivato se fossi intelligente!* (*Arena-where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*) (**figure 125**), a sculptural installation that the artist created for the exhibition, in collaboration with the gallery's owner, Lucio Amelio. The work, consisting of over two hundred and fifty photographs, depicting Beuys's previous works, encased in one hundred large aluminum frames, a small oilcan, and two stacks of copper, felt, and fat plates, engaged many of the changes and paradoxes that emerged in sculptural practice during the 1960s and early 1970s. Beuys created *Arena* at a moment of great art historical transition, when the dogma of high modernist formalism and medium specificity fell under increasing scrutiny.

---

<sup>1</sup> Willoughby Sharp, "An Interview with Joseph Beuys," *Artforum* 8, no. 4 (December 1969): 47.

<sup>2</sup> As quoted in, Christopher Phillips, "Arena: The Chaos of the Unnamed," in *Arena: where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994), 58.

*Arena* functions as a decisive crux in what was a pivotal moment in the history of twentieth century sculpture, and yet, it remains one of Beuys's least discussed works. The most substantial critical analysis of the work did not appear until the mid-1990s and that text, like much of the still rather limited literature on *Arena*, focused on the work as a visual reference to the "artist-hero" persona that Beuys spent his whole professional life constructing.<sup>3</sup> As Annette Michelson remarked after viewing Beuys's work at his first retrospective exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1979, "One is almost helpless without the explanations supplied by the artist [Beuys]; the complex, quasi-system simply necessitates guidance, instruction, the key, the code."<sup>4</sup>

Many have attempted to break Beuys's code and, being unable to do so, have been forced to rely on the artist's complicated and omnipresent rhetoric. In light of Beuys's dominant voice and the subsequent emphasis on biography in so much of the Beuys literature by those who seek to continue the artist's doctrine, the now dominant reading of *Arena* as a kind of visual autobiography or curriculum vitae is understandable. After almost four decades of re-installations, re-configurations, and critical re-assessments, the work, however, remains closed to this mode of interpretation; the biographical intricacies and subtexts inaccessible, even to those who might possess

---

<sup>3</sup> The Dia Art Foundation acquired *Arena* in 1976 from Beuys's Italian dealer and close-friend, Lucio Amelio. In 1992-93, Dia exhibited *Arena* in full and published, in 1994, a definitive guide to the work, which included reproductions, captions, and credits for each of the works 100 panels as well as an interview with Amelio and essays from Lynne Cooke, Pamela Kort, and Christopher Phillips. See Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly, eds., *Arena: where would I have got if I had been intelligent!* (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Rosalind E. Krauss, and Annette Michelson, "Joseph Beuys at the Guggenheim," *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 17.

intimate knowledge of Beuys's life and creative process or witnessed the events depicted in the photographs.<sup>5</sup>

Detached from the futile and overwrought approach that seeks to decipher the intent of the artist or find correlates to autobiographical meaning, and examined instead within the context of experimental practices of the 1960s, *Arena* becomes a work that speaks to sculpture's unique ability to simultaneously embody material presence and absence.<sup>6</sup> With *Arena*, Beuys forged a profound relationship between sculpture and photography, collapsing the latter into the material constitution of the former. This approach was unique in both Beuys's practice and the greater context of vanguard art of the time, but it also exemplified the new, multiple nature of sculpture that emerged in the postwar period. As artists explored the possibilities of temporary installation tactics, performance-infused environments, and ephemeral actions employing process-oriented

---

<sup>5</sup> Pamela Kort wrote the most comprehensive analysis of *Arena*, an essay published initially in the Dia exhibition catalogue, though it has also appeared, with slight variations, in subsequent publications. Her analysis seeks to contextualize *Arena* in regards to Beuys' other works as well as to Beuys' literary influences. Kort sees *Arena* as a definitive visual autobiography, an approach to the work that has now become its standard interpretation, especially as put forth in the definitive publication on *Arena* published by Dia in 1994. See, Pamela Kort, "Joseph Beuys's *Arena*: The Way In," in *Arena: where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994); and Pamela Kort, "Joseph Beuys' Aesthetic 1958-1972," in *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, ed. David Thistlewood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> The approach to Beuys and, in particular, *Arena* presented in this chapter is indebted to recent Beuys scholarship that focuses more on material properties and the relationship of Beuys's work to the contemporary socio-political and artistic contexts in which it was made, rather than the biographic and mythologizing debates that dominated the 1980s and early 1990s. As David Thistlewood states, "Beuysian critiques are passing from the ownership of those who worked with him and 'knew' with certainty his purposes, to others who may be more tentative and speculative but may thus further diversify his interventions." David Thistlewood, "Joseph Beuys' 'Open Work': its Resistance to Holistic Critiques," in *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, ed. David Thistlewood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995), 4. See for example: Alex Potts, "Tactility: The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s," *Art History* 27, no. 2 (April 2004); Marion Ackermann and Isabelle Malz, eds., *Joseph Beuys: Parallel Processes* (Düsseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2010); and Mark Rosenthal, "Joseph Beuys: Staging Sculpture," in *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments*, ed. Mark Rosenthal (Houston: The Menil Collection, 2004). In regards specifically to *Arena*, I am especially obliged to, David Green and Joanna Lowry, "Splitting the Index: Time, Object, and Photography in the Work of Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein," in *Sculpture and Photography: Envisioning the Third Dimension*, ed. Geraldine A. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

materials, sculpture was no longer defined by the creation of a single, autonomous object, but by a heterogeneous collection of moving and interchangeable parts. As a result, photography became a necessary component of sculptural practice.

This act of translation between three- and two-dimensional-making became such a crucial aspect of art that many of Beuys's contemporaries abandoned the medium of sculpture and its material insistence, altogether. Always one to relish the dynamism of contradictory elements, Beuys continued to make objects, taking one of the most stable mediums, photography, and destabilized it by using it as sculptural material. With *Arena*, Beuys expanded the possibilities of sculpture by exploiting the tension created by collapsing, but not eradicating, the boundaries between object and image.<sup>7</sup>

### **From Naples to New York**

Throughout its forty-year history, *Arena* has undergone numerous structural changes, and with each subsequent installation, has taken a drastically different form, expanding and contracting the scope of the work. The work was shown for the first time in Italy, and owes much of its constitution to the German artist's interactions with its place of origin. Beuys created *Arena* for his second solo exhibition at Amelio's gallery, Modern Art Agency. The Italian dealer met Beuys a year earlier, in the summer of 1971 in Heidelberg, Germany at a meeting organized by the artist and activist Klaus Staeck. Held on the theme of "The Function in the Market Today" (**figure 126**), Staeck arranged the event in opposition to the perceived increase in selectivity at the Cologne Art Market,

---

<sup>7</sup> Even Beuys, in 1969, declared, "To be a teacher is my greatest work of art. The rest is a waste product, a demonstration. If you want to explain yourself, you must present something tangible. But after a while this has only the function of a historical document. Objects aren't very important for me anymore. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it." Sharp, "An Interview with Joseph Beuys," 43.



and asked Amelio to speak because of the reputation he had developed since opening his gallery in 1965 as an “anti-gallerist.”<sup>8</sup> Speaking alongside Beuys and Amelio were the Italian artists Mario Merz and Jannis Kounellis, as well as the critic Germano Celant. After the meeting in Germany, Amelio followed Beuys to Düsseldorf, and convinced him to come to Southern Italy and exhibit at Modern Art Agency.<sup>9</sup>

The encounter in Heidelberg provided the opportunity for the first substantive meeting between the two men, but Amelio claimed that Beuys had initially crossed his path in 1943, when the latter came to Naples for weapon training as a German soldier during WWII. Bypassing the perhaps problematic politics of this recollection, Amelio stated that this realization of Beuys’s initial exposure to Italy was crucial to understanding him as an artist:

From Italy, he [Beuys] wrote his parents about the beauty of ‘the land where lemon trees are blooming,’ how wonderful, how exciting. Beuys decided to become an artist through being in Naples. There is a letter to his parents from Italy in which he said, ‘I want to be an artist,’ and asked them to enroll him in the art academy. ‘I want to be a sculptor,’ he said....Like Goethe, he was dreaming of Italy even before coming....My opinion is that Italy was not just one of the countries where Beuys worked, it was the *main* place, chosen as the ideal where nature is strong and generous and the sun is the origin of every fantasy.<sup>10</sup>

Amelio, no doubt, had his own motivations for emphasizing Beuys connection to Italy, and Naples in particular, but the country did play an important role in Beuys’s career and artistic development. Between 1970 and his death in 1986, Beuys staged and participated in numerous exhibitions, actions, and projects throughout Italy, opportunities

---

<sup>8</sup> Michele Bonuomo, *Warhol, Beuys: Omaggio a Lucio Amelio* (Milan: Mazzotta, 2007), 210.

<sup>9</sup> Lucio Amelio and Pamela Kort, “The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio,” in *Arena: where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994), 34. Amelio stated, “I had a villa in Capri with my friend Pasquale Trisorio and we invited artists to come to Naples and Capri. Well, he [Beuys] started to resist. I said I would get a ticket for him and his family. ‘If you do that, I will come tomorrow,’ he said. So we all went to Capri.”

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 34, 38.

in large part contrived and facilitated by Amelio.<sup>11</sup> The two men developed a close personal and professional relationship. Like many gallery owners that supported avant-garde art in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, Amelio was more than a simple dealer. He functioned as a promoter, a translator, and a collaborator; a crucial facilitator, responsible for realizing the artist's vision by installing the work, organizing events, and procuring the necessary materials.<sup>12</sup>

After their encounter in Germany and the ensuing first Beuys exhibition at Modern Art Agency in 1971, Amelio asked the artist to put together another show. As Amelio recollected, Beuys hinted at a possible work, but was uncertain if the gallery owner could afford to pay the large sum he was asking for it. Beuys presented Amelio with a box full of altered photographs, with the caveat that a suitable form needed to be constructed for the exhibition. These photographs were the foundation for *Arena*, and after agreeing to his terms, Beuys entrusted Amelio with procuring frames and other material components to meet the artist's expectations.<sup>13</sup>

When the exhibition opened in June 1972, *Arena* – the work Amelio agreed to purchase with little more than a vague idea and two rough sketches – consisted of one oil can; two small, uneven stacks made from twenty-one slabs of wax mixed with fat and four plates of copper and iron; and one-hundred grey aluminum frames, each measuring

---

<sup>11</sup> Beuys was included in Celant's 1970 exhibition *Conceptual Art, Arte Povera, Land Art* at the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin before holding his first solo exhibition in Italy at the Modern Art Agency in November 1971. Over the next fifteen years, Beuys participated in three Venice Biennales and had numerous solo or group shows in Bari, Bologna, Brescia, Genoa, Milan, Pescara, Rivoli, Rome, and Venice. His last exhibition, *Palazzo Regale*, opened on the 23 December 1985 at the Museo Capodimonte, Naples. He died on 23 January 1986. For a full list Beuys' projects and exhibitions in Italy see Lucrezia De Domizio Durini, *The Felt Hat: Joseph Beuys, a Life Told* (Milan: Charta, 1997), 210-16.

<sup>12</sup> For an overview of their relationship from Amelio's perspective see Amelio and Kort, "The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio," 34-51.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

approximately fifty-five by thirty-two inches and sealed with heavy, exposed metal bolts and thick, hand-blown sheets of glass. Each frame was lined with a grey matte background. Encased in between the frames and the mattes were two-hundred-sixty-four black and white photographs, many treated by Beuys on the surface with sulfur, acid, wax, and his trademark matte brown paint, Braunkreuz.

Four frames did not contain any photographs. One displayed a single, mass-produced postcard reproduction depicting the Ancient Roman arena in Verona, Italy, with a large crease down the middle, also on a grey background. Three frames contain one plate of solid yellow glass each (**figure 127**) and two plates of solid blue glass, respectively (**figure 128**).<sup>14</sup> The majority of the photographs depict other work made by Beuys between 1949 and 1971, though, for the most part, the images are fragmented, blurred, washed out, torn, and treated to the point they what they depict becomes partially, or even, completely obscured. There are no captions and while some text does appear in the photographs, most of it is incidental, appearing as a part of an action or sculpture, not as a kind of explication.<sup>15</sup>

Beuys had already exhibited some of the photographs two years earlier, as an unexpected supplement to his entry to the group exhibition *Strategy: Get Arts* at the Edinburgh College of Arts. This exhibition marked the first time Beuys showed his work in the United Kingdom, and was, as the catalogue stated, the first exhibition to show

---

<sup>14</sup> Kort, "Joseph Beuys's Arena: The Way In," 18. For a full account of the specifications of *Arena* see Cooke and Kelly, *Arena: where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*, .

<sup>15</sup> Only two panels predominantly and legibly feature text. Panel #55 depicts (*Joyce*) which was a part of the theater piece, *Jahrhundertwende*, written by Eva Beuys-Wurmbach that was performed by her students in 1962. The panel consists of just the word "Joyce" written in paint. Panel #68 shows details of two scores, created for Beuys's actions *Eurasienstab* (1967) and *Der größte Komponist der Gegenwart is das Contergankind (The Greatest Contemporary Composer is the Thalidomide Child* (ca. 1966). These two photographs though share their panel with two details of *Champagne-chalk with Needle* from *Barraque D'Dull Odde* (1961-67).

contemporary German art there since 1938.<sup>16</sup> Beuys showed his sculptural installation *The Pack* and, during the run of the exhibition, enacted *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch)* *Schottische Symphonie* [*Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony*]. Shown on white paper boards, Beuys did not title the group of one hundred and sixty photographs, which he hung on the walls and leaned on the wall (**figure 129**). The organizers of the exhibition took the images as a kind of “didactic component” of Beuys’s greater contribution to the exhibition. The installation of the photographs was not included in the exhibition catalogue nor did it receive any mention in the contemporary press coverage of the show.<sup>17</sup>

Beuys and Amelio provide conflicting reports as to how the Edinburgh photographic installation relates to *Arena* and this preceding manifestation of photographs remains a perplexing aspect of the history of the later work. Amelio, as a shrewd dealer, maintained that the Scottish installation was merely a collection of “preliminary” images, unrelated to *Arena* because they were shown “without frames” and as only a “vague idea.”<sup>18</sup> He did acknowledge though that it may have just been an incomplete realization of the version produced for the Naples exhibition. For his part, Beuys seems to have thought of the Edinburgh work as a complete, earlier variation of *Arena*, though he acknowledged that it possessed a very different form. He stated, “I had already exhibited this work [*Arena*] in 1970 in Edinburgh, although not in the form, which it assumed later, but still in a sparse direction. If someone then, from England or

---

<sup>16</sup> *Strategy, get arts: exhibition at the Edinburgh International Festival, August 23 to September 12, 1970*. Edinburgh: Forth Studios, 1970.

<sup>17</sup> Kort, “Joseph Beuys's *Arena*: The Way In,” 19. The exhibition’s organizer Richard DeMarco told Kort during an interview in 1992 that Beuys had brought the photographs with him from Düsseldorf intending to show them in one of the galleries on their own, but that the consensus at the time was that no one really knew what to make of it.

<sup>18</sup> Amelio and Kort, “The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio,” 39.

Ireland, had come along and said that they wanted to buy this work, then it would probably have been titled differently.”<sup>19</sup>

The title turned out to be one of the key elements that helped shape *Arena* when Beuys showed it at Modern Art Agency. Whether or not the Edinburgh piece was a precursor or the first “official” version, the framed form that the work took and maintained was not established until the Naples exhibition. Whether through his intervention in Scotland or the accumulation of worked-on photographs in a box at his studio in Düsseldorf, it is clear that the impetus for the work came before Beuys’s involvement in Naples, but *Arena* was inextricably connected to Beuys’s Italian encounters. He gave the work an Italian subtitle, *dove sarei arrivato se fossi intelligente!* (*where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*). With this specific choice of a Latin name Beuys infused the work with a “reference to the Mediterranean situation,” and elements that would have not occurred, if the piece been “further developed in the North, as had once been intended.”<sup>20</sup> The work’s official title comes from a direct connection to Italy, visually represented by the only image included in the sculptural ensemble that did not depict Beuys’s previous work: the postcard image showing the Ancient Roman amphitheater in Verona (**figure 130**). This image, faded, cropped, and creased, supplied the name of the work, and helped shaped its structure and form.

Amelio may have wanted to make an explicit connection between Beuys’s work and Latin influence when he declared, “*Arena* is battlefield,” but the arenas of Ancient

---

<sup>19</sup> Joseph Beuys, in conversation with Martin Kunz, March 10, 1979, in *Spuren in Italien*, exhibition catalogue (Kunstmuseum Luzern, April 22-June 17, 1979), n.p. Reprinted in Kort, “Joseph Beuys's Arena: The Way In,” 19.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

Rome did provide a crucial conceptual and formal framework for the work.<sup>21</sup> As Dia curator Lynne Cooke pointed out, the Verona amphitheater was the first monument of antiquity that Goethe saw on his journey through Italy. This encounter prompted Goethe to write in 1786 of the structure known among the locals as Arena:

On entering it, but still more while walking around its rim, I felt strange because I was seeing something great and yet actually seeing nothing. Of course it should not be seen empty, but brimful of people...[Under such circumstances] a milling crowd...sees itself united into a noble body, induced into oneness, bound and consolidated into a mass, as if it were one form, enlivened by one spirit.<sup>22</sup>

Beuys was a great admirer of Goethe, and even duplicated the German writer's itinerary on his own journey to Naples. Goethe's words, written almost exactly two centuries earlier, could just as easily be applied to Beuys's *Arena*, a constructed space, empty but populated by the vestiges of past moments, forgotten presences both present and somehow, absent and inaccessible.

The circular form of the arena, an ancient theater serving as a place of action and encounter, formed the intended and initial shape of *Arena*. In Beuys's ideal installation, the work would consist of all one hundred frames arranged in a circle, hung on the wall, with the sculptural stacks and oil can in the middle; an idea he referenced on the announcement card he drew for the Naples Exhibition (**figure 131**). Neither the wall nor the gallery space at Modern Art Agency allowed, however, for such an extensive circular layout, or for all of the panels to be hung on the wall. Beuys and Amelio instead adapted the piece to the space, propping the panels along the wall similar to what Beuys had done

---

<sup>21</sup> Amelio and Kort, "The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio," 36. "*Arena* is the battlefield, the battlefield for the hero-artist who has to fight for the freedom of every human being. In the middle of *Arena* is a sculpture infused with ancient energy from its two elements: copper and wax. Wax as the product of bees, and copper as the conductor of energy."

<sup>22</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey* (New York: Suhrkamp Publishers, 1989), 31, 37. Reprinted in Lynne Cooke, "Installing *Arena*: An Introduction," in *Arena: where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly (New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994), 12.

with the photographs in Edinburgh, though in Naples, they were stacked in piles, some over ten panels deep (**figure 125**).

With the Naples installation, the frames became more than just modes of display. They became sculptural elements, altering and occupying the space of the gallery in a way that their flimsy glass counterparts in Edinburgh never could. The dense aluminum frames may not have been hung in a perfect circle, but they occupied all four walls, encircling the viewer as they walked from element to element. The presence of the frames and their arrangement became equally, if not more, important than the photographs contained within them, especially since a large majority were hidden from view in the large block-like stacks. The various components of *Arena* continued to change with every subsequent installation and the specificities of each new site of display. Even though Beuys used the circular shape of the ancient arena to conceptualize the work and provide a richly layered spatial and metaphorical reference point, *Arena* never possessed fixed dimensions or prescribed installation instructions. Regardless of the configuration, whether displayed as a circle, a rectangle, or a square, in stacks, hung on the wall or propped, Beuys “invented a form relating to the space.”<sup>23</sup>

The next major installation of the work occurred four months after Beuys showed *Arena* at Modern Art Agency, when the work traveled to Rome for the artist’s first solo exhibition at Fabio Sargentini’s L’Attico gallery. Sargentini’s novel garage space interior provided far more room than Amelio’s modest space, and while the frames were still propped against the walls, they were also far more spread out with shallower stacks (**figure 132**). Amelio was again responsible for the installation of the work with Beuys

---

<sup>23</sup> Amelio and Kort, “The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio,” 41.

supervising. Sargentini, who was often very hands-on when working with artists on unusual projects, had little involvement.

Sargentini met Beuys in the spring of 1969, at the exhibition, *When Attitudes Become Form*, in Bern. While installing in the Kunsthalle's galleries, Claudio Abate, who was traveling with Sargentini, suggested they take some photographs of Beuys to publish in L'Attico's in-house journal *Cartabianca*. While Sargentini agreed, acknowledging both the importance of the moment, and Beuys's growing reputation among international avant-garde artists, he disliked Beuys's work. "I was never able to get inside of it: the character was powerful, he had a precise image consciousness, his manner of dress – the hat, the vest with rings, his facial structure, and the work he did with felt and margarine, it was strong, but for me personally was too German, even if in some way I suffered the charm."<sup>24</sup>

Already not enamored with the work and ambivalent about the artist, Sargentini's relationship with Beuys was not helped by Amelio, who by 1972, was the artist's sole, and very involved, representative in Italy. The network of Italian galleries showing experimental work was still small in the early 1970s and while Amelio and Sargentini knew each other, even traveling together on multiple occasions in Germany, they did not have a close professional or personal relationship. Amelio was inseparable from Beuys, and as Sargentini recalls, it was very difficult "to have a dialogue with Beuys," if not on

---

<sup>24</sup> Politi and Sargentini, *Fabio Sargentini*, 28. "...non sono mai perfettamente riuscito a entrarci dentro: il personaggio era potente, aveva anche una precisa coscienza dell'immagine, il suo modo di vestire col cappello, il gilet con gli anelli, il suo viso scheletrico, poi i lavori che faceva, i feltri, la margarina; era forte, ma per me personalmente era troppo tedesco, anche se in qualche modo ne subivo il fascino." Sargentini's dislike or at least ambivalence was also evident when interviewed by the author in May 2010.



the grounds of artistic collaboration, than very literally, because Amelio also served as the artist's translator.<sup>25</sup>

Following the L'Attico exhibition, Amelio continued to promote Beuys in Italy, helping him to install *Arena* at the Studio Marconi in Milan in March 1973, and again in Rome, at the large group exhibition *Contemporanea* held in a parking garage under the Villa Borghese from November 1973 through February 1974. Beuys was hesitant to participate, only agreeing to show *Arena*, after the organizers promised him space equal to that received by major American artists, like Robert Rauschenberg, who were also participating in the exhibition.<sup>26</sup> The installation at *Contemporanea*, however, proved to be one of the most significant in *Arena*'s history, as it was the only time during Beuys's lifetime that all one hundred frames were hung together on walls.

Amelio arranged the frames in a square, dictated by the makeshift walls installed in the garage space allotted for Beuys (**figure 133**). The one hundred panels had no particular order, though the three monochromatic panels and the panel with the Verona postcard were set next to one another.<sup>27</sup> The *Contemporanea* installation of *Arena* is, in some ways, the most traditional. It followed the standard format for displaying photographs, and separated the sculptural stacks from the frames by encasing them in a shoddy, transparent cube, off to the side, in a corner of the room (**figure 134**). The sheer

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 29. Asked if his encounter with Beuys was decisive, Sargentini replied: "No, marginale, anche perché ormai c'era Amelio di mezzo, che parlava perfettamente tedesco, quindi era difficile giungere ad un rapporto autentico. Lo gestiva lui, non c'era spazio per un altro interlocutore. Forse non ero innamorato del lavoro di Beuys o non mi potevo innamorare di lui."

<sup>26</sup> Cooke, "Installing *Arena*: An Introduction," 14. Amelio, in recollection of the circumstances of Beuys's participation, does not mention the artist's concern over space in comparison to the American's allotted space, but states, emphasizing per usual his first person involvement, "We didn't want to take part in *Contemporanea*. Beuys said that he would give permission to lend the work only if the frames in *Arena* were hung with space between them larger than the frames themselves. In the end this was not respected, but he went to Rome anyway." Amelio and Kort, "The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio," 41.

<sup>27</sup> Cooke, "Installing *Arena*: An Introduction," 14.

scale of the collective panels and the spotlights attached to a bar running along the tops of the frames dramatically lit the photographs and created a diffused atmosphere in the space. The lighting prevented the installation from becoming too commonplace and united the various components into a total environment.

The Italian curator and critic Achille Bonito Oliva organized both the Milan and *Contemporanea* exhibitions, and the malleability and contingency of the work was not lost on him. He wrote in the Milan catalogue, “*Arena*, however, is not just a catalogue of events, but is rather an elastic space – a container of creative acts, which no longer need to be defined or limited to an inclusive number of events, but that can consequently last for the whole of Beuys’s life, continuing to accumulate traces of his movements.”<sup>28</sup> The configuration of the work for the Naples exhibition supports Bonito Oliva’s assertion that Beuys intended *Arena* to remain an open work in progress. Beuys expanded the scope of the work by including one hundred and four additional photographs, declared that he would continue to add to the work, and abandoned the numbering system assigned to the frames in order to keep the work and its installation more flexible.<sup>29</sup> By 1976, when Amelio finally agreed to sell *Arena* to the Dia Art Foundation, the artist and dealer made sure to stipulate in the contract that more elements could be added at Beuys’s discretion.<sup>30</sup>

Following the sale to Dia, Beuys installed the work only one more time before his death. The 1979 retrospective exhibition at the Guggenheim was the first major introduction of Beuys and his work to American audiences. Beuys, along with his co-

---

<sup>28</sup> Achille Bonito Oliva, *Joseph Beuys: Il Ciclo del suo lavoro* (Milan: Studio Marconi, 1973), n.p.

<sup>29</sup> Amelio and Kort, “The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio,” 46.

<sup>30</sup> Kort, “Joseph Beuys's *Arena*: The Way In,” 28. Dia had first approached Amelio about acquiring the work two years earlier, in 1974.

organizer and friend, Caroline Tisdall, made sure to present a carefully constructed narrative, arranging the show into twenty-four “stations” that snaked down central spiral of the Guggenheim and formed the structure of the accompanying catalogue. *Arena* appeared in station twenty-two, and was installed on the ground floor of the museum, just to the right of the small pool at the end of the spiral ramp (**figure 135**). Unlike previous installations, Beuys placed all one hundred aluminum frames into three dense stacks, which unavoidably recalled American minimalist sculptures. These stacks reflected their surroundings but did little to convey the scope of the work, as almost all of the photographs were invisible (**figure 136**). The smaller felt, fat, and metal stacks were also in three uneven piles, displayed about three feet deep in front of the frames, with the small oil can centered in between.

The Guggenheim exhibition served as a watershed and polarizing moment in the reception of Beuys’s work. While there was little emphasis on *Arena* in the retrospective catalogue or in any of the press surrounding the exhibition, the reception of the exhibition has become synonymous with the reception of the Beuys’s oeuvre and by association, *Arena*.<sup>31</sup> The entry in the accompanying catalogue written by Beuys and Tisdall, declared

---

<sup>31</sup> Much of the criticism that appeared after the Beuys retrospective focused on Beuys’s apparent theatrical subjectivity and the complex personal mythology he developed around his origins and involvement as a Luftwaffe radio operator during WWII. In particular, his story about how he survived a plane crash in the Crimea because a group of Tartars rescued him, wrapping him in felt and fat. As Robert Storr wrote, “...he was a bullshit artist of unrivalled ambition and stamina and dazzling aesthetic refinement....Beuys was and remains an important figure precisely because we suspect that his myth – in particular his myth of origins, with its tartars, felt, and fat – was pure hokum and yet we readily succumb to its lyricism. Robert Storr, “The Idea of the Moral Imperative in Contemporary Art,” *Art Criticism* 7, no. 1 (1992): 38 The critique against Beuys was significantly and lastingly shaped by Benjamin H. Buchloh’s Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol, Preliminary Notes for a Critique (1980),” and is summed up for example in statements such as: “No other artist also tried and succeeded so systematically in aligning himself at a given time with esthetic and political currents, absorbing them into his myth and work and thereby neutralizing and estheticizing them. Everyone who was seriously involved in radical student politics during the 1960s in Germany...laughed at or derided Beuys’ public-relations move to found the Grand Student Party.... Nobody who understands any contemporary science, politics or esthetics, for that matter, could want to see

that the *raison d'être* of *Arena*” was its “autobiographical tendency.”<sup>32</sup> Amelio had expressed this sentiment five years earlier, when he wrote, on behalf of Beuys, that *Arena* was “the space of the tragedy in which the artist-hero presents himself... an open work, a work in progress.”<sup>33</sup> In this view, the malleability of *Arena* is inextricably connected to Beuys, and as long as he was alive, the physical constitution of *Arena* was open and accessible to alteration.

The fusion of the autobiographical tendency with the physical constitution of the work has remained entrenched, echoed in even some of the more progressive analyses of the work. For example, Pamela Kort, writing in the 1994 *Dia* text, took a more critical, self-aware approach to *Arena*, but nonetheless, declared that *Arena* consciously referenced and reworked the concept of the “cult of the artist.” She continued, situating the work as a visual continuation of Beuys’s semi-fictional *Lebenslauf/Werklauf* (*Life Course/ Work Course*) that he ceased to add to around the time of *Arena*’s creation: “Just as the *Life Course* had become the axis of Beuys’s presentation of himself to a readership

---

in Beuys' proposal for an integration of art, science and politics...anything more than simple-minded utopian drivel lacking elementary political and educational practicality. Beuys' existential and ideological followers and admirers, as opposed to his bourgeois collectors and speculators, are blindfolded like cultists by their leader's charisma.... As to Beuys, the cult and the myth seem to have become inseparable from the work....”

Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol, Preliminary Notes for a Critique (1980),” in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, ed. Gene Ray (New York: D.A.P., 2001), 201.

For a overviews of the two modes of the interpretation of Beuys’ work see: Gene Ray, ed. *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy* (New York: D.A.P., 2001); *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, ed. David Thistlewood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995); and, Buchloh, Krauss, and Michelson, “Joseph Beuys at the Guggenheim,” 3-21.

<sup>32</sup> Caroline Tisdall and Joseph Beuys, *Joseph Beuys* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Thames and Hudson, 1979).

<sup>33</sup> Lea Vergine, *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language* (Milan: Skira, 2000), 49. Originally published as *Il Corpo come linguaggi: la Body-art e storie simili* (Milan: G. Prearo, 1974).

by 1973, so did certain changes he made to *Arena* in 1972 enable it to become the quintessential vehicle for the exhibition of his artistic persona to a viewing public.”<sup>34</sup>

Regardless of Beuys’s proclamations or ambivalence about exhibitions, he was concerned with the reception of his work and the broader issues of presentation. He showed *Arena*, like so many of his other projects, on multiple occasions and in multiple configurations; adding, changing, and bringing more critical attention to the significance of the piece. Amelio’s involvement with *Arena* proved crucial to the work’s creation, installation, and reception, and yet he was not alone in his championing of the artist. Beuys was strategic in his collaborations with collectors, dealers, and critics willing to promote his work, and in yet another contradictory flourish, he, the purveyor of ephemeral materiality and contingent installation, was “obsessed with placing his large works in museums or places where they would never move.”<sup>35</sup>

Beyond the images added in 1972 for *Arena*’s inaugural exhibition at Modern Art Agency, Beuys never did modify the photographic components of *Arena*, and outside of the work’s inclusion in the retrospective exhibition in 1979, he did not return to the work in *any* capacity between when the work entered into Dia’s collection and his death in 1986. Today, the work lives in perpetuity, perhaps just as Beuys always wanted, at Dia.

There is probably not an institution better suited to carrying on Beuys’s legacy.<sup>36</sup> In 1994,

---

<sup>34</sup> Kort, “Joseph Beuys's *Arena*: The Way In,” 19.

<sup>35</sup> Amelio and Kort, “The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio,” 43. Amelio was hesitant to sell when Dia approached him about *Arena*, and even though he already had paid for the work in full, consulted Beuys, who urged him to sell.

<sup>36</sup> The Dia Foundation was established in 1974 by Philipa de Menil and Heiner Friedrich, with the expressed wish to “extend the boundaries of the traditional museum to respond to the needs of the generation of artists whose work matured and became prominent during the 1960s and 1970s. Ever since, Dia’s mission has been to commission, support, and present site-specific long-term installations and single-artists exhibitions to the public.” For more information on the foundation and the opening of Dia: Beacon, visit the Foundation’s website at <http://www.diacenter.org>, and see, Lynne Cooke and Michael Govan, *Dia: Beacon* (New York: Dia Foundation, 2003).

Dia temporarily installed *Arena* in its most idealized form, with all one hundred panels hung in a circle, in New York (**figure 137**). Ten years later the work went on long-term view at Dia: Beacon, the converted Nabisco factory building located in the Hudson River Valley area of New York that opened in 2003.<sup>37</sup>

At Dia:Beacon, *Arena* occupies a wall in a dark corner of one of the smaller galleries; sandwiched in the southwest corner of the transformed industrial space between galleries displaying the work of American artists Richard Serra and Robert Smithson, respectively (**figure 138**). The work's heavy aluminum frames are, again, arranged into three stacks leaning against the wall, the oilcan and copper, felt blocks set, just in front, on the floor (**figure 139**). *Arena* is no longer displayed alone, as it once was in Naples. It now shares its space with two other projects that Beuys made five years later: *Aus Berlin: Neues vom Kojoten (From Berlin: News from the Coyote)*, composed of rubble, plaster, and other sculptural elements taken from Beuys's *I like America and America likes Me* (Fig.) and *Brasilienfond (Brazilian Fond)*, *Fond III/3*, and *Fond IV/4* (**figure 140**), each made of rectangular felt pieces topped with copper plates. Together, these three projects fill the gallery space with striking continuity. The sculptural stacks of *Arena* mirror the large stacks of the *Fond Pieces*, and the repeated use of metal, felt, fat, and the found detritus of modern life, coalesce into a unified and sophisticated artistic language.

Dia's didactic material provides as close to a succinct description as possible for a work that continues to defy transparency: "Favoring evocation over documentation, it functions as an artistic summa, drawing together images of Beuys's 'actions' and

---

<sup>37</sup> Amelio and Kort, "The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio," 46 Amelio recalled that after *Arena* was sold in 1976, Beuys never again spoke of the work and no additional panels were added.

collaborative performances, his sculptural objects and drawings.”<sup>38</sup> Regardless of its current or future form, of who owned or owns the work, of where it dwelled or dwells, *Arena* will always be a collection of its multiple parts, not just its photographs, frames, and stacks, but its collective history of forty years of installations and configurations, themselves generating endless layers of photographic supplements.

## Supplements

The various incarnations of *Arena* over the past forty years suggest a work defined by the fleeting and flexible interconnectivity of its multiple parts, and by the ability to respond to its environment, and consequently reshape it. The very nature of the work has caused it to expand and contract, folding new elements into its constitution with each installation. *Arena*, with its unique combination of parts and elements has few precedents or parallels, but *Atlas* (**figure 141**), a complex, encyclopedic work by one of Beuys’s German contemporaries, Gerhard Richter, proves helpful in thinking about how photographs and multiple, contingent structures could be employed in vanguard art practice.<sup>39</sup>

Begun in 1962, Richter first exhibited *Atlas* in 1972 at Museum for Hedendaagse Kunst in Utrecht under the title *Atlas der Fotos und Skizzen* – it included 315 parts. Today it is comprised of thousands of photographic images, which were or had the potential to be pictorial sources for Richter’s paintings. They include reproductions of

---

<sup>38</sup> Lynne Cooke, “Joseph Beuys: Introduction,” Dia Art Foundation, <http://www.diacenter.org/exhibitions/introduction/77>.

<sup>39</sup> Beuys was a professor at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf when Richter enrolled as a student in 1961. Richter himself became an instructor there in 1971, one year prior to Beuys’s dismissal.

works of art, documentary and news images, and personal or reference photographs the artist took himself.<sup>40</sup> Similar to *Arena*, these photographs were grouped together on sheets, though in a far more ordered and methodical manner, and presents a fascinating record of an intermedia practice.

Though Beuys intended to add photographs continuously to *Arena*, the number of images has remained unchanged since the aluminum frames were bolted shut in 1972. One of the more crucial and multifaceted components of *Arena*, the two-hundred-sixty-four-photographs, are but one element and one material among many that shape the work's form. Unlike the photographic images of *Atlas*, which continue to multiply, the photographs in *Arena* create a stable, solid core, in an otherwise capricious work. Because of what they depict and reference, however, they are the main contributing factor to why the "cult and myth" of Beuys's artistic persona has become indistinguishable from the work as well as the source of both *Arena*'s potency and complexity.<sup>41</sup>

All of the photographs in *Arena* were taken between 1962 and 1972, and depict works, projects, and actions created by Beuys between 1949 and 1971. These chronological designations remain hidden though to even the viewer equipped with a thorough knowledge of Beuys's oeuvre. The photographs do not convey enough information to substantiate the date of their creation or when they were selected.<sup>42</sup> Beuys did not include captions or labels of any sort in *Arena*, and the arrangement of the

---

<sup>40</sup> For a more complete discussion of *Atlas* see, *Photography and Painting in the Work of Gerhard Richter: Four essays on Atlas*, (Barcelona: Consorci del Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2000); Helmut Friedel, ed. *Atlas* (New York: D.A.P./ Distributed Art Publishers, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> Buchloh, "Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol, Preliminary Notes for a Critique (1980)," 201.

