Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

_______________________________ _______________

Emily Taub Webb Date

On Site-Specificity: A Genealogy

By

Emily Taub Webb
Doctor of Philosophy

Art History

____
James Meyer, Ph.D.
Advisor

____
Clark Poling, Ph.D.
Committee Member

____
Judith Rohrer, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

____
Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

____
Date

On Site-Specificity: A Genealogy

By

Emily Taub Webb
B.A., University of Michigan, 1997
B.F.A., University of Michigan, 1997
M.A., Emory University, 2004

Advisor: James Meyer, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Art History
2010

ABSTRACT

On Site-Specificity: A Genealogy
By Emily Taub Webb

This dissertation provides the first historicized reconstruction of the initial development of site-specific art by focusing on art production, exhibition, and criticism from 1967-1969. Reacting to minimalist art and challenging the modernist paradigm of a timeless and placeless sculpture, artists began to create works that responded to, and remained linked to, their individual locations. Siting an artwork came to entail more than choosing its location; for creators of process art, conceptual art, and land art, site emerged as an essential problem of artistic conception.

In structuring my analysis of the extensive and diverse body of works described as site-specific, I locate a set of terms that appears essential to a range of artistic practices and their critical reception, notably scale, context, space, place, and situation. Furthermore, I identify distinct iterations of the relationship between an artwork and its site: physical, conceptual, and social.

Devoting a chapter to each year's production, I trace the progression from the physical and oftentimes superficial association between a work and its location towards a more complete and complex site-specificity in which an artwork remains tied to its site in physical form, conceptual formulation *and* social function. Presenting several unconventional shows from 1967, Chapter One focuses on the role of exhibition organizers in encouraging the production of artworks not suited to the gallery space and examines the significance of scale and context for the development of site-specificity. Chapter Two explores the artistic and curatorial turn to alternative sites in 1968 and distinguishes between the general concern for space and the specific revelation of place in artworks created for two related exhibitions on college campuses. Chapter Three defines the term situation and introduces the significance of additional circumstances surrounding an artwork – like time and climate – that factor into its final form. The 1969 museum exhibition to first canonize earth art serves as the discussion's focus.

This dissertation ultimately provides the first close look at the early years of site-specificity's development, offers a framework through which to closely examine it, argues for the involvement of artists, curators, and critics alike, and reveals its unsettled nature.

On Site-Specificity: A Genealogy

By

Emily Taub Webb
B.A., University of Michigan, 1997
B.F.A., University of Michigan, 1997
M.A., Emory University, 2004

Advisor: James Meyer, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Art History
2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation would have remained impossible without the support of many individuals. First, I would like to thank my advisor, James Meyer, for serving as a true example in both his scholarship and teaching. His high standards and critical insight shaped this dissertation. It is his voice that resounded in my mind as I wrote each sentence that appears in the following pages. I am grateful, too, for his oversight of every aspect of this project, from beginning to end. I must thank the other members of my committee, Clark Poling and Judith Rohrer, for their close readings of the text, thoughtful comments, and encouragement.

I express my gratitude to Virginia Dwan and Seth Siegelaub for their willingness to correspond with me, to Virginia Dwan for granting admission to her archives, and to Nancy Holt for allowing access to her and Robert Smithson's papers. I thank the staff at each of the places where I conducted research for their kindness and assistance: the American Craft Council, New York, which houses the Museum of Contemporary Crafts Archives; the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art Archives, Cornell University; both the New York and Washington, D.C. offices of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; and the Dwan Gallery Archives and Historical Exhibition Archives, Bard College.

My research has been supported by a Smithsonian Institution Pre-Doctoral Fellowship at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and Archives of American Art, and a Mellon Dissertation Fellowship and Henry Luce Foundation American Art Dissertation Research Award, which were both granted by Emory University's Art History Department. During my time in Washington, D.C., I benefited from the guidance of Virginia Mecklenburg and Liza Kirwin and the inspiring fellowship and support of the intellectual community there. My participation in the Mellon Dissertation Seminar, directed by Jean Campbell, motivated me to write the first – and most difficult – words of this dissertation. I learned a great deal about the writing process from the seminar directors and my peers involved.

A simple written acknowledgement cannot express the gratitude I feel towards those friends and colleagues who have offered their encouragement and unbounded emotional support through the arduous, decade-long pursuit of my graduate education: David Blakesley, Rachel Bowser, Catherine Caesar, Jason Cjieka, Anthony Mangieri, Sam Minehart, Sarah Peterson, and Lisa Schneider. The example many of you set in accomplishing your own goals, your inspiring words, imposed deadlines, critical insights, and humor kept me on track during those moments when I most wanted to give up. Cathy, your mentorship and friendship – from my days in coursework all the way through the dissertation defense – has meant the world to me. Sarah, through the writing process I leaned on you more than anyone else, and you always held me up. I am indebted to you for your consistent willingness to listen as I developed my ideas and to help me think through those concepts that challenged me most, for your editorial comments on each and every chapter, for your faith in me and my ability to complete this, despite my "molasses" self. Above all else, I am so grateful for our friendship.

I would also like to thank my parents, Ronna and Marc Taub, for their unconditional love and support. From the time that I was a little girl, you always impressed upon me that I could accomplish whatever I set my mind to. I am not sure that I ever truly believed you, until now. Thank you for teaching me the importance of education, persistence, integrity, the value of hard work, and, most importantly, surrounding oneself with good friends and family. I am eternally grateful, too, for the friendship and support of my brother David. You have always believed in me, set the highest standards, and pushed me to be my best. In turn, I have always tried to make you proud. This undertaking was no different. Thank you, too, to Rasheena Taub and Marilyn and Lynn Webb for your wholehearted support of my academic pursuits. You have all been and continue to be my role models.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my husband, Adam Webb. Writing a dissertation can be a very isolating process; as a result of your unwavering belief in me, I never felt alone. Thank you for loving me enough to take on my burdens, for celebrating the highest highs and enduring lowest lows of this process with me, and for holding my hand through it all. Thank you for those long walks and talks when I felt most blocked and for doing everything in your power to help me cross the finish line. I have learned a tremendous amount during my graduate education, but the most valuable thing that I take away from it all is having met you. To A and B: you gave me the inspiration I needed to finish this project and kept me calm through the final stages. It is one of my hopes for you that you challenge yourselves in ways that seem beyond possibility. And go after those goals. There is no feeling like achieving your ambitions. I dedicate this dissertation to the three of you, my new family.

ON SITE-SPECIFICITY: A GENEALOGY

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: SITUATING SITE-SPECIFICITY 1

The Discourse of Site-Specificity 3
Prefiguring Site-Specificity: The Development of Installation in American Art of the 1960s 20

CHAPTER ONE: 1967: "BUILD THE BIG THING AND GO SEE IT" 29

Exploding Scale 31
Exposing Context: Thematic Framework and Physical Environment 43
Engaging Place 54
Revealing Place 65

CHAPTER TWO: 1968: "PLACING AS A VERB AS WELL AS A NOUN" 72

Confronting Space: Making the Invisible Visible 76
Differentiating Space and Place 84
Locating Place: Physical Site and Social Function 86
Alternative Siting Introduced 100
Alternative Siting Examined: Out into the World 104
Alternative Siting Examined: Expanding the Gallery System 119

CHAPTER THREE: 1969: "THE TERRESTRIAL STUDIO" 130

Introducing the Element of Time: Site versus Situation 133
Investigating the Relationship between Time and Place 142
Conceiving "Earth Art" 143
Executing "Earth Art" 145
Exhibiting "Earth Art": The Works on View 149
Robert Morris 154
Hans Haacke 154
Dennis Oppenheim 162
Robert Smithson 169
Framing "Earth Art": A Shared Set of Terms 179
The Persistence of Time and Space 185

CONCLUSION: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SITE-SPECIFIC ART **193**

"New York – Nevada" – The Two Sites of *Double Negative* 193
Defining Site-Specificity 200
On the Question of Permanence 202

WORKS CITED **206**

INTRODUCTION

SITUATING SITE-SPECIFICITY

During the course of the 1960s, a new kind of art challenged the modernist paradigm of timeless and placeless sculpture. An abstract monument, capable of being relocated from the artist's studio to the gallery to the front of a building without altering its meaning, no longer represented the norm. Artists began to create works that responded to, and remained linked to, their individual locations. This change derived in large part from minimalist sculpture, which required the viewer to perceptually experience the work and its relationship to its surroundings. Such work deflected the spectator's attention away from the art object toward its environment. This development presented artists with the opportunity to explore the specific nature of the project's site. Thus site itself emerged as an essential problem of artistic conception. The term *site-specific* has since been used to characterize a multitude of practices, including works of process art, conceptual art, institutional critique, and land art. Consequently, the concept's meaning has become general and wide-ranging.

Scholars have attempted to localize the definition by proposing sources, narrating a general history, and marking out categories. All efforts, however, only offer a rough sketch of site-specificity's beginnings. This dissertation returns to the initial introduction of the notion of place into American artistic practice of the mid-1960s and examines how site-specificity first emerged as a significant factor for art production and exhibition. It assesses the cultural, political, and artistic events that instigated the activation of place in

art and presents those terms that remained central to the development of a site-specific art. Reconstructing a chronological account of site-specificity's beginnings confirms that a consequential shift in artistic concern – from the superficial attention to an artwork's general context towards a critical engagement with the specific conditions of its place – did occur in the mid-1960s.

In presenting the genealogy of site-specificity, this study examines the unsettled nature of the concept's development. For, rather than a coherent formal group with an individual aim, we witness a diverse range of artists that, despite their distinct practices, shared a concurrent interest in creating works that engaged with the space and place surrounding them. Simultaneously, those very terms – space and place – arose repeatedly in artists' conversations and interviews, critics' texts and symposia. In addition to the involvement of art makers and critics, curators also contributed to the realization of site-specific art at this time through their innovative displays and efforts to assist artists in abandoning the white cube for the outdoors.

The narrative provided here both locates a discrete set of terms at play in the development of site-specific art and illuminates the changing, inconsistent artistic climate that generated the concept. Ultimately, no single, fixed definition of site-specificity emerges. The manner in which artists contended with their works' environments varied. While some produced works rooted physically to their site, others revealed a social or conceptual connection. Rather than propose a rigid classification, I identify several distinct iterations of the relationship between art and place at this time, while clarifying a progression from the mere physical association between a work and its site towards a more complete site-specificity, in which an artwork remains tied to its site in physical

form, conceptual formulation, *and* social function. In the end, all site-related practices communicate to the viewer a heightened awareness of her surroundings.

In what follows I review the extant literature devoted to site-specificity, elucidating the state of related scholarship and this study's contributions; I establish the structure of the dissertation and the terms that drive its narrative; and I investigate select works that prefigure site-specific practices. A comparison of contemporaneous March 1966 exhibitions by Robert Morris and Carl Andre, two artists associated with minimalism, initiates the account. Through an analysis of the shows, I track the subtle transition between the display of individual sculptures and gallery "installation," an early manifestation of an art of and for a place. I argue that Morris and Andre's careful positioning of sculptural elements within the gallery space heralded both artistic engagement with the new problem of place and critical attempts to articulate this change. Additionally, I define the term *modernism* as it appears throughout my text. My use of the term assumes the principle of mobility, a notion that site-specificity contests.

The Discourse of Site-Specificity

This dissertation responds to a gap in the study of contemporary art history. The scholarship devoted to site-specificity can be divided roughly into two phases: writings dating from the late-1970s to mid-1980s and those from the last decade that demonstrate a recent return to the subject. In the earlier texts, scholars acknowledged the theoretical import of this particular moment at the end of the 1960s as the dawn of postmodernism and pointed to site-specific art as evidence of that transition.[1] These writings focused on

---

[1] See Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44 and Craig Owens, "Earthwords," *October* 10 (Fall 1979): 121-130 and "The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism," *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 67-86.

the artwork of Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, and the institutional critique artists. A current group of scholars has revisited site-specificity as it relates to contemporary practices, including public art, global art, body art, and performance art. Their studies reconsider the definition of the concept and suggest a shift in its meaning, narrating the general progression of site-specific work from an art fixed to a place to a practice based on a perpetual movement between a network of sites.[2] Other writers have focused on the development of land art or recent art production in relation to site-specific practices of the 1960s.[3] No study, however, has investigated and reconstructed site-specificity's origins through the close examination of works, exhibitions, and criticism. How did "site-specificity" come to be? What exactly did *place* and *site* represent to artists at this critical moment in history? How did their meanings change over just a few short years? And what characterized their critical reception?

It is the goal of this study to return to the years when place first appeared as a component in artworks and to discover the development of the concept, the meaning of the term for artists, curators, and critics, and what was at stake – culturally and artistically – in the creation of a site-specific art. In the chapters that follow, I trace the development of artistic engagement with place from the superficial use of location to its more definitive emergence as an essential problem of artistic conception. The various ways in

---

[2] On a practice based on a "constant movement between sites," see James Meyer, "The Functional Site, or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000) 23-37. See also Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002).

[3] For research devoted to land art, see John Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984); Alan Sonfist, ed., *Art in the Land: A Critical Anthology of Environmental Art* (New York: Dutton, 1983); Gilles A. Tiberghien, *Land Art* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1995); and Suzaan Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002). Boettger examines many of the works and exhibitions that I address, along with the particular historical moment in question; her study, though, focuses on the importance of such contributions specifically for the development of land art.

which a work of art might relate to its site – physically, socially, and conceptually – are closely examined.

While the words *site* and *place* appear repeatedly as new topics of artistic concern in conversations among artists, dealers, and critics throughout the 1960s, the term *site-specific* remains noticeably absent. In fact, it becomes quite difficult to locate the first use of the term.[4] In 1967, Dennis Oppenheim produced a series of works titled *Site Markers*. Two years later Harold Rosenberg described the early earthworkers as *site-modifiers*.[5] In receiving the news of his untimely death in July 1973, Robert Smithson's peers issued a statement in which they referred to their friend as a pioneer in current art trends such as *site selection*.[6] Despite the prevalence of such terms, site-specificity did not coalesce as an intellectual concept until its emergence in writings of the late-1970s and 1980s, as scholars began to define the initial stages of postmodernism.

In 1978, Rosalind Krauss realized the need to define recent developments in sculptural activity. In her seminal essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," Krauss reconsidered the current implications of the term *sculpture* in relation to past definitions. Notably, Krauss invoked place consistently when recounting the history of the medium. First, she described monumental sculpture as historically engaged with the world around it and inevitably fixed to its site – both through its function as a commemorative marker

---

[4] The earliest mentions that I have found appear in 1977: "Long makes sculpture both outdoors and indoors; the outdoor sculptures are site-specific and can be viewed only in the form of black and white still photographs." Josine Ianco-Starrels, "Exhibit of Situational Works Opens Tuesday," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1977, T71. Later that same year, Jo Ann Lewis of *The Washington Post* wrote, "It was in the mid-1960s that Carl Andre and Robert Morris first talked about site-specific sculpture and 'post-studio,' as suggested by Andre's suggestion that 'we may actually be seeing the end, not of gallery or museum art, but of studio art.'" Lewis "The Landscape of Art for the '70s," *The Washington Post* , October 30, 1977, 177.

[5] Harold Rosenberg, "The Art World: Art and Words," *The New Yorker*, March 29, 1969, 114.

[6] Smithson-Holt Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C., microfilm reel 3832, frame 639.

and its elevation on a vertical base. She then countered this kind of practice with her description of modernist sculpture. Krauss declared, "it is the modernist period of sculptural production that operates in relation to this loss of site, producing the monument as abstraction, the monument as pure marker or base, functionally placeless and largely self-referential."[7] The permutations of modernist sculpture – timeless and placeless abstract formalist objects – remained limited and had exhausted themselves by the 1950s, according to Krauss. With that phase of production in the past, the word *sculpture* no longer referred to an autonomous monument and instead came to represent the wide range of structures, processes, and forms being created by recent artists such as Alice Aycock, Christo, Michael Heizer, Sol LeWitt, Mary Miss, Nancy Holt, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson, among others.

Krauss diagrammatically mapped this recently complicated field by extending the terms of what sculpture had come to be in the early 1960s – not landscape and not architecture.[8] No longer all-encompassing, *sculpture* was now just one of four equal terms. Of the others she named – marked sites, site construction, and axiomatic structures – two conspicuously included the word *site*. Despite the importance of place

---

[7] Krauss, 34. Krauss's definition of modernism derives in part from Greenbergian modernist theory, which insists on the self-critical, medium-specific tendency in art for art to be reduced to its essential qualities. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Arts Yearbook* 4 (1961): 103-108.

Robert Smithson made this very argument in his 1968 essay "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," when he described the placement of Anthony Caro's steel, abstract sculpture *Prima Luce* in a landscape. Smithson called attention to the fact that Caro's work held no relationship to its surroundings. Further discussion of Smithson's text appears in Chapter Two. Robert Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," *Artforum* 7:1 (September 1968): 44-50.

[8] Krauss employed a mathematical structure, called a Klein group, as her model: "By means of this logical expansion a set of binaries is transformed into a quaternary field which both mirrors the original opposition and at the same time opens it." The binary terms – not-landscape and not-architecture – open up into four conditions – landscape, architecture, not-landscape, and not-architecture. A different "sculptural" category emerges at the intersection of each of the two terms. For instance, what Krauss names "marked sites" – the physical manipulation or application of temporary marks to sites – exists at the juncture of landscape and not-landscape. Krauss, 36-38.

for her definitions of sculpture over time and site for her model for classifying recent work, Krauss did not address in-depth their repercussions for her expanded field. Interestingly, by 1978, she still did not employ the term site-specific in her essay even while referring to artistic practices that might be characterized as such.

Krauss specifically identified the years 1968 through 1970 as the moment that artists felt "the permission, or pressure, to think the expanded field."[9] She suggested that cultural circumstances specific to the period must have demanded the development of an expanded field at this time in the history of art. She asked what was the nature of this shift that heralded postmodern artistic practice.

Krauss's inquiry into the state of sculptural practice in the late-1960s largely inspired in my investigation. She pinpointed the years 1968-1970 as the origin of postmodernism and the emergence of an expanded field of sculpture; these years overlap directly with those that serve as the focus of my study. Site-specific art that introduced a physical, social, or conceptual connection between a work and its place serves as one example of the shift in sculptural production of the late-1960s that Krauss described. Furthermore, Krauss's notion of modernism resonates with the terms of this project. More specifically, it is Krauss's definition of modernist sculpture – nomadic, existing independent from time and place, lacking reference to the outside world, and therefore transportable – that I employ in my text as a counterpoint to the art under discussion, an art derived from and therefore very much rooted to its place. If modernist art can be defined as placeless, then site-specific works represent a departure from that practice and the transition towards postmodernism. Douglas Crimp's related notion of modernism,

---

[9] Ibid, 41.

which I discuss below, echoes this definition in many ways and therefore also remains significant for this study.

Benjamin Buchloh invoked Krauss's notion of modernist sculpture in his 1980 essay, "Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture."[10] This scholar, too, pointed to a transformation in contemporary sculptural practice, as witnessed in Asher's 1979 works that reflect critically on the gallery itself. For Buchloh, the shift entailed a move away from the independent, self-referential object and towards a "situational aesthetic," in which a work operated within a set of conditions. It existed within a system, or situation. Buchloh identified three new factors as essential for this kind of art, factors that Asher integrated into his work: "material- and site-specificity, place, and presence."[11] He followed up by describing material-specificity, place, and presence, without accounting for site-specificity. Importantly, though, Buchloh referenced the concept directly as a significant element in the change in sculpture. He also called attention to place and time as relevant for recent art.

Within the decade following Krauss's essay, both Craig Owens and Douglas Crimp explicitly pointed to site-specificity as one of several artistic concerns that distinguished postmodernist art from previous practice.[12] According to Crimp, though, a particular kind of site-specific practice announced the shift into postmodernism. He

[10] Benjamin Buchloh, "Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture," *Performance: Text and Documents*, ed. Chantal Pontbriand (Montreal: Parachute, 1981) 55-64 reprinted in Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955-1975* (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2000), 1-39.

[11] Buchloh, 14. Victor Burgin's text "Situational Aesthetics" served as a direct source for Buchloh's analysis of Asher's art (although the term "site-specific" does not appear in Burgin's writing). Burgin's essay will be referenced in a discussion of the term *situation* in Chapter Three. Victor Burgin, "Situational Aesthetics," *Studio International* 178:915 (October 1969): 118-121.

[12] Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism," 71 and 75, and Douglas Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," in Rosalind Krauss, *Richard Serra: Sculpture*. Ed Laura Rosenstock. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986).

identified the origins of site-specificity in minimalist practice, but insisted on only a formal association between a minimal object and its place[13]:

> [With minimalism] the critique of idealism directed against modern sculpture and its illusory sitelessness was, however, left incomplete. The incorporation of place within the domain of the work's perception succeeded only in extending art's idealism to its surrounding site. Site was understood as specific only in a formal sense; it was thus abstracted, aestheticized.[14]

While minimal sculpture revealed the physical surroundings of the gallery, it accepted "the 'spaces' of art's institutionalized commodity circulation as given" and, therefore, continued modernist practice.[15] While minimalist sculpture directed attention to the object's surroundings, it did so only superficially. Crimp insisted that the true break with modernism occurred only when a work of art was *socially* site-specific, critically exposing the commercial and ideological conditions of the work of art.

According to Crimp, in its pure autonomy, modernist art truly belonged in the no-place of the museum.[16] The development of a site-specific work, created for and tied to a

---

[13] Douglas Crimp, "Photography at the End of Modernism," *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993) 17 and "Redefining Site Specificity," 154-156. Crimp used the term "social" to describe a practice that critiques or reflects on its own institutional system, not the greater culture. Others convincingly attributed a social meaning to minimal art. See Hal Foster, "The Crux of Minimalism," *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1996).

[14] Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 154-55. See also Crimp's later essay, "Photography at the End of Modernism," 17.

[15] Crimp, "Redefining Site-Specificity," 155.

[16] Crimp stated, "The idealism of modernist art, in which the art object *in and of itself* was seen to have a fixed and transhistorical meaning, determined the object's placelessness, its belonging in no particular place, a no-place that was in reality the museum – the actual museum and the museum as a representation of the institutional system of circulation…. Site specificity opposed that idealism – and unveiled the

particular place, promised art's release not only from the space of the museum, but from the entire institutional system, encompassing the museum and commercial gallery, and its emphasis on commodification. Artists participating in institutional critique of the 1970s employed a variety of methods to directly reveal the commercial and ideological parameters of the art world. Non-circulating, place-specific work offered one avenue of escape from a controlling art market.

Crimp's designation of a social site-specificity motivates my discussion of works that maintain social relationships to their sites. My use of this term, however, refers to how an artwork engages with the function of its place. I intend to demonstrate that artists created pieces that revealed their sites' uses, regardless of whether or not those uses related to the art institution. Notably, my mention of the term social does not refer to the politics of the 1960s.

In recent years, a handful of scholars have revisited the artwork and critical debates of the late 1960s and 1970s in order to re-assess this change in artistic practice and consider its meaning for contemporary artists. Rather than attempting to close in on any single definition of site-specificity, Erika Suderburg exposed the sheer breadth of the concept in her 2000 book *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. Suderburg compiled a selection of essays, wide-ranging in their subject matter and critical methodologies, which explored the various issues at stake in the study of installation and site-specific art: community space, architecture, video and film space, environmental and political action, identity. In her introduction, Suderburg defined the two terms – installation and site-specificity – acknowledging both their distinctions and common

---

material system it obscured – by its refusal of circulatory mobility, its belongingness to a *specific* site." Crimp, "Photography at the End of Modernism," 17.

characteristics.[17] She suggested that installation occurred indoors, in the neutral space of the gallery. While the minimalists first introduced site-specific practices within the gallery, too, earthworkers soon extended that practice to the outdoors. Site-specific art reacted to its site; installation art involved site as part of the content of the work. A relationship between, and blurring of, the terms persisted throughout her discussion.

Suderburg also provided a comprehensive history including noteworthy monuments, events, figures, and artworks from antiquity to the end of the twentieth century. She traced the historical origins of installation and site-specific practices, suggesting roots in Neolithic stones and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *Wunderkammers*. In offering a longer narrative of site-specificity than the one typically recognized by scholars, Suderburg acknowledged the fact that the relationship between art and place was not new to the 1960s and illuminated important connections with the past. Her inclusive format denied any classification of site-specificity and instead demanded a rethinking of set categories and conclusive narratives.

James Meyer and Miwon Kwon contributed two of the essays published in Suderburg's collection. In his essay, "The Functional Site, or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," Meyer offered a constructive framework for examining site-specific practice. He distinguished the "literal" site of works that privilege place, such as Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, from the "functional," mobile site of artworks that enact a mapping among a network of sites. The latter can represent both the actual traveling between locations, as in the recent work of Christian Philipp Müller and Renée Green, and a network of documents, texts, photographs, and places that comprise a single artwork, as

---

[17] Erika Suderburg, "Introduction: On Installation and Site-Specificity," *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art* (Minneapolis: The Minnesota University Press, 2000) 1-22.

in the work of Robert Smithson.[18] Drawing on Meyer's notion of the "literal" and "functional" sites, Miwon Kwon similarly named three competing, concurrent, overlapping paradigms of site-specific art: the phenomenological model, the social or institutional critique model, and the discursive model.[19] In her 2002 publication, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, Kwon addressed the meaning of site-specific art for contemporary production and exhibition. She focused on the role of community and identity in public art and raised the question of the repeatability and mobility of early site-specific projects in their later reinstallations.

Nick Kaye's recent study, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place, and Documentation*, also expanded the meaning of site-specificity.[20] Kaye's account – based on the writings of Crimp and Michael Fried – identified minimalism as imperative for the development of the concept of site-specificity. He pointed to the significance of the minimalist object in transferring the viewer's attention away from the form toward its surroundings *and* in involving time and space in the experience of the work. Consequently, Kaye proposed a "site-specificity linked to the incursion of performance into visual art and architecture."[21] He concluded that site-specificity involved more than

---

[18] Craig Owens described this aspect of Smithson's work as allegorical in "Earthwords." Meyer went on to describe a chronological progression of reflexivity: from modernism's medium specificity to minimalism's reflection on the surrounding space; from institutional critique's concern with the gallery and museum system to, finally, a contemporary practice that reflects on the art world as just one of a network of mobile sites. Meyer, "The Functional Site, or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," 24-27.

[19] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 1-3, 11-31. A shorter, essay version of Kwon's ideas appeared in Suderburg's compilation: "One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity," 38-63.

[20] Nick Kaye. *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

[21] Ibid, 3. Fried referred to the time and space that viewing a minimal object required as "theatrical." For the critic, such works – neither painting nor sculpture – blurred the lines between traditional media and

a work's proper location; for Kaye, the term broadly characterized conceptual and performative works ranging from minimalist sculpture, land art, and contemporary architecture to theater, Happenings, and body art.

Rather than organizing the book by medium, movement, or chronology, the author focused on four central themes – spaces, site, materials, and frames. In each section Kaye introduced the significance of the theme for his notion of site-specificity and then presented a complementary case study submitted by an artist – for example, fragments of texts from a performance or descriptions and photographs of a gallery installation. Kaye did not pinpoint a conclusive definition of site-specificity, but instead examined the meaning of the term for a range of practices and mediums.

A very recent, unpublished dissertation by Rebecca Reynolds examined the role of sculpture parks and gardens in the development of site-specificity.[22] Reynolds' analysis considered outdoor practices dating from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, ranging from early works by Robert Morris, Tony Smith, and Carl Andre to the inception and design of Storm King and the Hirshhorn Museum Sculpture Garden to works by Jackie Ferrara, Mary Miss, and Beverly Pepper sited at the Laumeier Sculpture Park. She presented the outdoor sites of temporary works by minimalist artists as analogous to exterior gallery spaces, and sculpture parks and gardens as parallel to open-air museums. Ultimately, Reynolds' project ascribed sculpture parks and gardens a major role in the establishment of site-specificity.

---

crossed over into the realm of theater. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* 5 (June 1967): 12-23.

[22] Rebecca Reynolds, "From Green Cube to Site: Site-Specific Practices at American Sculpture Parks and Gardens, 1965-1987" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 2008).

Each of these scholars has offered a definition of site-specificity and presented a general history, acknowledging minimalism's influence and the impact of the development on recent practice. The consolidation of the term by critics in the 1980s, its recent reassessment, and the presentation of sweeping historical analyses and inclusive accounts have laid the groundwork for my narrow, focused analysis. Like Suderburg and Kaye, I do not locate a single, concrete definition of the term; however, the subject of my investigation remains much more limited than theirs. My contribution involves the close documentation and assessment of what I consider to be the critical, transitional years of site-specificity's invention: 1967-1969. These crucial years, in the wake of minimalism, witnessed a shift in artistic attention from the superficial engagement with place toward a more complex and complete relationship between an artwork and its surroundings. Through a genealogical approach to artistic and exhibition practices during this period, I am able to draw out and closely examine those key terms that appear to have contributed to the early development of site-specificity.

This study reconstructs the historical circumstances that prompted the emergence of site-specific work. It focuses on the period between 1967 and 1969, addressing a variety of art practices, including installation art, conceptual art, dematerialization and process art, and land art. I structure the dissertation chronologically, devoting a chapter to each year and the corresponding artworks, exhibitions, and related criticism. The project, however, demands that exhibitions become the primary consideration. This is due to the fact that art exhibition itself implicates the problem of place; the art in question demanded new methods of display, and, in response, curators produced new kinds of

exhibitions. Thus, the circumstances surrounding the conception, execution, and reception of those exhibitions drive this genealogy.

Chapter One focuses on the relationship between artists and the art establishment in the year 1967. In the mid-1960s artists began to challenge the modernist sculptural ideal, creating artworks that crossed boundaries between media and tested conventions of form, scale, and placement. In response to the latest trends in contemporary art, exhibitors devised radical ways to display such work, which, in turn, encouraged artists to further explore new artistic territory. With their innovative exhibitions, the curators and dealers provided fresh opportunities for artistic response and provided the possibility for artists to engage with place. Art dealers colluded with art-makers in the development of site-specific art. In particular, the gallerist Virginia Dwan contributes to this narrative, appearing as a passionate advocate for artists who felt compelled to produce works that did not conform to conventional gallery exhibitions and who wanted to create outdoor works that ultimately remained fixed to their alternative sites. Perhaps surprisingly, Dwan propelled site-specificity's development even more actively than contemporary critics. In this chapter, I track the various and often inconsistent ways in which artists and their commercial counterparts both explored and struggled with integrating art and place and, in turn, together advanced the concept of site-specificity – a theme that pervades the entirety of this dissertation.

Throughout Chapter One, I examine two related concerns that propelled site-specificity's development: scale and context. First, I consider the significance of scale for art production and exhibition by examining a group show held by Virginia Dwan in January 1967, entitled "Scale Models and Drawings." The exhibition contested standard

methods of display by presenting miniature representations of unrealized, large-scale artworks in the space of the gallery. "Scale Models and Drawings" provided artists with the opportunity, and the permission, to conceive of and create works intended for a space outside of the gallery while still practicing within the confines of the art institution. Next, I turn to the problem of context and its impact on art at this time through an analysis of two other unusual group exhibitions mounted at this moment: the Museum of Contemporary Crafts' "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" and the city-organized show "Sculpture in Environment," the first exhibition to move sizable artworks out of art institutions and into the city's public spaces. An investigation of these two exhibits reveals the ways in which an artwork's physical placement and thematic framework – the exhibition's title, the accompanying wall text, labels, and catalogue, and the other works on display – contributed to the viewer's expectations about what she would experience and, ultimately, shaped her perspective of the art she saw.