<sup>42</sup> The Dia catalogue on *Arena* provides a comprehensive list of every photograph in every panel of the work, but there remain numerous unidentified or undated photographs.



photographs within the aluminum frames adhere to no chronological or specific structural organization. Some photographs are displayed one to a frame (**figure 142**), some in groups of six or more (**figure 143**). Horizontally and vertically oriented photographs mingle side-by-side in no particular order (**figure 144**). Works created years apart appear next to one another and are often reproduced in multiple frames, from different angles, or with different photographic treatments (**figure 145**).

What the photographs of *Arena* “advance,” is “a vocabulary of shapes that refuse to be fixed, alternating between blurred and sharp representations, arresting and melting forms, and detailed and abstract compositions.”<sup>43</sup> Beuys’s sculptures, often recycled from, integrated in, or created for, his various environments and actions, reoccur across numerous photographs. Fragments from his monumental *Block Beuys* installation (**figure 146**), itself an accumulation of previous works, make repeated appearances, as do his *Konzertflügel (Grand Piano)*, *Fond* pieces, *Wämeplastik (Warmth Sculpture)* (**figure 147**), and *Stuhl mit Fett (Fat Chair)*. By far the works Beuys made from fat are the most prevalent. Numerous unidentified blobs and bits of the substance appear in multiple frames, and many different manifestations and variations of Beuys’s fat corners are featured in over fifteen separate photographs (**figure 148**).

The images present to the viewer an overall tone and expansive diversity of Beuys’s artistic practice. As a collective group, whether showing objects, the artist himself, or a combination of the two, the photographs of *Arena* convey how crucial

---

<sup>43</sup> Kort, “Joseph Beuys's Arena: The Way In,” 18. Kort suggests that *Arena* possesses “four chronologies”: 1947-1973, the dates that Beuys assigned it on the showing at *Contemporanea* that mark the beginnings of his formal study of art to the exhibition date; 1949-1971, the years the work shown in the photographs were produced; 1962-1972, the decades during which the photographs were taken; and 1970-1972, the years that Beuys constructed the work. Other chronologies could certainly be added to this list encompassing the other installations of *Arena*, its history after the sale to Dia, and its open-ended material existence.

Beuys's actions were to his artistic practice. Between 1963 and 1986, Beuys carried out seventy actions, most of which were enacted prior to 1972.<sup>44</sup> On an indexical level, *Arena* depicts fragments of these actions; even if some of Beuys's most emblematic actions and their subsequent photographs are conspicuously absent. For example, one of the iconic images (**figure 149**), showing Beuys sitting in a chair, cradling a dead rabbit, the artist's head drenched and dripping with honey taken during his 1965 action, *wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt* (*How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*), is not included. Also missing is the image from 1964 (**figure 150**) of Beuys holding a cross sculpture while blood drips from his nose taken at the Festival der neuen Kunst (Festival of New Art) in Aachen.

Further, while at least two photographs highlight key objects from his 1963/66 work *Eurasia Sibirische Symphonie* (*Eurasia Siberian Symphony*), none of the photographs that famously depict Beuys interacting with the hare or dragging it around on stilts (**figure 151**) were included in *Arena*. All of these images, photographs that have become synonymous with Beuys's conspicuous presence within his works, were excluded from the work, perhaps because they were too recognizable. This not only speaks to how inadequate *Arena* is as a kind of comprehensive visual archive, but also that the photographs themselves were not valued as autonomous objects. Indeed the images taken from the actions in *Arena* are a jumbled mix of before, during, and after.

The iconic images of Beuys may be absent, but Beuys's presence still permeates every aspect of *Arena*, binding the artist's presence into the fabric of the work. His face

---

<sup>44</sup> For a thorough discussion of Beuys's actions see, Uwe M. Schneede, *Joseph Beuys: Die Aktionen* (Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1994); and Mark Rosenthal, ed. *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments* (Houston: The Menil Collection, 2004).

looks out from behind the glass and his body appears in vestigial form in countless photographs. The photographs show the artist in action(s), performing in his trademark clothing and accessories, interacting with objects that reappear in subsequent photographs. Even when his body is absent, his touch is visible, whether figuratively in the transformation of material or quite literally in the application of brown paint on the surface of a photograph (**figure 152**).

Like many of his avant-garde contemporaries in the early 1960s, Beuys turned to “actions” or happenings as a means to break down the barriers between art and life, to imbue the work of art with a sense of energy and experimentation. The development of this aspect of Beuys’s practice is most often contextualized within the activities of the loosely connected vanguard art movement, Fluxus, and Beuys’s consequent introduction to performance art and other various experimental strategies, such as happenings, through artists like John Cage, George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, and Wolf Vostell. Beuys did organize a handful of Fluxus events in Germany in the early 1960s, which also featured some of his earliest actions, but while the shift in Beuys’s own practice to similar activities coincides with his involvement with Fluxus, the relationship proved tenuous and complicated due to internal group politics.<sup>45</sup> The Danish artist Eric Andersen suggested, for example, that Beuys was a very marginal figure within the Fluxus circle and that his practice was incongruous with Fluxus principles since his work was too “symbolic, expressionistic, and traditional,” and “very concerned with the concept of

---

<sup>45</sup> Beuys did use the term Fluxus to designate his work, especially in the 1960s, and maintained close relationships certain European-based factions of the group, including Vostell and Paik.

*Selbstdarstellung* (self-representation) as an interpretation of the world. It was not an anonymous work. It was a personal work oriented in a specific sense.”<sup>46</sup>

Regardless of Beuys’s official standing within the group, Fluxus strategies of experimentation and performance-related activities, were became popular among vanguard artists, from different nationalities and backgrounds in the early 1960s. Allan Kaprow and Claes Oldenburg were generating happenings in the United States, and European artists associated with groups as diverse as Zero/Nul, Nouveau Réalisme, and Viennese Actionism, were all creating, publicizing, and discussing similar ideas around the time that Beuys took an interest in what was referred as “action art.”<sup>47</sup> The question of direct influence between Beuys and these artists is neither germane nor interesting, but what remains central to the discussion is the concurrent employment of strikingly similar tactics that speak to the greater art historical context of the time.

Artists like Yayoi Kusama, Piero Manzoni, and Yves Klein, in particular, present more illuminating and compelling comparisons to Beuys than any of his American Fluxus colleagues. They all established a complex relationship between artist, object, and event, giving equal weight to each, and thus infused their work with a greater sense not only of temporality but also more specifically, of ephemerality. Though sometimes regarded as a negative aspect of their practice, all of these artists also shared a flare for the dramatic, the spectacular, and, though to a lesser extent with Manzoni, the self-mythologizing.

---

<sup>46</sup> Joan Rothfuss, “Joseph Beuys: Echoes in America,” in *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, ed. Gene Ray (New York: D.A.P., 2001), 42.

<sup>47</sup> Beuys makes particular mention of a lecture given by Allan Kaprow in July 1963 at the Zwirner Gallery in Cologne in his *Lebenslauf/Werklauf (Life Course/Work Course)*, published in, Tisdall and Beuys, *Joseph Beuys*, .

Klein, in particular, proves useful in determining what was at stake in Beuys's shift toward "action art," and how it affected his greater artistic practice.<sup>48</sup> Though from very different backgrounds, Beuys and Klein were of the same generation, born within seven years of one another, and came to a professional career as artists in their thirties. By early 1960s, Klein's work was well known in Germany. He had his first retrospective exhibition at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld in 1961 and was the first artist to show at Schmela Gallery in 1957, the same year he began work on a commission for the new city theater in Gelsenkirchen. Schmela also represented Beuys in Germany, and the two artists exhibited and participated in public dialogues together during this time in the Rhine region. Klein's unexpected death in 1962 even prompted Beuys to create *Demonstration on the Occasion of the Death Hour of Yves Klein*.<sup>49</sup>

Beyond the historical connections, Beuys and Klein's work speaks to a profound engagement with material occurring in the postwar period, as well as the widespread desire to push beyond traditional boundaries of art making. Beuys's use of brown paint and a limited color palette, as well as the inclusion of two blue and one golden yellow monochrome panels in *Arena* recalls Klein's obsession with monochrome, and in particular, his trademark International Klein Blue.<sup>50</sup> Klein, like Beuys, was also interested in the creation of total environments, and while he most often described himself as a

---

<sup>48</sup> For some recent examples that reference this comparison to varying degrees, see: Buchloh, "Reconsidering Joseph Beuys, Once Again," 75-89; Green and Lowry, "Splitting the Index: Time, Object, and Photography in the Work of Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein," 148-65; Andria Hickey, "Man, Myth, and Magic: Yves Klein and Photography," in *Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers*, ed. Kerry Brougher and Philippe Vergne (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2010), 287-331; and Rosenthal, "Joseph Beuys: Staging Sculpture," 10-135.

<sup>49</sup> Exact information on the nature of Beuys's and Klein's interactions is hard to come by, but see, for example, Rosenthal, "Joseph Beuys: Staging Sculpture," 74, 130; and Kim Levin, "Introduction," in *Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America*, ed. Carin Kuoni (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Rosenthal, "Joseph Beuys: Staging Sculpture," 74. The two most dominant colors in Klein's work is blue and golden yellow.

painter, devoted much attention to the installation of his work in a specific site.<sup>51</sup> Both artists produced heterogeneous bodies of work, mastering a limited and focused group of materials and personal symbols to create a complete artistic universe, a complex network of interchangeable “original,” independent works, and what Nan Rosenthal has referred to as supplements. She writes:

As Jacques Derrida uses the term, a supplement is something that is double, paradoxical and contradictory in its nature and basic structure. It is by definition something extra added to a preexisting whole and dependent on it. It is ‘only a supplement’ to the completed work. At the same time, however, a supplement supplies something *lacking* from the wholeness of the original work and reveals it as incomplete, precisely because it needs to be supplemented, needs to have its deficiencies made up.<sup>52</sup>

Both artists, whether participating in an elaborate action, creating a simple blue monochrome painting, or sculpture made of fat and felt, were mindful of integrating and employing the work created after “the work.” They elevated and recycled the relics and records generated from an action or environment, folding them back into their installations, environments, and actions. “For Klein, the value of a picture was something it took on in the continuing process of interpretation. . . . For him art was something living,

---

<sup>51</sup> Nan Rosenthal, “Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein,” in *Yves Klein, 1928-1962: A Retrospective* (Houston: Institute for the Arts, Rice University, 1982), 106. For example, in preparation for the exhibition in Krefeld, Klein requested the plans for the building, originally designed as a private residence by Mies van der Rohe, and up scaled his monochrome panels to fit the particulars of the space.

<sup>52</sup> Rosenthal here is paraphrasing from Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 141-47. Rosenthal, “Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein,” 117. Derrida’s notion of the “supplement” also forms the basis for the interpretation of both Beuys’s and Klein’s use of photography put forth by David Green and Joanna Lowry. Similar to Rosenthal, they write that both Beuys and Klein “employed a multiplicity of strategies in order to problematize any simple distinction between what might have been defined as *the work* and its attendant phenomena. These phenomena (including photographs, films, videos, and written statements), whether they were offered as a form of exegesis or commentary, or simply as a documentary record of the work, actually became increasingly difficult to separate from the work.” See, Green and Lowry, “Splitting the Index: Time, Object, and Photography in the Work of Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein,” 160.

something that continued to work and continued to produce effects in the world. His art is not objects – ‘works’ in the traditional sense – but ‘workings’ or processes.”<sup>53</sup>

Beuys and Klein’s shared interest in art that could remain alive, open, and dynamic, helps to explain why performance-based actions were an attractive mode of experimentation at the time. Their actions combined the objects they created with the unexpected energy of a live performance, and in both cases, the interlocutor was the artist. As Klein wrote, “A painter must paint a single masterpiece: himself, and thus become a sort of atomic battery, a sort of constantly radiating generator that impregnates the atmosphere with his pictorial presence fixed in space after its passage.”<sup>54</sup> Klein and Beuys exercised complete control of how they presented themselves in their respective actions, paying careful attention to staging and personal appearance. Both artists saw themselves as conductors, in every sense of the word.

For his *Anthropometries of the Blue Period* (**figure 153**), held at the Galerie Internationale d’Art Contemporain in Paris on March 9, 1960, Klein appeared in the role of musical conductor, dressed in a tuxedo and white gloves, a costume that would become a trademark of his public performances. After setting up the space, arranging blank white paper on the walls and floor, various pedestals, and the audience’s seating, Klein began to direct both a string chamber orchestra, which played his one-chord *Monotone*, and a handful of a naked female models who proceeded to coat their bodies in IKB paint and press them onto the white paper. The gallery was associated with Georges Mathieu and other artists of *art informel*, often seen as a European equivalent to Abstract

---

<sup>53</sup> Rosenthal, “Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein,” 117.

<sup>54</sup> Yves Klein, “Some Excerpts from my Journal,” in *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, ed. Klaus Ottman (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2007), 14.

Expressionism. This connection and the nature of this event have led many to make the connection between the living paintbrushes of Klein's *Anthropometries* and the action painting of Jackson Pollock.

Harold Rosenberg's essay, "The American Action Painters," and Hans Namuth's photographs of Pollock were well known to European artists at the time through Mathieu, but if Klein was referencing Pollock with his *Anthropometries*, it was far more likely an attempt, like those made by so many of his contemporaries on both sides of the Atlantic, to escape Pollock's specter, not celebrate it.<sup>55</sup> As Klein wrote of his work's reception, "Many art critics claimed that via this method of painting I was in fact merely reenacting the technique of what has been called 'action painting.' I would like to make clear that this endeavor is opposed to 'action painting' in that I am actually completely detached from the physical work during its creation."<sup>56</sup>

Beuys was more apt to get his hands dirty in the creation of his sculpture or an action, but he shared with Klein the emphasis placed on creating and maintaining a "staged persona" and the "subsequent development of his work in the public eye." Beyond their appearance and staging during an action, both artists manipulated how their pictorial presence would be fixed in space.<sup>57</sup> Both artists had an uneasy, ambiguous relationship to photography, but also recognized its importance within their practice. They were careful to make sure that each action was photographed, and mindful of how to stage the scene in a way that would be conducive to a photographic image. Klein, for

---

<sup>55</sup> Rosenthal, "Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein," 124.

<sup>56</sup> Klein as quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Hickey, "Man, Myth, and Magic: Yves Klein and Photography," 295.



example, made sure that the photographers were present for the rehearsal of *Anthropometries* action, and had them help set up the space with him.<sup>58</sup>

Neither artist was enthusiastic about photography, but their archives contain thousands of images ranging from personal snapshots to performance documentation to examples of photomontage.<sup>59</sup> These images show the artists in a variety of guises, camera savvy, and in full control, manipulating their own mythic persona to their desired effect.<sup>60</sup> Beuys and Klein did not come to photography as a medium in its own right and neither ever took a serious interest in photographing their own work; but like many of their avant-garde contemporaries, they realized the necessity of documenting and disseminating photographs of actions and events that were ephemeral and seen live by few viewers.

With the emergence of happenings, actions, and events, and the ensuing need to photograph them, a small group of photographers, including the Paris-based Hungarian team of Harry Shunk and John Kender, Peter Moore, Ugo Mulas, and Ute Klophaus, Reiner Ruthenbeck, and Charles Wilp from the Rhine region, quickly staked their claim as specialists in “action photography.”<sup>61</sup> Many artists developed proprietary relationships with a given photographer, suggesting that they wanted a particular aesthetic in the photographs and that their chosen photographer(s) were capable of achieving it.

---

<sup>58</sup> Rosenthal, “Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein,” 124.

<sup>59</sup> There are more than four thousand photographs in Klein’s archive and somewhere between six and ten thousand for Beuys. See, Hickey, “Man, Myth, and Magic: Yves Klein and Photography,” 289; and Eugen Blume, “Joseph Beuys and Photography,” in *Joseph Beuys: Make the Secrets Productive* (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2010), 45.

<sup>60</sup> Hickey, “Man, Myth, and Magic: Yves Klein and Photography,” 296.

<sup>61</sup> Rosenthal, “Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein,” 122 Phillips, “Arena: The Chaos of the Unnamed,” 56. In the last three years of his life, Klein used the Paris-based Hungarian team of Harry Shunk and John Kender or the Dusseldorf-based photographer, Charles Wilp.

Beuys worked with Klopheus more than any other photographer.<sup>62</sup> From the very beginning of her involvement with Beuys, Klopheus emphasized “mistakes” and “accidents” in both her shooting and darkroom procedures, which, in time, came to characterize the “Beuys aesthetic.” They first met at the event, *24-Hour-Happening* at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal in 1965.<sup>63</sup> Klopheus had no previous connection to Fluxus or the Happenings scene, but her photographs became the primary documents of the event and the participating artists referred to her as a “collaborator” and an “action-photographer.”<sup>64</sup> She wrote of her work with these artists, “One can only try to translate these experiences of the actions artists, they can’t really be reproduced. So, I attempt to make sure the photograph doesn’t have a ‘final’ air to it.”<sup>65</sup>

Klopheus’ approach to Beuys’s work was unconventional and well outside of the bounds of “good” photography. Her images were often visually perplexing and lacked any clear, definable subject matter. Klopheus blurred, scratched, and chemically mistreated both the negatives and prints, which, after being developed, were over- and under-exposed, cropped, and framed in unusual ways. These photographs illustrated catalogues, gallery announcements, and periodicals. The German art journal, *Interfunktionen*, published extensive photo spreads of Beuys’s actions shot by Klopheus, legitimizing her approach to action art. In a forty-plus page spread, with one photograph per page, in the November 1970 issue covering Beuys’s action *Celtic*, little coherent information is conveyed. There is no order to the images, no sense of before, during, or

---

<sup>62</sup> Beuys’s wife, Eva Beuys-Wurmbach, frequently photographed his work throughout his career, as did Caroline Tisdall, but especially in the early stages of his career it was Klopheus that took the majority of the photographs.

<sup>63</sup> Blume, “Joseph Beuys and Photography,” 50. Beuys presented one of his earliest actions, *und in uns*.

<sup>64</sup> Phillips, “Arena: The Chaos of the Unnamed,” 57.

<sup>65</sup> Klopheus, as quoted in, *ibid.*, 58.

after, and many of the photographs highlight seemingly insignificant details like blurred close-ups of Beuys's hands or cords scattered on the ground.<sup>66</sup>

Klophaus, more than any other photographer who shot Beuys's actions evinced atmosphere. Beuys may have felt ambivalent toward photography, but he was masterful at staging individual moments to be captured on film. He never "posed" for Klophaus or looked directly into the camera, but he contorted his body to maximum photographic effect. He knew how to manipulate light and his angles, and he was smart enough to foster a relationship with a photographer who knew how to capitalize on his charisma. In short, he found a photographer who understood his project. As Klophaus wrote, "The sculptures, environments, and actions of Joseph Beuys are multi-dimensional. To them belong time and space. Trivialities are taken out of their normal context and are given new status; the fixed and the conventional are broken up, given a new context and thereby a new identity."<sup>67</sup>

Both the initial object or performance and the photographs Klophaus created of them found a new context and status when they became a part of *Arena*. 165 images have identified or attributed photographers out of the 264 photographs that comprise *Arena*. 142 are by Klophaus. Almost ninety percent of the photographs that Beuys probably selected for the work are by Klophaus, but even more than that, how he chose to arrange and construct *Arena* underscores and reciprocates the aesthetic established by Klophaus in the photographs she took of his work. Beuys selected images for *Arena* that were

---

<sup>66</sup> From the late 1960s through the early 1970s, Beuys was regularly and prominently featured in *Interfunktionen*. He appeared on a handful of the covers and was given generous space within each volume. This support was waning by 1972 and ceased altogether after the tenth volume, when Benjamin Buchloh took over from the founding editor Friedrich Heubach.

<sup>67</sup> Ute Klophaus, "Being and Remaining: Photography to Joseph Beuys (1985)," in *Live Art on Camera*, ed. Alice Maude-Roxby (London: John Hansard Gallery, 2007), 111-13.

already once removed and decontextualized from the event or object they depict. The images function together as a kind archival accumulation without any governing sense of organization or easily decipherable content; a collection of photographs clearly connected to Beuys's practice but severed from the function and form of the works they represent.

The photographs of *Arena* may reference a given work, but they do not function as a substitute or double for it. Instead, they collectively replicate, or at least echo, the formal language already expressed in the images themselves; forming a moody, grey, disconnected patchwork of visually striking fragments that convey tone more than information. Images that were once "supplements" to Beuys's sculptural work or actions become the form of *Arena*, and this, the "workings" or "processes" of Beuys's practice, more than anything, is what the piece captures and conveys. What *Arena* shows, and concurrently collapses, is the circuitousness nature that came to define sculpture when it expanded beyond a single, autonomous object and began to fold into itself more and more "supplements."

For a work comprised of what are essentially relics and records, *Arena* itself generated a fair share of its own supplements that have now become ensnared in our understanding and reception of the work. An entire body of photographs has been generated, showing the various installations and spatial configurations. These images are not just documents of exhibitions, but speak to ways in which the work was manifested and to the various elements that became a part of the work. The photographs of *Arena* taken by the Italian photographer Fabio Donati at *Contemporanea* (**figure 133**) give a sense of the darkness of the installation, the temporary spotlights illuminating the panels

on the walls and the lines of the parking lot still visible on the ground, as well as the haphazard Plexiglas box enshrining the sculptural stacks and oil can.

*Arena* also generated two separate actions. The first was held on June 15, 1972, for the inaugural showing of *Arena* at Amelio's Modern Art Agency. Beuys unexpectedly informed Amelio that he intended to do an action and later that afternoon he performed *Vitex agnus castus* (**figure 154**). As a small handful of people roamed the gallery, Beuys laid face down on the floor of the gallery, surrounded by the aluminum frames of *Arena*. Lying next to the copper, felt, and fat stacks, he proceeded to rub the side of the copper plates with his oil-lubricated fingers for approximately four hours (**figure 155**).<sup>68</sup>

During the action, Beuys also attached a long cobalt blue ribbon to his hat, on which he wrote the Latin name of the plant, and thus the title of the action, in sulphur, recollecting the three monochrome panels of *Arena*. In his other hand, he held a branch of a vitex plant, which Amelio procured from the surrounding countryside at Beuys's request. Also known as, the "chaste tree," the vitex plant or tree is native to the Mediterranean region and was sacred to the Ancient Greeks. Beuys stated of *Vitex agnus castus*, "Energy emanates from the two poles, male and female. My action drew them together. I mean a different concept of chastity produced by this reaction and the conflict of elements." Tisdall further interpreting, continued, "This implies an active struggle and leads back to the meaning of the arena in which so much of Beuys' life is spent, in

---

<sup>68</sup> Amelio and Kort, "The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio," 42; Tisdall and Beuys, *Joseph Beuys*, 225. Beuys and Tisdall stated that *Vitex agnus castus* lasted for four hours, while Amelio stated it was only about three hours. Amelio also recalled that there were very few people actually on hand to witness the action, owing in part to its unexpectedness.

discussion, political organization, permanent conference and the circus of the art world.”<sup>69</sup>

A few short months after the action in Naples, Beuys created yet another action during *Arena*'s installation at L'Attico. By the early 1970s, Sargentini was frequently showing and supporting modes of performance-based art. He only agreed to show the sculptural installation if Beuys also created an action, “because by that time [Beuys] was famous for his performances.”<sup>70</sup> Though Amelio did not like the caveat placed on the exhibition, Beuys agreed to go to Rome and proceeded to enact *Anacharsis Cloots*.

Wearing his trademark felt hat and a long Swiss Red Cross coat, Beuys paced around Sargentini's large garage gallery space, surrounded on all four walls by the aluminum frames, reading in German from a book he had brought with him on the train up from Naples about the eighteenth-century revolutionary, Anacharsis Cloots. The action was photographed by Claudio Abate (**figure 156**), filmed, and recorded on a tape recorder, but the reaction from the audience did not suggest that this was an event worth capturing for posterity. “Look at this charlatan,” people said. “This is just a theatrical thing.” Nobody understood,” Amelio, recalled. “Not even me, because I didn't know what he was reading.”<sup>71</sup>

These actions were largely met with confusion or indifference by the few that saw them live. Created in conjunction with *Arena*, however, they add yet another complex layer to how we understand the overall sculptural work. *Vitex agnus castus* and

---

<sup>69</sup> Tisdall and Beuys, *Joseph Beuys*, 225.

<sup>70</sup> Amelio and Kort, “The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio,” 43. Amelio went on to say, without ever referring to Sargentini by name though they clearly knew each other, that “this gallerist didn't say ‘action,’ he said ‘performance.’ Beuys hated the idea of performing. Performance has to do with theater; action has to do with being alive.”

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

*Anacharsis Cloots* are separate, independent works, distinguished as such by bastions of the Beuys legacy like Amelio and Tisdall, but the distinctions between them and *Arena* are frequently blurred. *Vitex agnus castus*, in particular, has become subsumed into the discussions of *Arena*. For example, Cooke, on the first page of the introduction to the Dia text on *Arena*, declared the action “integral to the work from its inception,” and it even monopolized the section of the Guggenheim catalogue devoted to the sculptural installation.<sup>72</sup>

Given the fame that Beuys’s actions generated for the artist, it is not surprising these two performances should find a place of prominence within analyses of *Arena*. For all of Beuys’s posturing, the actions are, in many ways, the most accessible and straightforward facet of his artistic practice. *Vitex agnus castus* or *Anacharsis Cloots* in comparison to the multiple components and layers of *Arena*, fit neatly into the language Beuys himself constructed around his work. These actions though are both “superfluous and necessary,” to how we see and understand *Arena*.<sup>73</sup> Their existence further highlights the interconnectedness of every component in the ever-expanding network of the “work.” The photographs in *Arena*, like the photographs, films, actions, or statements generated around *Arena*, do not cohere into a unified narrative. They instead problematize the nature of the work as a whole and call our attention to the distance between what we see and what actually was once there.

---

<sup>72</sup> Cooke, “Installing *Arena*: An Introduction,” 12.

<sup>73</sup> Green and Lowry, “Splitting the Index: Time, Object, and Photography in the Work of Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein,” 160.

## Between Image and Object

*Arena* is not a highbrow, didactic scrapbook of Beuys's life, an elaborate, aestheticized archive of his previous work, or a stage, shell, or vehicle for Beuys's actions. It is not a model for a new way of displaying photographs. *Arena* does not express "any kind of systematic formal experiment with photography," nor does it attempt to explore photography's medium specificity or its ability to serve as a vehicle for personal expression.<sup>74</sup> The photographs that give *Arena* its form depict Beuys's previous works, but as images, they remain "completely mysterious. They do not explain anything."<sup>75</sup>

Disconnected from the futile attempt to decode Beuys's cryptic fragments and stripped of the artist's opaque rhetoric, *Arena* exists as a sculpture; one that both shapes and transforms the space which it occupies through its unique material presence and collapses the boundaries between object and image by circuitously folding a collection of photographic images into an accumulation of objects. Key to this interpretation of *Arena* is the realization that the work's physical constitution is unique, made up of not only aluminum, copper, felt, and fat, but also of photographs, which function here not just as images, but also as material. Thus, *Arena* becomes not a "photographic" work or a work documenting actions, but a sculpture made from photographs.

The focus on materials was always at the core of Beuys's practice, and this, regardless of the diversity of his output, is what makes it sculptural. Sculpture, for Beuys, was not just about the creation of three-dimensional objects, but a way in which to

---

<sup>74</sup> Phillips, "Arena: The Chaos of the Unnamed," 60

<sup>75</sup> Amelio and Kort, "The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An interview with Lucio Amelio," 43



approach the world. In his introduction to the Guggenheim retrospective catalogue, Beuys explained his theory of sculpture as it applied to his work:

My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture, or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture **can** be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone:

**Thinking forms** – how we mould our thoughts or

**Spoken forms** – how we shape our thoughts into words or

**SOCIAL SCULPTURE** – how we mould and shape the world in which we live:

**Sculpture as an evolutionary process; everyone an artist.**<sup>76</sup>

Discussion of Beuys's statement on his "social sculpture" often is distilled down to his populist, Warholian-like phrase that everyone is an artist, but like his American Pop colleague and friend, there was always more going on underneath the surface. "Everyone an artist" is an easy sound bite in the making, but underlining Beuys's statement is a call to break down the boundaries between art and life and a profound declaration of the possibilities inherent, specifically, to sculpture. He asserts that sculpture's unique ability to mold, shape, and transform is a paradigm that has applications and significance well beyond the creation of static, autonomous stone or bronze objects.

Like many of his contemporaries in the 1960s, Beuys turned away from traditional modes of sculptural practice, redefining its language by shifting the focus to a profound engagement with unorthodox, often ephemeral, and transformative materials. Beuys became almost synonymous with fat and felt, two materials defined by their

---

<sup>76</sup> Emphasis and structuring is by Beuys. Tisdall and Beuys, *Joseph Beuys*, 6.

amorphousness. This emphasis on materiality was not a “truth to materials” modernist revival or about using materials for novelty or for materials’ sake, but as a way to convey action and process.<sup>77</sup>

Performance and live events were one strategy for infusing work with action, connecting, for example, the work of Beuys, Kaprow, and Klein. Established art historical narratives tell us that the Europeans bastardized Pollock’s accomplishments, taking his “emphasis on the performative dimension of painting as a license to transform the act of production into public spectacle.” On the other hand, American artists wrestling with the Pollock’s legacy “did not focus on the public display of the artist as subject nor did it focus on the public display of action as spectacle, as theater, as substitute for theatricality.”<sup>78</sup>

By the end of the 1960s, many of Beuys’s American contemporaries, like Robert Morris, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson, had also turned to materials, action, and process. They also developed quasi-systems and complicated networks of meaning in their work and partook in varying degrees of ephemeral sculptural events that relied on the creation of a photographic component. They utilized simple, often industrial, materials, and made work that was minimal in its form, horizontally oriented, and site specific or determined. These so-called postminimalist artists, however, lacked any notable accompanying personal mythology or overbearing subjectivity, and were thus celebrated and contextualized as pioneers in the greater discussions of materiality and process.

---

<sup>77</sup> For a fuller account of how materials affected medium, and in particular sculpture, see Potts, “Tactility: The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s,” 282-304.

<sup>78</sup> Buchloh, “Reconsidering Joseph Beuys, Once Again,” 81.

Read only as a self-obsessed, out-of-touch, theatrical charlatan, the lack of comparison between Beuys and his American contemporaries, is justified. Looking at his work through the wider lens of materiality in postwar art, however, the very real differences between artistic temperaments and intentions begin to lose their importance. The interest in materials and process were by no means limited to American artists, something made clear when looking through the participants of the various international exhibitions occurring throughout the end of the 1960s and early 1970s. Beuys's work was largely unknown in the United States until the mid-1970s, and any actual contact with the artist or his art occurred in Europe. Serra, who participated with Beuys in *When Attitudes Become Form*, recalled:

What was interesting for me was that I hadn't seen a lot of the Europeans. I didn't know Beuys's work well and I hadn't seen much work by Long, Kounellis, or Merz. For that reason, the exhibitions [in Bern and Amsterdam in 1969] were an eye-opener. I had met Pino Pascali when I was in Italy on a Fulbright scholarship, but the others I hadn't met. So I spoke to Long, I spoke to Kounellis, I spoke to Merz - I went and stared at Beuys. I was obviously more familiar with the work of Nauman, Eva [Hesse], Ryman and Smithson, but I don't think there was a continental divide. We all shared a common language and sensibility.<sup>79</sup>

Beuys always maintained that he paid little attention to what was going on in the greater art world and saw little affinity between his work and his contemporaries. His recollection of the Bern exhibition was negative, as he thought most of the work on view was derivative in comparison to his own. He stated, "I have been doing these things for a long time, and now I am questioning their value."<sup>80</sup> Though Beuys's rejection or dismissal of exchange and influence is questionable, by 1969, he had well established his process-oriented sculptural practice and use of materials.

---

<sup>79</sup> Richard Serra in conversation with Lucy Steeds, 13 November 2009. In, Rattemeyer, *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969*, 261

<sup>80</sup> Sharp, "An Interview with Joseph Beuys," 46.

While his personal contact with other artists was selective, numerous encounters throughout the 1960s and 1970s helped foster the development of similar approaches. Many American artists received significant support from not only Italian, but also German gallery owners and collectors during this time, and were asked to come to Cologne or Düsseldorf for exhibition-related events.<sup>81</sup> Morris presents one of the more problematic examples of these exchanges concerning Beuys. He was one of the few American artists to have contact with Beuys before the sister exhibitions of 1969 in Amsterdam and Bern. They became acquainted in 1964, when Morris exhibited at the Galerie Schmela and performed *Site*. While there, he visited Beuys's studio, and soon after, coincidentally, or not, began to work with felt.<sup>82</sup>

Each artist used the material to different ends, something the British artist Richard Hamilton remarked on in recalling stumbling upon the two shows on view in the summer of 1968 at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. He stated, "The Morris/Beuys show was an extraordinary conjunction. It revealed blatantly, yet with superficial connections that confused the polarity, the difference between the post-war art of Europe and America....The twinned personalities were bared. The American cool, thoughtful, abstract, minimal. The German white hot, visionary, arcane, multi-referential."<sup>83</sup>

Hamilton's statement reveals its own particular set of perceived divisions and serves as a reminder that formal similarities are sometimes just formal. The exhibitions, publications, and criticism of this period make clear that there was enough palpable historical overlap, conceptual connection, and formal correspondence between artists on

---

<sup>81</sup> Some like Eva Hesse, spent considerable time in Dusseldorf, and certainly would have at least been aware of Beuys's work.

<sup>82</sup> Rosenthal, "Joseph Beuys: Staging Sculpture," 99.

<sup>83</sup> Richard Hamilton, "Joseph Beuys (1921-1986)," *Art Monthly* (March 1986): 10-11.

both sides of the Atlantic to warrant fruitful comparison. Morris, apparently unconcerned with questions of influence, invited Beuys to participate in his *9 at Castelli* exhibition.<sup>84</sup> By the mid-1970s Beuys was featured alongside his American counterparts in a wide variety of publications, including Lucy Lippard's *Six Years* and Gregoire Müller's *The New Avant-Garde*, exhibition catalogues from Kynaston McShine's *Information* to German Celant's *Conceptual art, arte povera, land art*, and art journals like Willoughby Sharp's *Avalanche* and Friedrich Heubach's *Interfunktionen*.

Looking back through the often brief runs of the art periodicals that covered developments and currents in avant-garde practices during this time is illuminating. Artists from Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands are shown side-by-side with artists from the United States and Britain in ways that defy the standard art historical narratives of nationalistic divisions that have come to define the understanding of the period. *Interfunktionen* was particularly apt at making effective textual and visual juxtapositions, publishing extensive, photography-heavy features that not only highlighted these artists in Pollock-like moments of making, but also the crucial role that materiality played in the subsequent work. For example, in its fifth volume, published in November 1970, the first forty-one pages of the issue were devoted to "Kunst als Kontext," and illustrated, among others, the work of Dennis Oppenheim, Robert Smithson, Carl Andre, Jan Dibbets. Forty-two single page photographs, taken by Klopheus of Beuys's action, *Celtic*, dominated the second half of the issue.

---

<sup>84</sup> Sharp, "An Interview with Joseph Beuys," 46. Beuys refused Morris' invitation because he did not think, "it was necessary," a decision that in his interview with Sharp, he possibly regretted. Beuys also stated that he "was a little surprised when Morris started working with felt," but he "couldn't say more."

A similar structure was evident in volume three of *Interfunktionen*, published a year earlier, in 1969, that was dedicated to the new earth art/ land art tendencies, but also featured a long spread of Beuys's *Eurasienstab II (Eurasian Staff II)* action.<sup>85</sup> Here photographs of Beuys in action, in an environment strewn with piles of fat and fat corners are considered in conjunction with photographs of Smithson's *Mirror Trail*, for example, as well as an excerpt from the American artist's text, "A Sedimentation of the Mind." Illustrating Smithson's quote was not a photograph of his own work, but an image showing Yves Klein, sitting cross-legged, next to his sculpture, *Le globe bleu* (**figure 157**). The excerpt makes the claim that for artists of the 1960s, what was to be taken from Pollock was not the drama of his performance, but his profound engagement with materials; something that for Smithson, did not separate European and American artists, but united them. The published excerpt read:

Jackson Pollock's art tends toward a torrential sense of *material* that makes his paintings look like splashes of marine sediments...The rational idea of 'painting' begins to disintegrate and decompose into so many sedimentary concepts. Both Yves Klein and Jean Dubuffet hinted at global or topographic sedimentary notions in their works - both worked with ashes and cinders...It is also clear that Klein's all blue globe is not a map, rather it is an anti-map, a negation of 'creation' and the 'creator' that is supposed to be in the artist's 'self'.<sup>86</sup>

What Smithson saw in this kind of work, whether by Pollock or Klein, was not "form," but a "physical metaphor without realism or naturalism"; that nothing was certain or fixed.<sup>87</sup> Action and materials, process and performance, were not disconnected

---

<sup>85</sup> The first thirty-five pages of the issue were devoted to covering "earth art" and were comprised of short texts and quotes interspersed with large photographic reproductions of various works. Dennis Oppenheim, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Richard Long, Jan Dibbets, and Robert Smithson were the most covered artists. A large portion of the photographs from both issues were taken from the exhibition *Earth Art* at Cornell University in 1969.

<sup>86</sup> This passage is taken from Smithson's essay, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," which was originally published in *Artforum* in September 1968. See *Interfunktionen* 3 (November 1969), 15.