The chapter also addresses two one-person exhibitions that took place at the Dwan Gallery in the spring of 1967: Carl Andre's *Cuts* and William Anastasi's *Six Sites*. The former displayed a very material, physical sculpture of concrete capstones set on the gallery floor, while the latter presented a conceptual work – comprised of six stark canvases hanging on the walls – that privileged the work's generative idea over its material embodiment. However different, both of these shows conformed to normative exhibition practices: in each, a single artist displayed his works on the walls or floor of a high-profile gallery for the art-savvy public to view. I examine the ways in which both works, although distinct in approach and production, exposed the physical space of the gallery. While remaining within the bounds of the art establishment, Andre and Anastasi

communicated an awareness of place. In addition to claiming that scale and context directly impacted the relationship between art and place, this chapter establishes that innovations advanced by both artists and dealers in 1967 instigated the development of site-specificity and introduces the centrality of a physical relationship between an artwork and its site.

In Chapter Two, devoted to 1968, I examine how and why the continued and pointed interest in place – now both physical *and* social – on the part of art makers, curators, and critics advanced the concept of site-specificity. Moreover, I pursue the relationship between the well-known historical events of this pivotal year and these artistic developments. The chaotic circumstances that characterized the U.S. at that time pervaded the American art world as well. Free-thinking members of both the general public and the art establishment dared themselves to reassess systems already in place. Citizens challenged the government's authority and sought radical alternatives, while artists and curators tested the conventions of the gallery system and investigated new approaches toward creating and displaying art.

I begin with a discussion of *space* and *place*, two closely related terms that artists consistently invoked, that greatly shaped their works at the time, and that remained crucial for the emergence of site-specific art. Through an analysis of two related exhibitions organized by the same individuals and showcasing the same roster of artists, I attempt to suggest a distinction between the concepts. For an exhibition at Massachusetts's Bradford Junior College, conceptual artist Douglas Huebler and independent curator Seth Siegelaub asked three artists – Carl Andre, Robert Barry, and Lawrence Weiner – to generate works specifically for the school's indoor gallery space.

The submissions by these artists demanded that the viewer become aware of the ever-present but continuously overlooked space surrounding the works, the emptiness within the room's walls. Just two months later, Siegelaub invited Andre, Barry and Weiner to use the Windham College campus in Putney, Vermont, as their point of departure and the ultimate destination for original works. The resulting artworks called attention to the particular physical conditions of their sites. The artists' concern for space, evident in the Bradford show, shifted to an interest in place in the Windham exhibition, revealing a transition in focus from the general towards the specific. Moreover, the Windham show prompted Andre's first outdoor piece, *Joint*, and a work by Weiner – titled *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf* – that, as I argue, established a social relationship to their respective sites. Strikingly, both exhibitions showcased New York City artists, but occurred in places outside that art world epicenter.

I also address two New York gallery shows that challenged accepted norms of display. Virginia Dwan's "Earth Works" exhibition presented artworks that embraced earth as their medium and subject matter within the walls of the white cube. My discussion of this show centers on Robert Smithson's *A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.)*, a work directed at both its current context – the place of the gallery – and its origin – the expansive mining landscape of Franklin, New Jersey. Towards the end of 1968, Leo Castelli forfeited his pristine gallery space altogether for "9 at Leo Castelli," a show staged in a storage warehouse. The focus of my account is Richard Serra's famed *Splashing*, for which the artist poured molten lead against the junction where the warehouse wall met the floor, allowing the lead to solidify in place. Amongst the works on view in "9 at Leo Castelli," Serra's piece appears to have realized the concept of site-

specificity most completely, fulfilling two of the three definitive relationships to place that I propose. Not only did *Splashing* reflect and remain joined to its physical site. The work also subtly exposed the social function of its place. In covering over a part of the room often taken for granted, Serra incorporated that space into his piece and called attention to it. He denied the viewer the customary experience of gallery-going that she anticipated – walking into the "neutral" gallery and examining artworks. Instead, the artist required her to consider the odd space where the wall met the floor. Serra forced her to reflect on the conditions of viewing art. While conventional gallery space proved insufficient for many of the works that the artists in these shows produced, in both cases place remained a major artistic consideration.

Chapter Three introduces the significance of additional circumstances surrounding a work of art – beyond space and place – that factor into its final form: concerns like time and climate. Through the examination of two exhibitions – one gallery display of Fred Sandback's work and a museum show that involved both indoor and outdoor works – I establish the distinction between the terms *site* and *situation*. The former describes a fixed place, while the latter involves a changing, relational set of circumstances that only partially and temporarily involve place. The case studies that I address in this final chapter – consistent with the working definition of site-specificity that I develop throughout the dissertation – illustrate that other elements besides place, such as real time and weather, in fact, remained essential and dynamic factors in the relationship between an artwork and its site.

While the opening chapters establish the physical and social association between an artwork and its surroundings during the late-1960s, in the third and final chapter, I also

consider the relationship between an artist's conception for a work of art and its eventual location. In February 1969, Cornell University's White Museum canonized the new art that abandoned the institutional space of the gallery for the outdoors with its show "Earth Art." Curator Willoughby Sharp invited ten artists, including Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, Hans Haacke, and Dennis Oppenheim to create works either inside the gallery or in the surrounding areas of the campus using natural elements. The works produced at Cornell remained not only physically bound and, in some cases, socially, or functionally, engaged with their locations, but also conceptually linked to their destinations. Oppenheim chiseled into Cornell's frozen Beebe Lake. Smithson chose the local salt mines as the subject, medium, and as one of the sites for his submission. The presentation of these works in the Ithaca landscape was only temporary, though: with the changing winter weather and its impact on the terrain, the works included in "Earth Art" were wholly ephemeral, transforming with the conditions around them. They responded to both their physical sites *and* to the complete situations for which they were created.

Prefiguring Site-Specificity: The Development of Installation in American Art of the 1960s

While the years 1967-1969 serve as the focus of this study, the concepts intrinsic to site-specificity certainly did not arise suddenly at that time. Key developments led to the point at which artists began contending directly with place. In the remainder of this introduction I address a primary episode in the transformation of the meaning of place in American art of the 1960s, a decisive moment in which artists first appeared to engage with the problem of place in their work and critics first strove to articulate this change. Through a comparison of contemporaneous exhibitions by Robert Morris and Carl Andre,

two artists associated with minimalism, I track the subtle shift from sculpture to installation, an early manifestation of an art of and for a place.

In March 1966 Dwan Gallery's Los Angeles space opened an exhibition of Robert Morris's recent sculpture. The works, consistent with the artist's minimalist aesthetic of the preceding years, included nine freestanding grey fiberglass polyhedrons, situated evenly within the space of one room. The material of these works – smooth, seamless fiberglass – denied the viewer any evidence of their construction or the artist's hand. While the objects were not absolutely symmetrical, a viewer easily sensed the wholeness and simplicity of each form from a single vantage point. Nevertheless, the forms and their positioning within the gallery beckoned the viewer to stroll around them.

The objects displayed in this show and their organization around the gallery mystified critics.[23] Were they looking at discrete sculptures or at a group of interrelated artworks? One such critic, David Antin, noted that Morris's work somehow prohibited the viewer from relating to these objects as standard sculptural forms. In their simplicity, the pieces lacked discrete parts and, therefore, any sense of internal composition. Antin questioned whether, as an alternative way to interact with the display, a viewer ought to detect relationships between the individual pieces themselves.[24] In his struggle to comprehend how Morris's forms correlated with one another and the space around them, Antin invoked the notion of an environment. He offered a brief definition of the term: "It is a specific space into which the observer is thrust, i.e. it is a place."[25]

---

[23] One reviewer suggested that Morris's show signaled a shift in the history of sculptural practice: "Morris has here accomplished an important break with past sculpture by creating a sculpture that serves to redirect the entire environmental experience." D.F., "Robert Morris, Dwan Gallery," *Artforum* 4:9 (May 1966), 13.

[24] David Antin. "Art & Information, 1: Grey Paint, Robert Morris." *Artforum* 65:2 (April 1966): 24.

[25] Ibid.

Ultimately, Antin concluded that Morris's objects did not constitute an environment. He offered two reasons. First, he insisted that the days of creating environments had passed. In stating this, the author referred to works by artists such as Claes Oldenburg and Edward Kienholz from a few years earlier. These artists produced thematic tableaux by fusing their sculpture with the architecture of the gallery. As a result, the viewer became enveloped in a scene. Various sculptural props surrounded the viewer, transforming the setting into another, imagined place, like a store or a bar.

The second reason Antin gave involved Morris's artistic conception. Antin asserted that the artist had no intention of creating an installation in which the forms related to one another or their surroundings in any specific way. Morris himself made this claim in his "Notes on Sculpture," published in October of that year.[26] The artist asserted that relationships within individual objects and between multiple objects detracted from the viewer's experience of a single form as a whole: "The better new work takes relationships out of the work and makes them a function of space, light, and the viewer's field of vision."[27] For Morris, the contextual conditions that surrounded a work of art became vital to the work itself. While the critic and the artist both insisted that the polyhedrons were not intended to relate to one another, both conceded that the forms did affect the space of the gallery. They divided the space; their surface planes related to the floor, the walls, and the ceiling.

While Antin established that a work or group of works might impact their surroundings without becoming an environment, he never seemed to resolve exactly how

---

[26] Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," *Artforum* 5:2 (October 1966): 20-23.

[27] Ibid, 21.

Morris's works accomplished this. For the critic, the terms *environment* and *place* were synonymous. In resisting the term *environment* and its association with the tableaux, Antin overlooked the value of *place* for artists of this time. At this moment in 1960s art, the words, in fact, connoted two very distinct meanings. The environments of Oldenburg and Kienholz *transformed* the space of the gallery; their works mentally transported the viewer to another setting. Alternatively, artists engaging with place in this new manner began to *expose* the works' surroundings, the particulars of *that* gallery. Essentially, one practice concealed the structure of the room while the other revealed it. When he recognized that Morris's works did, in fact, address their setting, the critic identified a developing concern in contemporary sculpture. Over the next few years, place would become a critical aspect of artistic conception for numerous artists in various ways, as will become clear in the following chapters.

One month prior to Morris's Los Angeles show, Carl Andre presented a single work in the back room of New York City's Park Place Gallery. Andre set forty-one Styrofoam planks side-by-side in a single row on the gallery floor. Each plank measured nine feet long, twenty inches wide, and seven inches thick. Together they stretched the length of the room, filling the space from the center of the west wall to the center of the east wall and creating a barrier to the gallery's north side.

According to Andre himself, this sculpture, entitled *Reef*, signaled the culmination of his sculptural development.[28] For the artist, it constituted "sculpture as place." Andre delineated a progression in his own oeuvre and the whole of Western art in which sculpture evolved through three stages: from "sculpture as form" to "sculpture as

---

[28] Phyllis Tuchman. "An Interview with Carl Andre." *Artforum* 8:10 (June 1970): 61.

structure" to "sculpture as place." Modeled, chiseled, shaped material, such as the exterior copper sheet of the Statue of Liberty, represented his category of "sculpture as form." An early work of Andre's from 1959 entitled *Last Ladder* fulfilled this primary stage within his own development. The artist manipulated the form of the vertical timber by chiseling recesses into one side; his treatment remained purely superficial. Lady Liberty's internal iron scaffolding, the Eiffel Tower, and Andre's own *Pyramids* of 1959, corresponded to "sculpture as structure." The construction of these works dictated their form. Andre fit wooden beams together, inserting each one into the carved notches of those supporting it. The cuts in the beams varied in placement; therefore, each building block remained unique and served an individual and indispensable function in the work's design. The sculpture and its structure were indivisible. Finally, the island supporting the Statue of Liberty – which determined the statue's positioning, its scale, and the viewer's relationship to it – illustrated "sculpture as place." Andre's ultimate aim as an artist was to create sculpture that revealed its place. The artist believed that *Reef* was the first of his works to fulfill this objective.

In creating *Reef*, Andre initiated a new process for executing his works. He simply placed his material – Styrofoam planks – end to end, without affixing them to one another. The artist resisted constructing anything at all. When the exhibition closed, the artist discarded the pieces, one by one, without having to dismantle any larger form. For Andre, the fact that the work involved individual, discrete particles, classified *Reef* as his first "sculpture as place."

This work clearly departed from Andre's prescribed category of "sculpture as structure." Visually, the Styrofoam planks coalesced into a single shape made up of

equal parts. Nevertheless, the units, which remained separate, did not contribute to any built form; rather, they simply rested on the gallery floor and blocked the viewer from crossing the room. The artist consequently declared this the first of his works to reveal place, describing *Reef* as "a kind of negative place, a place of no-access."[29] However, for me, the question remains whether *Reef* wholly represents Andre's ultimate objective of "sculpture as place." While the Styrofoam boards certainly filled the space of the gallery, they did not reveal the specifics of their physical surroundings. They alone became the object of the viewer's attention. As I examine in the coming pages, over the course of the next several years Andre's works appeared to become further engaged with the specific concept of place.

In March 1966, the month of Morris's show and the month following the *Reef* display at Park Place Gallery, Andre's installation of *Equivalents I-VIII* opened at Tibor de Nagy's gallery in New York City. In this exhibition, the artist arranged eight groups of sixty bricks into varying sized rectangles and then stacked each two layers high. The different permutations included arrangements of three bricks wide by twenty bricks long, four wide by fifteen long, five wide by twelve long, and six wide by ten long. Each factor served as the basis for two works: one rectangle made up of three bricks laid end-to-end and twenty side-by-side and a much narrower rectangle made up of twenty bricks laid end-to-end and three bricks side-by-side. Andre's exhibition of *Equivalents* presented discrete objects, situated on the floor of the gallery, similar to Morris's concurrent show on the West coast. In their arrangements, both artists left ample space around each form, allowing the viewer to stroll through the gallery and experience the

---

[29] Ibid.

works from multiple vantage points. The planar shapes comprising both installations invited the viewer to observe the relationships of the forms to the gallery.

At this point, however, the two exhibitions diverged. Morris's arrangement drew the viewer towards the middle of the room; all three triangular forms angled inward and the largest area of empty space remained in the center. The artist did not position the works evenly within the gallery. He left ample space for a viewer to walk around the group of distorted cubes or even in-between the two pairs; other areas, for example between the far end of the extended, three-sided form and the gallery wall, required a viewer to navigate with more care. Apart from the other individual objects, Morris's four cubes related to one another in form and proximity and acted together as one artwork. Andre, on the other hand, presented eight works, entirely equal in the number of component parts. These objects – all rectangles – corresponded to one another in form while Morris's shapes did not. Given the exhibition's title and the obvious association among the brick forms, *Equivalents I-VIII* compelled the viewer to relate the individual objects to one another. Additionally, Andre distributed the brick rectangles very evenly within the space and aligned them with the angles of the room, evoking a very deliberate correlation between the forms and the gallery.

Unlike Morris's work, Andre's constituted an installation – a first step towards the development of site-specific art in which a group of objects on display cohered with one another and their surroundings, encouraging a viewer to become aware of the place in which she stood. The parts acted less as discrete sculptures than as a single whole. As Antin pointed out, Morris conceived of his works as independent sculptures and never intended for them to interact with one another or their setting in any specific way. In

exhibiting *Equivalents*, Andre alternatively presented eight forms that related to one another in conception, construction, and organization within the gallery.

As compared to Morris, Andre did intend for the viewer to experience his art in terms of the relationships of the parts to one another, to the whole, and to their general context. He too, though, had no interest in the *particulars* of the individual gallery space. While Andre's *Equivalents I-VIII* began to reveal their place, the forms did not call attention to any specifics about the locale. Both exhibitions could have been recreated in different spaces with the same effect. Perhaps a larger space would have required more Styrofoam planks or concrete bricks or a slightly different configuration of materials, but those were not Andre's concerns.

Place clearly performed an essential role in Carl Andre's work, as stated in his philosophy of sculptural progression. This concern for place in art, however, did not belong to him alone. The term began to appear consistently in conversations amongst artists, curators, and critics, and evidence of its impact materialized in the practices of a range of American artists during the second half of the 1960s.