<sup>87</sup> Smithson, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 110.

elements or opposing forces, but tools that were now available to the artist. Even after Beuys's pieces were "completed," the material of the work allowed process to alter the physical constitution of a given work; undergoing continual chemical reactions, fermentation, changes in color, decomposition, corrosion, and desiccation. For Beuys, everything was in a "state of change," and both the piece of fat piece in the corner featured in his action *The Chief* and the artist himself was a "transmitter." He stated, "Both are sculptural elements. That is a very important concept for me. If I produce something, I transmit a message to someone else....Here is the borderline between physics and metaphysics: this is it what interests me about this theory of sculpture."<sup>88</sup>

Beuys infused his work with meaning through a select group of core materials: copper and other metals, fat, honey, and felt. These were selected, like Smithson's asphalt or Serra's molten lead, for their ability to convey, conduct, or contain energy and action. They were not only malleable during the act of creation, but also imbued an unfinished and unfixed quality into work. This approach to materiality, however, was dialectical, simultaneously extolling its virtues and denying its essential tactility. As Alex Potts writes, works by Beuys, or his contemporaries like Hesse or Kounellis whose practices remained anchored in a "hands-on interaction with substances and their tactile and other material properties," "are paradoxical entities, because they seem to offer themselves up directly to the viewer in their physical immediacy. At the same time the viewer is made very pointedly aware that any feelings or ideas that may be conjured up by these

---

<sup>88</sup> Tisdall and Beuys, *Joseph Beuys*, 6; Sharp, "An Interview with Joseph Beuys," 42.

agglomerations of material are not themselves palpable or visible properties of the work.”<sup>89</sup>

Materiality is omnipresent in every aspect of the work, and on almost every level, equally denied. Beuys placed tremendous importance on process and indeterminacy, on the material and temporal aspects of his work, and yet, in *Arena* this is at one level effectively precluded as the works are frozen in a photograph or encased behind heavy glass. Indeed, the work’s grimy, all-over grey patina, ponderous mausoleum-like frames, rusted metal bolts, and static images, can easily suggest an anomalous tomb, forever preserving the past moments of Beuys’s achievements, rather than a dynamic, process-oriented sculpture.<sup>90</sup> His choice to feature photography, a medium that by its very nature stands “at one remove from the physical world but also irrevocably fixes the transformational flow of time,” seems even more counterintuitive and incongruous.<sup>91</sup> Even so, *Arena* continues to convey a fluid dynamism; an immense and pervasive tactility expressed through the denied or absent immediacy of the materials shown in the photographs.

The globs of fat or thick stacks of felt that populate the photographs of *Arena* are ungraspable, but they function within the work as both powerful vestiges of process and reminders of its ongoing, if subtle, presence in the work. With their cropped, blurred, or treated surfaces, Beuys prevented the photographs from providing a complete picture of the works and actions they depict, but infused process into the physical prints by treating

---

<sup>89</sup> Potts, “Tactility: The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s,” 300.

<sup>90</sup> Kort, “Joseph Beuys's *Arena*: The Way In,” 20. This reading of *Arena* also lends itself quite well to a biographically minded interpretation of the work. Kort, for example, after pointing to the memorial-like qualities of the work, states, “These encasements are like memorial caskets enshrining and perpetuating the delicate larvae of Beuys's achievement.”

<sup>91</sup> Phillips, “*Arena*: The Chaos of the Unnamed,” 53.



them with the same substances they depict, creating an endless circle of present and represented materials. The ubiquitous snippets of fat, felt, and metal in various states of transformation shown in the photographs merge with the grey metal frames, the wax and fat coated sculptural stacks, and the fat and brown paint slowly altering the chemically treated paper. Regardless of when or why it was created, photographs of *Kreuz mit Kniescheibe und Hasenschädel* (*Cross with Kneecap and Hare's Skull*) (1961), a detail from *Sibirische Symphonie* (*Siberian Symphony*) (1963), *Irish cross/Birth signs* (1951), and a detail from *EURASIENSTAB* (*EURASIAN STAFF*) (1968) (**figure 158**), for example, fit together as a cohesive group.

Beuys's self-imposed group of select materials and limited tonal palette, Klopheus's aesthetic style permeating the work, and the photographs' erratic arrangement on the mattes, collectively strip the images of any "evidence of their historicity by endowing them with a kind of objecthood that has clear affinity with his sculpture."<sup>92</sup> Untethered from their historical specificity, the subjects depicted in the photographs refuse to reveal their where or when, and as a result, animate the work with a dynamic present. The photographs of *Arena* do not "irrevocably fix the transformational flow of time" as much as they transform sculpture's temporality altogether. In their multiplicity, in the connectivity created by the dialogue between the various elements, Beuys ensured that *Arena* would remain open-ended, a "constellation of energies" that are ephemeral in

---

<sup>92</sup> Green and Lowry, "Splitting the Index: Time, Object, and Photography in the Work of Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein," 158.

their material constitution but remain forever in motion, animated by the viewer who sees something beyond the formal qualities inherent in a standard photographic print.<sup>93</sup>

### **Sculpture as Multiple**

By 1972, the landscape of art world had changed. The debates, issues, and concerns of medium specificity and the possibilities of a materially based practice that dominated the postwar period were soon to be drowned in a groundswell of multimedia practices, institutional critique, and identity politics. Beuys's career spanned this crucial transitional moment, and more than many of his contemporaries', his practice was easily convertible into the quickly emerging artistic currency of postmodernism. He was as much, if not more, of a postmodern artist as a modern one, a showman in shaman's robes, or in this case a hunting vest and felt hat.

Regardless of his position as the "last gasp of the old avant-garde idealism," or the "first manipulator of the new, that is, post-avant-garde machine," Beuys was always hyper-aware of presentation and display as it related to both his work and his public persona; an attribute that would become compulsory for the postmodernist art stars of the late twentieth century.<sup>94</sup> He may have professed ambivalence towards photography, but he was one of its most avid users, amassing thousands of images that he deployed with an impressive sophistication and effectiveness. In integrating photography into the physical structure of the work, Beuys manipulated the possibilities of photography. While, at first glance, it seems anomalous within his oeuvre, as he never before and never again use

---

<sup>93</sup> "Constellation of energies" was a phrase used by Beuys, as quoted in Phillips, "Arena: The Chaos of the Unnamed," 53.

<sup>94</sup> Donald Kuspit, "Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman," in *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, ed. David Thistlewood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995), 34.

photographs in this way, *Arena* was but one manifestation of Beuys's desire to disseminate his artistic ideas through photography.

Beuys distributed photographs of his work through established channels like publications, press, and announcements, but he also made the act of diffusion a central component of his artistic practice. The photographs of *Arena* can be understood then in a similar context as Beuys's multiples, many of which took the form of photographs themselves and were material objects dispersed into the world that served as, "an amazingly sustained outpouring of energy toward the contemplation of his self-assigned communication project."<sup>95</sup> The attraction to photography and Beuys's seeming lack of concern for the primacy of the "authentic original," is evident in a statement he gave about his multiples:

But actually, it's more important to speak of distribution, of reaching a larger number of people... You can look at it from a number of different aspects. -Why is anyone interested in distributing a thing as widely as possible?

The whole thing is a game, one which, with the help of this kind of information, counts on casting the anchor of a vehicle somewhere close by, so that people can later think back on it. It's a sort of prop for the memory, yes, a sort of prop in case something different happens in the future....

I'm interested in the distribution of physical vehicles in the form of editions because I'm interested in spreading ideas.<sup>96</sup>

*Arena* is not a proper "multiple," but it is comprised of multiple components that function in a very similar fashion, through its various constitutions and configurations, as a physical vehicle conveying Beuys's ideas. In part, sculpture's relationship to photography has always been about presentation and communication; the means by

---

<sup>95</sup> Joan Rothfuss, "Circulation Time," in *Joseph Beuys, The Multiples: Catalogue raisonné of multiples and prints*, ed. Jörg Schellmann (New York: Edition Schellmann, 1997), 522.

<sup>96</sup> Joseph Beuys, Bernd Klüser, and Jörg Schellmann, "Questions to Joseph Beuys (1977)," in *Modern Sculpture Reader*, ed. Jon Wood, David Hulks, and Alex Potts (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2007), 317.

which a temporary installation in a specific space or site, the presence of an artist engaging with material, or a transient realization of physical forms has been dispersed and disseminated into the world. Beuys, and his contemporaries in the 1960s who sustained a sculptural practice defined by a committed investigation of the possibilities of material and embraced, often, ephemeral actions and process, had no choice but to turn to photography.

### **Coda**

*Arena* and the other projects discussed in the previous chapters were facilitated through a progressive if tenuous network of patronage, prevalent in Italy during the 1960s and early 1970s. Combined with the photographic components these works generated, the form of each further reflects the impact of this geographic and historical context. The *Voltri* remain in the teatro in Spoleto in the summer of 1962. The mirrored orbs of *Narcissus Garden* endlessly reflect the XXXIII Venice Biennale of 1966. The oozing black matter of *Asphalt Rundown* is forever inextricable from its Roman quarry in the fall of 1969, and the Verona amphitheater occupying one of *Arena*'s aluminum frames recalls its various manifestations throughout the Italian peninsula in 1972.

It is tempting to see the sculptural experiments of the late postwar period – whether Beuys's fusion of photography's immutability with sculpture's transmutability, Smithson's dialectical turn with materials in action, Kusama's creation of a dynamic environment, or Smith's foray into group sculpture installation – as precursors to the large-scale, site-specific, and multipart installations that have flourished in contemporary art. Indeed many of the characteristics of sculptural practice that emerged in the 1960s,

from a new model of artist as art director to working outside the space of the studio, have become so widely embedded that they now seem almost cliché. Broadly speaking, the shift in sculpture away from the insular or autonomous object that has come to dominate the medium in the second half of the twentieth-century did fully emerge during the 1960s, but as Alex Potts suggests, the installation art of today “is locked into a very different economy of image and object. It usually offers up a freely disposed hybrid spectacle where the materiality of the media used is infused with obvious metaphoric resonances, or presents itself merely as transparent to the symbolic meaning of the images it configures.”<sup>97</sup>

The four projects examined here did alter the specifics of display and inaugurated new approaches to sculpture, but unlike more contemporary examples, the *Voltri*, *Narcissus Garden*, *Asphalt Rundown*, and *Arena* never renounced their material aspects. Smith, Kusama, Smithson, and Beuys remained profoundly committed to engaging physical phenomena, to exploring the ability of materials to convey meaning. The integration of photography into their sculptural practice did not signal an eradication or dematerialization of the art object but more interestingly, transformed its material parameters. Thus, the “economy of image and object” these projects offer is not one of spectacular hybridity but of complex, irresolvable ambiguity created by the tension between both registers functioning within a single work.

The ways by which the four artists engaged in this intermedial practice are as diverse as the works they created, and reflect the changes that occurred broadly within vanguard art over the ten years between Smith’s steel *Voltri* in 1962 and the materially

---

<sup>97</sup> Potts, “Tactility: The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s,” 300.

photographic *Arena* in 1972. In both ideology and actual practice, this ten-year period remains one of the more radical in the history of twentieth-century art, but its somewhat utopian spirit was fleeting, and marks more of a closure of Modernism or an endpoint of this kind of international vanguard tendency, than an inauguration of contemporary artistic practices. Debuting in 1972, the year that Arte Povera dissolved and that Lippard and so many others have come to see as the end of this experimental explosion, *Arena* is perhaps the fullest expression, an inadvertent zenith, of postwar explorations into the possibilities of sculpture in what, in retrospect, has emerged as a predominantly photographic moment.

*Arena* built upon the minimalist vocabulary that opened the 1960s, using the repetition of identical, simple geometric forms in its construction, but Beuys also integrated photographs into the literal material structure of the work. He achieved this through very non-minimalist means, emphasizing the messiness and action of the materials represented through its photographic components, and pushing the incorporation of photography into sculptural practice about as far as it could possibly go. The photographs become pure sculptural matter but never fully relinquish their function as images, as conveyors of visual information. In its culmination, *Arena* exposes what all of these projects reveal to varying degree; that in this moment of experimentation, photography becomes sculpture's "other half," its invisible arena of dissemination and dispersion, reminding the viewer of the distance between the materiality suggested and the physical reality presented.

## Figures



Figure 1. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, October 1969. Cava di selce, near Rome, Italy, dimensions variable. Photograph by Robert Smithson.



Figure 2. Installation view of the exhibition, *The Family of Man*, 24 January 1955. 8 May 1955, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photographic Archive, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.



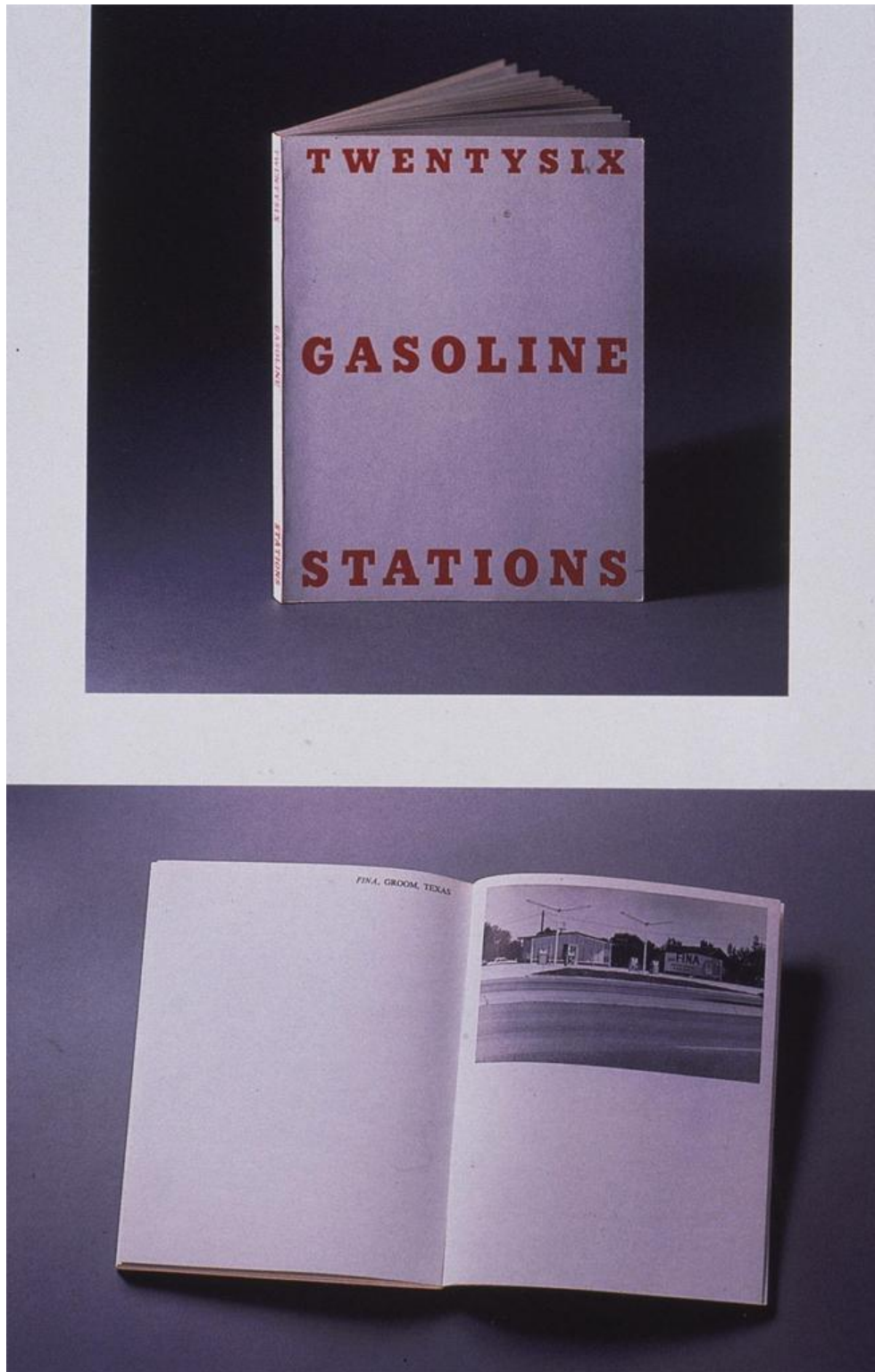


Figure 3. Ed Ruscha, *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* 1963. 48-page book, 26 photographic illustrations, 7 1/16 x 5 1/2 x 3/16 in. (17.9 x 14 x 0.5 cm) closed.



Figure 4. Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Oggetti in meno (Minus Objects)*, 1965/66. Installed at the artist's studio in Turin, 1966, dimensions variable. Photograph by Paolo Bressano.

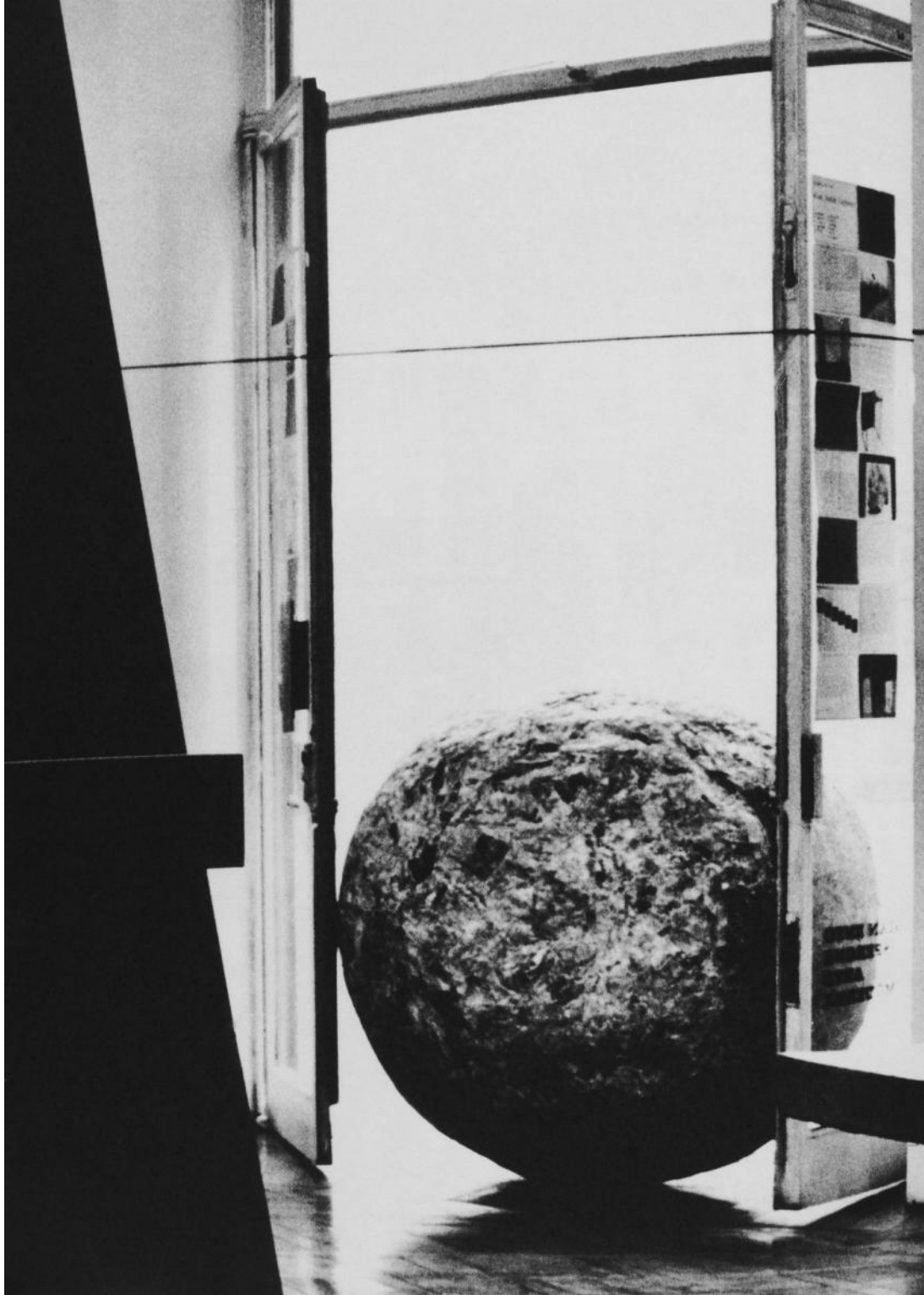


Figure 5. Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Palla di giornali (Ogetti in meno) (Ball of newspapers [Minus objects])*, 1966. Pressed newspaper, dimensions variable. Installation at Galleria Sperone, Turin in 1967.



Figure 6. Ugo Nespolo, *Buongiorno Michelangelo*, 1967. Film stills.



Figure 7. Michelangelo Pistoletto, *Mappamondo (World Map/ Globe)*, 1966-68.  
Newspaper and iron, approx. 71 in. (180 cm). Collection of Lia Rumma.



Figure 8. David Smith, *Voltri III. XXII*, 1962. Installation view in Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 9. Beverly Pepper working at Italsider di Piombino, 1962.  
Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 10. Eugenio Carmi working at Italsider di Cornigliano, 1962.  
Photograph by Ugo Mulas.





Figure 11. David Smith with workers at Italsider di Voltri, 1962.  
Photograph by David Smith.



Figure 12. David Smith outside Italsider di Voltri, 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 13. David Smith working at Italsider di Voltri, 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 14. David Smith working at Italsider di Voltri, 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 15. David Smith holding metal pieces at Voltri, 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.

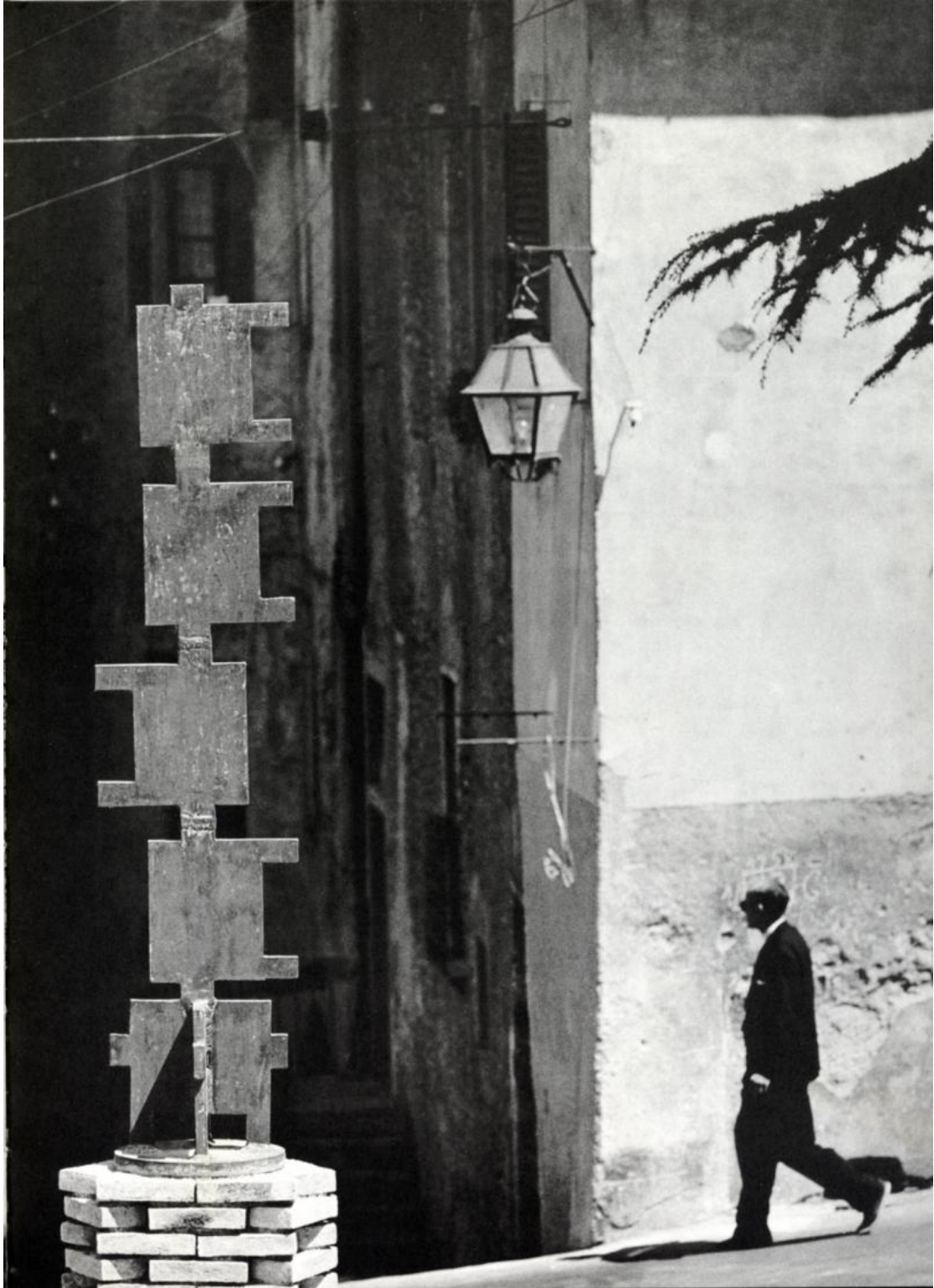


Figure 16. David Smith, *Voltri I*, 1962. Steel, installed in the Piazza Campello, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 17. David Smith, *Voltri XVIII*, 1962. Steel, 1.07 x 1.01 x 0.83 meters, installed in the Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.

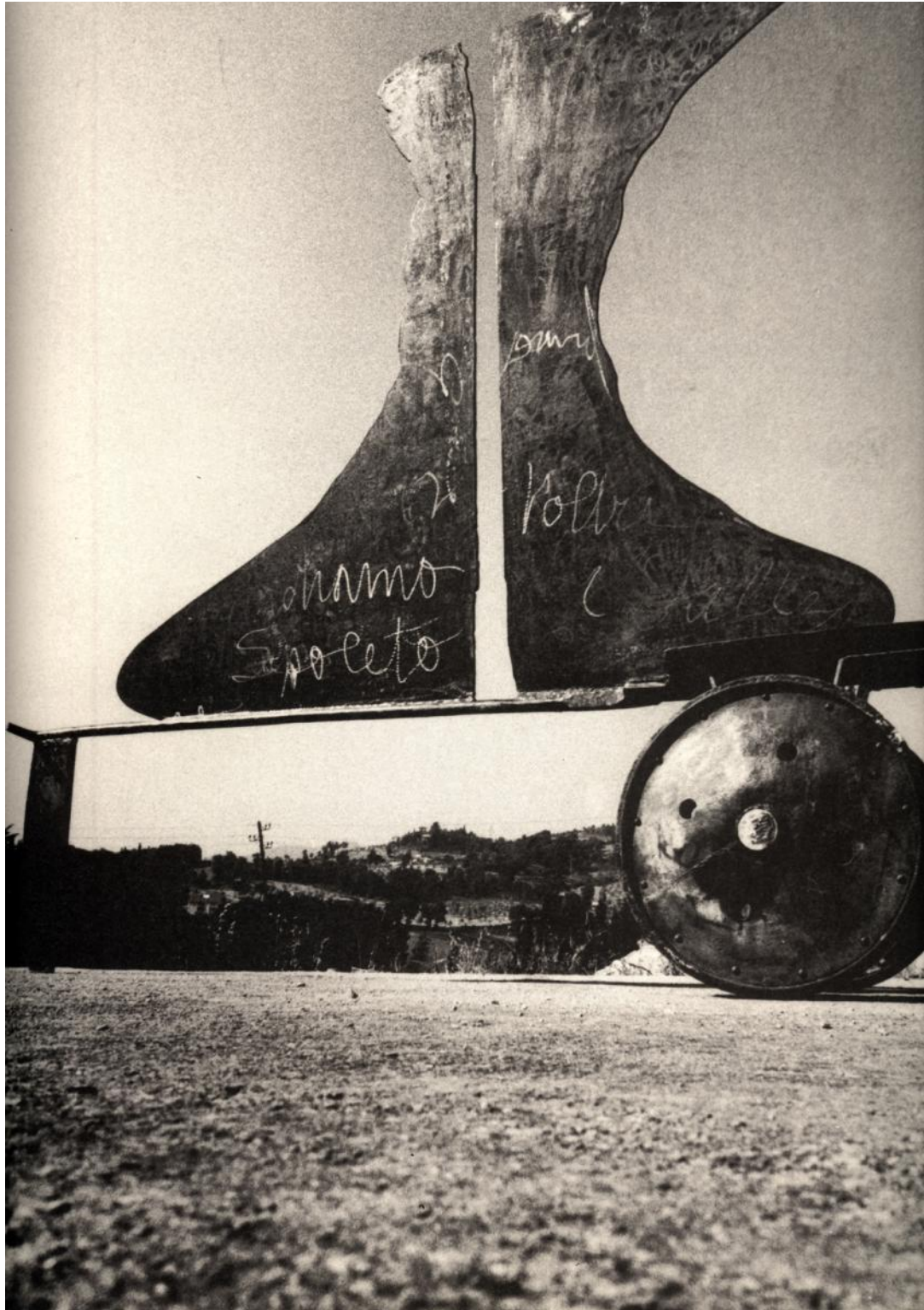


Figure 18. David Smith, *Volti VI*, 1962. Steel, 2.48 x 2.62 x 0.64 meters. Collection of Patsy and Raymond D. Nasher, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas.  
Photograph by Ugo Mulas.





Figure 19. Alberto Giacometti, *The Chariot*, 1950. Painted bronze on wood base, 57 x 26 x 26 1/8" (144.8 x 65.8 x 66.2 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York.

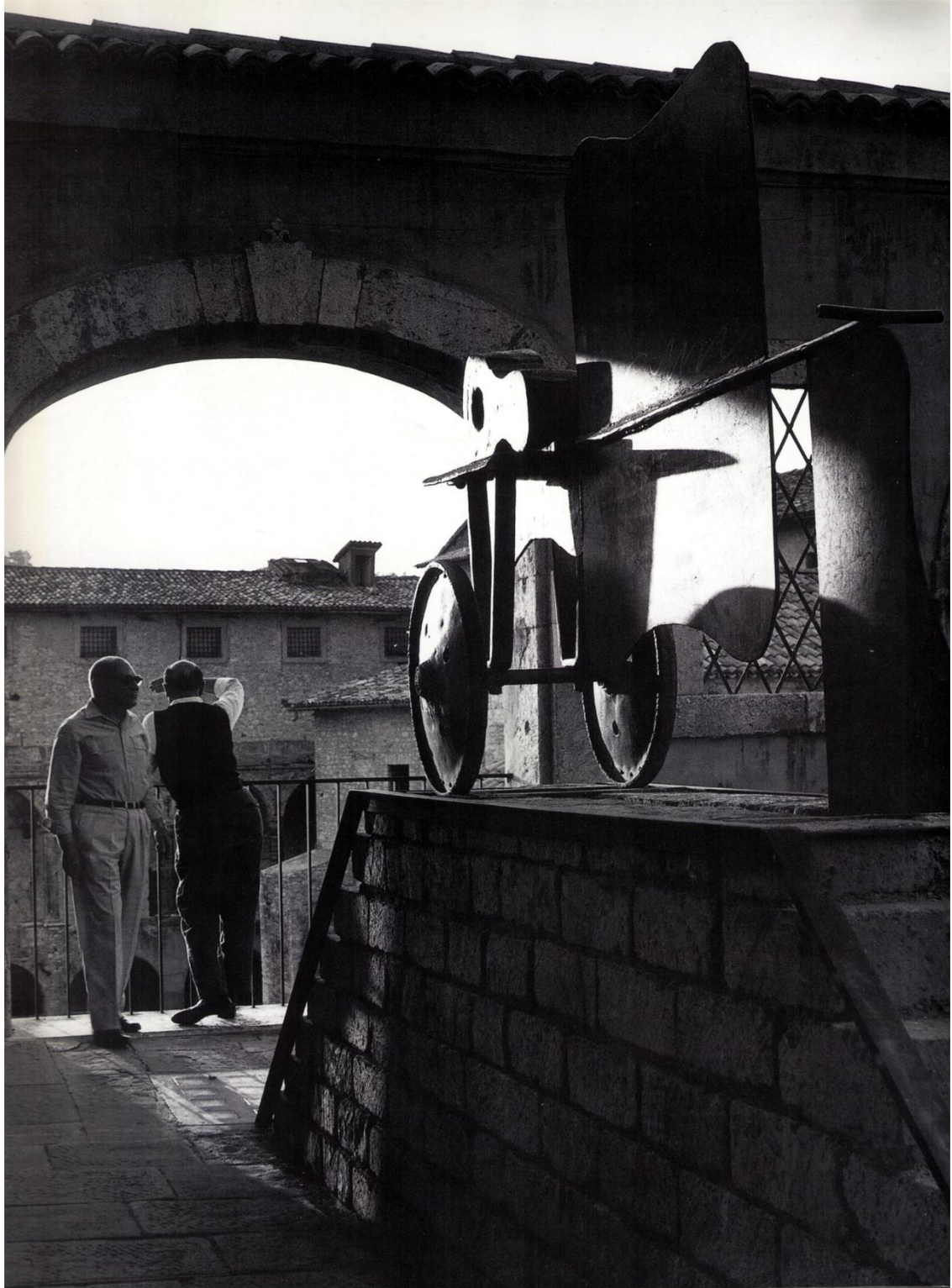


Figure 20. David Smith, *Voltri XIII*, 1962. Steel, 1.62 x 2.63 x 0.66 meters, installed in the Piazza della Libertà, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.

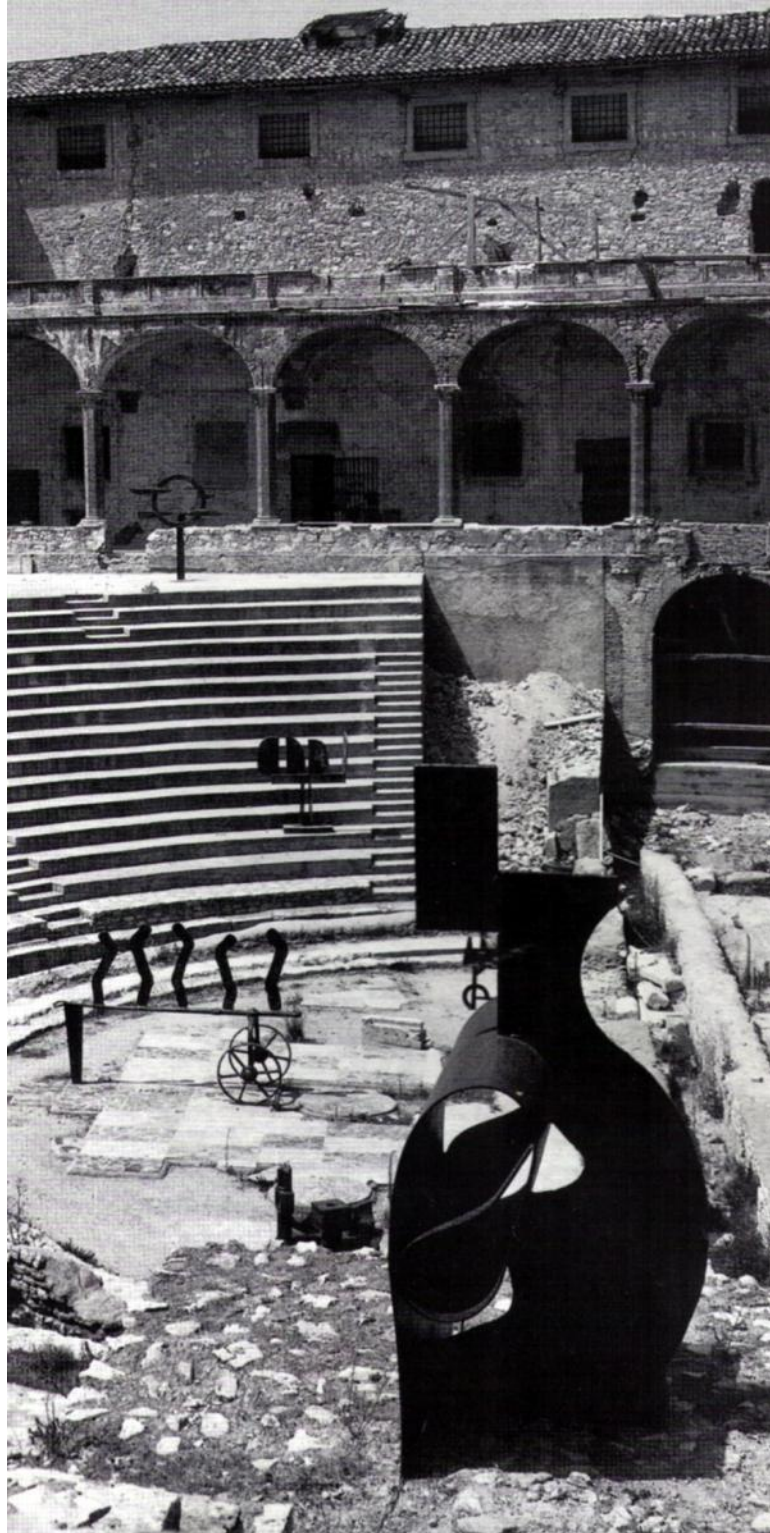


Figure 21. David Smith, *Voltri VIII*, 1962. Steel, 2.01 x 1.33 x 0.85 meters, installed in the Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 22. Henry Moore, *Reclining Figure*, 1957. Bronze, 2.28 x 2.40 x 1.14 meters, installed in the Piazza del Duomo, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.

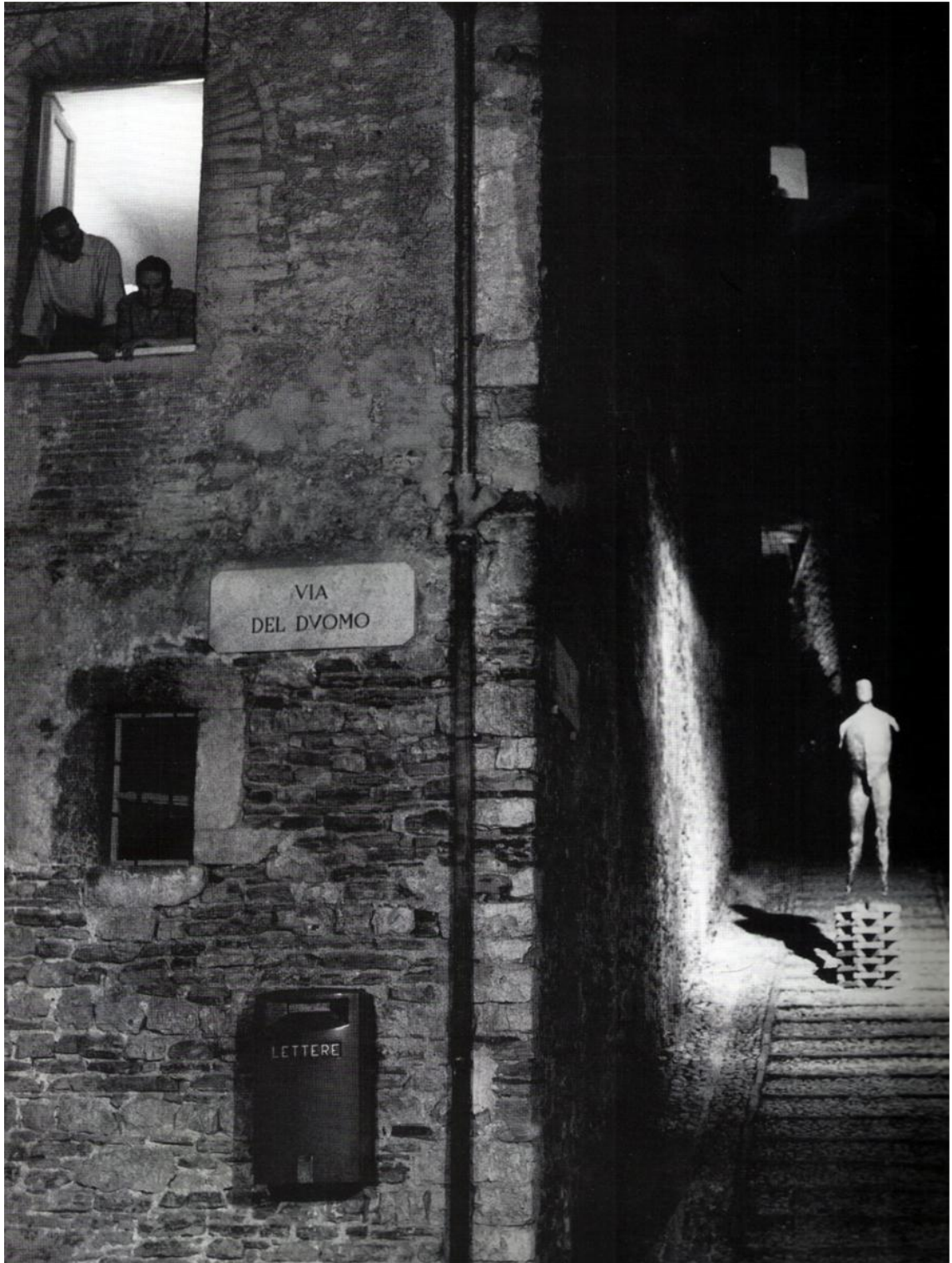


Figure 23. Augusto Perez, *Il Re*, 1959. Bronze, 1.96 meters high, installed on the Via dello Spagna, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 24. Giacomo Manzù, *La grande chiave*, 1959. Bronze, 2.24 x 0.91 meters, installed in front of the Chiesa di San Filippo, Piazza Mentana, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 25. Henry Moore, *Glenkiln Cross*, 1955-56. Bronze, 3.36 x 0.79 x 1.00 meters, installed Giro della Rocca, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 26. Lucio Fontana, *Virginia*, 1961. Polished bronze, 0.35 x 0.27 meters, installed in the Piazza Pietro Fontana, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.





Figure 27. Ettore Colla, *La Grande Spirale*, 1962. Steel, 12 meters high, installed on the Viale G. Matteotti, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 28. Beverly Pepper, *Leda*, 1962. Iron and steel, installed on the Via Filitteria, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 29. David Smith, *Voltri II*, 1962. Steel, installed on the Viale G. Matteotti, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 30. David Smith, *Cubi IX*, 1961. Steel, 105.75 x 58.625 x 43.875 inches, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Shown installed in the Piazza G. Garibaldi, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 31. Alexander Calder, *Teodelapio*, 1962. Steel, 20 x 14 x 14 meters, installed in the Piazza G. Polvani. Stazione FS, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.

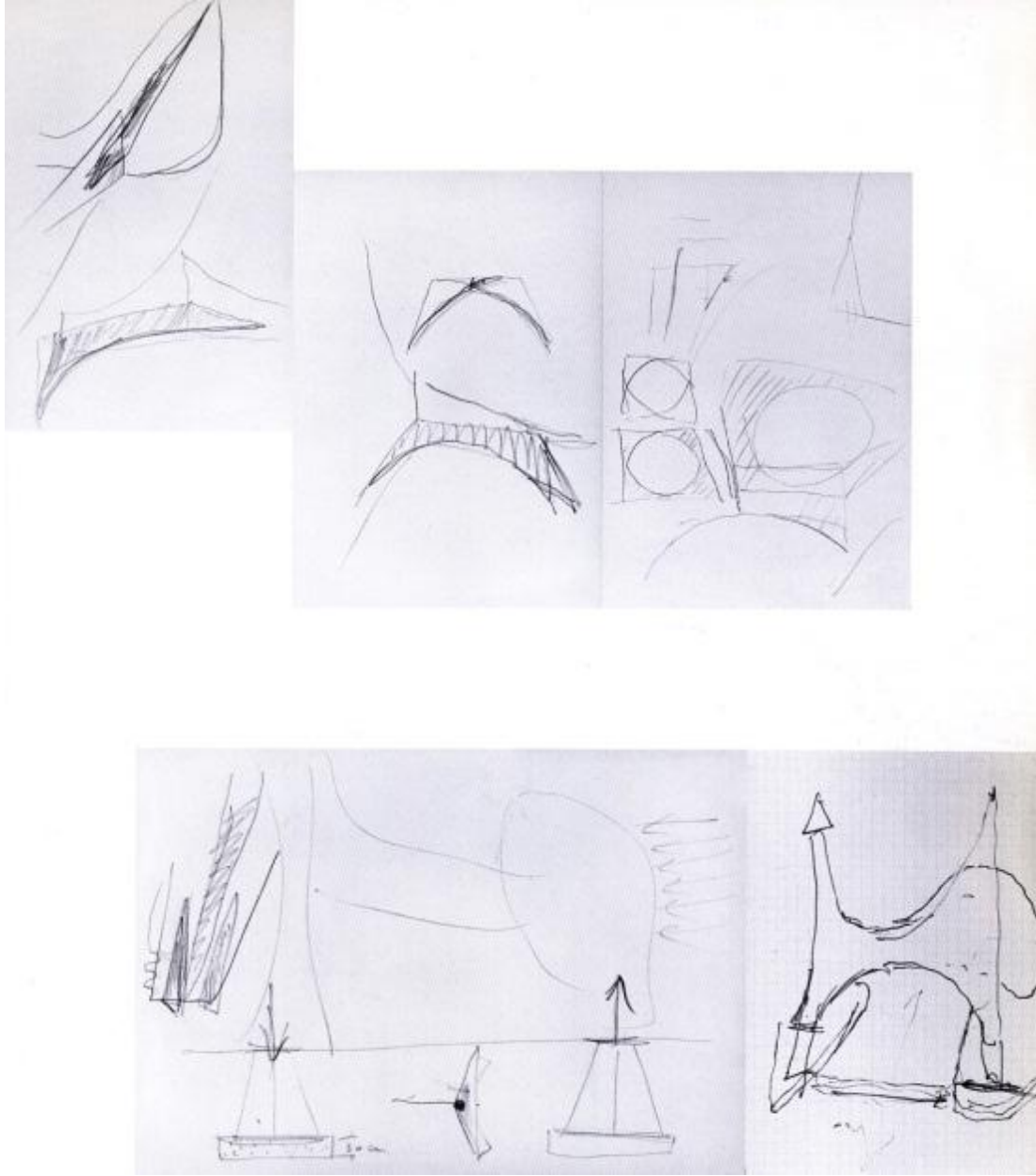


Figure 32. Alexander Calder, Preliminary sketches for *Teodelapio*, 1962.



Figure 33. Spoleto municipal bus ticket, 2010.



Figure 34. Exhibition sign for *Sculture nella città*, 1962. Installed behind Calder's *Teodelapio* in the Piazza G. Polvani. Stazione FS, Spoleto, Italy.



# COMUNE DI SPOLETO

## Cittadini,

Le "SCULTURE NELLA CITTÀ," che arricchiranno di una nota di particolare interesse il "Quinto Festival dei Due Mondi," stanno affluendo in questi giorni nella nostra Città da Musei, Gallerie e collezioni pubbliche e private di ogni parte del mondo, oltre che dagli studi degli Scultori più rinomati di ogni Nazione.

Le sculture saranno temporaneamente sistemate nelle vie e piazze, in modo da creare un singolare ornamento alla nostra Città.

È la prima volta che si attua un tentativo del genere, di porre, cioè, a confronto le architetture antiche e le sculture moderne e di far vivere queste ultime nei luoghi stessi nei quali si svolge la nostra vita di ogni giorno.

Le opere scelte rappresentano le varie tendenze della Scultura attuale: esse sono l'espressione degli Artisti che cercano di riflettere nella loro creazione le ansie e le alternative della nostra epoca. Molte di esse rivelano una audace connessione con il progresso della tecnica, mentre altre manifestano l'antica e umanistica concezione dell'uomo, misura dell'universo.

La comprensione di queste sculture potrebbe sembrare a molti privilegio esclusivo degli intenditori. In realtà, il godimento dell'opera d'arte, antica e moderna, è patrimonio comune di tutti gli uomini, maggiore o minore che sia il grado di suggestione che l'opera d'arte esercita su di noi.

Per una breve stagione, l'intera nostra Città sarà trasformata in un grande Museo d'arte moderna, al quale si potrà accedere senza il biglietto d'ingresso; e senza che vi siano guardiani a custodirlo.

Le opere esposte, che costituiscono un patrimonio di valore inestimabile, sono tutte affidate al nostro civico senso di responsabilità; ciascuno di noi dovrà sentirsi impegnato a garantirne la sicurezza e partecipe del grande sforzo che è stato compiuto e che è stato reso possibile dal contributo di Governi, Enti, Industrie e privati.

L'antica tradizione d'arte che ha reso illustre nei secoli la nostra Città ci dà la garanzia di questo nostro impegno e di questa nostra comune responsabilità.

Del Palazzo Comunale, 22 maggio 1962

LA GIUNTA MUNICIPALE

Figure 35. Letter from Giovanni Toscano, Mayor of Spoleto, to the citizens of the city, 22 May 1962.

# the SPOLETO EXPERIMENT

by David Sylvester

...in addition, Cavendish wanted to have sculptures created specially for the show. He persuaded Italian, the State-controlled, model, owners, to provide...  
 ...the most beautiful building I have...  
 ...the traditional settings for modern sculpture have, of course, been architectural...  
 ...I had come with drawings but abandoned them seeing the opportunity of found pieces—domestic machines...  
 ...And I think it was who was the star of the recent open-air exhibition of modern sculpture in Spoleto in the Umbrian hills. The background here was neither public park nor modern architecture but medieval buildings and Roman ruins. The exhibition, staged by Professor Giovanni Cavendish of the Italian Ministry of Fine Arts, was part of this year's music and drama festival in the town which has been organized at Spoleto by Gian-Carlo Menotti. Works were borrowed from such masters as Pagan, Giacometti, Moore.

...in addition, Cavendish wanted to have sculptures created specially for the show. He persuaded Italian, the State-controlled, model, owners, to provide...  
 ...the most beautiful building I have...  
 ...the traditional settings for modern sculpture have, of course, been architectural...  
 ...I had come with drawings but abandoned them seeing the opportunity of found pieces—domestic machines...  
 ...And I think it was who was the star of the recent open-air exhibition of modern sculpture in Spoleto in the Umbrian hills. The background here was neither public park nor modern architecture but medieval buildings and Roman ruins. The exhibition, staged by Professor Giovanni Cavendish of the Italian Ministry of Fine Arts, was part of this year's music and drama festival in the town which has been organized at Spoleto by Gian-Carlo Menotti. Works were borrowed from such masters as Pagan, Giacometti, Moore.

...in addition, Cavendish wanted to have sculptures created specially for the show. He persuaded Italian, the State-controlled, model, owners, to provide...  
 ...the most beautiful building I have...  
 ...the traditional settings for modern sculpture have, of course, been architectural...  
 ...I had come with drawings but abandoned them seeing the opportunity of found pieces—domestic machines...  
 ...And I think it was who was the star of the recent open-air exhibition of modern sculpture in Spoleto in the Umbrian hills. The background here was neither public park nor modern architecture but medieval buildings and Roman ruins. The exhibition, staged by Professor Giovanni Cavendish of the Italian Ministry of Fine Arts, was part of this year's music and drama festival in the town which has been organized at Spoleto by Gian-Carlo Menotti. Works were borrowed from such masters as Pagan, Giacometti, Moore.

# THE SUNDAY TIMES COLOUR SECTION 9th December 1962



Left: In a quiet courtyard in Spoleto, Italy, Cavendish stands with his sculpture. Right: One of the Cavendish sculptures, with ancient Greek forms.



A surprising modernistic form near the medieval town, that by the Italian sculptor Marino Marini, at the risk in The World, is a unique sculpture...  
 Photographed for LIFE by CARLO BAVAGNOLI

# LIFE INTERNATIONAL

Figure 36. Press clippings from *The Sunday Times* and *Life* on *Scultura nella Città*, 1962.



Figure 37. Lynn Chadwick, *Stranger III*, 1959. Bronze, installed on the Via del Duomo, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.

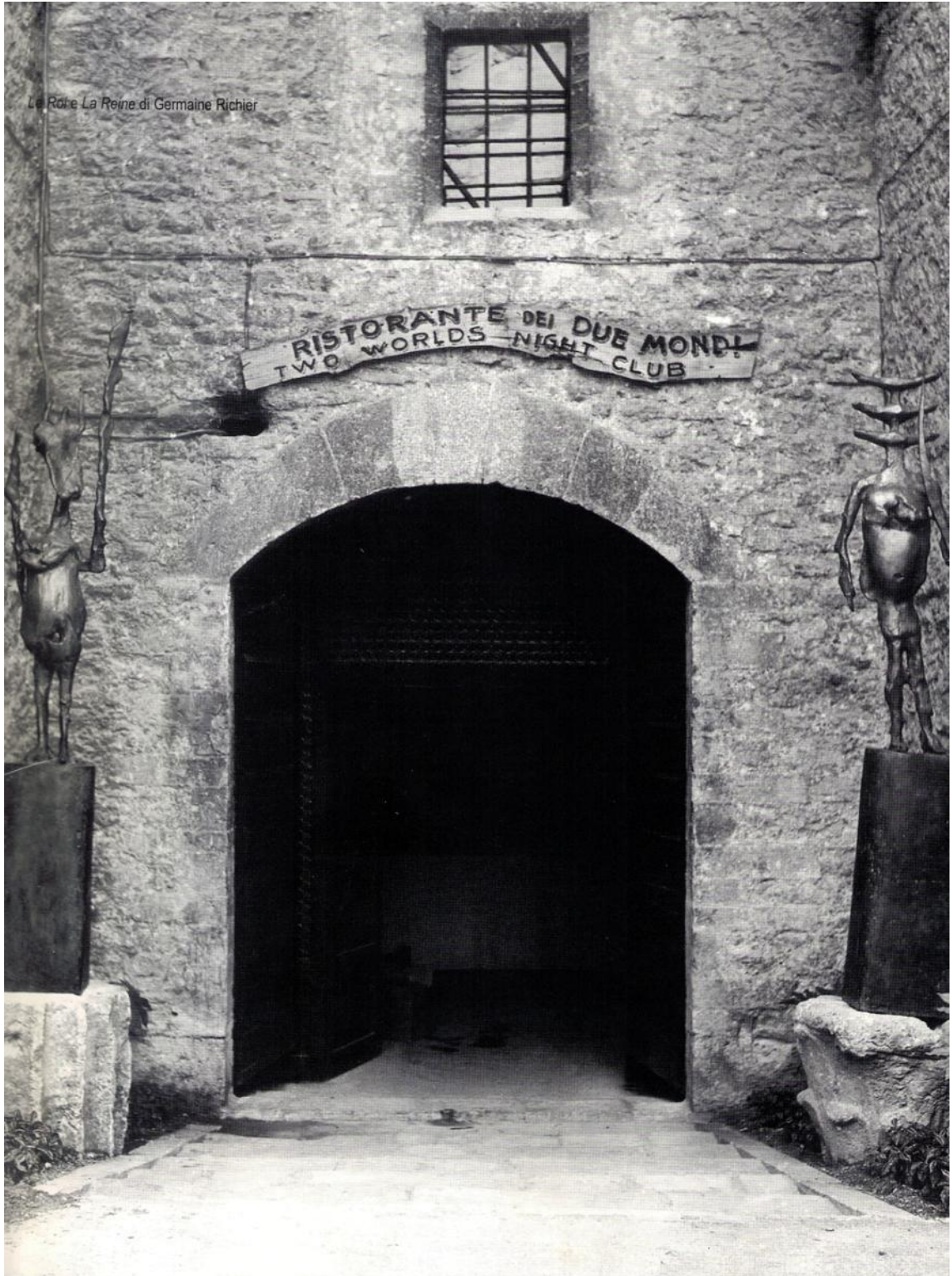


Figure 38. Germaine Richier, *Le Roi* and *Le Reine*, 1962. Bronze, installed in the Piazza della Signoria, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 39. Alexander Calder, *Le Veuve Noire* (*The Black Widow*), 1959. Steel, 2.25 x 4.40 meters, installed in the Piazza San Domenico, Spoleto, Italy, in 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 40. Hans (Jean) Arp, *Apparat d'une danse*, 1962. Bronze, 1.77 x 1.09 x 0.16 meters, installed on the Via dell'Arringo (Piazza del Duomo), Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 41. Marino Marini, *Cavallo e Cavaliere (Horse and Rider)*, 1957-57. Bronze, 2.45 x 1.64 x 1.2 meters, installed in the Piazza della Libertà, Spoleto, Italy, in 1962.

Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 42. David Smith, *Volti VI*, 1962. Steel, 2.48 x 2.62 x 0.64 meters, installed in the Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy. Collection of Patsy and Raymond D. Nasher, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.





Figure 43. David Smith, *Voltri VII*, 1962. Steel, 2.12 x 3.11 x 1.12 meters, installed in the Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 44. David Smith, *Voltri X*, 1962. Steel, 1.64 x 0.87 x 0.30 meters, installed in the Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.

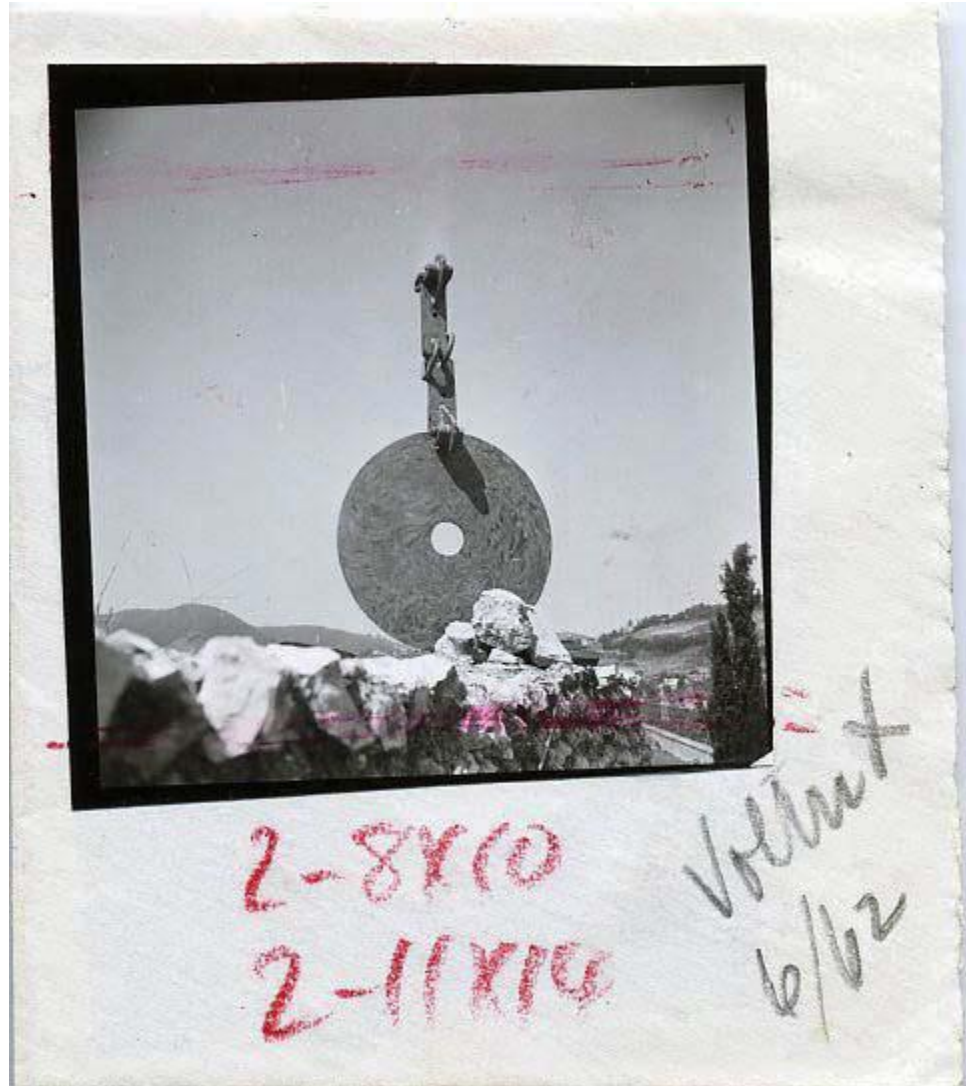


Figure 45. David Smith, photographic proof of *Voltri X*, 1962. Courtesy of the Estate of David Smith, New York.



Figure 46. David Smith, *Voltri X*, 1962. Photograph by David Smith. Courtesy of the Estate of David Smith, New York.

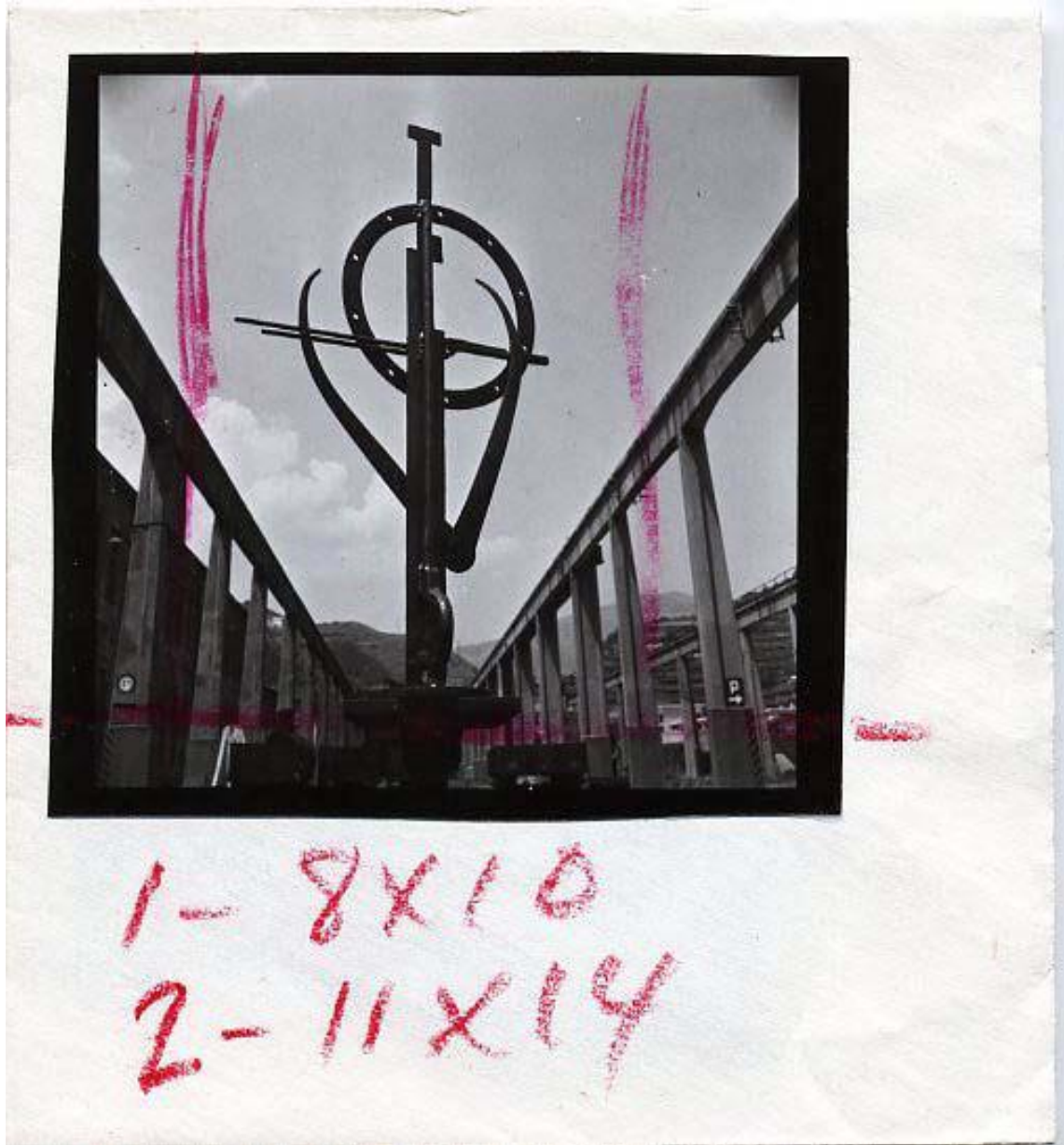


Figure 47. David Smith, photographic proof of *Compass Circle (Voltri)*, 1962. Courtesy of the Estate of David Smith, New York.



Figure 48. David Smith, *Compass Circle (Voltri)*, 1962. Photograph by David Smith.  
Courtesy of the Estate of David Smith, New York.



Figure 49. Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy, 2010.

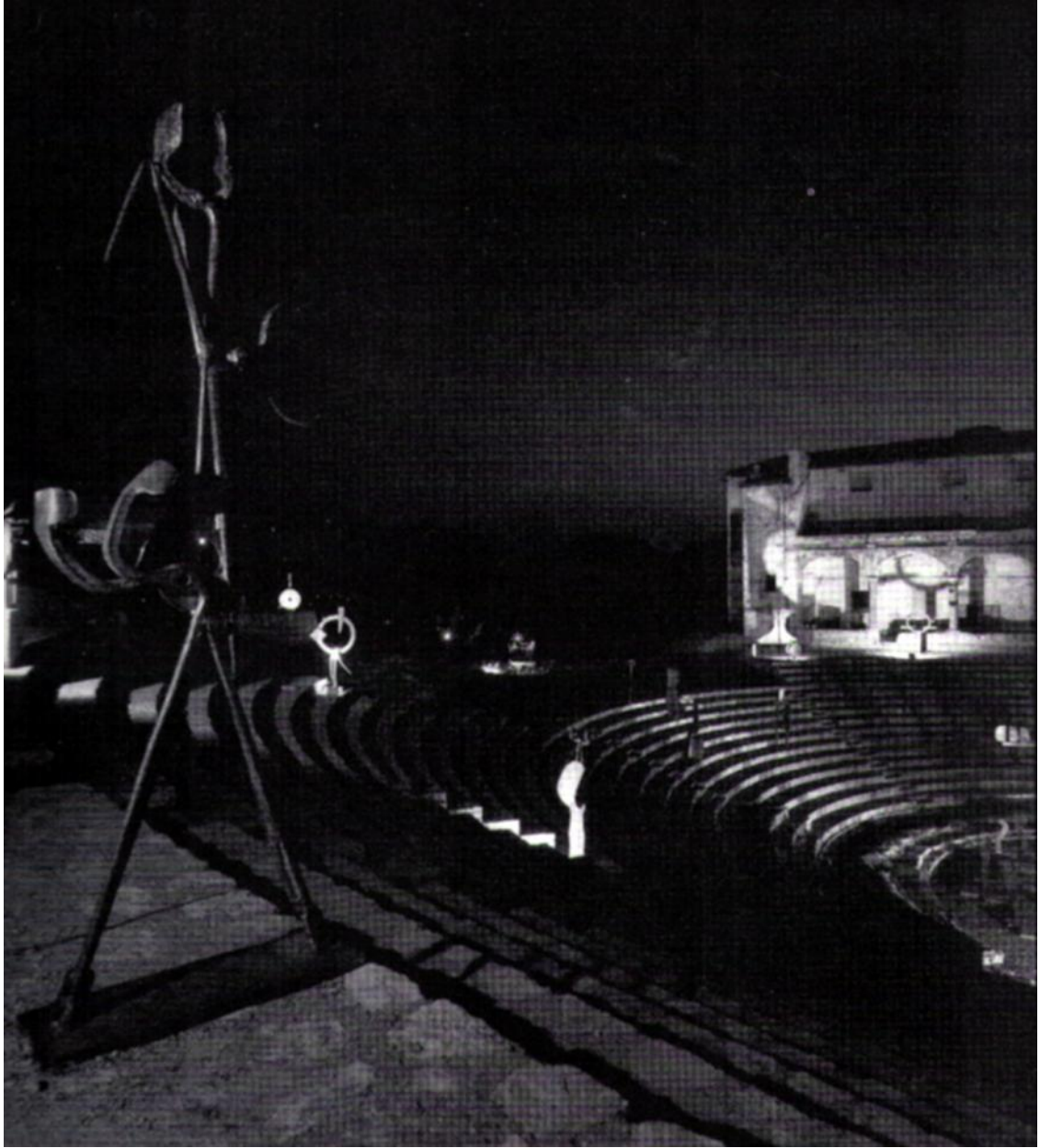


Figure 50. Nighttime installation view of David Smith's *Voltri* installed in the Teatro Romano, Spoleto, Italy in 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.





Figure 51. Lynn Chadwick, *Stanger III*, 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 52. Present day (2010) installation view of Lynn Chadwick's *Stranger III*, 1962, Spoleto, Italy.



Figure 53. Alexander Calder, *Teodelapio*, 1962. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 54. Present day (2010) installation view of Alexander Calder's *Teodelapio*, 1962, Spoleto, Italy.



Figure 55. Yayoi Kusama in front of *Narcissus Garden*, 1966. Fifteen-hundred silver plastic orbs, dimensions variable (each ball 7 7/8 in., 20 cm dia.). Installed at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.



Figure 56. Yayoi Kusama, *Narcissus Garden*, 1966. Installation view at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.



Figure 57. Yayoi Kusama interacting with *Narcissus Garden* and visitors at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, 1966, Venice, Italy.



Figure 58. Lucio Fontana and Yayoi Kusama standing in *Narcissus Garden* at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, 1966, Venice, Italy. Published in *L'Espresso* on 26 June 1966.





Figure 59. Lucio Fontana and Yayoi Kusama at Fontana's studio, Milan, 1966.

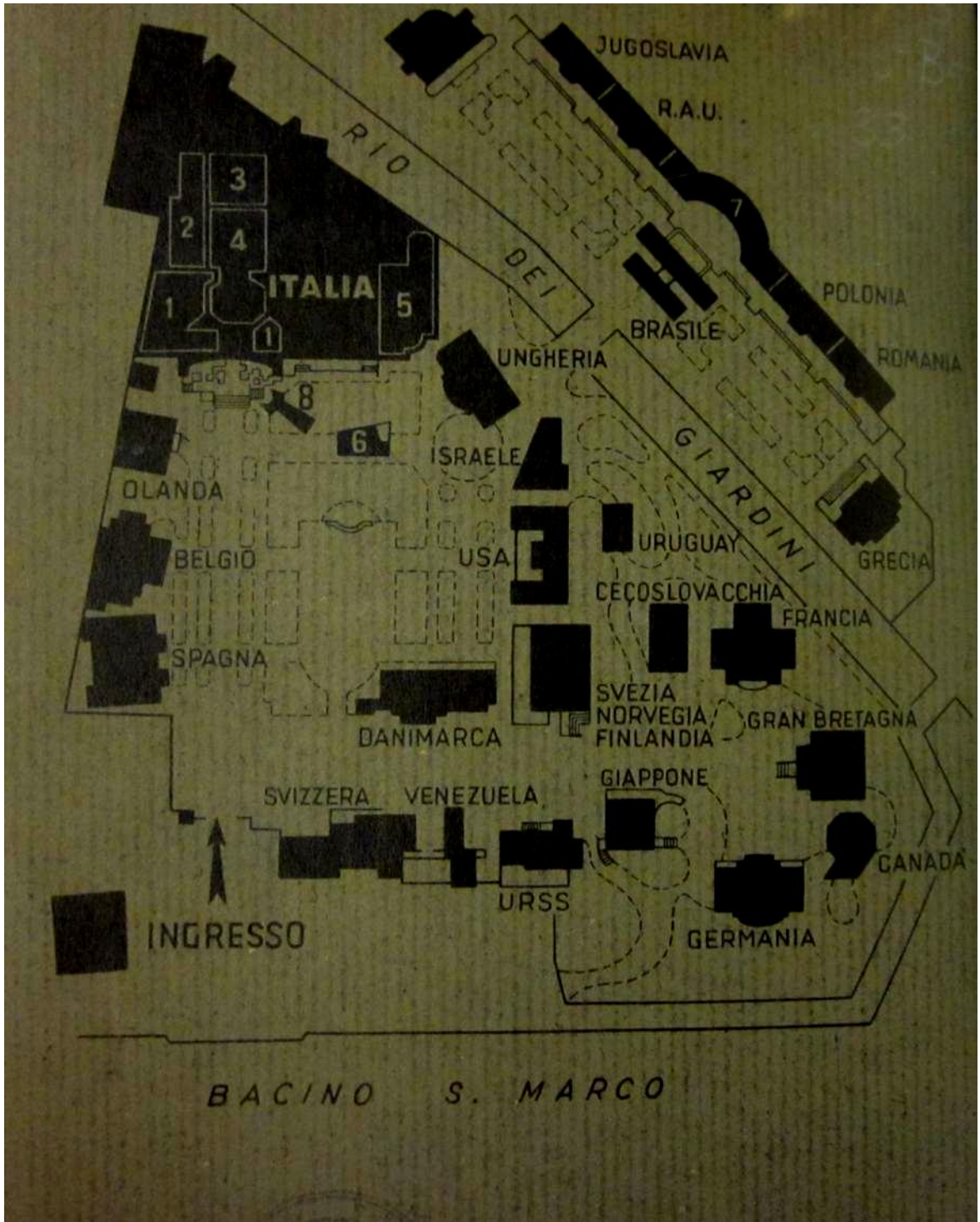


Figure 60. Map of the XXXIII Venice Biennale, 1966.



Figure 61. Satellite view of Italian Pavilion and Venice Biennale grounds, 2010.



Figure 62. Carlo Scarpa, Il padiglione del libro (Book Pavilion), grounds of the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.



Figure 63. Ay-O, *Tactile Room*, 1966. Dimensions and materials variable. Installed in the Japanese Pavilion during the XXXIII Venice Biennale.



Figure 64. Yayoi Kusama, *Accumulation No. 2*, 1962. Sofa, fabric filler, plaster, and paint, 88.9 x 223.5 x 102.2 cm. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.



Figure 65. Yayoi Kusama, *Driving Image Show* installation at the Castellane Gallery  
New York, April 1964.



Figure 66. Yayoi Kusama and Renato Cardazzo at the opening of *Driving Image Show* at the Galleria d'Arte del Naviglio in Milan, January 1966.