This new term – place – entered American art critical discourse at this particular moment in time, and artists and critics alike attempted to define the concept. The results varied greatly. The materializations of place introduced here only mark the beginning of a shift that occurred in the mid- and late-1960s and, in the end, affected much more than artwork and criticism. The works being produced demanded new methods of display, which required curators to develop alternative ways of exhibiting. Sculptures and installations that remained dependent upon their surroundings for meaning and, in turn, were unable to be relocated to a gallery or individual home resisted private purchase and

museum collection. Aside from disturbing the overall art market, this directly affected the artists' practices and demanded new systems of patronage. The art world underwent a transformation during the mid- and late-1960s as a result of the introduction of place in art. In order to address the larger issues involved, however, one must first begin with an introduction of the key terms and an investigation of the primary events that demonstrate this transformation.

CHAPTER ONE

1967: "BUILD THE BIG THING AND GO SEE IT"

Site-specific art did not come about as the result of one artist's efforts, nor was it the product of a group of artists working towards a shared goal. In fact, artists represented merely one faction of those who contributed to the development of an art fixed to its site. Exhibitors played a large role in the advent of site-specific art, art that ultimately became immobile and, therefore, largely resistant to the art market. The viewer at times became a third participant in the advancement of site-specific art.

This chapter focuses on the involved parties and how their separate and often inconsistent efforts during the year 1967 drove the development of site-specific art. In the mid-1960s artists began to challenge the modernist sculptural ideal, creating artworks that crossed boundaries between media and tested conventions of form, scale, and placement. In response to the latest trends in contemporary art, exhibitors devised innovative ways to display such work which, in turn, encouraged artists to further explore new artistic territory. With their pioneering exhibitions, the curators and dealers provided fresh opportunities for artistic response and raised the possibility for artists to engage with place. Art dealers therefore colluded with art-makers in the emergence of site-specific art. In this chapter, I track the various, inconsistent ways in which artists and

their commercial counterparts both explored and struggled with integrating place and art during 1967 and, in turn, together advanced the concept of site-specificity.[1]

The terms of site-specificity arose as a result of these novel artistic and exhibition practices. Throughout this chapter, I examine two related concerns that propelled the development of art linked to its site: scale and context. First, I consider the significance of scale for art production and exhibition in the late-1960s by examining a group show held by Virginia Dwan in January 1967, entitled "Scale Models and Drawings" that contested standard methods of exhibition. Next, I assess the impact of context on art at this time through an analysis of two other unusual group exhibitions of this year: the Museum of Contemporary Crafts' "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" and the city-organized show "Sculpture in Environment."

Finally, I address two one-person exhibitions that took place at the Dwan Gallery in the spring of 1967: Carl Andre's *Cuts* and William Anastasi's *Six Sites*. Andre, as we have already seen, emphasized materiality in his works and Anastasi alternatively called attention to the conceptual nature of his art. However different, both of these shows conformed to normative exhibition practices: in each, a single artist displayed his works on the walls or floor of a high profile gallery for the public to view. Through an investigation of these concurrent works I demonstrate that, although distinct in approach, each of these artists resolved to reveal the physical space of the gallery by means of his artwork. While remaining within the bounds of the art establishment, Andre and Anastasi each devoted his current practice to communicating an awareness of place.

---

[1] Throughout the dissertation, I investigate only those few decisive works, exhibitions, and critical writings that articulate the transformation of the meaning of place during the year in question. Note that this is not an exhaustive examination of all art practices occurring throughout 1967-1969.

Besides demonstrating the importance of scale and context for art engaged with place, this chapter establishes that simultaneous innovations made by artists and dealers in 1967 instigated the development of site-specificity.

Exploding Scale

The aesthetic of the "primary structure" – variously termed by critics Minimal, Cool, or ABC art – pervaded the New York art scene in the middle of the 1960s. The size of such artworks, however, remained extremely variable. At the time of the first major public exhibition of object-type art at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1966, Ronald Bladen, Robert Grosvenor, and Tony Smith were creating gigantic geometric sculptures that dramatically impacted the viewer by virtue of their dimensions alone. Another set of artists, including Donald Judd, Carl Andre, and Robert Smithson, produced sculpture scaled more closely to the human body.[2] Robert Morris, the most publicly outspoken among this latter group, published a two-part manifesto in April and October of that year, "Notes on Sculpture," arguing for the qualities that current sculpture ought to possess: Gestalt forms, neutral tones, and human scale.[3] The discussion of scale

---

[2] The first minimalist exhibition mentioned here was the Jewish Museum's 1966 "Primary Structures" show. In Kynaston McShine's introduction to this exhibition's catalogue, he acknowledged that the current work was generally large in scale. However, he referenced two types of this large-scaled work: some of the sculptures "intrude[s] aggressively on the spectator's space," while other forms draw the spectator into their sculptural space. *Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptures*, exhibition catalogue (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1966.)

Minimalist artists have been crudely divided into these two groups. The artists themselves held very different beliefs about their individual art practices and did not consider themselves a part of any group. In fact, Donald Judd and Robert Morris differed greatly in their approaches. They did, however, both create works scaled to the person's body. For these purposes they have been grouped together. The faction of artists that included Bladen, Grosvenor, and Smith was mostly represented by the Fischbach and Park Place Galleries; the latter group was mostly represented by the Green Gallery. The "Primary Structures" show exhibited works by artists from both groups. See Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York*, exhibition catalogue (Austin, Texas: Blanton Museum of Art, 2008) and James Meyer, *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001) 163 and 163, n. 59.

[3] Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part I," *Artforum* 4:6 (February 1966): 42-44, and "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," *Artforum* 5:2 (October 1966): 20-23.

dominated the entire second half of his essay. The term scale remained distinct from Morris's characterization of size, which referred to an object's measurements. Alternatively, scale necessarily depended upon the viewer's relationship to the object. For Morris, the human body served as a standard against which one could compare the form in question and subsequently judge how to best perceive it. The artist privileged scale over size for the way that scale implicated the viewer in the work.[4]

Morris argued for a bodily-scaled sculpture in his 1966 essay – an art that did not overwhelm the viewer, but rather required individual engagement. However, he himself began conceptualizing monumental artworks that very year.[5] Recruited by his colleague Robert Smithson – who had been hired by an architecture and engineering firm to help integrate art into the design for the new Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport – Morris devised a plan to create a massive circular ring of packed earth that would sit on the edge of the airport's runway.[6] The ring, entitled *Project in Earth and Sod*, was to rise three

---

[4] Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," 21.

[5] Morris's personal philosophy on art was constantly changing. For example, the theories expressed in "Notes on Sculpture," advocating for a particular kind of minimal art, were replaced in 1968 when Morris wrote "Anti-Form," an essay that sided against object-type art and supported instead process, chance, and materiality. Robert Morris, "Anti-Form," *Artforum* 6:8 (April 1968): 33-35.

[6] In July 1966, the architecture and engineering firm of Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton hired Smithson to serve as their artist-consultant in the planning of the Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport. Over the course of the following months, Smithson devised a radical way to integrate art into the traveler's experience of the airport. Rather than planning to place sculpture at various locations throughout the terminal, the artist incorporated the areas surrounding the air terminal building and runways into the artistic program. Smithson envisioned artworks that could only be seen from the air, as aircraft arrived into and departed from the airport. He invited three of his fellow artists – Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Morris – to join him in proposing sculptures for the project.

Andre's notes indicate that he submitted his proposal on May 7, 1967. It seems reasonable to conclude that all four artists submitted their plans for the project at approximately the same time and, therefore, must have developed their conceptions in advance of the May submission date. Morris's "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," in which he championed an art scaled to the human body, went to print in October 1966. Therefore, Morris must have conceived of his circular earth mound prior to the Spring of 1967, merely six months after he argued for a human-scaled art. See Smithson-Holt Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C., roll 3832, frames 985-987.

feet from the ground and appear trapezoidal in section: six feet wide at its base with sides sloping upward at forty-five degree angles. In an essay detailing his ideas behind the airport's art program, Smithson confirmed that Morris intended for his circular mound to be large enough in scale to be visible "to aircraft as they take off and land."[7] Notes by Morris that accompanied his proposal further verified the artist's designs for an oversized artwork, a work that exceeded human scale. Morris also dictated that the size of the work have a definite relationship with the land on which it would stand: "Radii length *dependent upon site*. For example, lay out one line on 100' radius, another on 106' radius. Fill in mound between radii, compact and sod."[8] Morris's insistence that the work be altered according to its eventual placement on the fringe of the airport tarmac remained significant for the development of site-specific art. The artist intended to adapt the work to the dimensions of the particular location. Morris's proposal is an early indication of an artist adjusting a conception in order to suit a place. In order for Morris to ensure that *Project in Earth and Sod* accommodated its site, he planned to modify only one aspect: its scale.

It remains evident that, despite Morris's inclusion of oversize works into his oeuvre at this time, the artist continued to place a very high value on scale – the relationship between an object and a standard unit of measurement. While he intended *Project in Earth and Sod* to be large enough to be seen from the air, Morris did not design the work merely to impress through size. Viewers would not typically encounter

---

[7] Robert Smithson, "Proposal for Earthworks and Landmarks to be Built on the Fringes of the Fort Worth-Dallas Regional Air Terminal Site." In Jack Flam, ed., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 354.

[8] Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3832, frame 986. Italics are my own, for emphasis.

the earth mound at ground level, where its massive dimensions would overwhelm. Rather, the artist scaled it to the large site for which he was creating. When viewed from miles overhead, the work's specific, massive measurements would be less evident than its relationship to its surroundings. The correlation between sculpture and site was central to his conception. Morris shifted from a scale based on the size of a human body to one based on the work's environment. The significance that Morris applied to scale resonated with many artists in the following years, particularly those who began experimenting with place.

During 1967, the concern for scale affected much more than art production; it caused many problems for artists and their exhibitors. The works being created no longer suited conventional gallery and museum spaces. Their monumental size required larger rooms, and additional space surrounding the works became a necessary factor for proper viewing. As space remained especially limited in New York City, oversized sculptures demanded new methods of display. This required curators to develop alternative ways of exhibiting. The sheer size of large-scale works made relocating them extremely difficult and, in turn, troubled their status as commodities for private purchase and museum collection. How did large-scale works figure into the established system? With the introduction of large-scale works, did the institutions of art continue to function in the same ways? The considerations of portability and immobility, display, and an artwork's commodity status – all consequences of the production of monumental artworks – became central for artists and exhibitors in 1967. The challenges that arose with the creation of large-scale artworks altered exhibition practices and ultimately shaped the development of site-specific art.

In January 1967, the New York City art dealer Virginia Dwan opened an exceptional show that temporarily resolved the problem of scale recently affecting contemporary art production and exhibition. Seventeen artists contributed one or more works to the group exhibition, entitled "Scale Models and Drawings." The submissions included models and drawings of large-scale artworks. Three tables positioned throughout the gallery supported two to four maquettes each, allowing plenty of room for viewers to move around and examine the works closely. In addition, drawings and even a model or two hung on the walls.

Dwan and the artists agreed that contributions take the form of models and drawings, thereby freeing the makers to think beyond the practical limitations that accompanied creating actual, feasible sculptures to be exhibited, for sale, as independent artworks in a commercial gallery setting.[9] Artists responded by offering proposals for both realizable and imaginary works.[10] Richard Baringer, Robert Smithson, and Robert

---

[9] According to Virginia Dwan, "the show was in part conceived by the artists." Correspondence with the dealer, June 26, 2009.

[10] Ibid. Virginia Dwan recalled that the artists "had desires to make the artworks therefore they showed models that could be executed." This statement, however, seems to undermine several of the submissions and statements by the artists themselves, as described in the coming pages.

Notably, a few of the works on display did not fit neatly into either category that I have outlined. For example, Mel Bochner exhibited a piece entitled *36 Photographs and 12 Diagrams*, in which he presented a series of drawings and photographs that represented a group of constructions he had made in his studio out of building blocks. The artist diagrammed each structure and photographed the built form from three angles: plan, elevation, and corner view. In this work, Bochner did not demonstrate a concern for large-scale sculpture or for creating something outside of the space of the gallery – two concerns shared by most of the works included in "Scale Models and Drawings." In a similar fashion to the other works on view, though, *36 Photographs and 12 Diagrams* did refer to physical forms not present in the exhibition – Bochner's built constructions.

Most critics who reviewed Dwan's exhibition did not mention Bochner's work; the one who did noted its distinction from the other submissions. Those who make no reference to Bochner's piece include David Bourdon, "Immodest Proposals For Monuments," *New York World Tribune*, January 8, 1967, 22; Max Kozloff, "New York Reviews," *Artforum* 5:7 (March 1967): 52; and Charlotte Willard, "In the Art Galleries," *New York Post*, Saturday, January 28, 1967, 46. Dan Graham sets Bochner's work apart from the rest, stating, "The only artist in the Dwan exhibition to take the idea of model at its static, face value – that is, as in incomplete stage in itself – was Mel Bochner." "Models and Monuments: The Plague of Architecture," *Arts Magazine* 41:5 (March 1967): 32-35. This statement suggests that the critic perceived

Morris each contributed plans capable of being executed. Baringer proposed a monumental aluminum arch and a forty-foot high aluminum sculpture. Robert Smithson contributed a model and drawing for his first earthwork, conceived in 1966, entitled *Tar Pool and Gravel Pit*. The structure involved two concentric rectangular fields, both depressions in the land. The inner area would contain a pool of tar, while the outer section would hold gravel. Robert Morris submitted a variation on his proposal for the Fort Worth-Dallas Airport project: a plaster model that represented a three-foot tall sodded earth mound measuring up to five hundred yards across.[11] Both Smithson and Morris's proposals involved geometric configurations of natural materials positioned out in the land. Despite the fact that one artist's proposal involved digging into earth and

---

the other included models as finished works of art. The work is not discussed but is illustrated in Patricia Stone, "Scale Models, Drawings," *Arts Magazine* 41:4 (February 1967): 57.

On Bochner's *36 Photographs and 12 Diagrams*, see Sasha M. Newman, "The Photo Pieces," *Mel Bochner: Thought Made Visible, 1966-1973* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1995): 114-119 and Scott Rothkopf, *Mel Bochner Photographs, 1966-1969* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

[11] In order to communicate his goals for the Fort Worth-Dallas Airport's art program and the groundbreaking work that he and the others proposed, Smithson planned to exhibit models of the four works by himself, Andre, Morris, and LeWitt at Virginia Dwan's New York City gallery concurrent with their construction at the Texas site. The "Airport Show" was to take place at Dwan Gallery in September 1967. This exhibition, however, never occurred. The architecture and engineering firm that Smithson advised did not win the airport commission and, as a result, terminated their contract with the artist-consultant in June 1967.

The timeline between the January 1967 "Scale Models and Drawings" exhibition and Smithson's design for the potential "Airport Show" that was to take place in September 1967 remains fairly unclear. A text that Smithson wrote, proposing the "Airport Show," was dated generally 1966-67. Presumably, all four of the artists' proposals for the airport property were submitted at approximately the same time – sometime in the Spring of 1967. (See note 6 above.) Was Smithson inspired by the January 1967 exhibition and his participation in it to create another show displaying models, therefore indicating that he wrote "Proposal for Earthworks and Landmarks to be Built on the Fringes of the Fort Worth-Dallas Regional Air Terminal Site" sometime after the "Scale Models and Drawings" show was conceived? Or did conversations between Smithson and Dwan regarding Smithson's interaction with the airport project precipitate Dwan's group exhibition? Smithson and Dwan had a relationship based on common intellectual interests and idea-sharing, as documented in Charles Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan, March 21-June 7, 1984, Tape recording, Archives of American Art, New York. According to Dwan's recent recollections, the two shows remained unrelated; "Scale Models and Drawings" was conceived independently of the Dallas airport project. Correspondence with the dealer, June 28, 2009.

The timeline for the conception of Morris's *Project in Earth and Sod* remains unknown, as well. Was this a work that he had long wanted to execute and, finally, with the airport project was given the circumstances to implement? Or was he developing this work for the airport when he entered it into Dwan's January 1967 show? The latter assertion seems the more likely; as yet, however, I have found no evidence to corroborate it.

other building up on top of it, both designed low-lying forms that would appear rather unobtrusive upon approach from ground level. Only an overhead view would relay the magnitude of these forms in full.