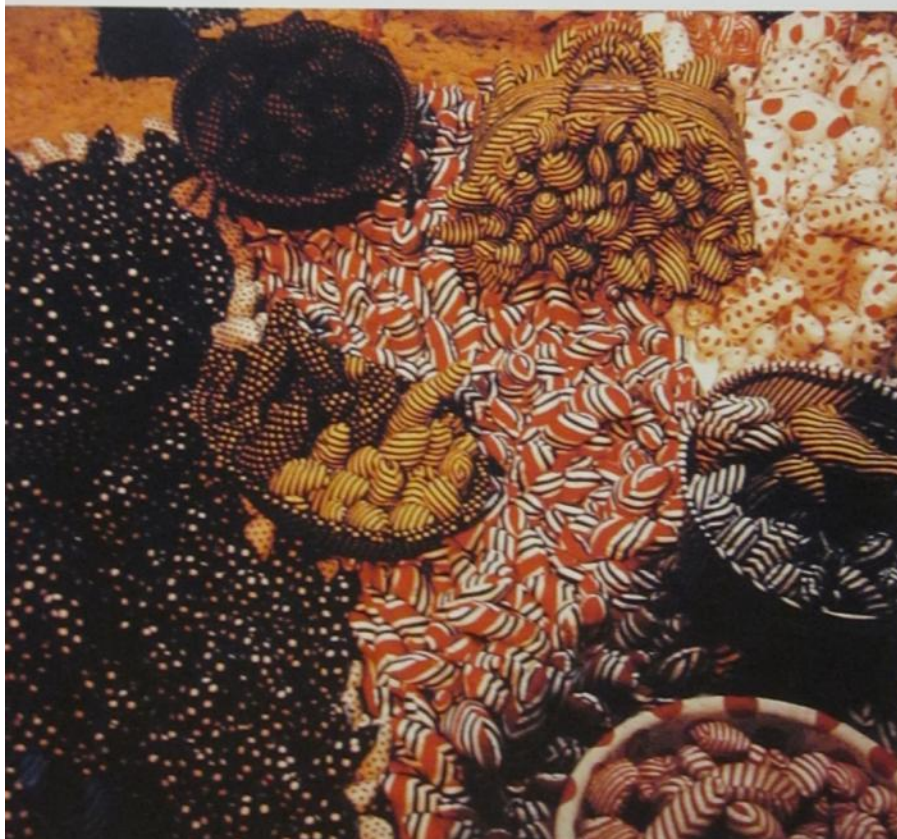
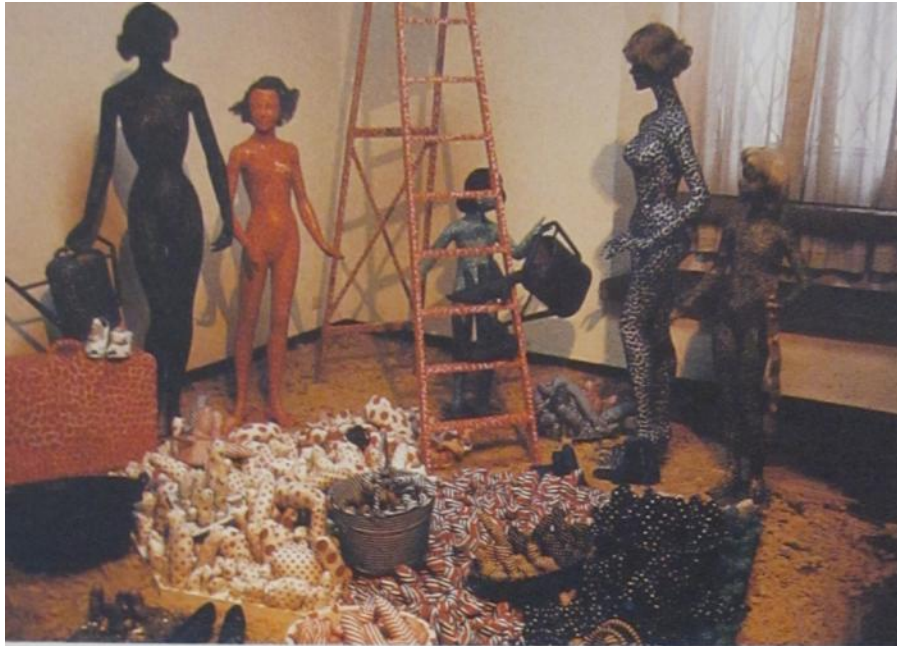


Figure 67. Installation view of Yayoi Kusama's *Driving Image Show* at the Galleria d'Arte del Naviglio in Milan, January 1966.

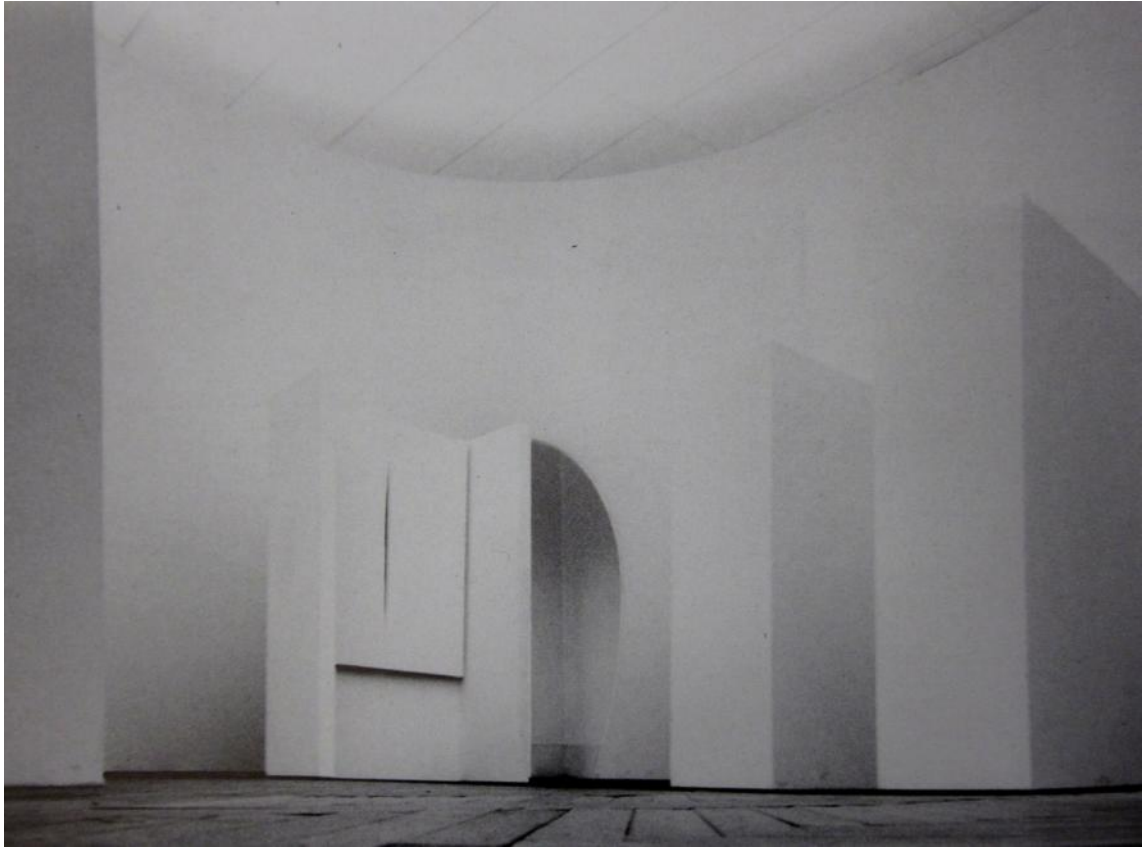


Figure 68. Lucio Fontana in collaboration with Carlo Scarpa, *Ambiente spaziale bianco* (*White Spatial Ambience*), 1966. Installed in the Italian Pavilion at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.

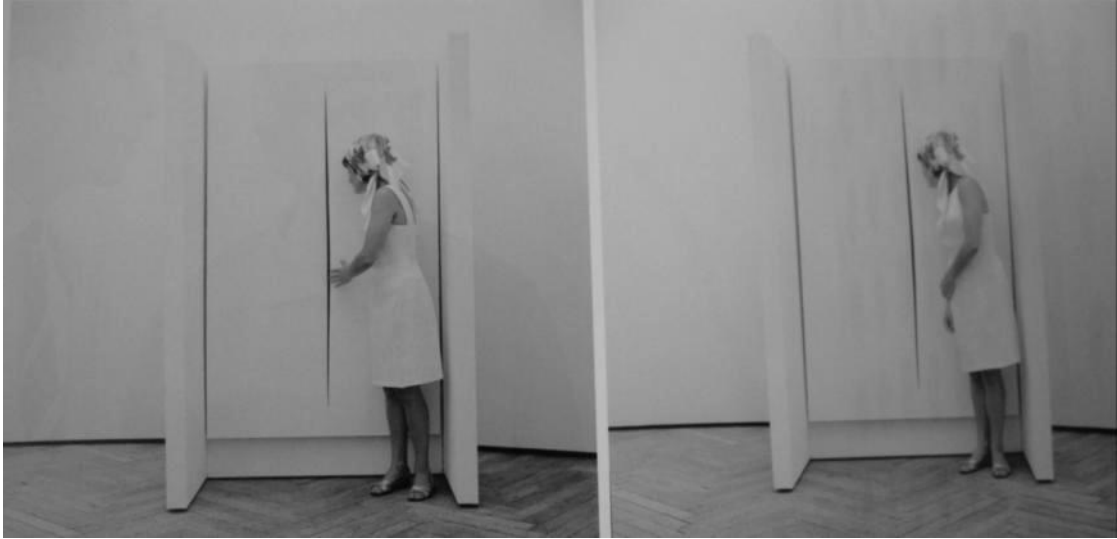


Figure 69. Detail of *Ambiente spaziale bianco* (*White Spatial Ambience*), 1966. Installed in the Italian Pavilion at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy.

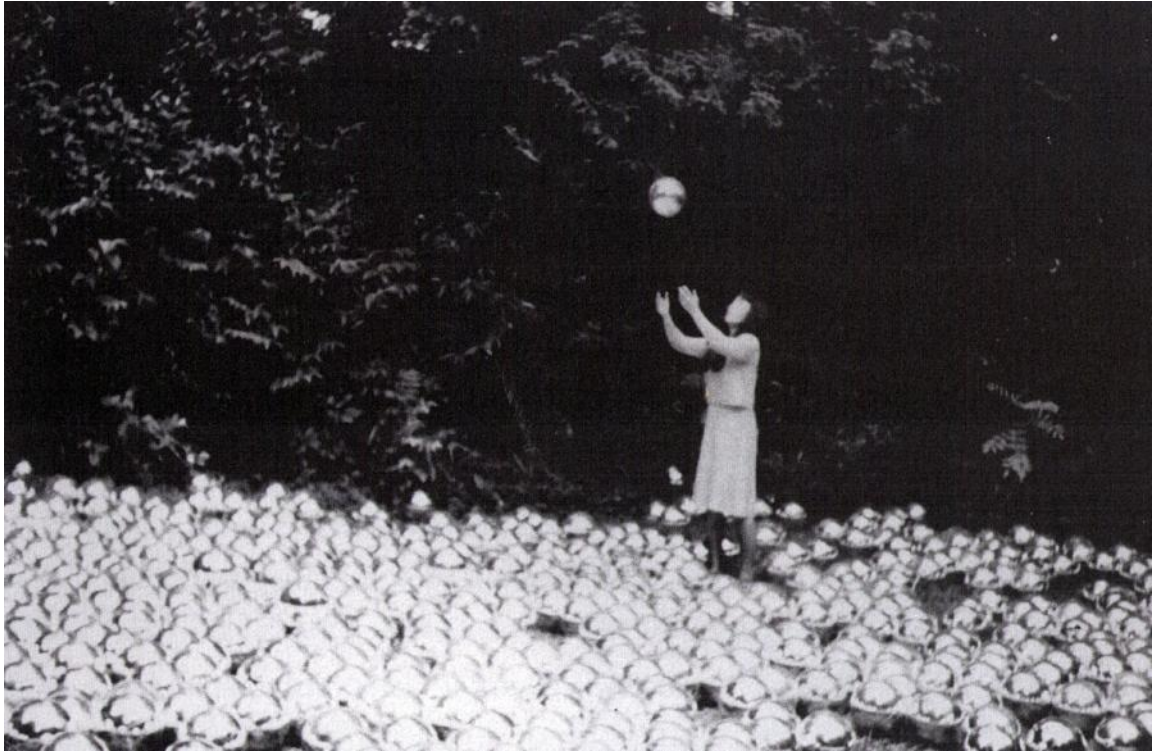


Figure 70. Yayoi Kusama interacting with *Narcissus Garden* at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, 1966, Venice, Italy.



Figure 71. Detail of Yayoi Kusama, *Narcissus Garden*, 1966.



Figure 72. Yayoi Kusama with a macaroni mannequin from her *Food Obsession* series, February 1964. Photograph by Peter Moore.



Figure 73. Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Mirror Room. Phalli's Field*, 1965. Sewn stuffed fabric, plywood, mirrors, 98 3/8 x 196 7/8 x 196 7/8 in. Installation view from *Floor Show* exhibit at the Castellane Gallery, New York.



Figure 74. Yayoi Kusama, *Kusama's Peep Show/Endless Love Show*, March 1966.  
Installation view, Castellane Gallery, New York.



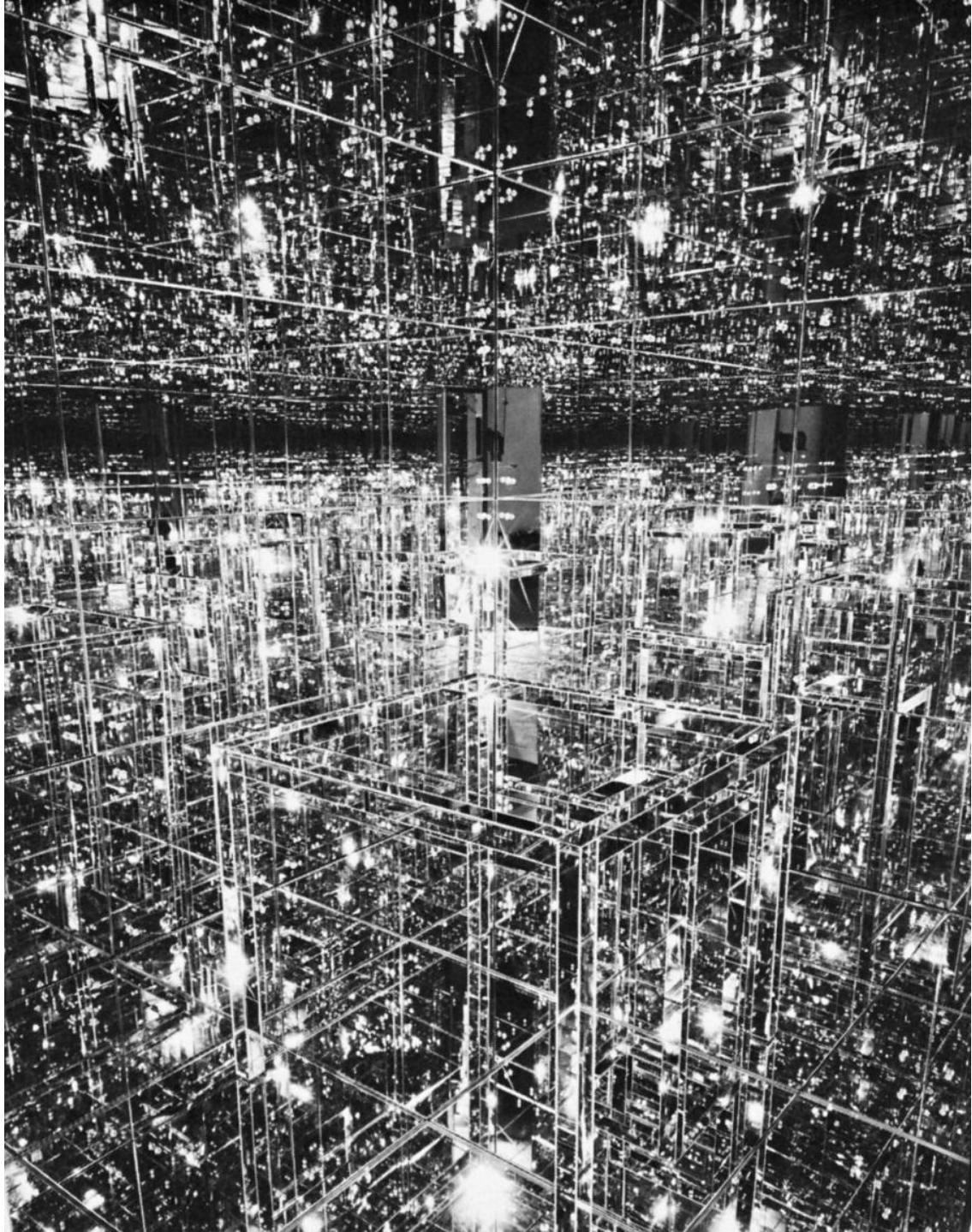


Figure 75. Lucas Samaras, *Room No. 2* (popularly known as the *Mirrored Room*), 1966. Mirror on wood, 96 x 96 x 120 inches (243.8 x 243.8 x 304.8 cm). Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1966.



Figure 76. Allan Kaprow, *Yard*, 1961. Tires, dimensions variable, installation view at Martha Jackson Gallery, New York.



Figure 77. Allan Kaprow, *Yard*, 1961. Installation view at the Pasadena Museum of Art, California in 1967.



Figure 78. Yayoi Kusama, *Narcissus Garden*, 1966.



Figure 79. Yayoi Kusama, *Narcissus Garden*, 1966.



Figure 80. Press clippings of Yayoi Kusama, c. 1968. Photograph by Peter Moore.



Figure 81. Lucio Fontana executing an incision, 1964. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 82. David Smith welding at the Voltri Centre, 1966. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.





Figure 83. Jackson Pollock painting, Summer 1950. Photograph by Hans Namuth.



Figure 84. Yayoi Kusama, untitled photo collage, c. 1966. showing the artist reclining on *Accumulation No. 2*. Photograph by Hal Reiff.

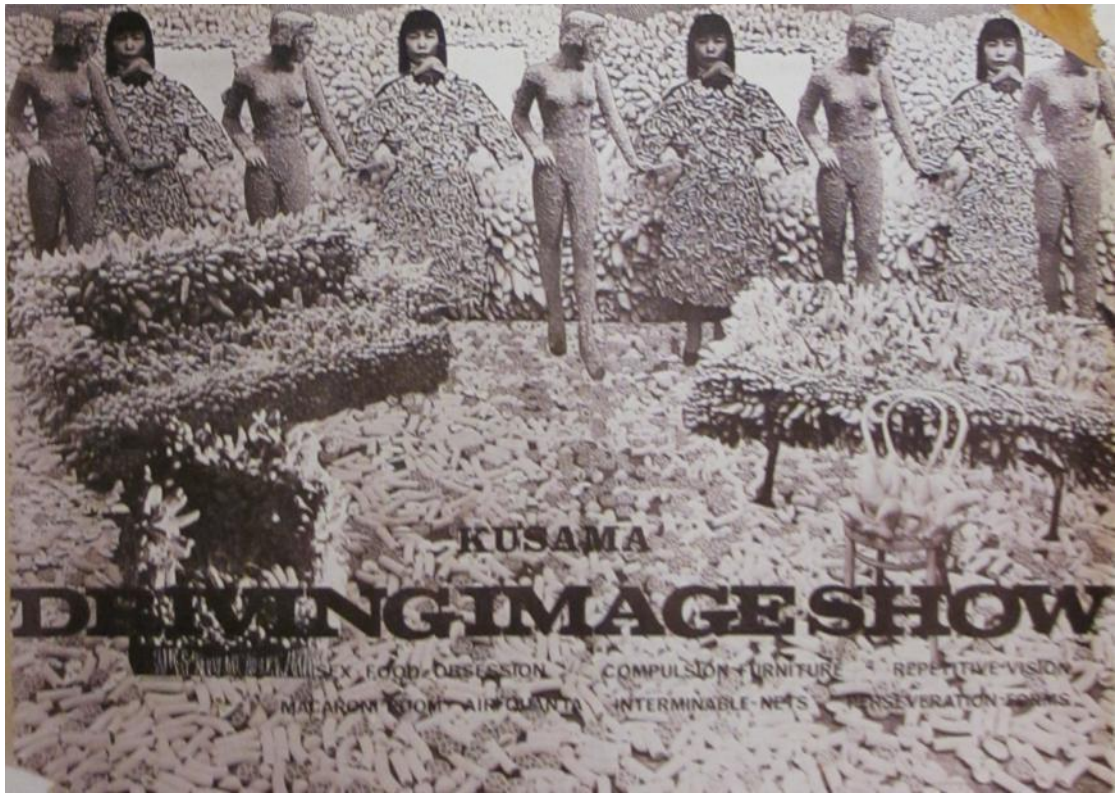


Figure 85. Gallery announcement for Yayoi Kusama's *Driving Image Show*, Castellane Gallery, New York, 1964.



Figure 86. Yayoi Kusama standing in her environment *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show* (originally created in 1964), installed for the *Nul: negentienhonderd vijf en zestig* exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965.



Figure 87. Installation view of *Aggregation: One Thousand Boats Show*, installed for the *Nul: negentienhonderd vijf en zestig* exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965.



Figure 88. Yayoi Kusama posing with her *Accumulation No. 2* in her studio, 1964.  
Photograph by Eiko Hosoe.



Figure 89. Artists at the *Nul* exhibition opening, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1965 (left to right): Jiro Yoshihara, Hans Haacke, Henk Peeters, Rotraut Klein-Uecker, Jan Schoonhoven, Lucio Fontana, Pol Bury, Gianni Colombo, Mrs. Fontana, E.L.L. de Wilde, Nono Reinhold, Yayoi Kusama, George Rickey, Jesus Raphael Soto, Otto Piene, Nanda Vigo, Alfred Schmela, Heinz Mack, unidentified woman, Günther Uecker.



Figure 90. Yayoi Kusama interacting with *Narcissus Garden* and visitors at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale, 1966, Venice, Italy.





Figure 91. Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Mirror Room*, 1965. Installation view at Castellane Gallery, New York. Photograph by Eiko Hosoe.



Figure 92. Protestors at the XXXIV Venice Biennale in the Piazza San Marco, Venice, Italy, 1968.

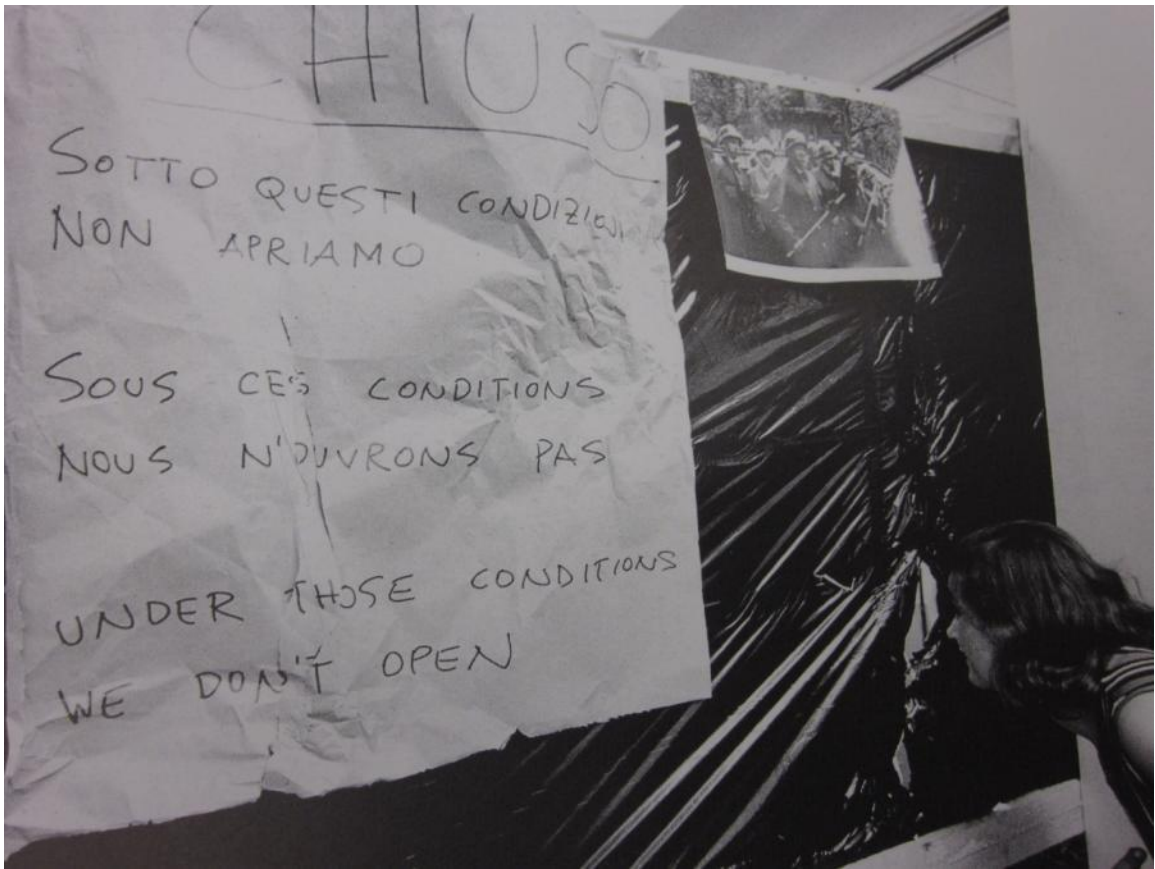


Figure 93. Closed-off gallery in the Italian Pavilion at the XXXIV Venice Biennale, 1968. Photograph by Ugo Mulas.



Figure 94. Pino Pascali in his gallery at the 1968 Venice Biennale with *Pelo (Fur)*, 1968. Acrylic faux-fur, 120 x 165 x 165 cm. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome. *Stuoia (Mat)*, 1968. Woven steel wool, 230 x 120 cm. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome. *Solitario (Solitaire)*, 1968. Acrylic faux-fur and wooden armature, 22 panels, 133 x 77 cm each. Prada Foundation, Milan.



Figure 95. Pino Pascali, *Vedova Blu* (*Blue Widow*), 1968. Acrylic fur, metal structure. 152 cm h. Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna. Photograph by Claudio Abate.



Figure 96. Yayoi Kusama with a reconstruction of *Narcissus Garden*, 2000, at Le Consortium, Dijon, France.



Figure 97. Eliseo Mattiacci, *Percorso*, 1969. Action at the L'Attico, Rome in 1969.  
Photograph by Claudio Abate. Archivio Claudio Abate, Rome.

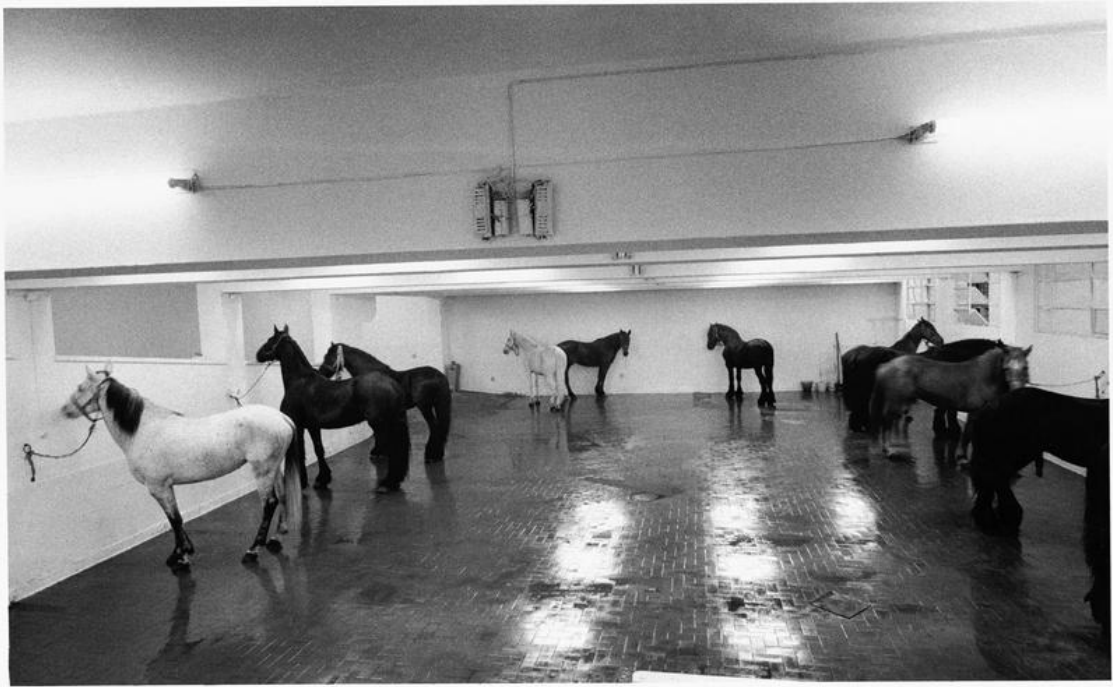


Figure 98. Jannis Kounellis, *Senza titolo (Dodici Cavalli)* [*Untitled (Twelve Horses)*], 1969. Installation with live horses at L'Attico Gallery, Rome.



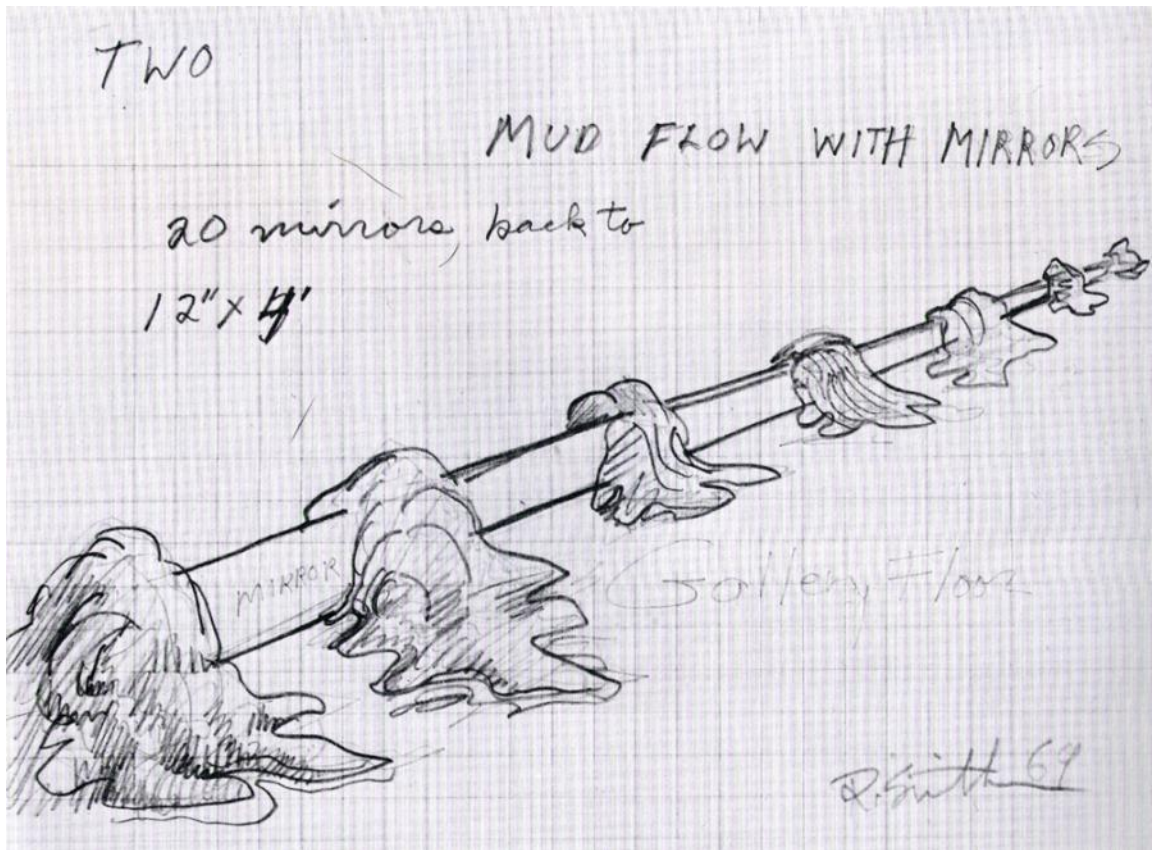


Figure 99. Robert Smithson, *Mud Flow with Mirrors*, 1969. Pencil, 6 3/4 x 8 3/4 in. Collection Estate of Robert Smithson.



Figure 100. Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970. Mud, precipitated salt crystals, rocks, water, 1500 ft. long x 15 ft. wide. Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake, Utah. Photograph by Gianfranco Gorgoni.

## DIALECTIC OF SITE AND NONSITE

<u>Site</u>	<u>Nonsite</u>
1. Open Limits	Closed Limits
2. A Series of Points	An Array of Matter
3. Outer Coordinates	Inner Coordinates
4. Subtraction	Addition
5. Indeterminate Certainty	Determinate Uncertainty
6. Scattered Information	Contained Information
7. Reflection	Mirror
8. Edge	Center
9. Some Place (physical)	No Place (abstract)
10. Many	One

### Range of Convergence

The range of convergence between Site and Nonsite consists of a course of hazards, a double path made up of signs, photographs and maps that belong to both sides of the dialectic at once. Both sides are present and absent at the same time. The land or ground from the Site is placed in the art (Nonsite) rather than the art placed on the ground. The Nonsite is a container within another container - the room. The plot or yard outside is yet another container. Two dimensional and three dimensional things trade places with each other in the range of convergence. Large scale becomes small. Small scale becomes large. A point on a map expands to the size of a land mass. A land mass contracts into a point. Is the Site a reflection of the Nonsite (mirror), or is it the other way around? The rules of this network of signs are discovered as you go along uncertain trails both mental and physical.

Robert Smithson 69

Figure 101. Robert Smithson, *Dialectics of Site and Nonsite*, 1969. Document published in *Land Art*, ed. Gerry Schum and Ursula Schum-Wever.

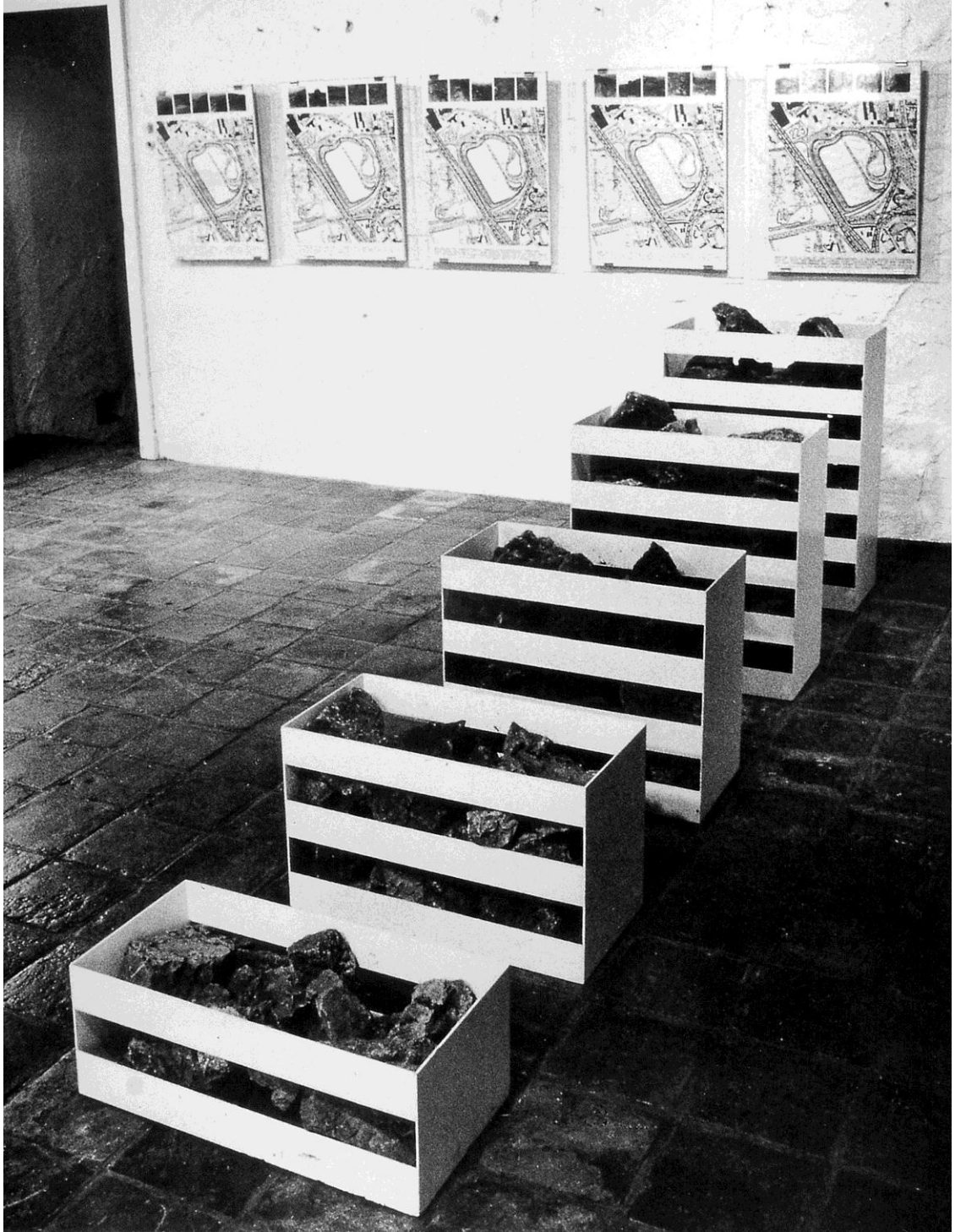


Figure 102. Robert Smithson, *Nonsite, Oberhausen, Germany*, 1968.  
Photodocumentation, map of Oberhausen, steel, slag, dimensions variable.  
Private Collection.

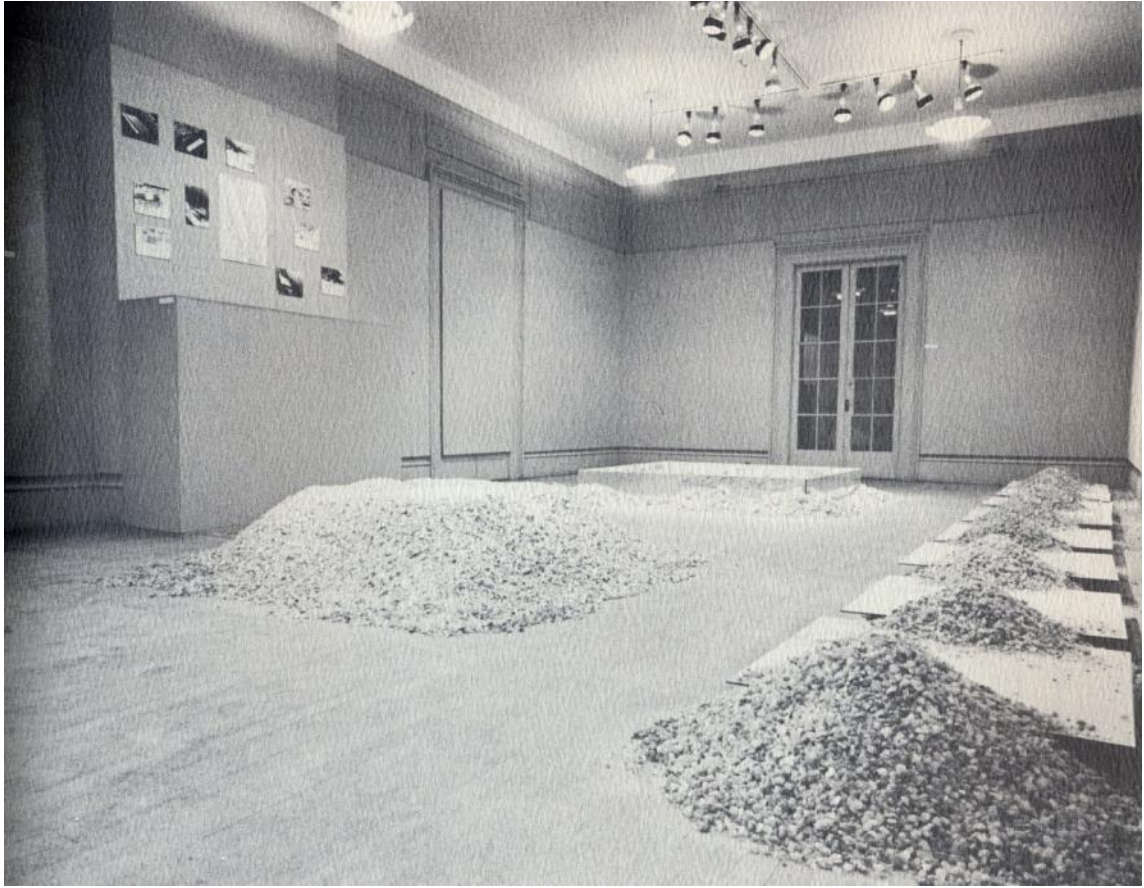


Figure 103. Robert Smithson, *Mirror Displacement (Cayuga Salt Mine Project)*, 1969. Rock salt and mirrors, dimensions variable. Installation during the exhibition, *Earth Art*, 1969, A.D. White Museum, Cornell University.

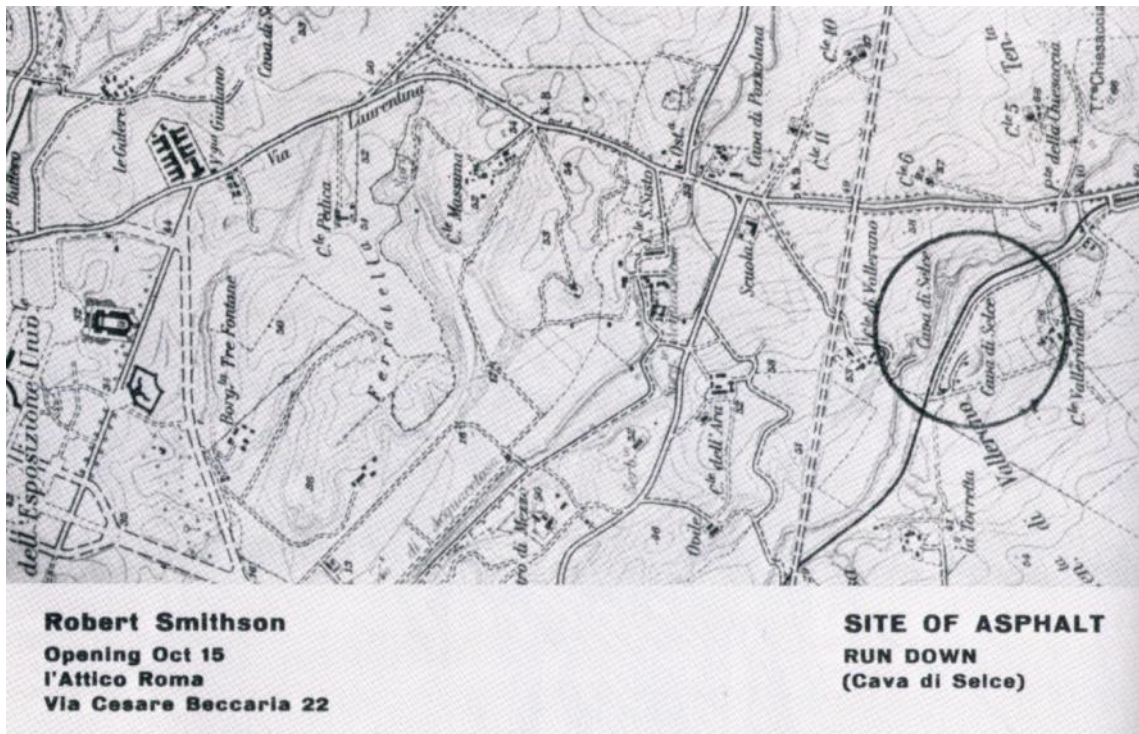


Figure 104. Robert Smithson, *Site of Asphalt Rundown*, 1969. Announcement card for exhibition at L'Attico Gallery, Rome, Italy. Photograph courtesy John Weber Gallery.

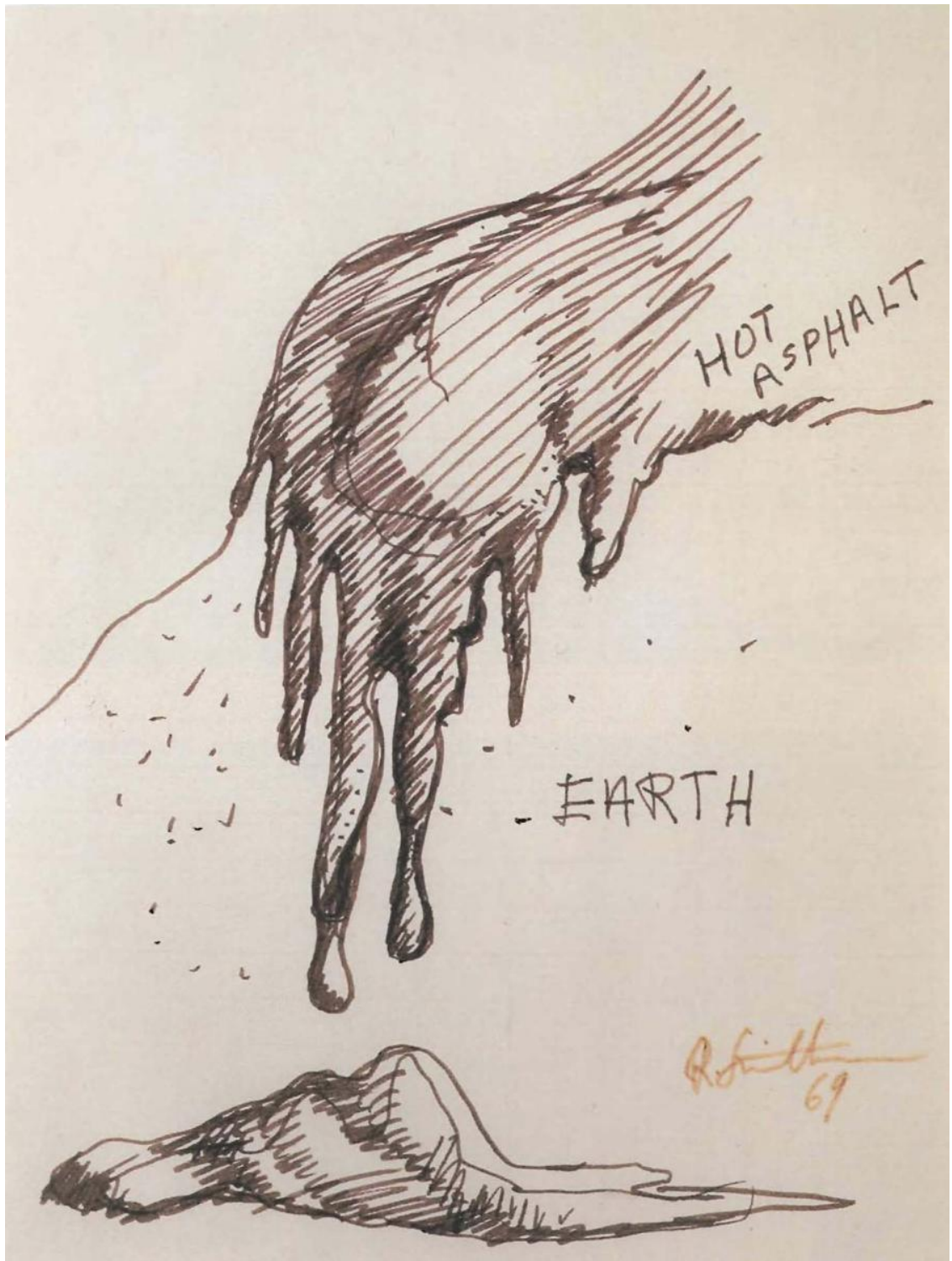


Figure 105. Robert Smithson, *Hot Asphalt. Earth*, 1969, black ink on paper, 8 5/8 x 6 5/8 in. Collection of Tony Shafrazi.

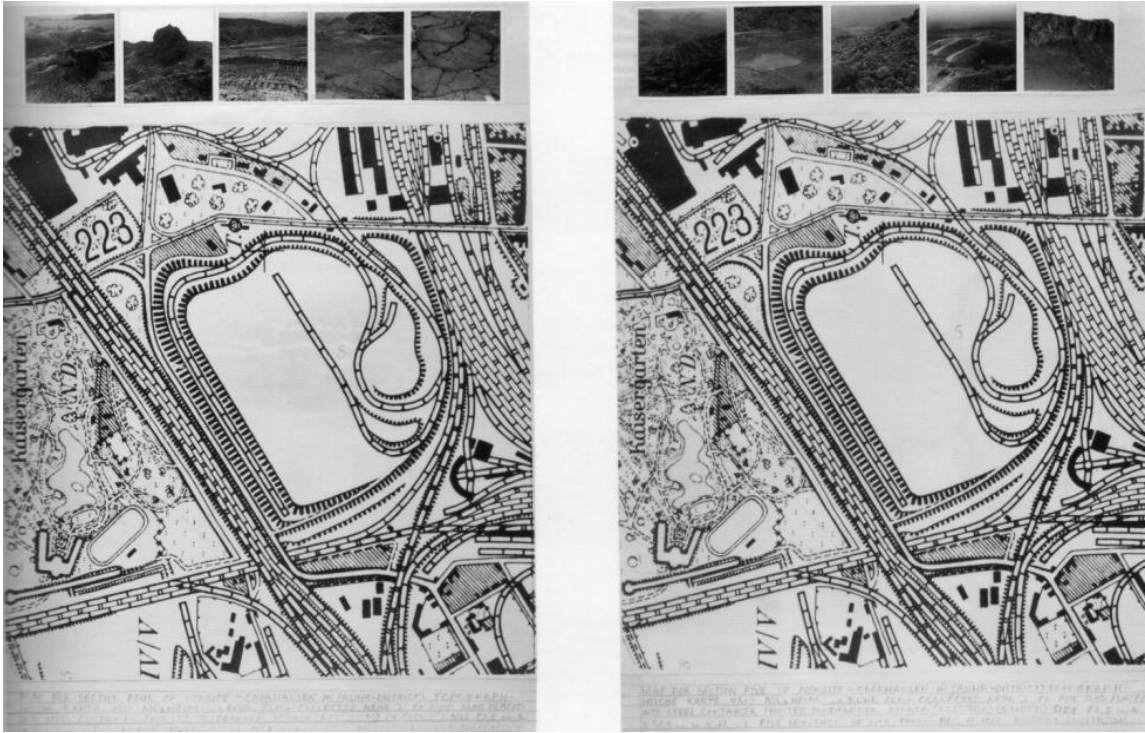


Figure 106. Robert Smithson, *Nonsite, Oberhausen, Germany*, 1968 (detail of photodocumentation and map of Oberhausen).





Figure 107. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Lump*, Oberhausen, Germany, 1969.  
Asphalt, approx. 31 x 39 in. Collection F. Klingbell.



Figure 108. Robert Smithson, *Concrete Pour*, Chicago, November 1969 (no longer extant).



Figure 109. Robert Smithson, *Glue Pour*, Vancouver, 1969 (no longer extant).  
Photograph by Nancy Holt.



Figure 110. Robert Smithson, *Glue Pour*, Vancouver, 1969 (no longer extant).  
Photograph by Nancy Holt.



Figure 111. Robert Smithson, *Partially Buried Woodshed*, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, January 1970 (no longer extant). One woodshed and twenty truckloads of earth, 18 ft. 6 in. x 10 ft. 2 in. x 45 ft.

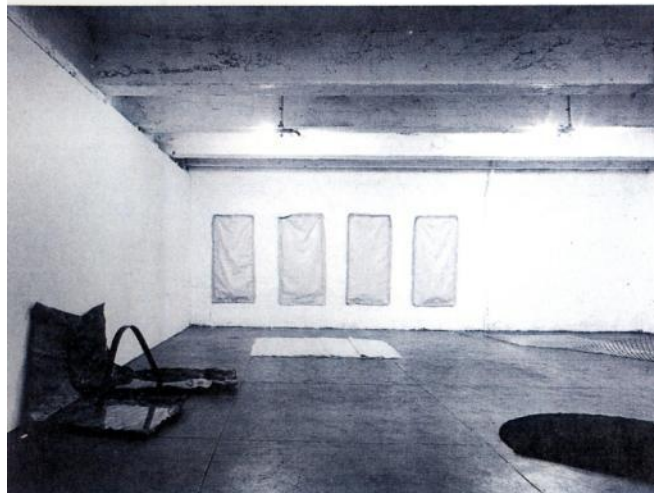
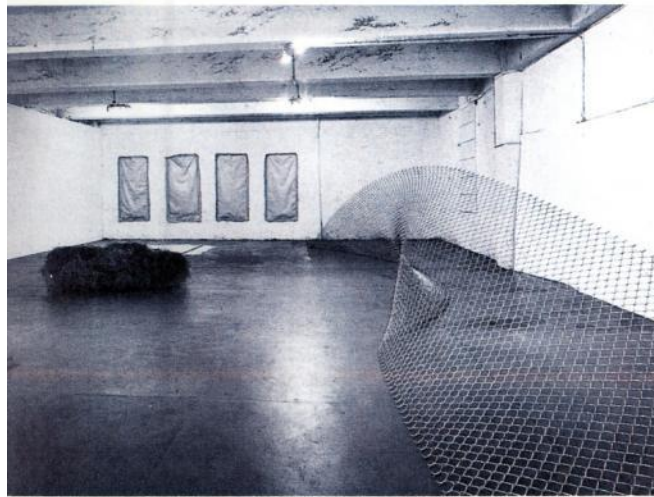
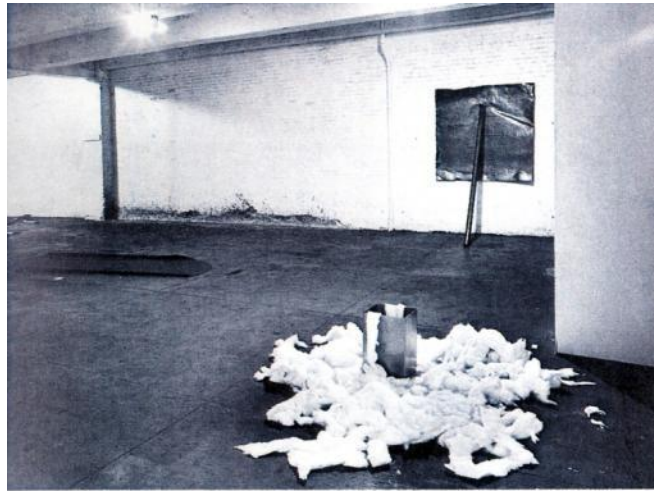


Figure 112. Installation photographs of *9 at Castelli*, Castelli Warehouse, New York, December 1968.



Figure 113. Giovanni Anselmo, *Senza titolo (Untitled)*, 1968. Steel, water, cotton, 54 x 30 x 30 cm. Collection Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Antwerp.



Figure 114. Installation view of *Op Losse Schroeven: situaties en cryptostructuren*, 15 March. 27 April 1969, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.





Figure 115. Installation view of *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, 1969, Kunsthalle, Bern.



Figure 116. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, October 1969. Cava di selce, near Rome, Italy, dimensions variable. Photograph by Claudio Abate.



Figure 117. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, October 1969. Cava di selce, near Rome, Italy, dimensions variable. Photograph by Robert Smithson.



Figure 118. Robert Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily*, installation views at the Castelli Warehouse, New York, 1-22 March 1969. Photographs courtesy of Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

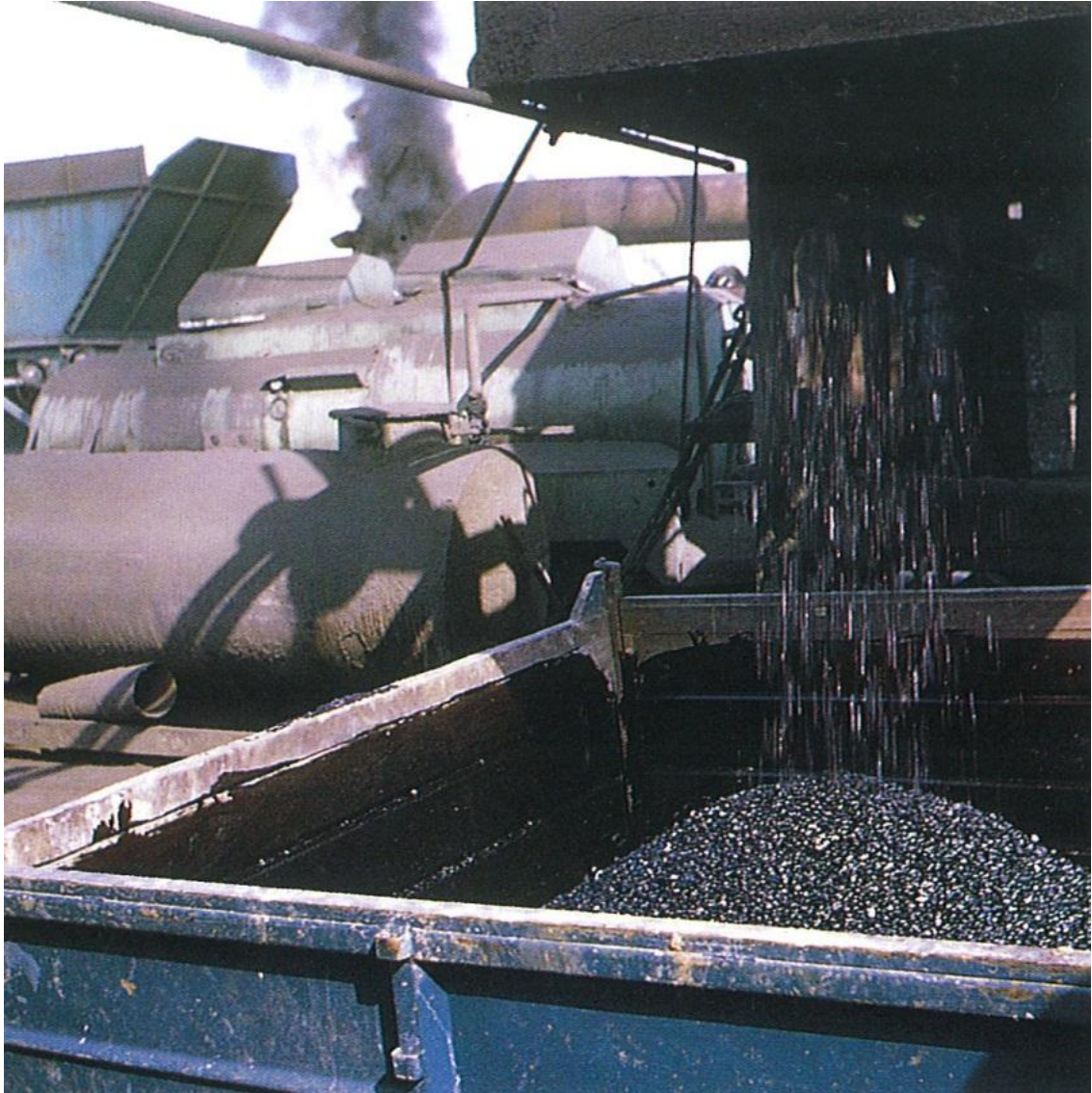


Figure 119. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, 1969. Photograph by Robert Smithson.

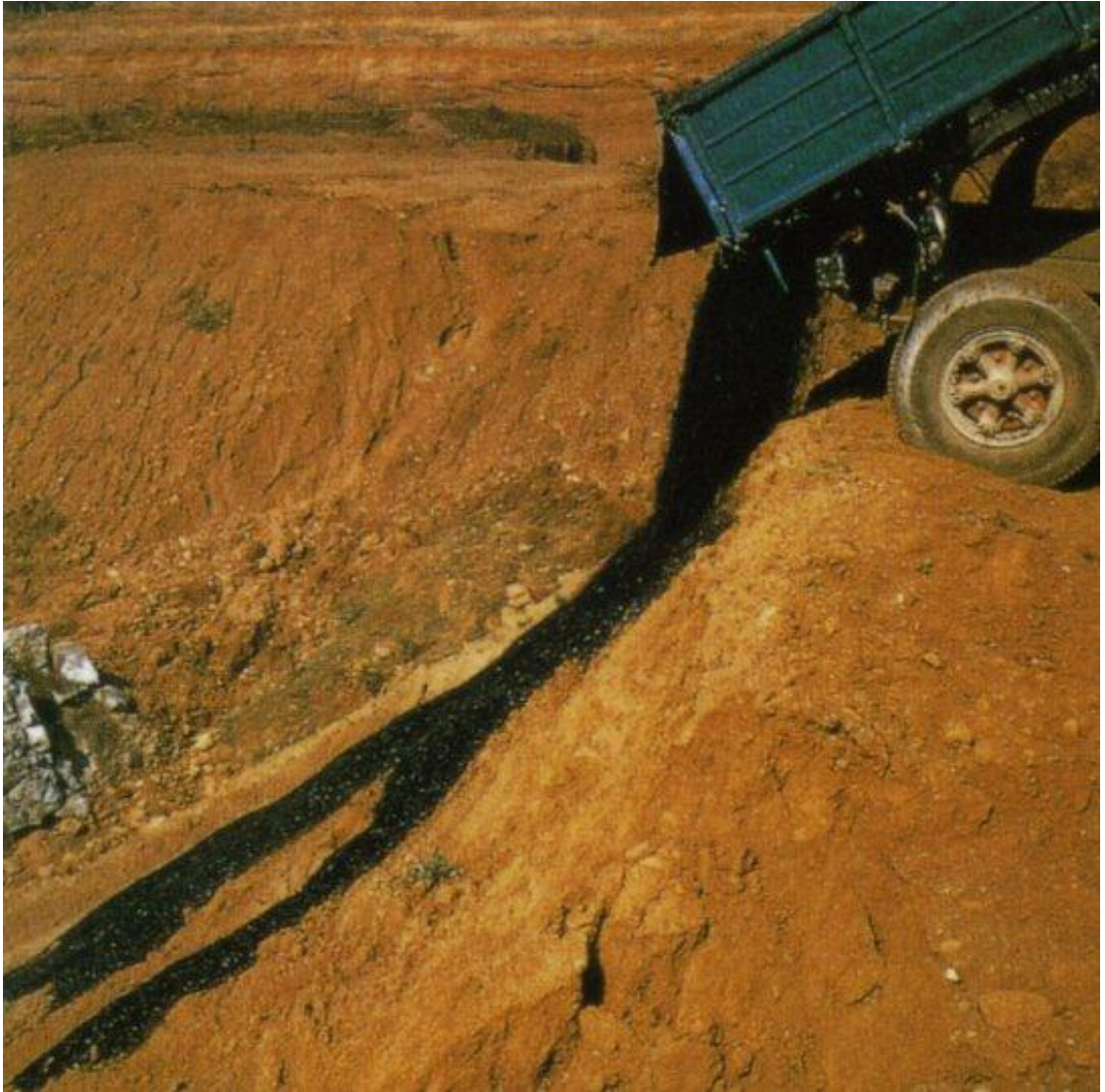


Figure 120. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, 1969. Photograph by Robert Smithson.



Figure 121. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, 1969. Photograph by Robert Smithson.

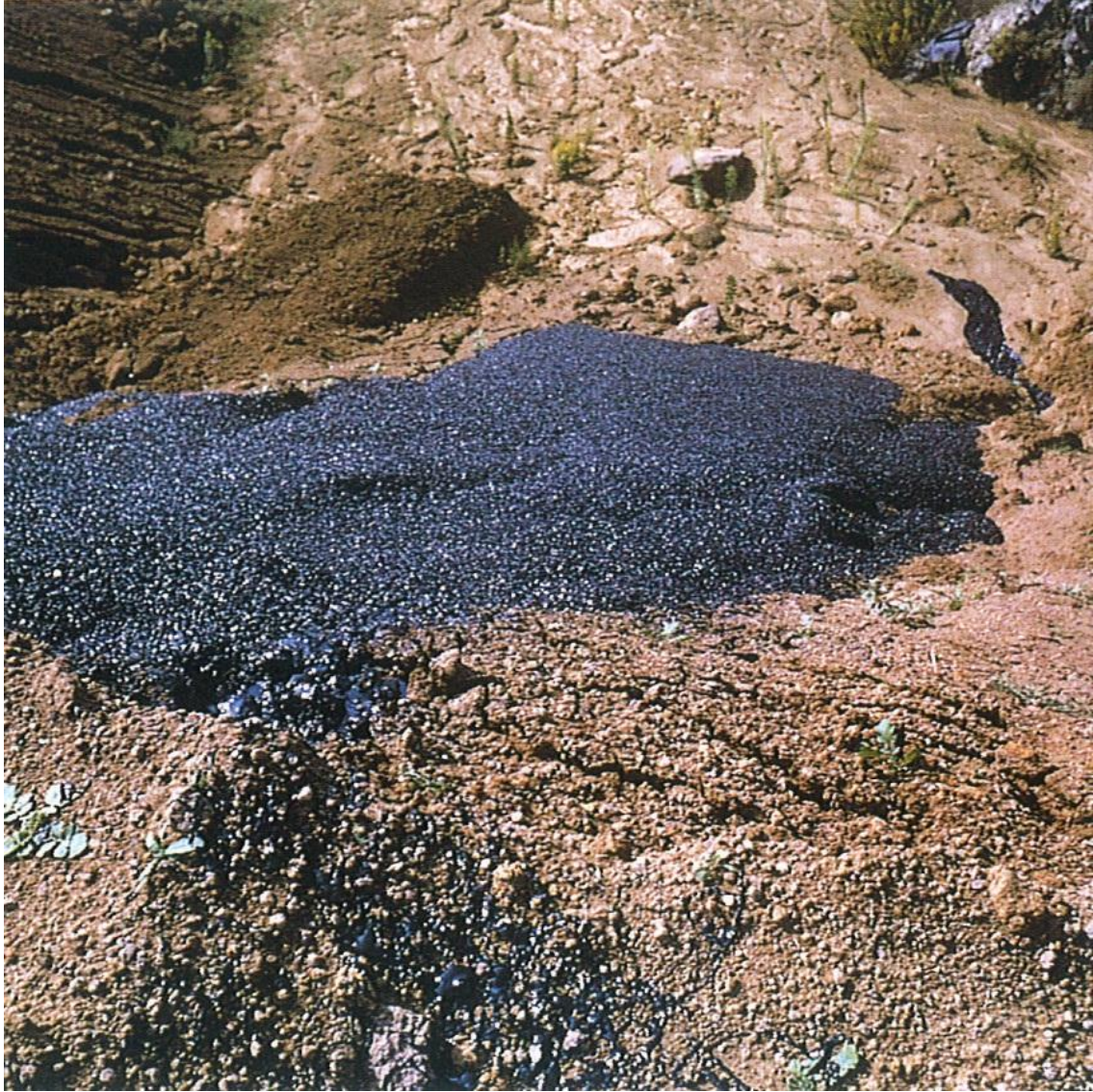


Figure 122. Robert Smithson, *Asphalt Rundown*, 1969. Photograph by Robert Smithson.





Figure 123. Installation of Jannis Kounellis, *Dodici Cavalli* at L'Attico, Rome, January 1969. Photographs by Claudio Abate.



Figure 124. Sue Spaid, photographs of the site of *Asphalt Rundown*, Cava di selce, outside of Rome, Italy, 2010.



Figure 125. Joseph Beuys, *Arena-dove sarei arrivato se fossi intelligente!* (*Arena-where would I have got if I had been intelligent!*), 1972. One hundred aluminum and glass frames, photographs, fat, brown paint, one small oilcan, and two stacks of copper, felt, and fat plates, dimensions variable (each frame measures 55 x 32 in.). Installed at the Modern Art Agency, Naples, in 1972.



Figure 126. Jannis Kounellis, Lucio Amelio, Germano Celant, and Joseph Beuys in Heidelberg, Germany, at a meeting organized by the artist and activist Klaus Staeck on the theme of “The Function in the Market Today,” in 1971.

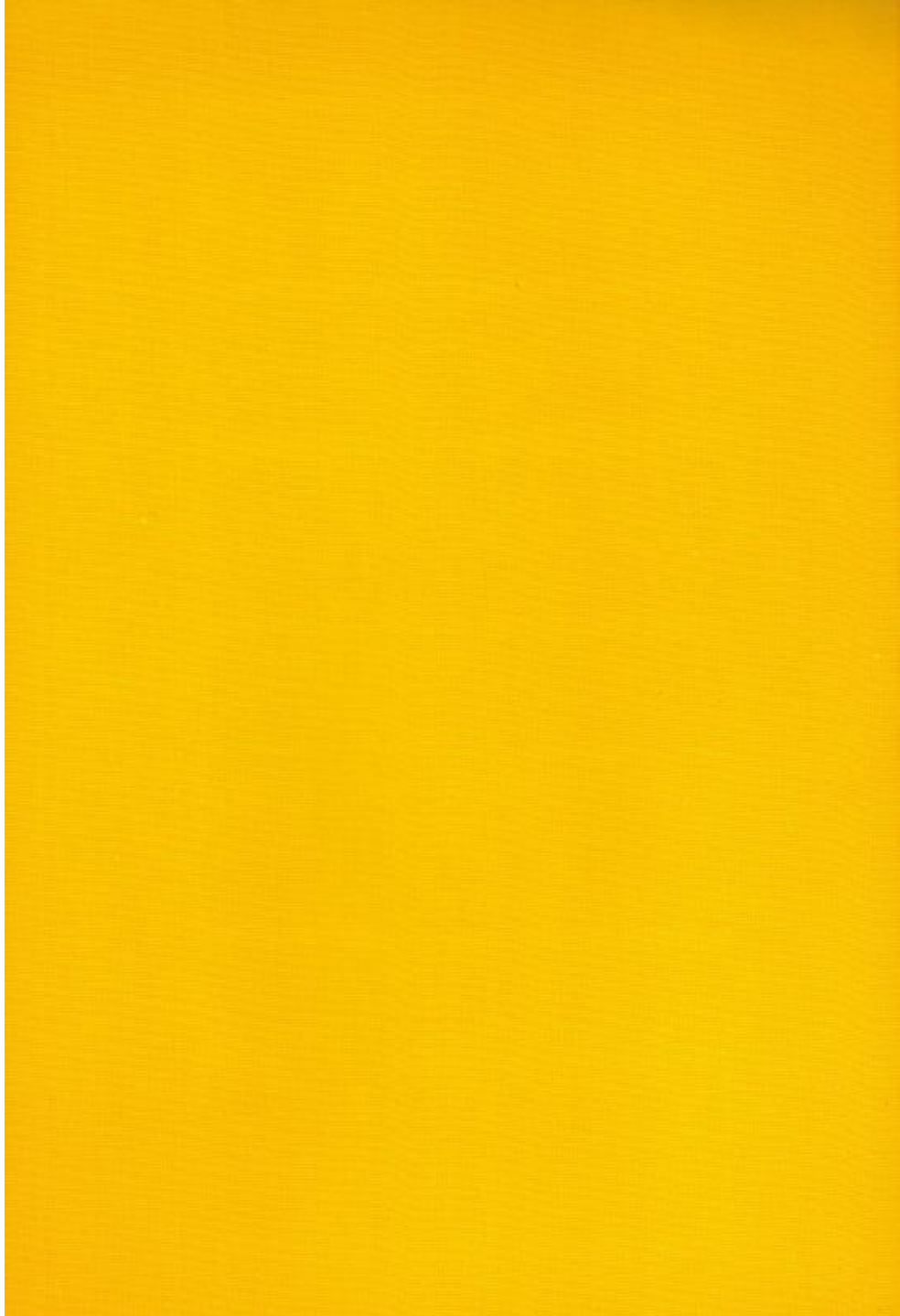


Figure 127. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate # 82, 1972. Yellow glass.

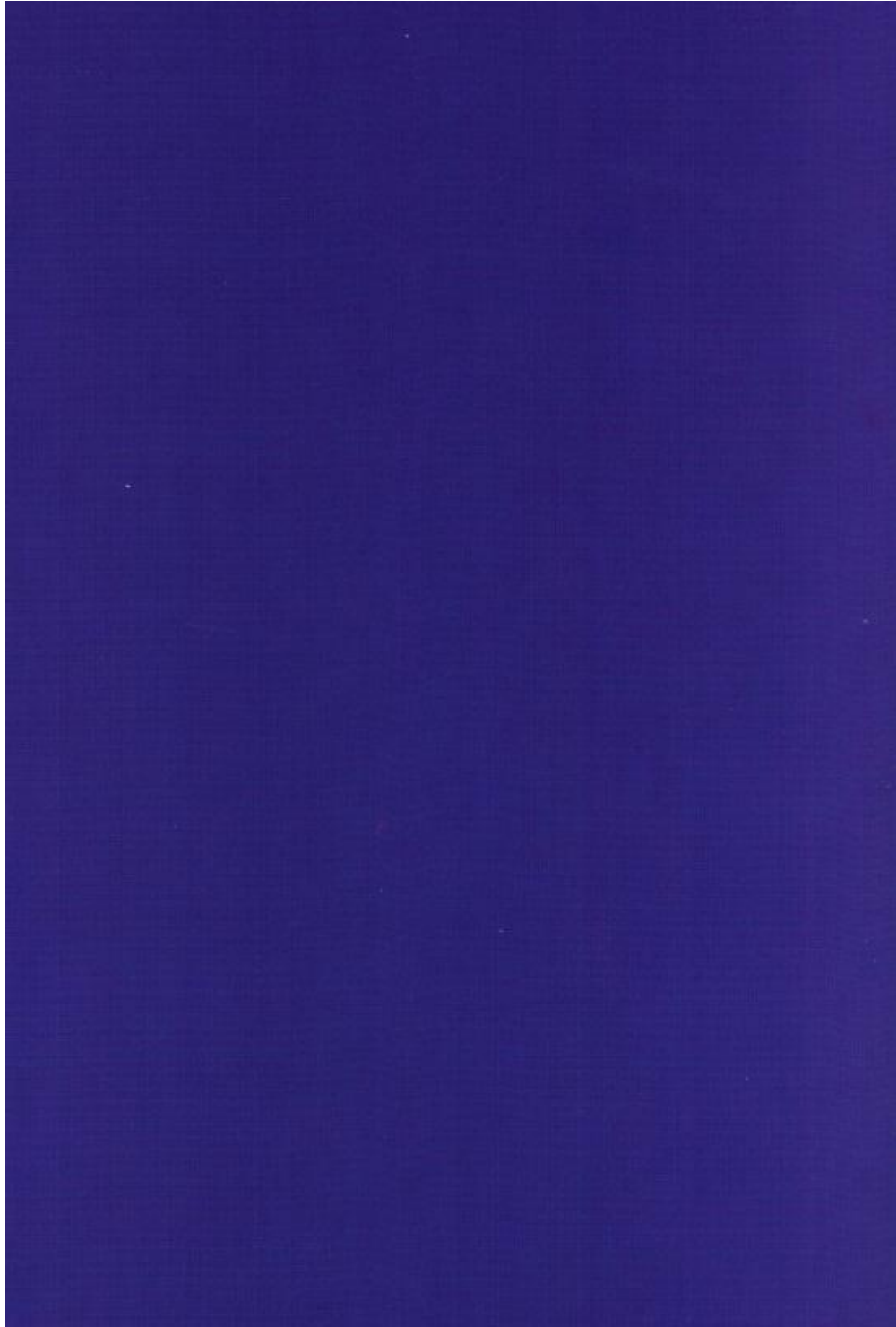


Figure 128. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #85, 1972. Blue glass.