A few artists, including Tony Smith and Christo, submitted sketches of works that they had already worked through, constructed, and displayed elsewhere. For example, Tony Smith offered a drawing and cardboard model of a project that he had devised for the Roosevelt Memorial competition seven years earlier.[12] The proposal consisted of three large white granite walls of increasing size positioned at right angles to one another so as to form three sides of an open quadrilateral. Christo's model and collage of *42390 Cubic Feet Empaquetage* illustrated the package of helium that he actually raised at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis the previous year.

Still others submitted impossible proposals. Michael Steiner exhibited a model for his plan to encase a mountain peak in a concrete block. Ronald Bladen conceived of a water-driven kinetic ocean piece that would sit a quarter mile off-shore and span three hundred yards wide. According to this drawn proposal, steel blades would rise out of the water and then, as waves broke over them, become forced downward into the ocean again.

"Scale Models and Drawings" represents a shift not only in sculptural production, but in exhibition practice as well. Dwan and her artists recognized a conflict between conventional art exhibition and the direction of contemporary art-making. By devising "Scale Models and Drawings," the dealer presented one solution to exhibiting improbable and oversized works. She displayed *models* of proposed, or actual, artworks.

---

[12] Smith did not win the competition.

The presentation of models on tables was not an unprecedented method of exhibition. Historically, museum exhibitions of architectural works often involved the display of models.[13] In addition, a group of artists or architects competing for one commission might be given the opportunity to display their maquettes in a gallery setting. Such models, serving as three-dimensional sketches for works that potentially could be realized, allowed an audience to view multiple designs before making the ultimate decision.[14] In other cases, sketches and models existed as evidence of an artist's process in working through a project or as a prop for engineers and builders in executing the works. For an exhibition devoted to artistic process held the year before "Scale Models and Drawings," the Finch College Museum of Art/Contemporary Study Wing in New York displayed "working models, equations, sketches, diagrams and 'inspirational' materials" alongside completed artworks.[15]

Artists also began to incorporate the use of tables and platforms into the conception of their works and exhibitions at this time. Lucas Samaras first exhibited a

---

[13] The Museum of Modern Art in New York held their first exhibition of architecture in February-March 1932: "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition." More than a dozen exhibits centering on architecture followed that very decade. See "Exhibition History List," Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Of the examples that follow, architectural models seem the most applicable and analogous to the works on view in "Scale Models and Drawings." Recently, Dwan herself acknowledged that "architectural models did have an influence on how the show was executed." Correspondence with the dealer, June 26, 2009.

[14] Stuckey discusses this practice of displaying maquettes as part of a competition in his 1984 interview with Virginia Dwan.

[15] Mel Bochner, "Art in Process – Structures," *Arts Magazine* 40:9 (September–October 1966): 38-39. A model of Sol LeWitt's black open rectangular box sat on a pedestal just next to the full-scale object in the Finch College show, "Art in Process – Structures." Robert Smithson exhibited his *Enantiomorphic Chambers* – in both drawn and built forms. He showed the object, a model for it, and three related drawings. See the exhibition checklist, published in *Art in Process: The Visual Development of a Structure* (New York: Finch College Museum of Art/Contemporary Study Wing, 1966).

Significantly, Bochner's inclusion in Dwan's "Scale Models and Drawings" and involvement in the Finch College "Art in Series" exhibitions later that year demonstrate a direct link between these shows and their use of models on display.

series of his boxes in 1963.[16] On average these works measured between one and two cubic feet. Placed on pedestals, Samaras' small boxes covered in provocative materials beckoned a viewer to come close, interact with them, and peer inside. Anthony Caro created the first of his "table sculptures" in the summer of 1966. Typically, one of these small-scale works included a handle-like element and a component that protruded outwards and downwards from the form itself so that by necessity the object had to perch at the edge of a raised platform.[17] The same year that Caro initiated this practice, the artist Mel Bochner curated an exhibition of drawings produced by his contemporaries, entitled "Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant To Be Viewed As Art" at the School of Visual Arts in New York. Bochner only included representations of proposed, incomplete, or in-progress works, along with studio notes and diagrams. The drawings, therefore, were not considered precious or unique works of art. In order to display them, Bochner produced four identical binders filled with xerox copies of the submissions. Each sat on a waist-high pedestal in the otherwise empty gallery. A viewer could approach one of the notebooks and flip through it, intimately handling the photocopies. As with the supporting material on display in the Finch Museum exhibition, the books presented the involved artists' processes. This time, though, the preparatory materials related to works that would exist in the near future, works that could eventually be brought into the gallery for exhibit themselves. Finally, in

---

[16] Thomas McEvilley, "Intimate but Lethal Things: The Art of Lucas Samaras," *Lucas Samaras: Objects and Subjects, 1969-1986*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), 18.

[17] Caro insisted that his small sculptures *not* be viewed as maquettes, as his working process did not entail small-scaled preparatory studies. Rather, these pieces related specifically to the edge of a table. As Caro asserted in 1966-1967, "My Table Pieces are not models inhabiting a pretence world, but relate to a person like a cup or a jug." Ian Barker, *Anthony Caro: Quest for the New Sculpture* (Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2004), 161.

sketches detailing his plans to exhibit the airport proposals, Smithson indicated that the works would sit upon a low platform placed on the gallery floor.

Despite the recent incorporation of tables and pedestals into works of art and the history of models on display, "Scale Models and Drawings" stands apart from these other examples. The individual artists who participated in Dwan's exhibition had no association with any single project; the pieces that they submitted varied greatly in concept, form, and feasibility. The models did not serve as a step in the development of works, since the majority of projects on view were never intended for execution. Nor were they designed to engage with the form of the table on which they sat. Distinctively, the critics who reviewed the show referred to the *ideas* that the miniature objects represented as the works themselves, rather than the models. For instance, in his review Dan Graham described, "Michael Steiner's project to encase a mountain top in a block of concrete," and explained, "Ronald Bladen has designed a 'wind tunnel and sound volume.'"[18] The critic made no explicit reference to the objects on display, but passed them over to focus on the concepts that they represented. Ultimately, the maquettes stood in as ideas for both possible and impossible artworks too large to ever exist in the gallery.

In addition to finding a way to display these works, Virginia Dwan facilitated a situation in which such fanciful and conceptual artistic practices could enter into the marketplace. Consumers purchased the scale models and drawings. Kenneth Snelson's submission, a model for a thirty foot cantilevered tower, became a collector's small tabletop sculpture.[19] The model acted as an individual, modernist sculpture capable of

---

[18] Dan Graham, "New York: Of Monuments and Dreams," *Art and Artists* 1:12 (March 1967): 62.

[19] Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan. Note the difference between this object and Caro's "table sculptures": Snelson's form did not relate to the table in any way. In recent correspondence, Dwan

being relocated from its perch on a gallery shelf to a buyer's coffee table without any alteration of its purpose or meaning. If constructed, the work would certainly not have functioned in the same way. It would have remained immobile, fixed to its place. In "Scale Models and Drawings," Dwan and her artists strayed from conventional exhibition methods in order to accommodate contemporary art trends. While rejecting the art institution's accepted model for exhibition, however, they managed to continue to participate within the commercial system.

In January 1967, Virginia Dwan and the artists she represented deemed this measure necessary as a way to accommodate the scale of artworks under production at the time. The dealer enabled the artists to exhibit their works within the established gallery structure while creating sculptures that did not fit neatly within the prescribed space. Even if they had been technologically and financially sound, none of the proposed works could have been physically executed in a gallery space.

Dwan's exhibition calls attention to a major innovation in contemporary art production that resulted from artists' large scale investigations and, consequently, signals the advance of site-specific art: the models represented artworks intended for a space outside of the gallery. Although precise locations did not inspire the individual conceptions, each contributing artist created a work intended for a particular *kind* of place: a mountain site for Steiner, an ocean for Bladen, a large outdoor field in the Midwest for Morris. None envisioned Dwan's New York City gallery as his sculpture's final site. Some of the proposed works, including those by Snelson, Mark DiSuvero, and

---

confirmed that many of the objects sold. She went on to suggest that some of the buyers planned to erect the larger works. There is no evidence that this ever occurred. Correspondence with the dealer, June 28, 2009.

Peter Hutchinson, were architectural proposals. DiSuvero submitted a model of an apartment building in the form of a spiraling, cantilevered crucifix; Hutchinson proposed a cruciform-shaped exhibition space.[20] Other artists, such as Morris, Steiner and Bladen, involved the landscape. All of the models acted as points of reference, gesturing towards an actual or imagined artwork planned for a real setting. Virginia Dwan, in an interview in which she recalled this exhibition, explained how the models functioned to bridge the gap between the gallery and a new art that resisted the gallery space: "Well, it also said: 'If you really want to see it, build the big thing and go see it or go see it if it's already built.' It can't be brought into the gallery; it is a work of art; it's non-portable."[21] This acknowledgement of an immobile sculpture signified a rupture in modernist tradition and opened the doors for site-specific practices. If artists were no longer expected to create works that could be moved from the studio to the gallery to a collector's living room, then the work's intended, single, final location could be incorporated into the piece itself.

Dwan's show contested the established gallery system already in place: the works on view were not designed as autonomous objects for sale, but rather as concept proposals for potential monumental projects. The exhibition provided artists with the opportunity, and the permission, to create works unable to be displayed conventionally within the gallery space and yet still remain a part of the circulating art market. "Scale Models and Drawings" revealed that traditional gallery exhibitions – with finished sculptures set on pedestals – no longer served as the only way to display current art. This

---

[20] These artists conceived of their projects as autonomous structures, not alterations of an existing space.

[21] Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan.

novel way of thinking about artworks and their relationship to a gallery space began to pave the way for the development of both earthworks and site-specific art.[22]

Exposing Context: Thematic Framework and Physical Environment

When a viewer steps into a gallery space, she enters a constructed situation, or context, that consists of more than the walls, floor, and ceiling of the gallery. The gallery context also includes that gallery's name, the title of the exhibition, the accompanying wall text, labels, and catalogue, and the other works that share the gallery space. Each of these factors contributes to the viewer's expectations about what she will experience and, ultimately, shapes her perspective of the art she sees. The artist's intent in creating the work and the exhibitor's intent in displaying it also frame the way in which a viewer perceives any single object and, ultimately, the meaning she takes away from it.

A work's physical placement also informs the viewer's experience. The white cube of the modernist gallery presents a neutral, isolated, and austere environment for viewers, whereas a city park offers a more informal and even interactive setting.[23] In addition to these general characteristics, the specifics of those locales – such as the particular structure and dimensions of the place, its quality of light and noise level, and traffic patterns – also impact a work's reception.

Changing an artwork's context alters the way a viewer perceives the work and therefore transforms its meaning. At the transitional moment of 1967, as artists and exhibitors challenged modernist norms, a work's context – its thematic framework and

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] For more on the "white cube" and the gallery as context, see Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

physical environment – appear to have greatly influenced the work itself. Such effects of context on individual artworks prefigure the development site-specific art.

I now turn to an exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in order to examine how a work of art changes according to its thematic framework and physical environment. As discussed, Virginia Dwan's "Scale Models and Drawings" exhibition acknowledged and fostered the large-scale works being produced at this time. In describing the works included in the show, many critics employed the term "monumental," meaning massive and oversized.[24] New York City's Museum of Contemporary Crafts opened an exhibition in March 1967, a few weeks after the closing of "Scale Models and Drawings," only a few blocks south of Dwan Gallery's space. This show, entitled "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies," also involved "monumental" works; however, the Museum's mission for the exhibition remained quite distinct from that of the previous show. The organizers solicited artworks created in remembrance of people or events.

In reaction to the tradition of "sentimental, realistic, commemorative monuments,"[25] the curators designed an exhibition to display contemporary, unconventional works "used to memorialize a particular person or event."[26] The Museum put out a call requesting that artists disregard the traditional concepts of

---

[24] Bourdon, "Immodest Proposals for Monuments," 22-23; Willard, 46; Robert Pincus-Witten, "New York Reviews," *Artforum* 5:7 (March 1967): 52; Graham, "New York: Of Monuments and Dreams," 62-63; Graham, "Models and Monuments: The Plague of Architecture," 32-35; John Perreault, "Union-Made, Report on a Phenomenon," *Arts Magazine* 41:5 (March 1967): 26-31.

[25] Unpublished letter from Thomas Kyle, Assistant Director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, to Robert Arneson, art instructor at the University of California, dated December 28, 1966. American Craft Council Archives, New York City.

[26] Unpublished letter from Thomas Kyle, Assistant Director of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, to potential participant Ellen Jones, dated February 2, 1967. American Craft Council Archives.

monuments, tombstones, and trophies and interpret the definitions anew. The show attempted to reconsider these three conventional categories by enabling a new generation of artists to reinvent them: "A monument need not be an inert mass of bronze or marble. In a world of change, mobility and decreasing free landscape, consideration may be given to portable, temporary and disposable monuments."[27] In their appeal for submissions, the curators quietly evoked the current condition of the modern world and suggested that contemporary artistic forms might best represent this state.

Just as Virginia Dwan encouraged her artists to ignore limitations of size and practicability set by the confines of the gallery, these curators offered artists the liberty to create at will as long as the work produced loosely fit into one of the three given categories: monuments, tombstones, and trophies.[28] Once again, some works remained conservative in form and memorial content while others fell outside the realm of possibility. In a notice released to the press in advance of the exhibition's opening, the Museum's director clarified the requirements for a work's inclusion in the "monument" category: "The only criterion used for determining whether they are monuments was the artist's *commemorative intent*. This is expressed by the scale, the proposed site or merely

---

[27] The desire for "portable, temporary and disposable monuments" should not be interpreted as a call for ephemeral and mobile artworks, countering the development of site-specific works. Rather, it should be regarded as a solicitation for artworks that surpass conventional associations with monuments, tombstones, and trophies. Monuments are usually permanent, stable memorials. This quotation was taken from a page of text devoted to the category "Monuments" found in the exhibition's files. The text appears to have been written to accompany the works, likely a wall text. I will refer to it as "wall text" from here forward. American Craft Council Archives.

In Chapter Three and the dissertation's Conclusion I examine the relationship between ephemerality and site-specificity. Early in the development of site-specificity, most works that engaged with their place remained temporary; later, as the notion of site-specificity solidified, it became equated with a greater sense of permanence.

[28] The organizers divided the exhibition into three parts. They then subdivided each category. The monuments section, for instance, included proposed monuments, temporary monuments, existing monuments, and works of art that could be used for monumental purposes.

the title… From the decision on the location of the monument to the choice of media and form, the artist's total involvement is essential."[29] While the Museum staff identified *scale* and *site* as conditions that an artist might manipulate to convey a memorial effect, the organizers imposed no limitations on entries.

The Museum solicited contributions to the show from both students and established artists. In addition, the organizers borrowed several of the works included in the exhibition – primarily in the monuments category – from the Dwan Gallery.[30] Considering the group of high-profile artists that Virginia Dwan represented at the time and the impressive reputation of her gallery, the practice of borrowing and lending works was not unusual. What does remain surprising, however, is that the Museum of Contemporary Crafts appropriated artworks for their exhibition with little or no relevance to the subject of memorialization. Furthermore, most of the pieces that the Museum requested from Dwan Gallery had been displayed in the previous month's "Scale Models and Drawings" show. Michael Steiner's concrete block embedded in a mountain, Richard Baringer's model for an arch, Robert Smithson's model for the *Tar Pool and Gravel Pit*, and Christo's photo-mural of *42390 Cubic Feet Empaquetage* appeared in both shows.[31]

[29] Press release found in American Craft Council Archives. This quote appeared in the archive's copy of the unpublished wall text, as well. Italics are my own, for emphasis.

[30] In a letter written by Thomas Kyle to Virginia Dwan, dated March 2, 1967, the Museum's Assistant Director requested that Dwan Gallery loan the Museum of Contemporary Crafts the following works: "Mountain Project by Michael Steiner, Tower model and T.A.O. Monument by Kenneth Snelson, Model by Richard Baringer, Tar Pit model by Robert Smithson, and Tableau "Hope" by Edward Kienholz." American Craft Council Archives.