Figure 129. Joseph Beuys at the exhibition *Strategy: Get Arts* in Edinburg, Scotland, 1970.



Figure 130. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #13 (postcard of Verona arena), 1972.



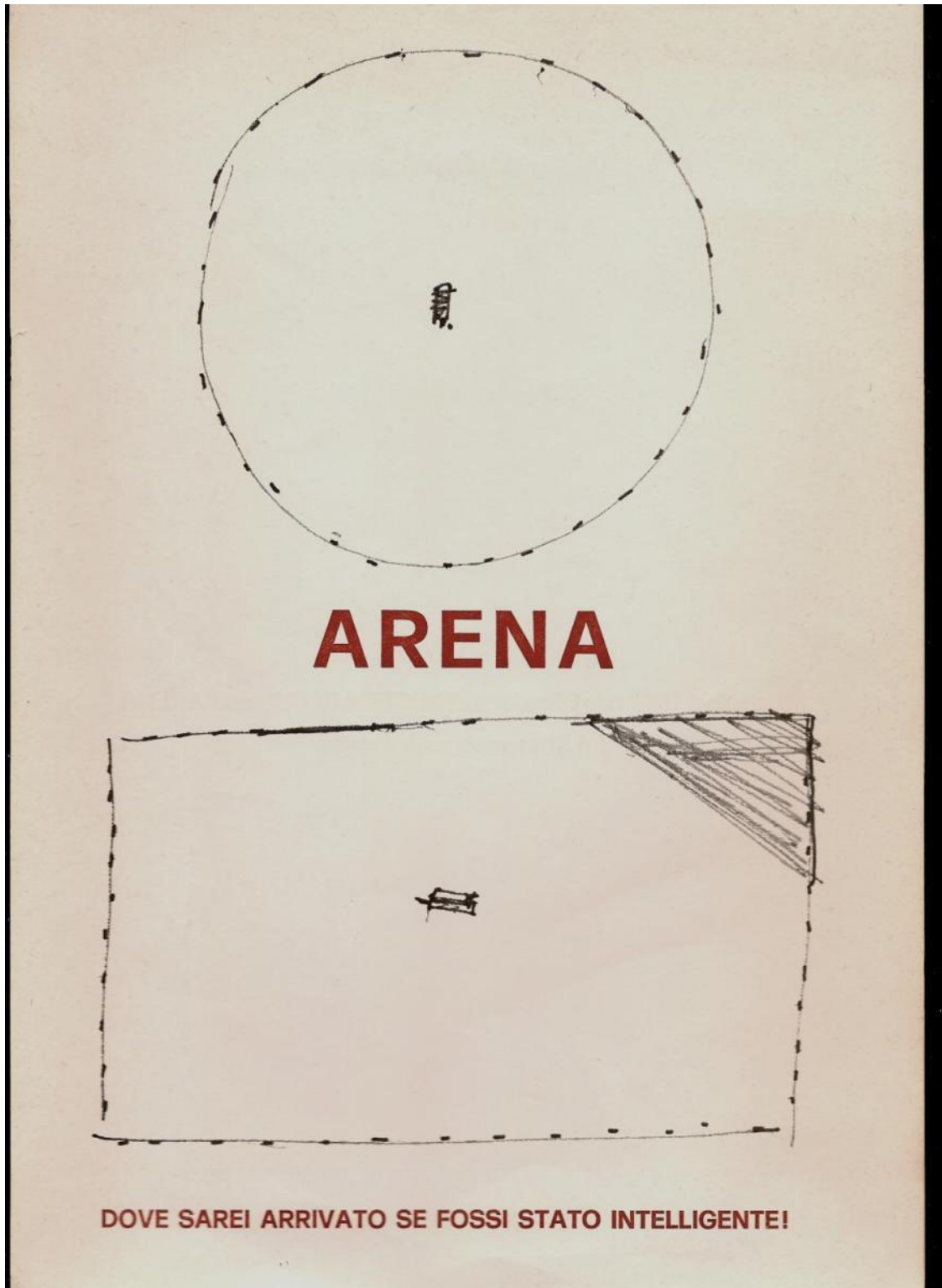


Figure 131. Exhibition announcement card for *Arena: Dove sarei arrivato se fossi stato intelligente!* Modern Art Agency, Naples, 1972.



Figure 132. Joseph Beuys and *Arena* at L'Attico, Rome in 1972. Photograph by Claudio Abate.

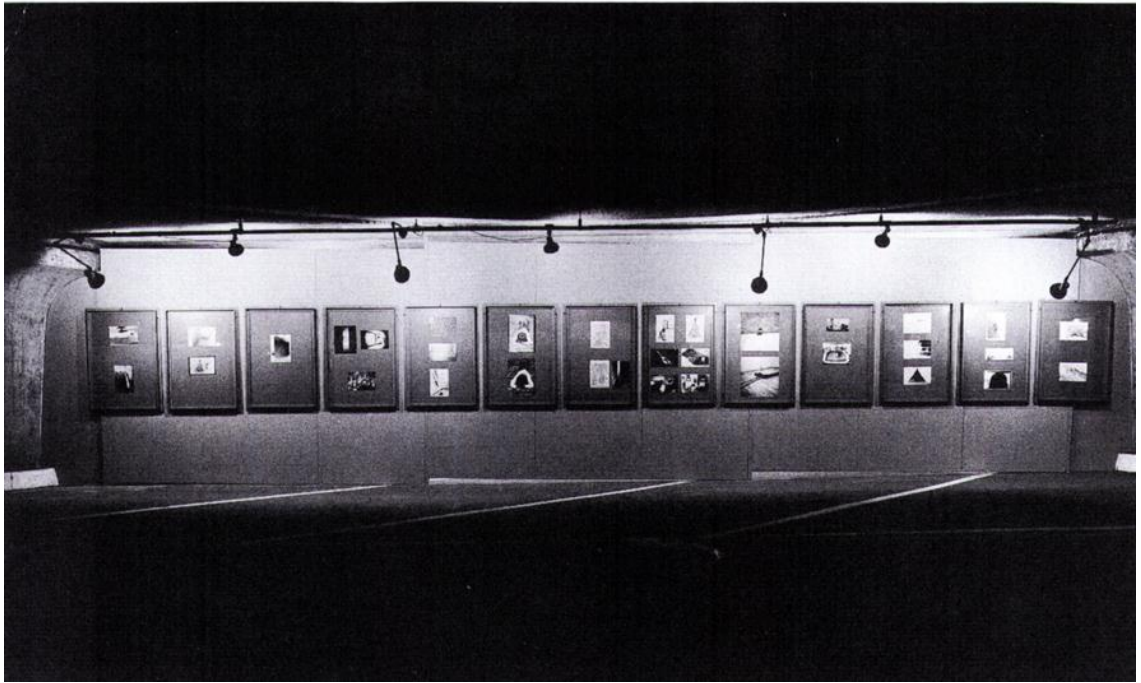
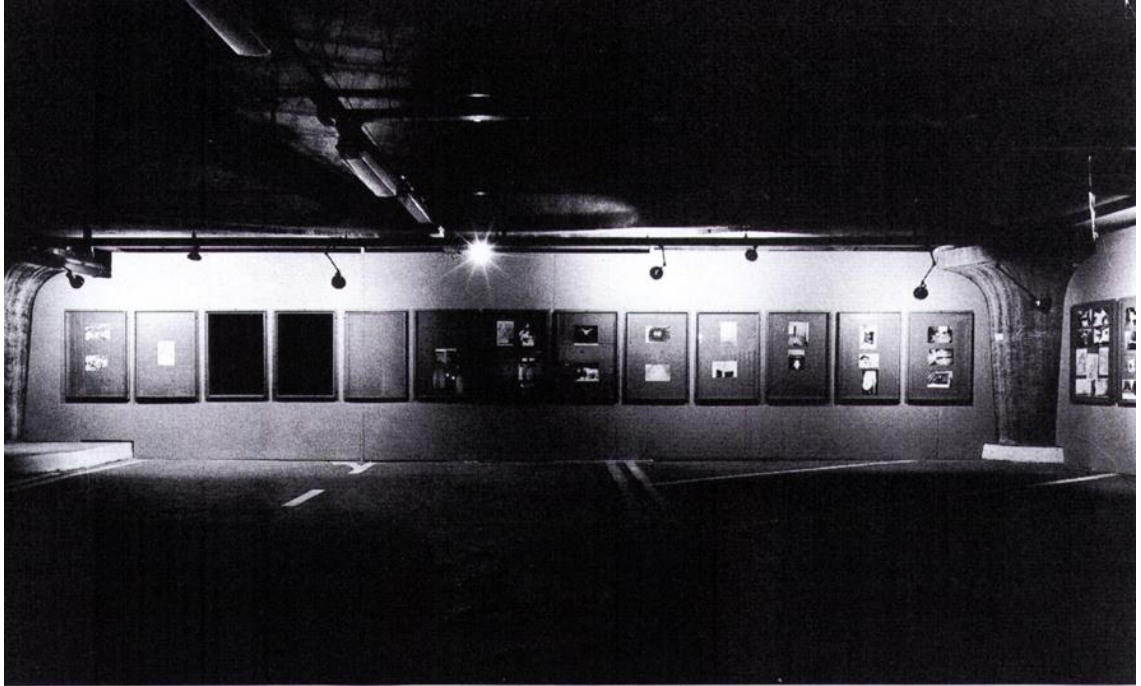


Figure 133. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, installed at *Contemporanea* in Rome, 1973.

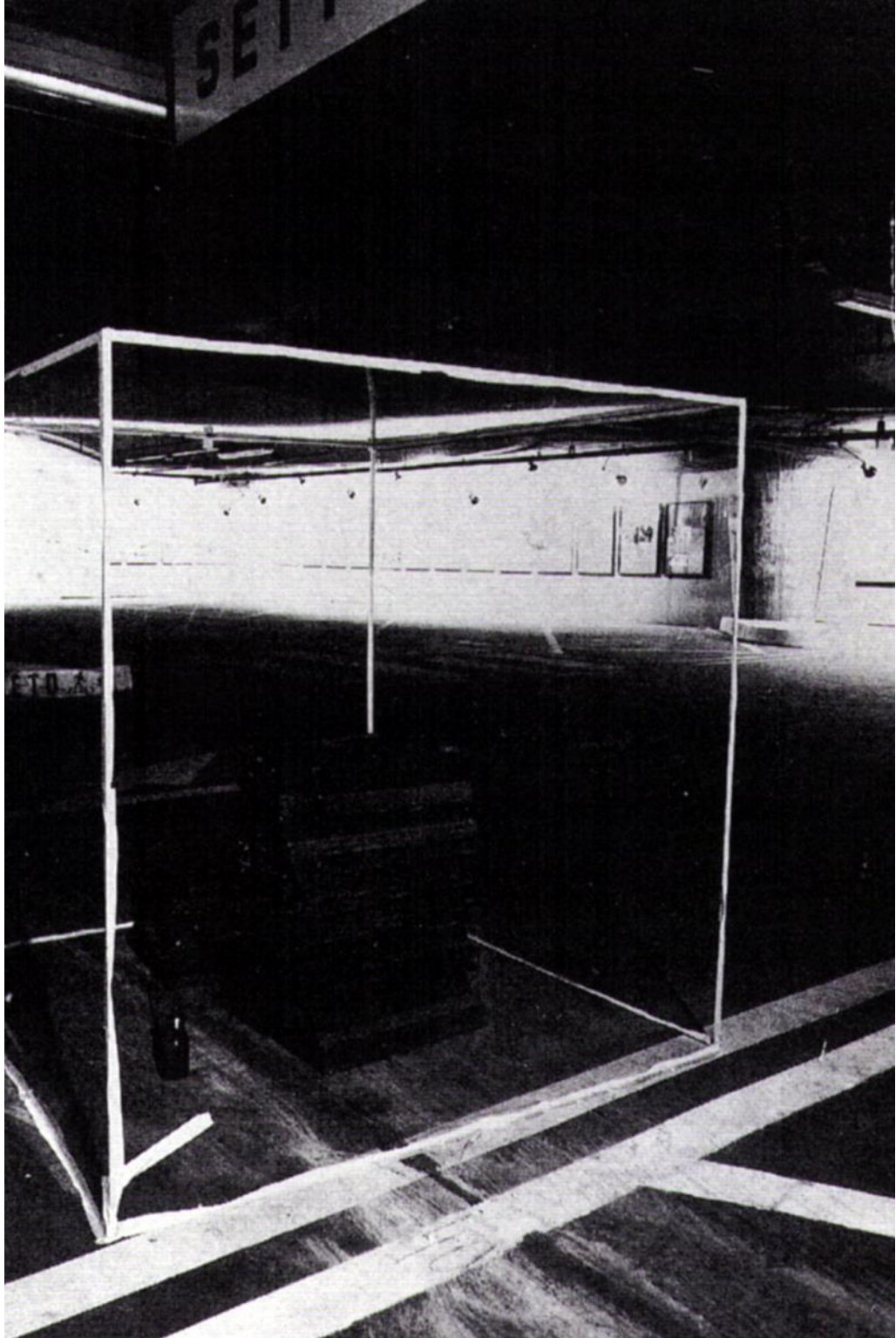


Figure 134. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, installed at *Contemporanea* in Rome, 1973.

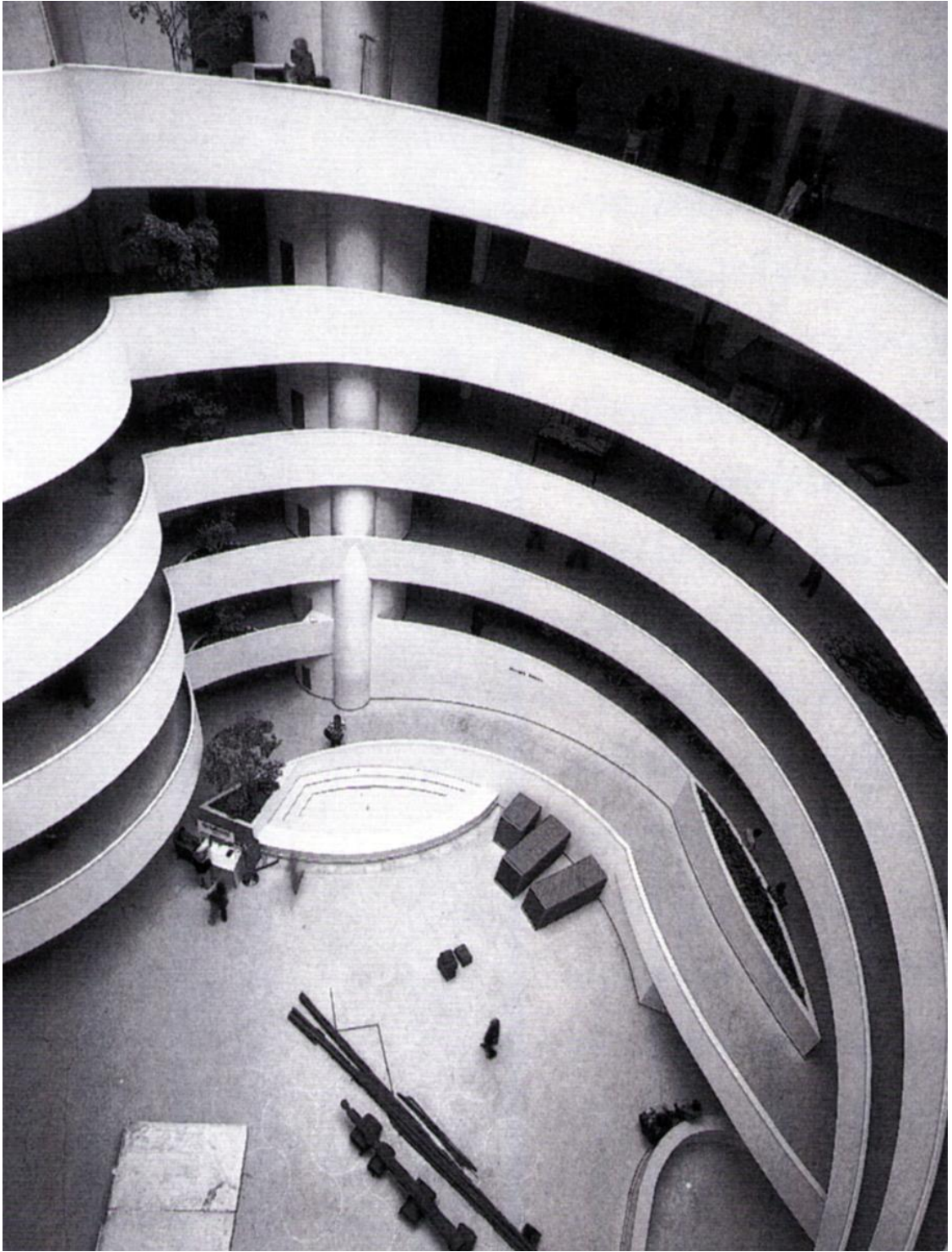


Figure 135. View of *Arena* from above at *Joseph Beuys*, retrospective exhibition held at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York in 1979.



Figure 136. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, 1972 as installed in the atrium of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York in 1979.



Figure 137. Installation view of *Arena. where would I have got if I had been intelligent!* at the Dia Center for the Arts, New York, 1992-93.

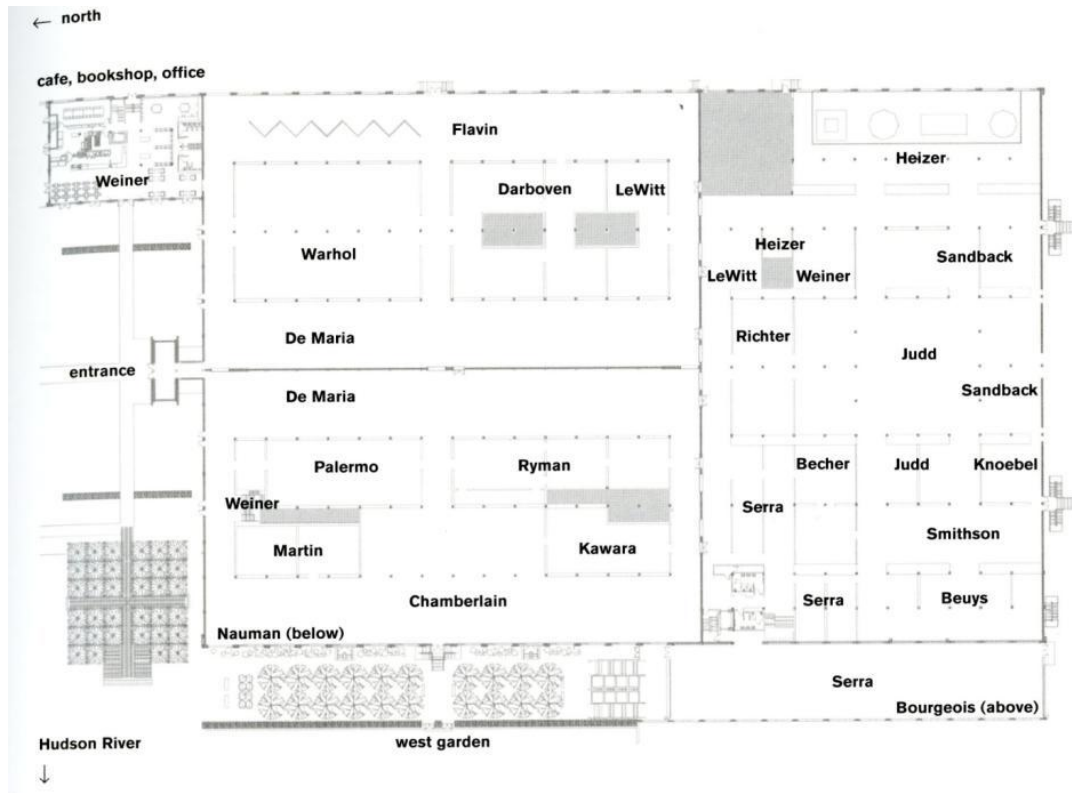


Figure 138. Floorplan of Dia:Beacon, 2003.





Figure 139. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, 1972, installed at Dia: Beacon, 2003.



Figure 140. Joseph Beuys, installation view of *Fond III/3*, 1979, and *Fond IV/4*, 1979 at Dia: Beacon, 2004.



Figure 141. Gerhard Richter, *Atlas*, 1962-present. Sheet 9 (1962), newspaper photographs and clippings, 51.7 x 66.7 cm.

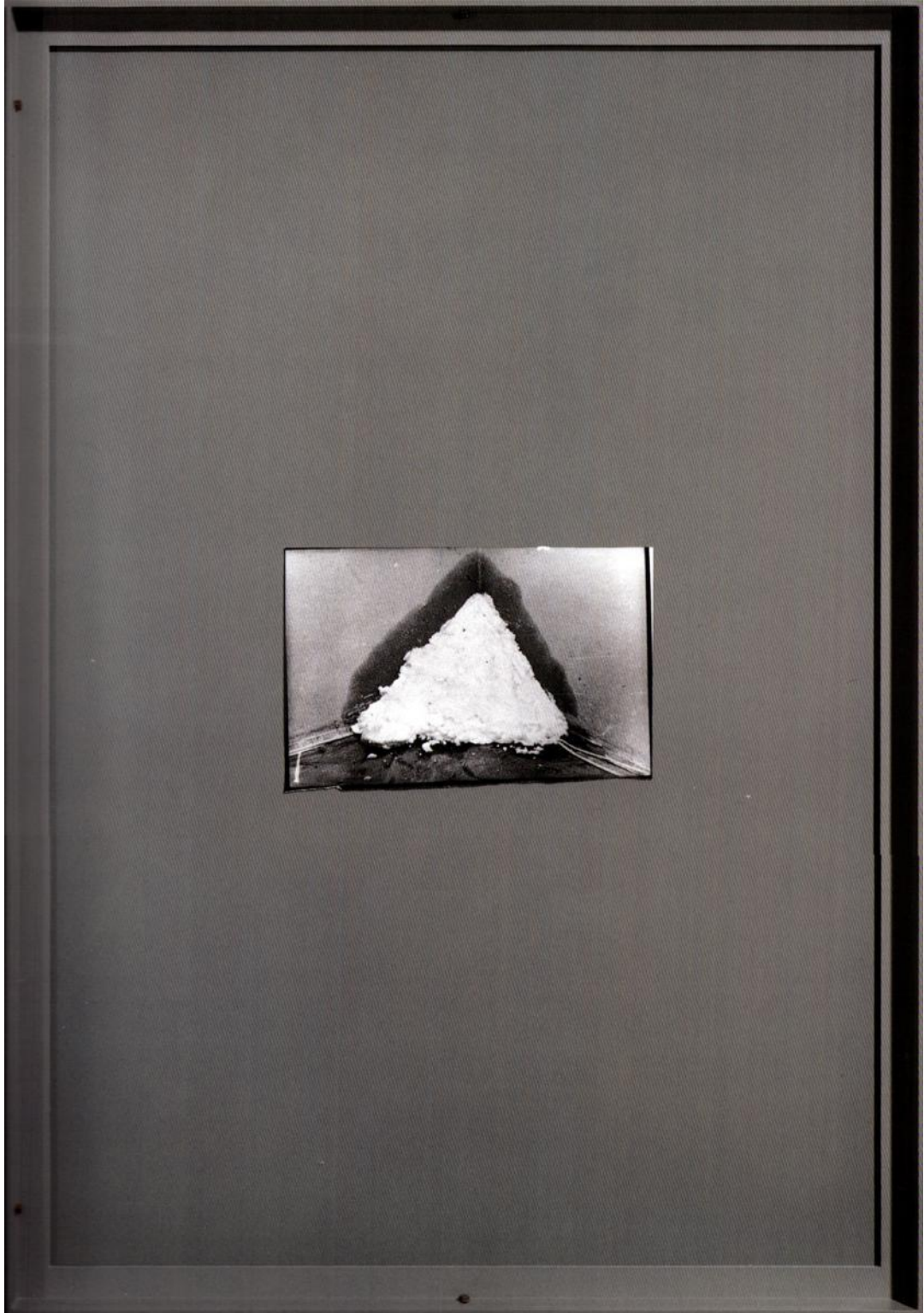


Figure 142. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #49, 1972.



Figure 143. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #47, 1972.



Figure 144. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #3, 1972.



Figure 145. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #26, 1972.



Figure 146. Joseph Beuys, *Block Beuys* (Raum 2) [Room 2]. Installation. Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt.



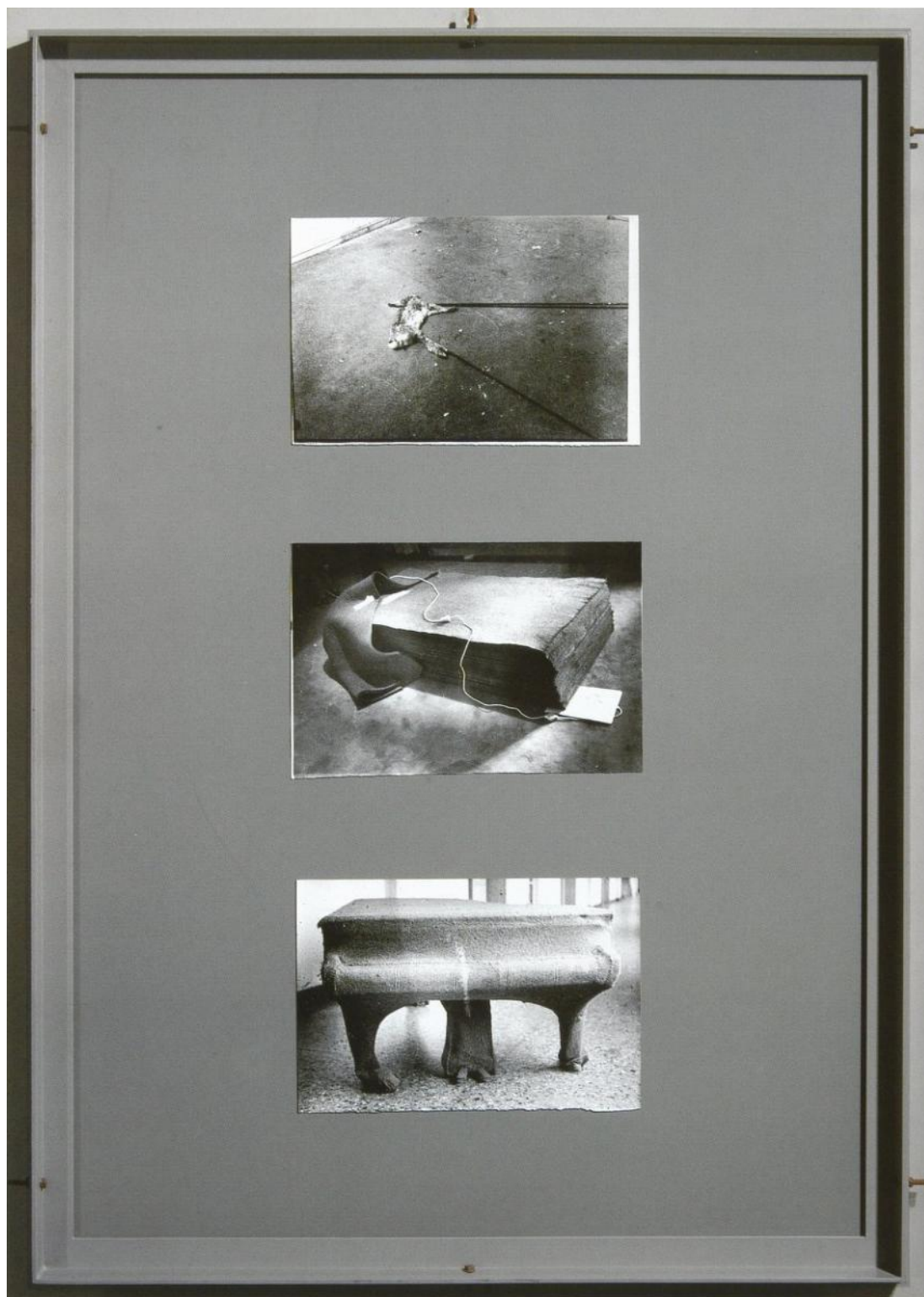


Figure 147. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #19, 1972.

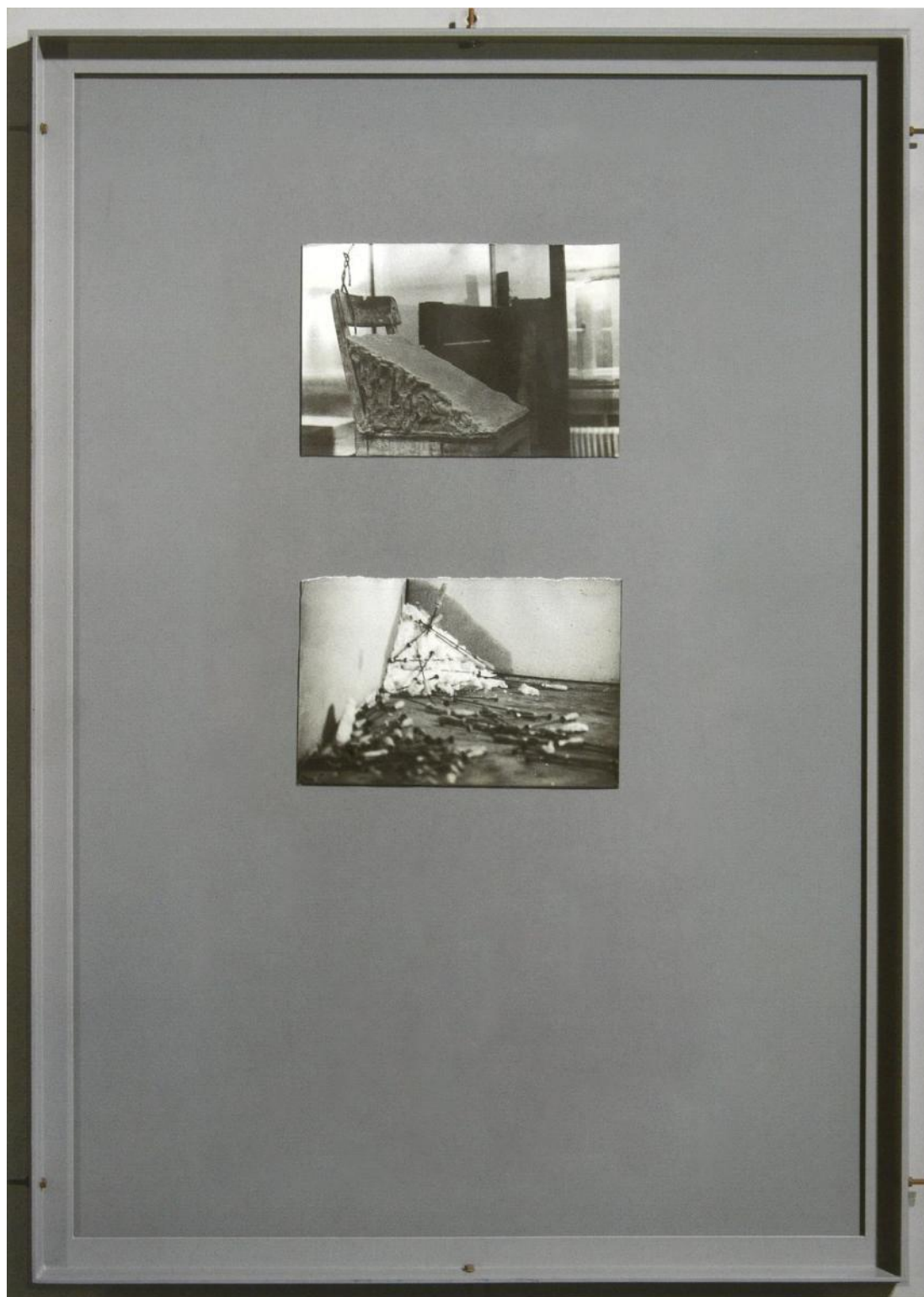


Figure 148. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #65, 1972.



Figure 149. Joseph Beuys, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965.  
Photodocumentation of a performance at Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, Germany.

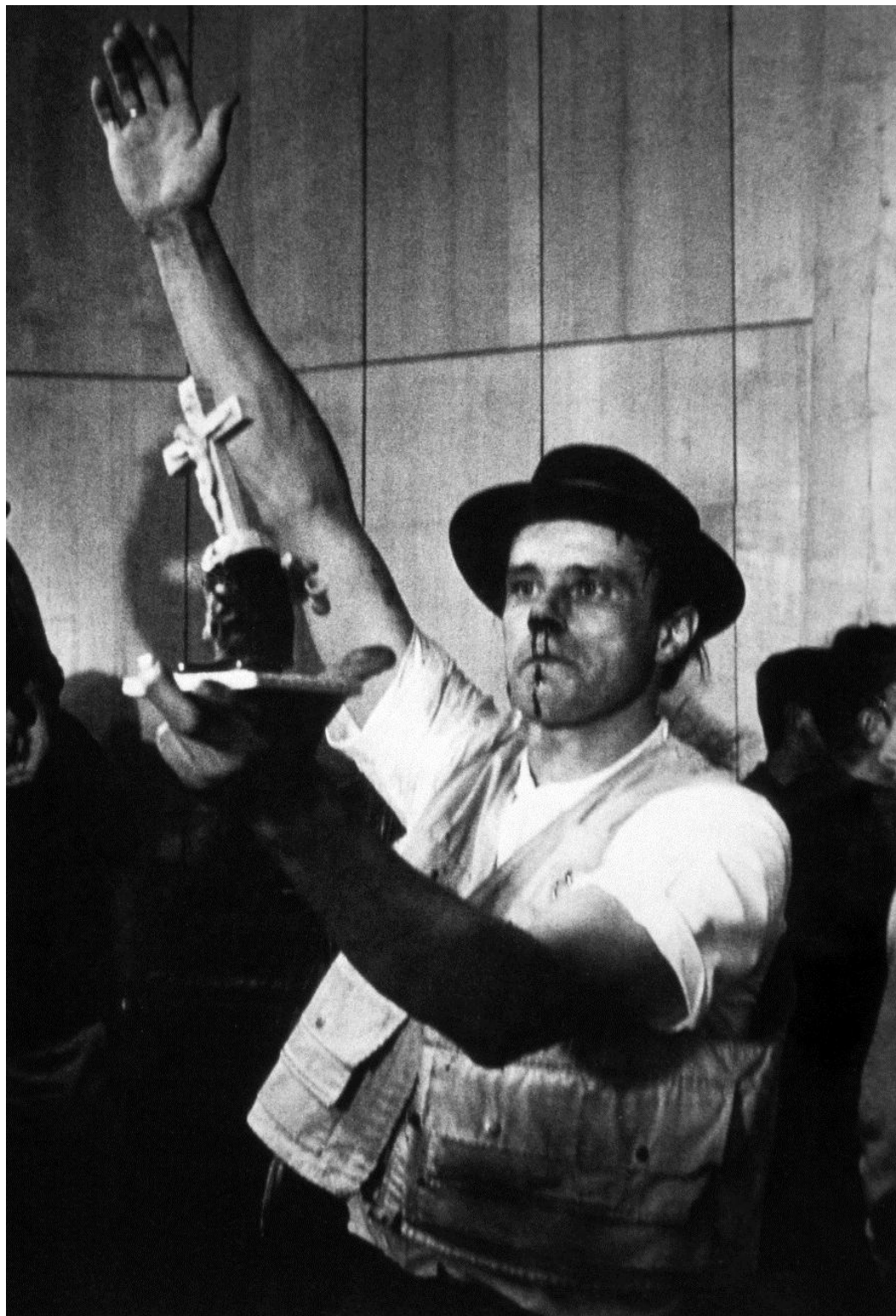


Figure 150. Joseph Beuys, Untitled performance during the Festival of New Art, July 20, 1964. Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule, Aachen, Germany.