[31] Ibid. All were placed into the "monuments" category.

By physically relocating the models from the "Scale Models and Drawings" exhibition to their own venue, the "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" organizers reframed the meanings of these works. Christo originally constructed and exhibited *42,390 Cubic Feet Empaquetage* in Minneapolis in 1966. He displayed the work again, using a model and a collage of images, at the Dwan "Scale Models" show in January 1967. Dwan showcased the small reconstruction of the piece, along with photographs, as a reference to the actual, larger work that existed outside of her gallery. For the Museum of Contemporary Crafts's exhibition, the artist loaned the collage once again. Christo re-adapted the piece – without making any physical changes to it – to fit the museum's current needs. This becomes apparent in the wall text that accompanied the work:

> This 'monument' was erected between the 24th and the 29th of October 1966, with the participation of 147 first year students of the Minneapolis School of Art and was co-sponsored by the Contemporary Arts Group and the Walker Art Center of Minneapolis. The 'monument' was made out of 8000 square feet of eight mil translucent polyethylene which enclosed 4 U.S. Army high altitude research balloons measuring 18 feet in height and 25 feet in diameter. This construction in turn enclosed 2820 eight inch balloons. The entire construction was secured by over 4000 feet of rope. The 42,390 cubic foot empaquetage was airlifted by helicopter on October 29th at 12:30 pm.[32]

Here, the Museum's explanatory text – surely exhibited with the artist's consent – described Christo's 1966 sculpture as a "monument." No other, earlier account of the

[32] Wall text, American Craft Council Archives.

piece used this term in portraying the artwork, and the wall label failed to account for this latest designation. The Walker Art Center's exhibition catalogue, which documented the 1966 show for which Christo initially constructed the piece, made no reference to the work as a monument.[33] The word, affixed to *42,390 Cubic Feet Empaquetage* for the Craft Museum's exhibition, added a new layer of meaning and ensured that – by way of intent – the piece fit the theme of the show. Similarly, Michael Steiner's model of a mountain encased by a concrete block acquired two different names for the two different shows in which it appeared. The Dwan Gallery's checklist named the work, simply, *Mountain Piece*. In his request to borrow the work for the "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" exhibition, the Museum's Assistant Director used that name as well.[34] The Museum of Contemporary Crafts's checklist renamed the work, *Model of a Mountain Monument*.[35] By labeling these extant works as monuments, the organizers of "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" manipulated the viewer's perception of them. Beyond serving as examples of contemporary large-scale work, Steiner and Christo's

---

[33] Although The Walker Art Museum's catalogue did not include this work on the exhibition checklist for their show "Eight Sculptors: The Ambiguous Image" that took place from October 22 to December 4, 1966, it did refer to Christo's conception for this work. The catalogue stated, "Another instance of the weightless, contentless package is the air-filled space balloon the artist proposes to wrap in Minneapolis and ship by helicopter from one location to another." Most likely, when the catalogue went to print, the work was not planned as part of the exhibition. According to the text that appeared with Christo's entry into the "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" show, though, the artist constructed the *Empaquetage* "between the 24th and the 29th of October 1966, with the participation of 147 first year students of the Minneapolis School of Art." The dates of the work remained consistent with the original exhibition dates. *Eight Sculptors: The Ambiguous Image*, exhibition catalogue (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1966): 11, 42.

[34] Letter from Thomas Kyle to Virginia Dwan, dated March 2, 1967. American Craft Council Archives.

[35] "Scale Models and Drawings" exhibition checklist, Dwan Gallery Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" exhibition checklist, American Craft Council Archives.

models suddenly acquired a commemorative content. The context of the exhibition – its thematic framework – informed the sculptures' altered meanings.

All of the works that Dwan Gallery loaned for this exhibition remained unfixed in both location and meaning. Each model represented the idea of a hypothetical, larger sculpture or structure conceived for a general kind of place. By displaying the maquettes in her "Scale Models and Drawings" show, Virginia Dwan ensured that her gallery space could accommodate the exhibition of such large-scale works. However, the models, by nature and necessity, remained separate from the proposed, actual locations of the works. They served as stand-ins for the impracticable, oversize art and maintained a mobility of locale and meaning that the theoretical, built forms lacked. Dwan acknowledged this when she suggested that contemporary art no longer remained portable, capable of being placed in a gallery setting, but now required that the viewer to go out in the world to see and experience it.[36] The models, alternatively, could be moved from one exhibition to another.

When the context surrounding the maquettes changed, their meanings changed. In Virginia Dwan's show, Christo's model and collage representation substituted for an oversized example of a recent artwork. When the Museum of Contemporary Crafts recycled the collage and placed it in their themed show, alongside "monuments," "tombstones," and "trophies," the work acquired a commemorative association, even if very loose. By being shown in conjunction with other memorializing works and in an exhibition with a clear agenda, as presented in its title, the piece accrued a new meaning that it never possessed when exhibited in Dwan Gallery, or even in Minneapolis. The

[36] Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan. Previously quoted; see page 42, footnote 21 above.

premise of the show provided the thematic framework through which the viewer perceived the art and, therefore, shaped her experience and understanding of the sculptures displayed. Much of the artwork's meaning, therefore, derived from its context. This characteristic is indicative of what we now think of as site-specific art, an art that is conceived of and for a particular place.[37]

"Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" did not exhibit site-specific art. The exhibition does raise questions, though, about how a work of art accrues meaning and how the work's surroundings impact its content. In the Museum's show, we see elements of site-specific practice *in reverse*. Rather than being created for a specific locale, the work exhibited obtained its meaning in response to its placement. This occurrence signifies a departure from modernist sculptural practices, in which an artwork maintains its discrete meaning despite any act of relocation. Here, an artwork acquired a new layer of meaning explicitly from its environment.

Carl Andre's submission to "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" demonstrates site-specificity's beginnings in a more material way. The artist created a new work for this show, thereby ensuring that it related explicitly to the chosen theme. In accordance with the personal working method that he implemented in 1966, the artist resisted constructing anything at all.[38] He simply allowed his material to act naturally

---

[37] In her recent article, "Toward Site," Jane McFadden considered Walter De Maria's 1960s works as both engaged with place and time – the here and now – and simultaneously demonstrating dislocation. She identified the relationship between an artwork and its context as central to the development of site-related works. Jane McFadden, "Toward Site," *Grey Room* 27 (Spring 2007): 38.

[38] In the Introduction it was explained that in the process of creating *Reef* for the back room of New York City's Park Place Gallery in February 1966, Andre initiated a new method for executing his works. For Andre, the fact that the work involved individual, discrete particles that were not joined to one another, classified *Reef* as his first "sculpture as place" – the culminating category in his philosophy that sculpture progresses from "sculpture as form" to "sculpture as structure" to, ultimately, "sculpture as place."

without affixing the particles to one another or composing a form in any way. The elements remained separate and inert. In a very uncharacteristic act, however, Andre did not place his material in any simple, rational, geometric organization as he did in his other works. Instead, as his contribution to this show, the artist poured a bag of sand from the second-floor stair landing of the Museum of Contemporary Crafts onto the main floor below.[39] The quality of the material itself, the movement that Andre made when he threw the contents of the sand bag out of their container and onto the Museum's lower level, the site where this act took place, and the effects of gravity all contributed to the final form that gave shape to the sand.

In contrast to the models borrowed from Dwan Gallery, Andre's pile of sand garnered its meaning from more than the thematic framework in which it appeared; the work retained and realized Andre's original commemorative objective. By entitling the new piece *Grave*, Andre ensured that it suited the exhibition's theme. The material, its form, and the artist's action of throwing dirt evoked a burial site. The artwork itself, a pile of sand that existed only for the duration of the exhibition and would be swept up at its end, remained a reminder of the ephemeral nature of life. Through this work, Andre evoked general associations of death and funerals, subjects that he associated with sculpture and wrote about in his poetry of the 1960s and 1970s.[40] In the midst of the

---

[39] The dematerialized form of this work resembles the floor distributions that artists Barry Le Va and Richard Serra began to create in 1966, and the 1968 anti-form works of Robert Morris. Andre, too, generated two scatter pieces, entitled *Spill (Scatter Piece)* in 1966 and *Scatter Piece* in 1969. The former involved plastic blocks, while the latter included such varied elements as ball bearings, pulley discs, aluminum channel, rectangular acrylic solids, and aluminum ingots. Of note: the "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" curators placed Andre's piece under the heading of "Works of art that could be used for monumental purposes." Exhibition checklist, American Craft Council Archives.

[40] Andre's word poems "Essay on Sculpture For E. C. Goossen 1964" (1964) and "Chaintomb Ode" (1965) both include words associated with death and burial. In a 1976 interview, he aligned sculpture and death: "… perhaps the first sculpture was the result of the first human realization that people died. The first

Vietnam War, these themes garnered additional value, focusing attention on the inescapable consequences of gruesome warfare.[41]

New York Times columnist Ada Louise Huxtable, in the only printed mention of Andre's contribution to the exhibition, indirectly described the current situation and commented on the suitability of this artist's work:

> Today, the 19th-century hero charges through a traffic jam or guards a slum. Esthetic puffery has little place in a time of tough questions and answers and terrible uncertainties. Man was never more mortal or his world more insecure. The exhibition offers no better comment on today's human condition than Carl Andre's pile of sand, meant to sink invisibly into the surface of the grave.[42]

---

realization of death: that people leave nothing other than a mark. I think sculpture is always related to this question of death. There is always something of the tomb in all sculpture, but not in a sad way." Carl Andre, *Cuts: Texts 1959-2004*, ed. James Meyer (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2005) 233, 244, 242, respectively.

[41] Andre would become the most politically active of all of the artists. His involvement in social action ought to be acknowledged when examining this piece and its associations. The following chapter presents the social and political implications of site-related works, including ones by Andre.

[42] Ada Louise Huxtable, "Monumental Questions," *The New York Times* (Sunday, March 26, 1967). Worthy of note, the Vietnam War was not explicitly discussed in this or any other review of the show. Similarly, the war was not referenced in any way at all throughout the exhibition notes, correspondence, or files.

Huxtable's review, a mention by Robert Smithson in his essay "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," and a reference in the publication put forth on the occasion of Andre's 1978 traveling retrospective exhibition appear to be the only evidence of *Grave*'s existence. Smithson referred to the work as "*grave site*." In the catalogue, the work was named *Monument for a Small Child* and was discussed as an example of the current trend in anti-form art and as "more of a poetic gesture than anything else." See Flam, 102 and *Carl Andre, Sculpture 1959-1977* (New York: Jaap Rietman Inc., 1978): 30. No photographs of the work exist. Furthermore, the piece was left out of Andre's 1987 catalogue raisonné, a book which he claims in his own introduction to be the complete listing of all works he created from 1958 through 1974 "whose existence could be verified." The artist did not consider this piece – along with some others, such as his "Dada Forgeries" – amongst his "works." Notably, his 1966 distribution piece *Spill (Scatter Piece)* – an equally temporary work – was included in the catalogue of works. *Carl Andre*, exhibition catalogue (Haags Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, 1987).

By 1967, the Vietnam War had reached a stalemate and fighting remained incessant. The United States' involvement met with great criticism from the American public: the first months of the new year witnessed the burgeoning student anti-war movement, the formal birth of the draft Resistance, and the largest demonstration in U.S. history, which took place in New York's Central Park at the very same time that "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" was on view nearby.[43] The Museum's thematic choice for their March exhibition must be considered within this political and social context, despite the fact that no explicit mention of the War exists in any exhibition materials or critical reviews. The subject matter selected – monuments, tombstones, and trophies – conveyed an unavoidable and sober reference to the current war. Even "trophies," when regarded in relation to the other categories, possessed the potential to signal something much darker than an award for victory. During wartime, the concept of a trophy easily evoked that of a war trophy – any item, including body parts, taken from enemy soldiers. Certainly the exhibition's organizers did not expect for their show to be so grim. They did, however, acknowledge that some of the contributors used the opportunity to make "social comments."[44]

Grave remains significant for more than its content; the work serves as a marker in site-specificity's early development. Andre's work ultimately depended upon the action of making it and the place where it was made, in addition to the properties of the material and the involvement of gravity. The physical location in which Andre first stood as he unfurled the bag of sand and its relation to the site where the particles finally rested

---

[43] Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1994) 115-132.

[44] Wall text for "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" show, American Craft Council Archives. Other contributions to this show explicitly addressed the Vietnam War.

dictated whether the pile was tall, flat, or wide. A closer stance would have allowed for more control, and perhaps a tighter and higher heap. On the other hand, had he thrown the material from a greater distance, the mound would have dispersed over a larger area. If the exhibition had occurred in another space or Andre had poured the sand on a part of the floor that stood at the same level as he did, the resulting pile would have appeared slightly different, as well. Nevertheless, while the work's shape might have changed, the pile of sand would maintain exactly the same meaning. As with all of the proposals for "Scale Models and Drawings," Andre's display could have moved to any similar kind of space, and *Grave*'s significance would have remained intact. The final form of Andre's piece remained particular to the physical situation in which it was created; however, the work obtained its meaning from the artist's intent and the exhibition's thematic framework – the surrounding art and the Museum's accompanying title and texts. The organizers of "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" provided the context that made the space of the exhibition specific. The material qualities of the site did not dictate *Grave*'s significance, but they did impact the artwork's form.

Engaging Place

Virginia Dwan was not alone in her endeavor to support contemporary artists by formulating new ways to exhibit their large-scale artworks. In the early fall of 1967, New York City officials prepared for a week-long, five-borough-wide festival that would promote their city's numerous cultural offerings. Doris Freedman, an administrator in the Office of Recreation and Cultural Affairs with a personal interest in the arts, devised a plan for her organization's involvement in the event. Freedman recognized that contemporary sculptors had no place to exhibit as a result of the extreme scale in which

they were working. They needed space.[45] Freedman and her colleagues viewed the Cultural Showcase Festival as a temporary means to solving this problem. As their contribution to the city-wide festival, the Office of Recreation and Cultural Affairs resolved to install oversize artworks by New York City artists in existing city settings for the month of October.

This exhibition became the first to move large-scale artworks out of art institutions and into the public spaces of New York City. The governmental group – and not a gallery, museum, or any other art world establishment – organized and executed the show. Their motivation stemmed in large part from a contemporaneous effort on the part of all levels of government to promote public art. During the mid-1960s, the national government established programs commissioning architecturally-scaled artwork for public buildings, and city governments were beginning to implement curricula mandating a percentage of building costs be reserved for art.[46] Such legislation encouraged artists to

---

[45] Lauren Raikin and Barrry Schwartz, Interview with Doris Chanin Freedman, May 24, 1971, page 12. I obtained this interview from Bard College's Historical Exhibition Archive, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

[46] The National Endowment for the Arts was established in 1965. Two years later, it founded the Art in Public Places Program.

In 1959, Philadelphia was the first city to develop a Percent for Art Program. Philadelphia's Institute for Contemporary Art organized the exhibition "Art for the City" in 1967, in which large-scale artworks were displayed throughout Philadelphia, intermingling with the city's architecture. The show had an indoor element, as well, which took place in the museum. "Art for the City" served as the inspiration for New York City's Parks and Recreation Commission to develop "Sculpture in Environment." Sam Green, Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Contemporary Art and curator of that institution's exhibition, advocated artistic involvement in city planning, as opposed to limiting the artist's role to mere urban beautification. The Philadelphia exhibition aimed at encouraging more collaboration between artists and city planners at a formative stage in the urban design process. Both exhibitions expanded the public's interest and education in contemporary sculpture. In the New York show, Green served as "Sculpture Consultant." See *Art for the City*, exhibition catalogue (Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, 1967); *Sculpture in Environment*, exhibition catalogue (New York: New York City Administration of Recreation and Cultural Affairs, 1967); and Suzaan Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002) 3-4.

create large-scale sculpture and required art world administrators and city officials to publicly place it.

The show's title, "Sculpture in Environment," conveyed the primary, ground-breaking aim of its organizers to move art, en masse, to the outside spaces of New York City. However, the exhibition committee had other goals as well. In addition to providing contemporary artists with the unique opportunity to exhibit their oversize works, the show encouraged the general public to interact with current sculpture outside of the privileged space of a gallery or museum. The organizers stated one final objective in the accompanying catalogue. They proposed a new artistic direction for participants: "Artists can either place studio works in urban locations or make works for *specific sites*. The latter is the more desirable approach, for artists can deal with the surrounding space as a component."[47] Through this statement, the committee formed by New York City's Recreation and Cultural Affairs Office to implement their exhibition unknowingly promoted place as a concern for contemporary artists. By conceiving of this show as an opportunity for artists to engage with particular locations around the city, the government group furthered the development of site-specificity. But did the exhibition actually enable and encourage artists to create artworks for specific sites?

According to Doris Freedman, the exhibition committee contacted over seventy-five artists in their call for participants. Ultimately, they chose twenty-four, including Alexander Calder, Charles Ginnever, Marisol, Louise Nevelson, Barnett Newman, Claes Oldenburg, Bernard Rosenthal, and Tony Smith. The artistic practices of these individuals represented a wide range of styles, galleries, and groups. However, they all

[47] Irving Sandler, Introduction, *Sculpture in Environment*, n.p. Italics are my own.

shared two distinguishing factors that qualified them to take part in the exhibition. First, each artist was committed to creating large-scale sculpture, and second, each had work ready and available to contribute.[48] There wasn't time for a new work to be conceived, constructed, and completed. According to Freedman, the finalists, for the most part, were selected for practical reasons. All had finished works waiting, ready to be installed according to the show's timeline. This suggests that the concern for artworks generated in relation to a specific, chosen locale did not remain an essential, or sensible, consideration for the exhibition. The works did not intentionally reveal their surroundings in any way; appended to already-existing environments, they simply served to adorn the city.

Although the artists did not create their works *for* their spaces, the artists did have a hand in choosing the sites where they would display their extant works. The locales, notably all in Manhattan, extended from Battery Park to Harlem. They included squares in front of prestigious municipal and corporate buildings, parks, and landmark locations, such as Grand Central Station and Lincoln Center. Charles Ginnever's *Midas and Fog* was displayed in front of Gracie Mansion. Marisol's *Three Figures* stood across from the Plaza Hotel at 59th Street and Fifth Avenue, and Barnett Newman's *The Broken Obelisk* sat in the plaza of the Seagram Building. The chosen locations remained predictable and interchangeable. If the artist's first choice was not available, the Office of Recreation and Cultural Affairs secured another site for the same work. In the end, the artworks acted independently from their final locations; they simply adorned the city. The concept of inviting artists to "deal with the surrounding space as a component" went unfulfilled.

---

[48] Raikin and Schwartz, Interview with Doris Chanin Freedman, May 24, 1971.

Of the thirty sculptures included in “Sculpture in Environment,” all but a handful were created within the parameters of modernist practice.[49] They existed as abstract monuments that were conceived of and created in the artist’s studio and then relocated to their final sites, to which they ultimately held no physical relationship. Each work could have easily been moved to another location – a city square or a museum gallery – without any change in its meaning. Furthermore, in contrast to the “Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies” exhibition, this show provided the viewer no thematic framework.[50] The sites at Gracie Mansion and the Plaza Hotel bore little impact on the works chosen for display, and the exhibition itself had little influence on how the viewers received those works. Nevertheless, several of the sculptures included in the exhibition began to suggest a dialogue with their sites.

Through an examination of three specific cases – submissions by Alexander Calder, Bernard Rosenthal, and Claes Oldenburg – I will reveal the variety of ways in which different artists approached the task of integrating their artwork with a single city location and how, as a result, this exhibition advanced the development of site-specific art. Calder, the American sculptor famous for his mobiles and stabiles, was residing in France during the preparations for “Sculpture in Environment.” For his part in the show,

[49] I am using Rosalind Krauss and Douglas Crimp’s definition of “modernist” sculpture, as discussed in the dissertation’s Introduction: a work independent from time and place, an autonomous monument, lacking reference to the world. See Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” (1978), *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44 and Douglas Crimp, “Redefining Site-Specificity,” in Rosalind Krauss, *Richard Serra: Sculpture*, ed. Laura Rosenstock (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 41-56.

[50] A catalogue did exist, but the average passerby would not have had quick access to that publication. The works would have been viewed independent from any exhibition context; in fact, it seems very likely that the pedestrian in Harlem, Astor Place, or Central Park might not even be aware of the work’s inclusion in an exhibition entitled “Sculpture in Environment.”

the artist wrote to his dealer requesting a space in Harlem to exhibit.[51] Although Calder's preference for a specific area of Manhattan indicates some forethought about how he wanted to display his work, it remains notable that he did not ask for any particular site within the Harlem neighborhood. In selecting all of Harlem – a district then associated with black culture and especially high poverty rates – the artist demonstrated a social motivation rather than any intention for a relationship between his object and its specific site. In a press interview, Calder explained his desire to reach out to Harlem's unique and isolated population, expand his audience, and share art with a community typically denied easy access to the city's major museums and galleries.[52] He even suggested that, in a "gesture of friendship," he might donate the works to the neighborhood at the close of the show.[53] Rather than viewing "Sculpture in Environment" as an exceptional occasion to artistically respond to a location, Calder regarded his participation in the exhibition as a philanthropic opportunity.

This becomes even more apparent after considering the artworks that Calder submitted. With Harlem procured, the artist called on his representation – the Perls Gallery – and requested that Klaus Perls select two works then on view at the gallery, remove them from their current exhibition, and place them in his chosen locale. Calder did *not* create a specific work for a specific site. On the contrary, the artist had no knowledge of the specifics of his location and he had no role in deciding which of his works he would contribute. From October 1 through October 31, 1967, Alexander

---

[51] In the letter, Calder relayed his assumptions that Harlem would be a popular request for the artists of "Sculpture in Environment." This, in fact, was not the case. Sandra Knox, "Two Stabiles May Stay Put After Move to Harlem," *New York Times*, 2 September 1967, p. 16.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ultimately, this did not happen. Ibid.

Calder's two 1966 black, steel stabiles – *Little Fountain* and *Triangle with Ears*, chosen by the gallery in his absence – perched on the lawn in front of the Lenox Terrace Apartment Building on West 135th Street. There they offered the same experience to the viewer as they did on view in the Perls Gallery. At the close of the show, the sculptures were relocated to a different place.

Another participant in the City's exhibition, Bernard Rosenthal, constructed a large, black Cor-ten steel cube entitled *Alamo*. He chose to situate the sculpture in a traffic island in Manhattan's downtown Astor Place at Fourth Avenue and 8th Street. The simple form, comprised of six regular sides, evoked a minimalist aesthetic. Nonetheless, the object strayed from its strictest minimalist counterparts both in its embellished surfaces, decorated with geometric incisions and raised planes, and in its skewed position. The cube stood up on one of its corners and, with a push by an engaged spectator, could spin.

Like Calder's stabiles, *Alamo* was conceived independently from any destined site. However, this work garnered the most attention from the press of any of the works in the exhibition due to its successful relationship with both its environment and its audience. Astor Place was a popular meeting spot and hangout for East Villagers and Cooper Union students. It therefore seemed an especially suitable place for Rosenthal's whimsical, mobile cube. According to the *New York Times* art critic Hilton Kramer, the work succeeded in its specific placement and, further, had a transformative effect on both the neighborhood and the overall reception of public art:

> At almost any time of the day, one could see the students, bohemians and passers-by in the East Village area gathered around this massive geometric

> form, scribbling on its surfaces, pushing it, gazing at it or just sitting around it, clearly enjoying its presence. The work seemed to generate an aura of affectionate response altogether rare in the history of public art in this city. The work itself is not, I think, a very distinguished sculptural conception, but it did succeed in *transforming*, if only slightly, the Astor Place area from a no-man's land of dehumanized urban traffic into a playful focus of leisurely pedestrian improvisation.[54]

In addition to the appropriate social context of *Alamo*'s placement, the work's physical siting was also relevant. The fifteen-foot-high cube occupied a large area of the traffic island on which it stood. People passing by, waiting to cross the street, were forced to contend with the form. If Rosenthal had chosen the space where Calder exhibited – in the middle of an open lawn in front of an apartment building – the cube would have acted differently. Viewers likely would have observed it from the distance of the surrounding sidewalk. Instead, as a result of the sculpture's dominant scale in relation to the traffic island, *Alamo* demanded that the public interact with it. In turn, through close engagement, viewers discovered its ability to spin. A contained space in a neighborhood frequented by students provided the perfect place for this work. While Calder indicated that he might grant Harlem his two steel stabiles, Rosenthal's cube was in fact one of only two works from the exhibition that still remains in situ today.[55] This fact serves as a testament to the success of the relationship between *Alamo* and Astor Place.

---

[54] Hilton Kramer, "Bernard Rosenthal's Salon Glamour," *New York Times*, March 9, 1968, p. 25.

[55] The other is David Smith's *Zig IV* in Lincoln Center.

Calder's stabiles established no relationship to his chosen site. Rosenthal's cube, while not created for any particular location, engaged its audience socially and its surroundings physically. The range of artists involved in "Sculpture in Environment" adopted various approaches to integrating their art forms with city sites. One work from this exhibition, however, stands out as an exception among all others in its relationship to place.

Claes Oldenburg opted to exhibit in a corner of Central Park. On the morning of October 1, 1967, the artist hired a gravedigger to hollow out a six-foot-long by three-foot-wide by six-foot-deep hole in New York's largest playground. After a half hour lunch break, the diggers replaced the excavated dirt and then raked over the earth in order to return the area to a neatly groomed condition. The hole remained visible, as the spot that was dug up lacked the grass cover of the surrounding area. Oldenburg's instructions indicated that the ground "may be reseeded at a later date."[56] That the grass was not recovered at the point that the hole was closed up indicates that the artist did intend for some aspect of the event to last. The work, entitled *Placid Civic Monument*, transcended the act; its location maintained significance.[57] Oldenburg's submission raised the possibility that an artwork could exist as only a *place* where an act occurred.

---

[56] Barbara Haskell, *Claes Oldenburg: Object into Monument*, exhibition catalogue (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1971), 60.

[57] In the early part of the 1960s, Oldenburg began to sketch blown-up, familiar objects situated in urban settings. He called these works "monuments." *Placid Civic Monument* represents the first of his proposed monuments to be realized. As with the other artists involved in "Sculpture in Environment," this work, too, had been conceived of years earlier.

Both the form and the title of the work to be discussed here certainly carry connotations of the grave and the ongoing war in Vietnam. In his notes, Oldenburg referred to this work as both the "hole" and the "grave." Furthermore, he noted, "Grave is a perfect (anti) war monument, like saying no more." The current social and political situation must be kept in mind when considering the contexts of this work, as well as many others included in the exhibition; however, it is not something that I address in this chapter. Ibid, 62.

In conception, medium, and process, Oldenburg's *Placid Civic Monument* remained distinct from "Sculpture in Environment's" other entries – for the most part, modernist works developed a priori in the participating artists' studios and workshops.[58] The idea for the hole did exist abstractly in the artist's notes from 1965; however, it was not until he was approached to participate in this exhibition and asked to choose a locale for his project that Oldenburg began to think about realizing the work.[59] The artist decided on the Central Park site adjacent to Cleopatra's Needle, a place that he frequented as a child. With great admiration for the existing monument, Oldenburg resisted creating another such sculpture.[60] Initially, the artist intended to bury an object in the ground, literally contributing a "sculpture in the environment" to the exhibition.[61] In the end, however, he chose to dig a hole and fill it in, creating "a different consistency of ground which could be spoken of as a sculpture."[62] In his written notes, Oldenburg described the work as an "underground sculpture" and "environmental sculpture."[63] The artist's words reflect the precarious definition of art at this time, and his vital concern that

[58] Forrest Meyers and Les Levine's works did not follow this modernist practice that I suggest the majority of works in this exhibition did. Rather, they were conceptual and experiential works that broke boundaries in their own, distinct ways. Neither of these works, though, engaged with its site in the same manner as Oldenburg's.

[59] Paul Cummings, Interview with Claes Oldenburg, December 4, 1973 – January 25, 1974, Tape 6, Side 2, Archives of American Art, New York City.

[60] "The site, the area that I had chosen was very close to the obelisk, Cleopatra's Needle, which I remember from childhood, I used to play there. I thought that was a great monument. So I figured: why should I put up a monument when that one is already there?" Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Haskell, 60.

the work be accepted as a *sculpture*.[64] The shifting status and varied manifestations of sculpture opened up the possibility for artists to contend with place and for the development of site-specificity.

Fixed to its site – both physically and in concept – *Placid Civic Monument* reveals a different relationship with place than the other entries to the exhibition. The work remained materially bound to its physical location in Central Park. The unseeded, groomed piece of land marked the artist's irreversible process until time managed to cover over the event. Surely the traces of the gravediggers' actions remained for the duration of the month of October, the extent of the exhibition. The work also remained conceptually bound to its placement in the city's largest park. Of course Oldenburg could have hired workmen to dig into New York's Bryant Park or Tompkins Square Park; however, the artist's concern for *Cleopatra's Needle* inspired his idea for the hole. Although the viewer was unaware of the obelisk's role in the artistic process, it remained central to the artist's intent. *Placid Civic Monument* could not have been constructed in any other park or in any other area of Central Park, for that matter. The sculpture's specific physical and thematic context produced its meaning. Unlike the remainder of works examined thus far, *Placid Civic Monument* was not created for a certain kind of place but for a specific place. The work retained a specific relationship to the Central Park site that the artist chose. As such, Oldenburg's hole began to exhibit site-specific characteristics.

---

[64] The hole stood apart in medium and form from any contemporary works. Its simple, geometric structure, however, certainly evoked associations with recently established minimal art, despite its negative form. This helps to explain its acceptance as a sculptural contribution to this show. The artist had submitted other various proposals for different New York City sites, which the exhibition committee had rejected. He put forward a plan to create a traffic jam by strategically parking buses at certain intersections and another for a Free Food Fountain that would dispense a foul-tasting paste that only the truly needy would want to use. Clearly, each demonstrates an unusual conception of what constitutes sculpture. Grace Glueck, "Art Notes," *New York Times*, 15 October 1967, p. 138.

Significant in both motivation and artistic conception, Oldenburg's act signals a transformation in the meaning of place for art at this time. A public committee recognized the problem contemporary artists faced in making large-scale sculpture that did not fit into galleries or museums and offered them the opportunity to exhibit in open, city spaces. The Office of Recreation and Cultural Affairs promoted works that responded to their destined place, despite the impracticalities of time constraints and expense. The organization even elected to publicize that particular aim in the exhibition's accompanying catalogue. In choosing the site for his sculptures, Alexander Calder considered the social and cultural aspects of a particular place. Bernard Rosenthal positioned his entry for "Sculpture in Environment" in a location where the public could interact with its specific and unique qualities. Oldenburg, with his submission, raised the possibility that art could exist solely as a place where an act occurred. The artist designed for a specific location and the project remained fixed to that site. "Sculpture in Environment" caused each of these artists to contend with place in new ways, ways that set in motion the development of site-specific art.

Revealing Place

In the previous pages, I have examined the new scale and its effect on exhibition practices; I have analyzed context and its potential to alter the way a viewer perceives an artwork or the meaning she takes away from it; and I have considered cases in which artists experimented with how place impacted their works. I will now focus on two instances in which place became the central and direct concern of two very different artists: Carl Andre, who, as we have seen, emphasized materiality in his works and William Anastasi, who alternatively called attention to the conceptual component of his

art. In the spring of 1967, Virginia Dwan held two consecutive exhibitions that abided by more conventional standards than did “Scale Models and Drawings.” In each, she displayed a single artist’s current work on the walls and floor of her gallery. While their working methods, materials, and general philosophies remained distinct, Andre and Anastasi simultaneously explored the concept of place and how their art, in turn, affected one’s awareness of her surroundings.