Figure 151. Joseph Beuys, *Eurasia Siberian Symphony, 34<sup>th</sup> Section*, 1963. Photograph of October 1966 performance at the Galleri 101 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

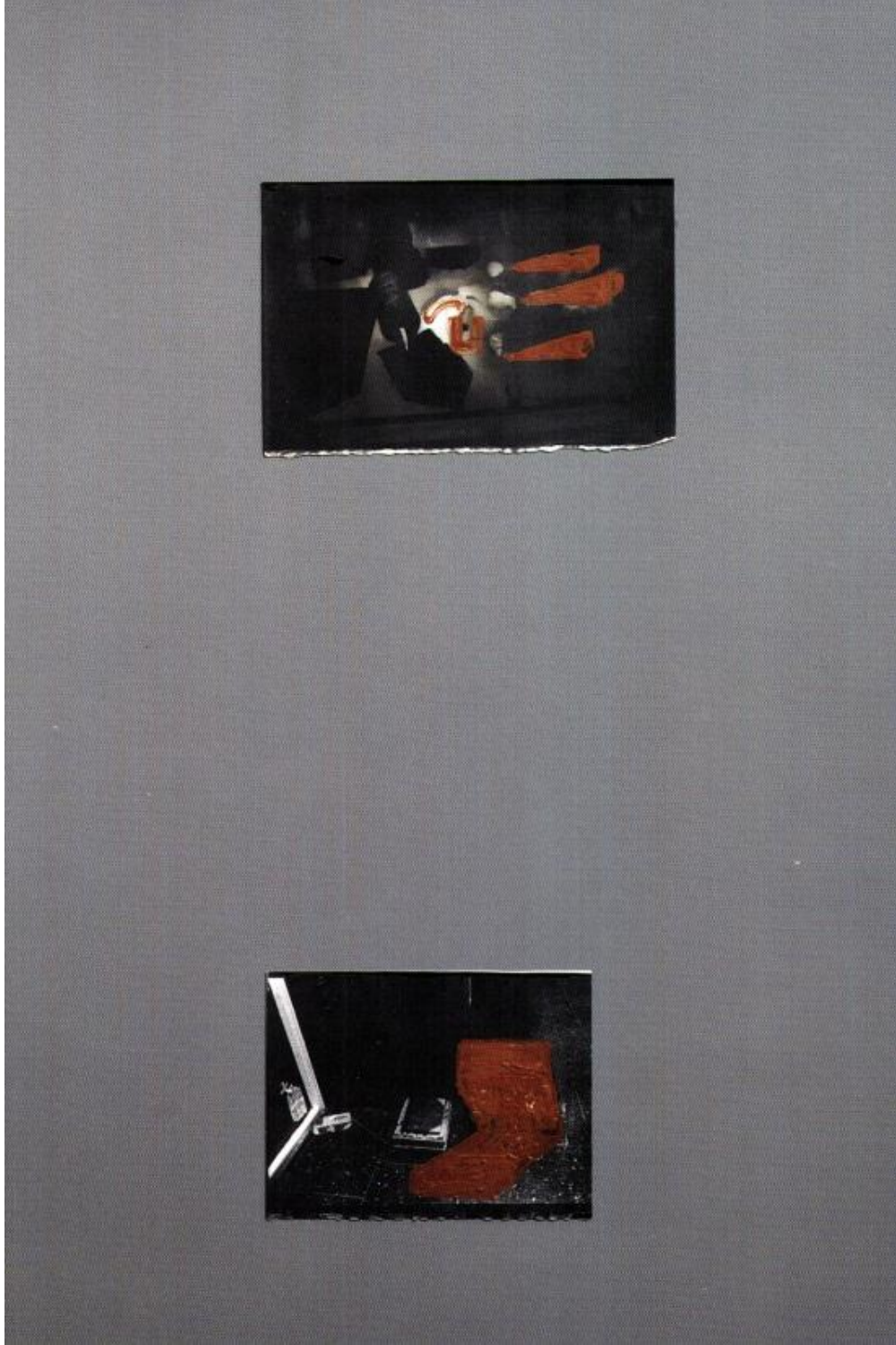


Figure 152. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of plate #72, 1972.



Figure 153. Yves Klein with models during the performance, *Anthropometries of the Blue Period*, 9 March 1960, Paris.



Figure 154. Joseph Beuys, *Vitex agnus castus*, 15 June 1972. Performance at Modern Art Agency, Naples.



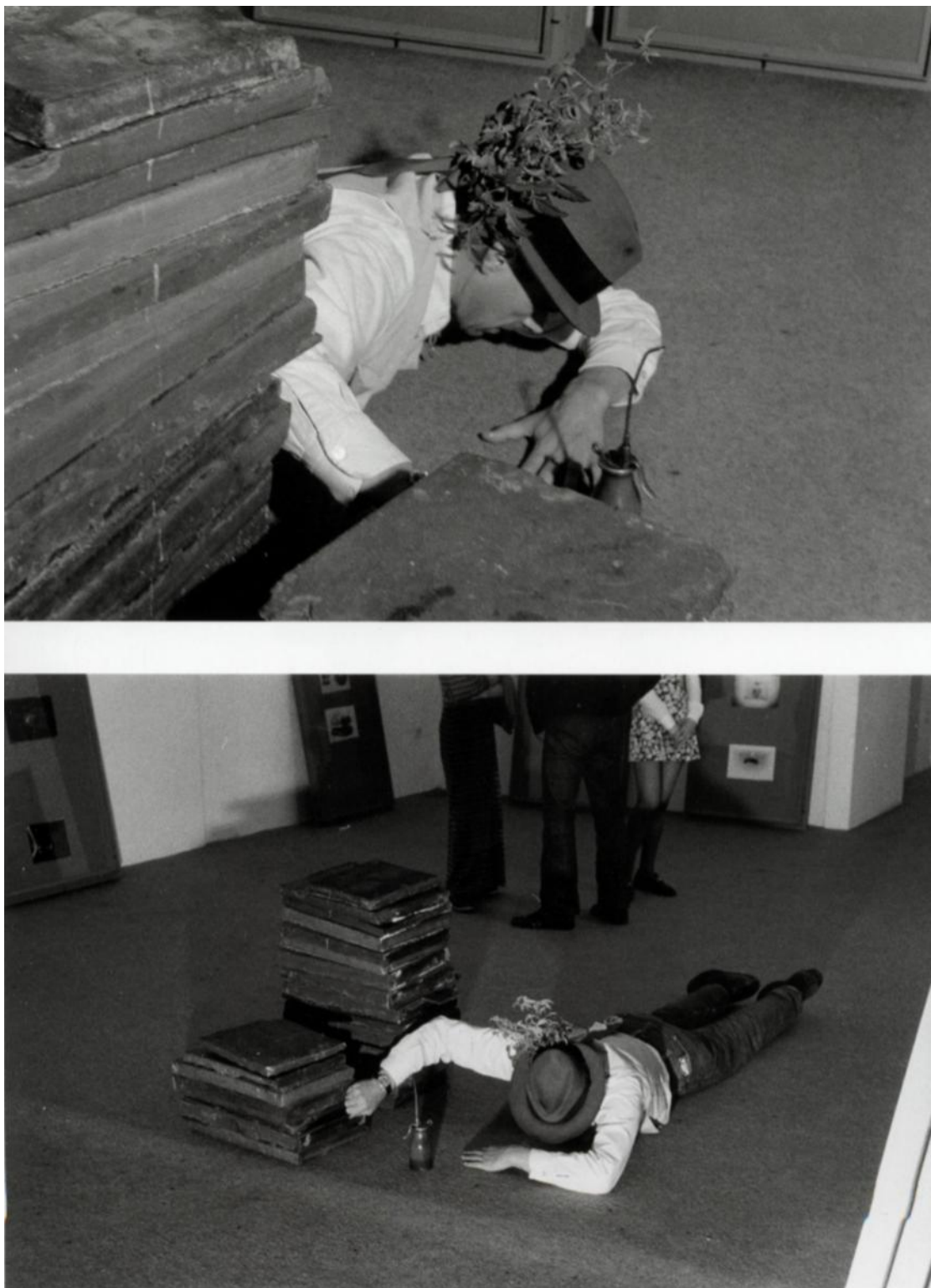


Figure 155. Joseph Beuys, *Vitex agnus castus*, 15 June 1972. Performance at Modern Art Agency, Naples.

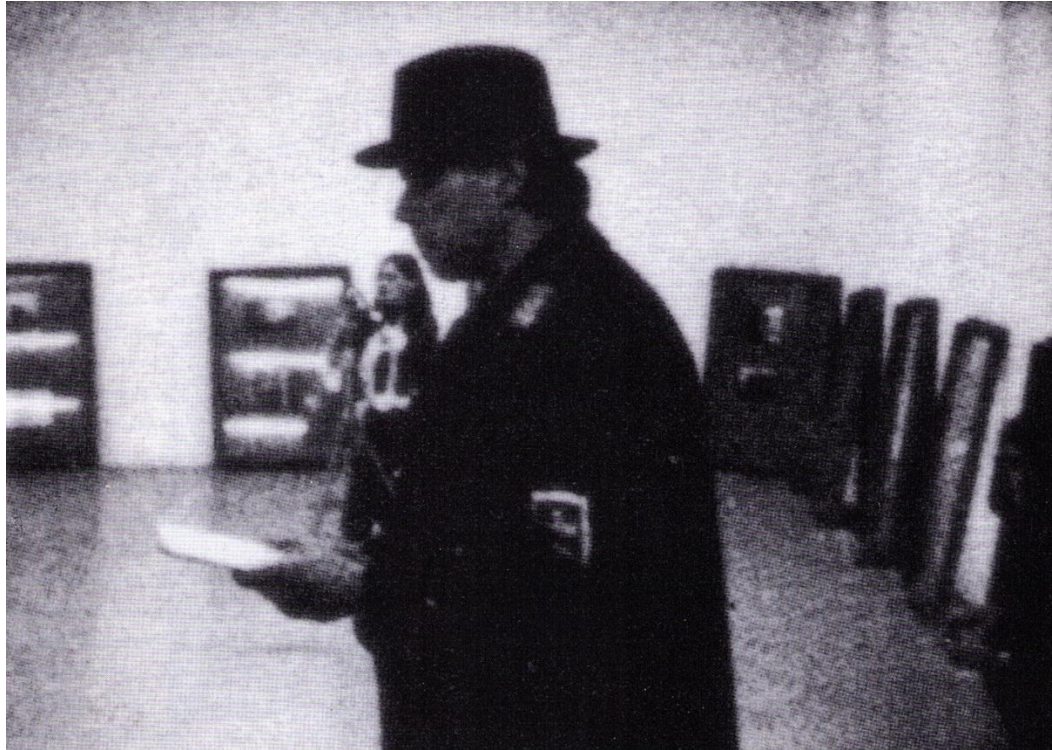


Figure 156. Joseph Beuys, Still from *Anacharsis Cloots*, 1972. 8mm film of performance at L'Attico, Rome.



Figure 157. Yves Klein, *Le globe bleu*, 1957. Photograph by Harry Shunk, 1962.  
Published in *Interfunktionen* 3 (1969).

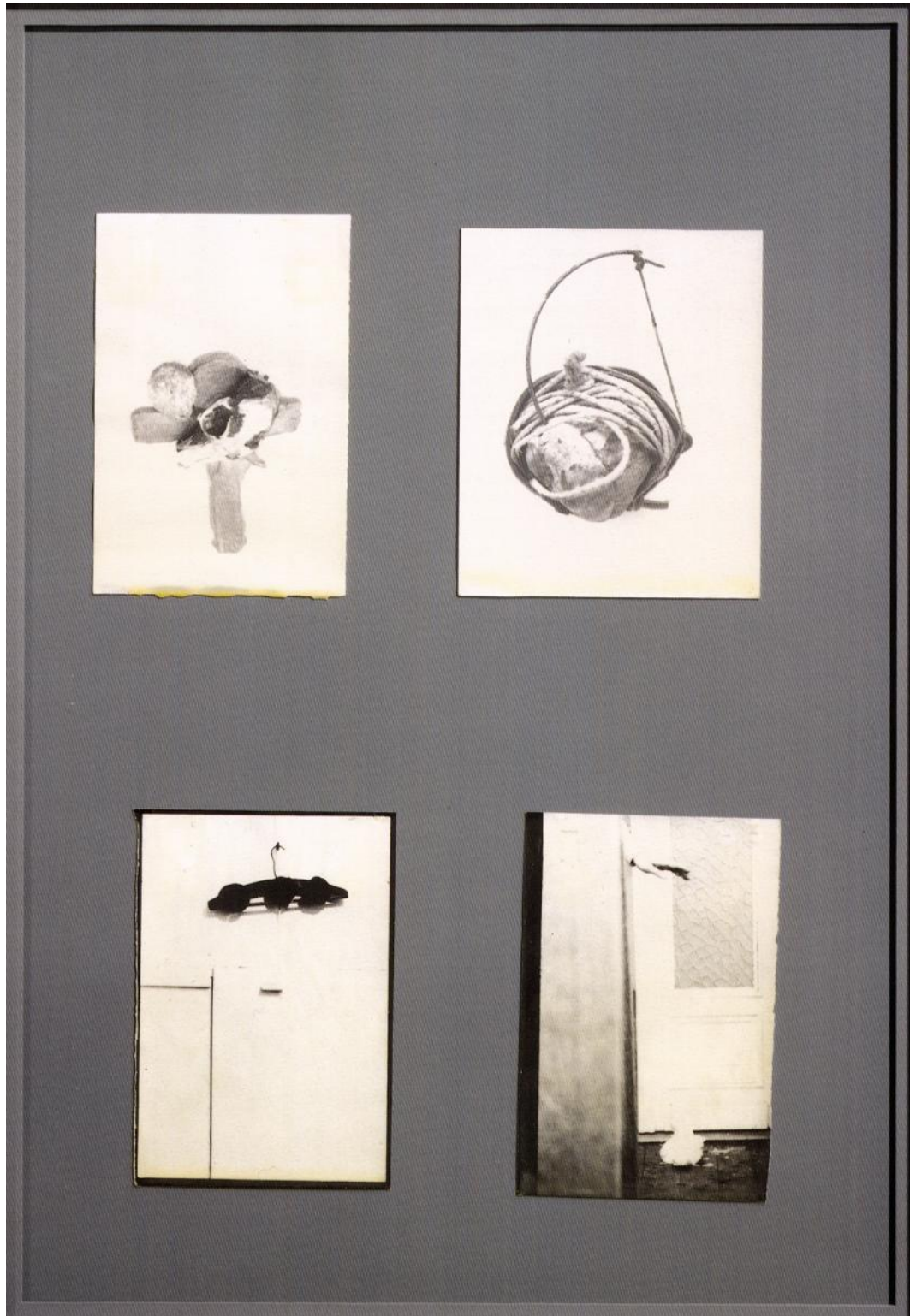


Figure 158. Joseph Beuys, *Arena*, detail of panel #10, 1972.

## Bibliography

- Ackermann, Marion, and Isabelle Malz, eds. *Joseph Beuys: Parallel Processes*. Düsseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2010.
- Adelmann, Marianne. "Sculpture in the Streets." *The Studio* 164, no. 835 (1962): 164-69.
- Alloway, Lawrence. "Art in Escalation, the History of Happenings: A Question of Sources." *Arts Magazine*, December 1966 - January 1967.
- . "Artists and Photographers (1970)." In *The Last Picture Show: Artists Using Photography, 1960-1982*, edited by Douglas Fogle. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2003.
- . *The Venice Biennale, 1895-1968: From Salon to Goldfish Bowl*. Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1968.
- Amelio, Lucio, and Pamela Kort. "The Neapolitan Tetralogy: An Interview with Lucio Amelio." In *Arena: Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!*, edited by Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly, 34-51. New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994.
- Antweiler, Werner. "Pacific Exchange Rate Service: Foreign Currency Units Per 1 U.S. Dollar, 1948-2009." University of British Columbia, <http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/etc/USDpages.pdf>.
- Armstrong, Richard, and Richard Marshall. *The New Sculpture 1965-75: Between Geometry and Gesture*. New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 1990.
- Assante, Dario. *Carlo Scarpa: Il Padiglione Del Libro All Biennale Di Venezia, La Galleria Del Cavallino, 1942 E 1949*. Venice: Cavallino, 2000.
- Atkinson, Terry. "Concerning the Article 'the Dematerialization of Art' (1968)." In *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Alex Alberro and Blake Stimson, 52-58. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

- Baker, Kenneth. "Talking with Robert Smithson (1970)." In *Robert Smithson: Spiral Jetty, True Fictions, False Realities*, edited by Lynne Cooke, 147-58. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Barbero, Luca Massimo. *Carlo Cardazzo. A New Vision in Art*. Milan: Electa, 2008.
- Barletta, Riccardo. "Una Biennale Per Gli Occhi." *Prospetti*, no. 2-3 (June-September 1966): 261-66.
- Baudrillard, Jean. "For Illusion Is Not the Opposite of Reality...." In *Photographies 1985-1998*, 129-42. Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 199.
- Bear, Liza, and Willoughby Sharp. "Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, and Smithson." *Avalanche*, no. 1 (Fall 1970): 48-70.
- Bernd & Hilla Becher, Robert Smithson: Field Trips*. Edited by James Lingwood. Turin: Hopefulmonster 2002.
- Beuys, Joseph, Bernd Klüser, and Jörg Schellmann. "Questions to Joseph Beuys (1977)." In *Modern Sculpture Reader*, edited by Jon Wood, David Hulks and Alex Potts, 316-24. Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2007.
- Beverly Pepper a Forte Belvedere: Trent'anni Di Scultura*. Milan: Electa, 1989.
- Blume, Eugen. "Joseph Beuys and Photography." In *Joseph Beuys: Make the Secrets Productive*, 45-51. New York: PaceWildenstein, 2010.
- Bonito Oliva, Achille. *Installation and Performance Art: Claudio Abate, Fotografo*. Milan: Photology, 2007.
- . *Joseph Beuys: Il Ciclo Del Suo Lavoro*. Milan: Studio Marconi, 1973.
- Bonuomo, Michele. *Warhol, Beuys: Omaggio a Lucio Amelio*. Milan: Mazzotta, 2007.
- Brenson, Michael. "The Fields." In *David Smith: A Centennial*, edited by Carmen Giménez, 39-65. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2006.

- Brin, Irene. "Milledue Cadauna (Twelve Hundred a Piece)." *L'Europeo*, 23 June 1966, 71.
- Brown, Gordon. "Yayoi Kusama." *D'Ars* 7, no. 1-2 (1966): 140.
- Brown, Robert. *Pino Pascali: Ponte, The Italian Sale, 20th Century Art*. London: Christie's, 2008.
- Buchloh, Benjamin H.D. "Beuys: The Twilight of the Idol, Preliminary Notes for a Critique (1980)." In *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, edited by Gene Ray, 199-211. New York: D.A.P., 2001.
- . "Reconsidering Joseph Beuys, Once Again." In *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, edited by Gene Ray, 75-89. New York: D.A.P., 2001.
- Buchloh, Benjamin H.D., Rosalind E. Krauss, and Annette Michelson. "Joseph Beuys at the Guggenheim." *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 3-21.
- Budnik, Dan, M. Knoedler, and Co. *Seeing David Smith: Photographs by Dan Budnik*. New York: Knoedler & Co., 2006.
- Cabutti, Lucio, Denis Curti, and Marisa Vescovo. *L Giocoliere Elettronico: Nam June Paik E L'invenzione Della Videoarte*. Turin: Hopefulmonster, 2002.
- Campany, David. *Art and Photography*. London: Phaidon, 2003.
- . "Conceptual Art History or, a Home for *Homes for America*." In *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, edited by Michael Newman and Jon Bird, 123-39. London: Reaktion, 1999.
- Carandente, Giovanni. "1962/2002 Sculture Nella Città, La Mostra Di Spoleto Nel Reportage Storico Di Ugo Mulas E Di Altri Importanti Maestri Della Fotografia Internazionale." n.p. Spoleto: Palazzo Racani Arroni, 2002.
- . "The American Odysseus of Sculpture." In *David Smith in Italy*, 17-28. Milan: PradaMilanoarte, 1995.

- . *Sculpture Nella Città, Spoleto*. Spoleto: NE Editrice, 2007.
- . "Sculptures in the City." *Siderexport [Foreign supplement of Rivista Italsider]* 4 (December 1962): 31-39.
- . "Sculture Nella Città." *Spoletium* VIII, no. 1-2 (December 1962): 19-27.
- . *Teodelapio: Alexander Calder*. Milan: Charta, 1996.
- . *Una Città Piena Di Sculture: Spoleto 1962*. Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992.
- . *Voltron*. Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1964.
- Carmean Jr., E.A. "David Smith: The Voltri Sculpture." In *American Art at Mid-Century: The Subjects of the Artist*, edited by E.A. Carmean Jr., 214-42. Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1978.
- Catalogo Della Xxxiii Esposizione Biennale Internazionale D'arte Venezia*. Venice: La Biennale di Venezia, 1966.
- Cederena, Camilla. "Quel Dito Dipinto Di Blu." *L'Espresso*, 26 June 1966, n.p.
- Celant, Germano. *Arte Povera*. Milano: G. Mazzotta Editore, 1969.
- . *Arte Povera = Art Povera*. Milan: Electa, 1985.
- . *Arte Povera Più Azioni Povere*. Salerno: Rumma Editore, 1969.
- . *Conceptual Art, Arte Povera, Land Art*. Torino: Galleria civica d'arte moderna, 1970.
- . "Yayoi Kusama." *Interview*, June 2005, 76-80.
- Christov-Bakargiev, Carolyn. *Arte Povera*. London: Phaidon, 2005.



- Colpitt, Francis. "The Photograph and the Photographed." *Southern California Art Magazine*, no. 24 (1979).
- Cooke, Lynne. "Installing *Arena*: An Introduction." In *Arena: Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!*, edited by Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly, 12-17. New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994.
- . "Joseph Beuys: Introduction." Dia Art Foundation, <http://www.diacenter.org/exhibitions/introduction/77>.
- Cooke, Lynne, and Michael Govan. *Dia: Beacon*. New York: Dia Foundation, 2003.
- Cooke, Lynne, and Karen Kelly, eds. *Arena: Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!* New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994.
- Cognati, Martina. *Eugenio Carmi: Tre Miliardi Di Zieri, Three Billion Zeros*. Milan: Charta, 2006.
- Crispoliti, Enrico, and Jan van der Marck. *Lucio Fontana*. Brussels: La Connaissance, 1974.
- De Domizio Durini, Lucrezia. *The Felt Hat: Joseph Beuys, a Life Told*. Milan: Charta, 1997.
- de Kooning, Elaine. "David Smith Makes a Sculpture." *Art News* 50, no. 5 (September 1951): 39-41, 50-51.
- de Lima Greene, Alison. "Dennis Oppenheim: No Photography." *Spot* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 5-6.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.
- Di Genova, Giorgio. "Integrazione O Invasione?" *Nuova generazione*, 5 August 1962.
- Di Martino, Enzo. *The History of the Venice Biennale, 1895-2005: Visual Arts, Architecture, Cinema, Dance, Music, Theatre*. Venice: Papiro Arte, 2005.

- "Doctor Adds His 'Touch' to Artist's Work." *Montreal Star*, 5 July 1966.
- Eco, Umberto. *The Open Work*. Translated by Anna Cancogni. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
- . "You Must Remember This..." In *The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-1968*, edited by Germano Celant, xii-xv. New York: Guggenheim Museum, 1994.
- Fellini, Federico. *Fellini on Fellini*. Edited by Anna Keel and Christian Strich. London: Eyre Methuen, 1976.
- Flood, Richard, and Frances Morris. *Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera, 1962-1972*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2001.
- Foote, Nancy. "The Anti-Photographers." *Artforum* 15, no. 1 (1976).
- Friedel, Helmut, ed. *Atlas*. New York: D.A.P./ Distributed Art Publishers, 2006.
- Frost, Rosamund J. "Lipchitz Makes a Sculpture." *Art News* (April 1950): 36-39, 63-64.
- Gilman, Claire. "Introduction." *October* 124 (Spring 2008): 3-7.
- Godfrey, Tony. *Conceptual Art, Art & Ideas*. London: Phaidon, 1998.
- Goodnough, Robert. "Pollock Paints a Picture." *Art News* 50, no. 3 (May 1951): 38-41, 60-61.
- Green, David, and Joanna Lowry. "Splitting the Index: Time, Object, and Photography in the Work of Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein." In *Sculpture and Photography: Envisioning the Third Dimension*, edited by Geraldine A. Johnson, 148-65. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Hamilton, Richard "Joseph Beuys (1921-1986)." *Art Monthly* (March 1986): 10-11.
- Henry Moore: Sculptures in Landscape*. London: Studio Vista, 1978.

- Hickey, Andria. "Man, Myth, and Magic: Yves Klein and Photography." In *Yves Klein: With the Void, Full Powers*, edited by Kerry Brougher and Philippe Vergne, 287-331. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2010.
- Hobbs, Robert. *Robert Smithson: Sculpture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.
- Hoptman, Laura. "Down to Zero: Yayoi Kusama and the European "New Tendency"." In *Yayoi Kusama: I Want to Live Forever*, edited by Akira Tatehata, 30-45. Milan: Federico Motta, 2009.
- . "Down to Zero: Yayoi Kusama and the European 'New Tendency'." In *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*, 43-59. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1998.
- . *Yayoi Kusama*. London: Phaidon, 2000.
- Hulme, T.E. "Cinders: A Sketch of a New Weltanschauung." In *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, edited by Herbert Read. London: Routledge, 1924.
- Jachec, Nancy. *Politics and Painting at the Venice Biennale, 1948-64*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.
- Jacobs, Jay. "David Smith Sculpts for Spoleto." *Art News Annual* 29 (1964): 42-49, 156-58.
- Johnston, Jill. "Reviews and Previews: Kusama's *One Thousand Boats Show*." *Art News* 62, no. 10 (February 1964): 12.
- Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*. Edited by David Thistlewood. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995.
- Judd, Donald. "In the Galleries: Yayoi Kusama." *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 10 (September 1964): 68-69.
- Kaprow, Allan. *Assemblage, Environments, & Happenings*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1966.

- . *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Edited by Jeff Kelley. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- . "Happenings in the New York Scene (1961)." In *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, edited by Jeff Kelley, 15-26. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.
- Kaprow, Allan, and Richard Schechner. "Extensions in Time and Space: An Interview with Allan Kaprow." *The Drama Review: TDR* 12, no. 3 (Spring, 1968): 153-59.
- Karia, Bhupendra. *Yayoi Kusama: A Retrospective*. New York: Center for International Art, 1989.
- Klein, Yves. "Some Excerpts from My Journal." In *Overcoming the Problematics of Art: The Writings of Yves Klein*, edited by Klaus Ottman. Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 2007.
- Klophaus, Ute. "Being and Remaining: Photography to Joseph Beuys (1985)." In *Live Art on Camera*, edited by Alice Maude-Roxby, 111-13. London: John Hansard Gallery, 2007.
- Kort, Pamela. "Joseph Beuys' Aesthetic 1958-1972." In *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, edited by David Thistlewood, 67-80. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995.
- . "Joseph Beuys's Arena: The Way In." In *Arena: Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!*, edited by Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly, 18-33. New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994.
- Kramer, Hilton. "Le Parc Takes Painting Prize for Kinetic Works at Venice." *New York Times*, 19 June 1966, 84.
- Krauss, Rosalind E. *Beverly Pepper: Sculpture in Place*. Buffalo: Albright-Knox Gallery, 1986.
- . "David Smith's 'New Vision'." In *David Smith: Photographs 1931-1965*, 7-11. New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 1998.

- . *Passages in Modern Sculpture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981.
- . "Reading Photographs as Text." In *Pollock Painting*, edited by Barbara Rose, n.p. New York: Agrinde Publications, 1980.
- . "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.
- . *Terminal Iron Works: The Sculpture of David Smith*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971.
- Kultermann, Udo. "Focus: *Driving Image*." In *Yayoi Kusama*, edited by Laura Hoptman, 85-93. London: Phaidon, 2000.
- Kuspit, Donald. "Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman." In *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, edited by David Thistlewood, 27-49. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995.
- L'attico 1957-87: Trent'anni Di Pittura, Scultura, Musica, Danza, Performance, Video*. Milan: Mondadori, 1987.
- Leeb Hadzi, Martha. "Report from Rome: Sculpture at Spoleto." *Art in America*, no. 4 (1962): 116-18.
- Levin, Kim. "Introduction." In *Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America*, edited by Carin Kuoni, 1-5. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1990.
- Lippard, Lucy. *955,000: An Exhibition*. Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1970.
- . *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972...* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Lippard, Lucy, and John Chandler. "The Dematerialization of Art." *Art International* 12, no. 2 (February 1968): 31-36.

- Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form. Works, Concepts, Processes, Situations, Information.* Edited by Harald Szeemann. Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1969.
- Lonzi, Carla. "I Pretend to Make Sculptures. Interview with Pino Pascali, 1967." In *Arte Povera from the Goetz Collection*, edited by Rainald Schumacher, 146-56. Munich: Sammlung Goetz, 2001.
- Lumley, Robert. *Arte Povera*. London: Tate 2004.
- . "Between Pop Art and Arte Povera: American Influences in the Visual Arts in Italy in the 1960s." In *Across the Atlantic: Cultural Exchanges between Europe and the United States*, edited by Luisa Passerini. New York: P.I.E.P. Lang, 2000.
- Marinelli, Gianluca. "L'italsider a Taranto. Gli Artisti E La Grande Industria, 1960-1974." *Kronos, periodico del DBAS, Dipartimento beni, arti, storia*, no. 4 (2008): 179-222.
- McShine, Kynaston. *Information*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970.
- "Merchants of Venice." *Newsweek*, 27 June 1966, 90.
- Morris, Robert. "Anti Form." *Artforum* 6 (April 1968): 33-35.
- . *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993.
- . "Notes on Sculpture, Part 4: Beyond Objects." *Artforum* 7 (April 1969): 50-54.
- Mulas, Ugo. *Ugo Mulas. Immagini E Testi*. Parma: Istituto di storia dell'arte, 1973.
- Narotzky, Norman. "The Venice Biennale: Pease Porridge in the Pot Nine Days Old." *Arts Magazine* (September-October 1966): 42-44.

- Norvell, Patricia. *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, Lewitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelau, Smithson, and Weiner*. Edited by Patricia Norvell and Alexander Alberro. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- O'Doherty, Brian. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986.
- Obici, Giulio. "Uno Spillo Mette in Crisi La Biennale Di Venezia." *Paese Sera*, 5 July 1966, n.p.
- Op Losse Schroeven: Situaties En Cryptostructuren*. Edited by Wim Beeren. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1969.
- Oppenheim, Dennis, and Alana Heiss. *Dennis Oppenheim: Selected Works, 1967-1990*. New York: Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum, 1992.
- Osborn, Robert. "Calder's International Monuments." *Art in America* (March - April 1969): 32-45.
- Pachner, Joan. "David Smith's Photographs." In *David Smith: Photographs 1931-1965*, 108-20. New York: Matthew Marks Gallery, 1998.
- Pecorini, Giorgio. "Videro Le Muse Negli Altiforni." *L'Europeo*, 30 Settembre 1962, 20-29.
- Phillips, Christopher. "Arena: The Chaos of the Unnamed." In *Arena: Where Would I Have Got If I Had Been Intelligent!*, edited by Lynne Cooke and Karen Kelly, 52-62. New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1994.
- . "The Judgment Seat of Photography." *October* 22 (Autumn 1982): 27-63.
- Photography and Painting in the Work of Gerhard Richter: Four Essays on Atlas*. Barcelona: Consorci del Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 2000.
- Politi, Giancarlo, and Fabio Sargentini. *Fabio Sargentini*. Milan: G.Politi, 1990.

- Potts, Alex. "Introduction: The Idea of Modern Sculpture." In *Modern Sculpture Reader*, edited by Jon Wood, David Hulks and Alex Potts, xiii-xxx. Leeds Henry Moore Institute, 2007.
- . "The Minimalist Object and the Photographic Image." In *Sculpture and Photography: Envisioning the Third Dimension*, edited by Geraldine A. Johnson, 181-96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- . "Personages Imperfect and Persistent." In *David Smith: Personage*, 7-19. New York: Gagosian Gallery, 2006.
- . *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- . "Tactility: The Interrogation of Medium in Art of the 1960s." *Art History* 27, no. 2 (April 2004): 282-304.
- Querél, Vittore. "Scultura Di Venticinque Tonnellate Giunta a Spoleto Dagli Altiforni Liguri." *Giornale di Sicilia* (20 July 1962).
- Rattemeyer, Christian. *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969*. London: Afterall Books, 2010.
- Ray, Gene, ed. *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*. New York: D.A.P., 2001.
- Restany, Pierre. "La Biennale Vista Da Pierre Restany: 'L'homo Ludens Contro L'homo Faber'." *Domus*, no. 441 (August 1966): 37-51.
- Rose, Barbara. *Pollock Painting*. New York: Agrinde Publications, 1980.
- Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters (1960)." In *The Tradition of the New*. New York: De Capo Press, 1994.
- . "The Art Object and the Esthetics of Impermanence." In *The Anxious Object*, 88-96. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.



- . "Preface (1960)." In *The Tradition of the New*, 3-11. New York: Da Capo Press, 1994.
- Rosenthal, Mark, ed. *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments*. Houston: The Menil Collection, 2004.
- . "Joseph Beuys: Staging Sculpture." In *Joseph Beuys: Actions, Vitrines, Environments*, edited by Mark Rosenthal, 10-135. Houston: The Menil Collection, 2004.
- Rosenthal, Nan. "Assisted Levitation: The Art of Yves Klein." In *Yves Klein, 1928-1962: A Retrospective*, 89-135. Houston: Institute for the Arts, Rice University, 1982.
- Rossi, Laura. "Fabbrica D'arte: Quando Gli Artisti Entrano in Officina." In *TICCIH (The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage) XIII International Congress*. Terni, Italy, 15 September 2006.
- Rothfuss, Joan. "Circulation Time." In *Joseph Beuys, the Multiples: Catalogue Raisonné of Multiples and Prints*, edited by Jörg Schellmann, 522-23. New York: Edition Schellmann, 1997.
- . "Joseph Beuys: Echoes in America." In *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, edited by Gene Ray, 37-53. New York: D.A.P., 2001.
- Ruscha, Edward, and John Coplans. "Concerning 'Various Small Fires': Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications." *Artforum* 3, no. 5 (February 1965).
- Rylands, Philip and Enzo di Martino. *Flying the Flag for Art: The United States and the Venice Biennale, 1895-1991*. Richmond, VA: Wyldbore and Wolferstan, 1993.
- Sargentini, Fabio. *Album: 9/68 - 2/71*. Rome: L'Attico, 1971.
- Schneede, Uwe M. *Joseph Beuys: Die Aktionen*. Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1994.
- Schumacher, Rainald. *Arte Povera from the Goetz Collection*. München: Sammlung Goetz, 2001.

- "Sculture Nelle Strade E Nelle Piazze Di Spoleto." *L'Avanti!*, 19 April 1962, n.p.
- Sharp, Willoughby. "An Interview with Joseph Beuys." *Artforum* 8, no. 4 (December 1969): 40-47.
- Silleck, Joan. "Venice Amused." *The Daily American*, 29 June 1966, n.p.
- Smith, David. *David Smith*. Edited by Garnett McCoy. New York: Praeger, 1973.
- . "Report from Voltri." In *David Smith*, edited by Garnett McCoy, 156-63. New York: Praeger, 1973.
- Smithson, Robert. "Art through the Camera's Eye (1971)." *Kunst & museumjournaal* 5, no. 6 (1994): 15-23.
- . *Robert Smithson: Slideworks*. Edited by Guglielmo Bargellesi-Severi. Verona: Carlo Frua, 1997.
- . *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Edited by Jack Flam. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Sommer, Ed. "Letter from Germany." *Art International* 10, no. 8 (October 1966): 46-49.
- Storr, Robert. "The Idea of the Moral Imperative in Contemporary Art." *Art Criticism* 7, no. 1 (1992): 38-39.
- Sylvester, David. "The Spoleto Experiment." *The Sunday Times*, no. 7282 (9 December 1962): 12-17.
- Szarkowski, John. *The Photographer's Eye*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966.
- Tatehata, Akira. "Reconsidering Yayoi Kusama." In *Yayoi Kusama: I Want to Live Forever*, 18-29. Milan: Federico Motta, 2009.

- Thistlewood, David. "Joseph Beuys' 'Open Work': Its Resistance to Holistic Critiques." In *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, edited by David Thistlewood, 1-19. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press; Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995.
- Tisdall, Caroline, and Joseph Beuys. *Joseph Beuys*. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Thames and Hudson, 1979.
- "A Town Full of Sculpture." *Time*, 24 August 1962, 50.
- Trini, Tommaso. "The Last Interview Given by Fontana (19 July 1968)." *Studio International* (November 1972): 164.
- . "Robert Smithson: Un Libro." *Domus*, no. 599 (October 1979): 52-53.
- Tuchman, Phyllis. "That Was then, and This Is Now: The View from New York." In *Painting, Object, Film, Concept: Works from the Herbig Collection*. New York: Christie's, 1998.
- "Una Galleria D'arte in Nelle Vie Di Spoleto." *Il Quotidano*, 6 June 1962, n.p.
- "Uno De Fori Di Ay-O Chiuso Per Consiglio Medico." *Il Gazzettino*, 5 July 1966, n.p.
- Valentini, Francesca. "Calder. Fotografie Di Ugo Mulas. 1962-1971." Università Ca' Foscari 2008-09.
- Valsecchi, Marco. "Sculpture Nella Città." *Rivista Italsider* III, no. 4 (August-September 1962): n.p.
- "Venice Biennale Work Hard to Put a Finger On." *New York Times*, 5 July 1966, 33.
- Vergine, Lea. *Body Art and Performance: The Body as Language*. Milan: Skira, 2000.
- Wall, Jeff. "'Marks of Indifference': Aspects of Photography in, or as, Conceptual Art (1995)." In *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975*, 247-67. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2003.

Witkovsky, Matthew S., ed. *Light Years: Conceptual Art and the Photograph, 1964-1977*. Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2011.

Wood, Jon, David Hulks, and Alex Potts, eds. *Modern Sculpture Reader*. Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2007.

*Yayoi Kusama, 441a Mostra Del Naviglio*. Milan: Naviglio, 1966.

Yoshimoto, Midori. *Into Performance: Japanese Women Artists in New York*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Zelevansky, Lynn. *Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-1968*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County of Museum of Art, 1998.