As we have seen, Carl Andre declared that his February 1966 positioning of Styrofoam planks across the Park Place Gallery floor – the work he entitled *Reef* – represented his ultimate objective of creating “sculpture as place.” I would argue, though, that in the months that followed, Andre’s gallery works became even further engaged with the concept of place. Andre would now create a piece that even better exemplified his ultimate goal of creating a sculpture that generated an awareness of place.

In March 1967, Andre covered the floor of the Los Angeles Dwan Gallery with a single layer of concrete capstones, laid flat in straight, regular rows. Eight open areas remained, uncovered by bricks, exposing the bare floor below. Andre derived the shapes and sizes of the eight open areas that comprised this work, *Cuts*, from a work he had exhibited exactly one year earlier at New York City’s Tibor de Nagy Gallery, *Equivalents I-VIII*.[65] For *Equivalents I-VIII*, as we have seen, the artist arranged eight groups of sixty bricks into varying sized rectangles and then stacked each two layers high on the gallery floor. Andre distributed the brick rectangles very evenly within the space and aligned them with the angles of the room and the parquet floors, evoking a very deliberate correlation between the forms and the gallery space. While the groups of bricks appeared

---

[65] See Introduction, pages 25-27 for a complete analysis of this work and its significance as an installation piece.

as objects on the floor of the room, the parts acted less as discrete sculptures than as a single whole. In exhibiting *Equivalents I-VIII* in March 1966, Andre presented eight forms that related to one another in conception, construction, and organization.

In the new work, *Cuts*, as with *Equivalents I-VIII*, a viewer noticed relationships among the rectangular forms – now voids in the surface of the floor – and between the forms and the gallery as an enclosure. The concrete capstones here, however, very clearly operated as one totality. In order to walk around the negative shapes, this exhibition required the viewer to stand on the material itself. Aside from experiencing the work visually, she literally engaged the work with her body. She walked on the capstones, stepped into the holes, and felt the difference between the wood of the gallery floor and the concrete Andre had placed beneath her feet. The viewer entered the work.

With *Cuts*, Andre revealed the place of the gallery.[66] The artist paved the Dwan Gallery floor with concrete stones and, yet, left gaps so that the room's normal state remained evident. In doing this, Andre unified the space, made explicit the fact that he had manipulated it, and drew attention to the gallery itself as a constructed room. *Cuts* forced the viewer to become a participant in the space she inhabited, and, in navigating the work, the viewer reconceived of the gallery space as a place. Alternatively, *Reef*, the work Andre claimed to be his first "sculpture as place," physically denied the viewer full

---

[66] I do not mean that he revealed the gallery as part of any social institution, but rather that he revealed the space to be a place. Through *Cuts*, Andre made the viewer aware that she was inhabiting a place, a dynamic location.

It seems necessary here to acknowledge the scholarship of Douglas Crimp. In his description of site-specific art as a definitively postmodern practice, Crimp maintained that in order to be truly site-specific, a work must be socially engaged with its particular site. As an example, he pointed to a work that revealed the social aspect of the gallery space as part of the established art system. For Crimp, works linked to their surroundings in merely a physical way remained extensions of modernist practice. I address Crimp's social definition of site-specificity in Chapter Two.

entry to the room by blocking her passage with Styrofoam blocks, and therefore created – in the artist's own words – "a kind of negative place, a place of no-access."[67] In comparison to *Cuts*, the earlier work functioned more as an impassable object situated on the floor of a gallery than as a work that served to reveal the environment. Between the time that Andre created *Reef* and his exhibition of *Cuts* the following year, the artist integrated the concept of place more directly into his artwork. In exhibiting *Cuts*, Andre did not present an art object for the viewer's consumption, but instead modified an existing space in order to present it as a place.

Andre did intend for the viewer to experience his art in terms of the relationships of the parts to one another, to the whole, and to their general context. He had no interest, though, in the particulars of the individual gallery space. The unique characteristics of Dwan's Los Angeles gallery had no impact on the artist's conception of *Cuts*. The exhibition could have been recreated in a different gallery without any change in its effect. As with *Grave*, Andre created *Cuts* for a *kind* of place.

Carl Andre's philosophy very clearly stated that place was essential for his work. While his understanding of the concept was very particular, the concern for place in art began to appear consistently in American practices at this time. No single definition of the term existed; rather, it materialized in various forms.

As Dwan Gallery's Los Angeles's art handlers dismantled Andre's show *Cuts* in April 1967, their New York City counterparts were readying that Dwan space for their next exhibition: six paintings by conceptual artist William Anastasi. For the show, the artist photographed the empty gallery's walls and then transposed the resulting pictures into large silkscreen images, slightly smaller in scale than the walls themselves. Anastasi

---

[67] Phyllis Tuchman, "An Interview with Carl Andre." *Artforum* 8:10 (June 1970): 61.

painted the panels in the light grey tone that had by this time become associated with much minimal art. The only compositional elements in the paintings included the representation of an occasional electrical outlet or air vent. The artist ultimately centered each representation on the very wall depicted in the painting.

This exhibition, entitled *Six Sites*, certainly demanded that the viewer consider the space of the gallery and its function. Just as Andre's negative cuts into the paved floor related to one another and the room itself, so did Anatasi's paintings. Here, however, the works related *specifically* to their individual locations on the walls. A viewer noticed the miniaturized electrical socket portrayed on the canvas and its positioning in relation to the real-life object in the room. The sites where the artworks hung served as the guiding principle for the artist's conception. Unlike Andre's *Cuts* or his pile of sand in the "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" show, these exact images could not have been relocated to another gallery's walls without rendering them meaningless.

One reviewer recounted his experience of the exhibition: as he exited, the man asked a gallery employee whether this show would travel to the Los Angeles space.[68] The answer was evident: no. *Six Sites* exemplified the growing significance of place for contemporary artists; it introduced the possibility of an art linked explicitly to its place, or a "site-specific" work.[69] In the years that followed – from 1967-1969 – the consideration

---

[68] L. George, "Anastasi," *57th Street Review* 1:6 (May 18, 1967).

[69] Brian O'Doherty referenced Anastasi's exhibition in his 1976 essay "Inside the White Cube [1]: Notes on the Gallery Space." In focusing on this show, O'Doherty addressed the gallery as an artwork's context and called attention to Anastasi's paintings as a first example of site-oriented art within such a space: "Covering the wall with an image of that wall delivers a work of art right into the zone where surface, mural, and wall have engaged in dialogues central to modernism. In fact, this history was the theme of these paintings, a theme stated with a wit and cogency usually absent from our written clarifications. For me, at least, the show had a peculiar after-effect; when the paintings came down, the wall became a kind of ready-made mural and so changed every show in that space thereafter." O'Doherty incorrectly attributed the exhibition to the year 1965. Notably, he did not yet invoke the term "site-specific." *Artforum* 14:7

of place appeared as a common artistic concern: artists working in a range of practices – from conceptual art to land art – began to explore the specific physical and social nature of a project's intended location and produced works inextricably linked – in conception and form – to their sites.

Over the course of the year 1967, we observe the very beginnings of a wide range of site-specific practices. While scholars in the field have all addressed the significance of minimal objects for the development of site-specificity, they largely have disregarded many of the critical implications of scale, particularly its effect on exhibition practices. The design and construction of large-scale artworks – introduced by artists associated with the newly canonized minimal style – generated a new set of problems with which artists and their dealers, by necessity, had to contend. The works being produced resisted traditional spaces and methods of display, and in turn required curators to develop alternative ways of exhibiting. Virginia Dwan encouraged her artists to ignore the art institution's practical limitations and, instead, to imagine works that transcended the constraints of space, construction, and economics. The mobility of these artworks enabled Dwan to loan them to the "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" show, thus demonstrating how the thematic framework and physical environment surrounding a work had the potential to alter its meaning. New York City administrators offered artists, for the first time, the city's public spaces as an exhibition site. With the old system under examination, new possibilities quickly arose. The results included projects designed for the outdoors and, ultimately – in the case of Oldenburg's *Placid Civic Monument* – works

(March 1976). See also Dwan's mention of O'Doherty's Anastasi reference in Charles Stuckey, interview with Virginia Dwan.

created expressly for a particular place. Simultaneously, artists such as Andre and Anastasi, in varying degrees, became concerned with incorporating and revealing place in their work.

A great diversity of artistic and exhibition practices drove the narrative of site-specific art forward. The intersection of art and place was not novel in 1967; however, remarkably, an explosion occurred in which a range of art-makers – representing distinct styles, mediums, and practices – all focused their attentions on creating works with their eventual locations in mind, and exhibitors formulated new ways to incorporate them into the established art system. This shift in artistic purpose *was* novel.

CHAPTER TWO

1968: "PLACING AS A VERB AS WELL AS A NOUN"

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the significance of scale and context for the development of site-specificity. Both of these interests turned artists' attentions to the space outside of their works and prompted artistic investigations of place. This chapter endeavors to define these two crucial terms – *space* and *place* – and examines the sustained engagement with these concepts by artists, curators, and critics during the year 1968. While artists had previously required viewers to reconsider the physical confines of the gallery, they began to look past those boundaries altogether and adopt alternative sites outside of the established gallery system. In the following pages, through the analysis of four group exhibitions, I examine how and why the continued and pointed interest in place – both physical and social – during this pivotal year contributed to the development of the concept of site-specificity. Moreover, I pursue the relationship between the well-known events of 1968 and these artistic developments.

This dissertation addresses a three-year period during the critical and changing decade of the 1960s. Arguably, 1968 stands out as the most turbulent of those years and so, for my purposes, will serve as the backdrop for a discussion of the correlation between site-specificity and the social, political, and historical context out of which such artworks emerged. One cannot refer to 1968 without conjuring visions of tragedy, violence, unrest, and revolution. At the very start of that year, hope that the Vietnam conflict would cease prevailed; however, before the close of January, the sudden

onslaught of the Tet Offensive and its ensuing nine-month campaign dashed such dreams. Back at home in the United States, American civilians experienced the instability of the outside world on their own terrain. On March 31, President Lyndon Johnson announced that he would drop out of the presidential campaign in order to devote himself fully to resolving the conflict in Vietnam. Four days later, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis while there to lead a march in support of striking sanitation workers. The unnecessary death of the civil rights leader crippled the country and incited riots in cities nation-wide. Only two months later a second senseless killing followed: Senator Robert Kennedy, a man of great inspiration and promise for many, was assassinated while campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination. The nomination process culminated in the August Democratic National Convention in Chicago, a meeting engulfed by war protestors. The winning nominee, Vice President Hubert Humphrey ultimately lost the November 1968 presidential election to Republican Richard Nixon, marking a turn toward conservative government.[1]

The artworks created in 1968 remained linked, although indirectly, to the sequence of events that I have just outlined. The chaotic circumstances that characterized the U.S. at that time pervaded the American art world as well. Free-thinking members of both the general public and the art establishment dared themselves to reassess systems already in place. Citizens challenged the government’s authority and sought radical alternatives to mend the nation’s broken condition, while artists and curators tested the conventions of the gallery system and investigated new approaches toward creating and displaying art.

[1] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), 298-313.

I would like to emphasize the distinction between social context and social function at the outset. In this chapter, I address both the social context of the year 1968 – political current events and their impact on the national and international communities – as well as the social function of a place – the way in which people utilize a particular site. These are two separate, yet theoretically related matters. The social circumstances in which a person exists to some extent inform the manner in which she interacts with and moves through the world around her.

For the scholar Douglas Crimp, writing in 1986, a work of art is not wholly site-specific unless it meets the criteria of revealing the social function of its place – ideally, the art institution. In his writings, he retrospectively identifies two phases of site-specificity.[2] The first arises in conjunction with the minimalist object, which newly established a relationship between the artwork, the viewer, and her physical surroundings. The surroundings, though, in this manifestation of site-oriented art, remain a kind of space, such as a gallery or an outside area. Therefore, the association of work-viewer-place is not wholly interdependent; another location can be substituted without effect. Crimp finds failure in this initial instance of site-specific art in which the work relates only superficially to its environment: "Site was understood as specific only in a formal sense; it was thus abstracted, aestheticized."[3] While minimal sculpture reveals the

---

[2] Crimp attaches the latter of these two stages of site-specific art with the rupture of modernist practice. This is not my interest here. Douglas Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site Specificity," in Rosalind Krauss, *Richard Serra/Sculpture*, ed. Laura Rosenstock (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 41-56. See also Crimp's later essay, "Photographs at the End of Modernism," *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1993), 2-31.

[3] Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site Specificity," 43.

physical surroundings of the gallery, it accepts "the 'spaces' of art's institutionalized commodity circulation as given."[4]

Crimp insists that a second iteration of site-specificity occurs when artists directly reveal the commercial and political structure of the art world. These works, according to Crimp, are *socially* site-specific, critically exposing the commercial conditions of modern art.[5] The development of this type of site-specific work, created for and exposing the function of a particular place, promises art's release not only from the space of the gallery, but from the entire institutional system. As I illustrate in the following pages, socially site-specific art began to materialize outside of the incisive institutional critique that Crimp pinpoints.

It remains important to note that, while continuing to develop the list of terms responsible for the development of site-specificity, this chapter still presents no fixed definition of site-specific art or work that conclusively exemplifies the concept. Although a consistent exploration of place prevails throughout 1968, no single work remains inextricably linked to its site in conceptual formation, physical form, *and* social function.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of space and place, two closely related terms that consistently appeared in artists' vocabularies during 1968, greatly shaped their works at that time, and remained crucial for the emergence of site-specific art. Through an

---

[4] Ibid.

[5] Crimp uses the term "social" to describe a practice that critiques or reflects on its own institutional system, not the greater culture. However, Crimp does acknowledge the social significance of the 1960s for artwork of that time: "We need hardly be reminded of the dangers inherent in divorcing art practices from the social and political climates in which they took place; in this case, the very mention of the year 1968 as the date of *Splashing* should serve sufficient notice." Ibid. Crimp does not go on to assess this relationship, though, between work and social context. I address this concern, as well as the work he speaks of, *Splashing*, later on in this chapter.

analysis of two related exhibitions – one at Bradford Junior College and the other at Windham College – organized by the same individuals and showcasing the same roster of artists, I demonstrate the clear distinction between the concepts. The participating artists' concern for space, evident in the first of the two shows, shifted to an interest in place in the second exhibition, revealing a transition in focus from the general towards the specific. Strikingly, both exhibitions showcased New York-based artists, but occurred in places outside that art world epicenter.

In the second part of this chapter I address two New York gallery shows that, while remaining within the margins of the art institution, challenged their accepted norms by opening up the gallery to the outside world. Virginia Dwan's "Earth Works" exhibition presented artworks that embraced earth as their medium, subject matter, and in some instances original location within the walls of the white cube. Leo Castelli forfeited his pristine gallery space altogether for "9 at Leo Castelli" and staged the show in a storage warehouse. The conventional gallery space proved insufficient for many of the works that the artists in these shows produced. In both cases, place remained a major artistic consideration. In addition to establishing the heightened value of place for artists and curators alike during the year 1968, this chapter ties their search for alternative practices and sites to the state of the U.S. at this tumultuous point in history.

Confronting Space: Making the Invisible Visible

We continue to witness the development of new kinds of exhibitions – both inside the art gallery and in other types of venues – by gallery dealers and curators. Seth Siegelaub, an independent curator, organized related exhibitions at two small northeast colleges. In both, he displayed works by the same three artists: Robert Barry, Lawrence

Weiner, and Carl Andre. The first exhibition took place at the all-women Bradford Junior College in Bradford, Massachusetts, from February 4 to March 2.[6] The second exhibition opened at Putney, Vermont's Windham College campus on April 30 and ran through May 31. With each show, Siegelaub held a symposium in conjunction with the opening during which the three artists conversed about their art and their interests.

Most scholarly writing on these shows has devoted little attention to the first of these exhibitions, concentrating instead on the second.[7] The reason for this resides in the fact that the Windham show was much more unconventional in conception and exhibition space, hence the resulting artworks: the artists were asked to create temporary projects for the college campus, with restricted funds for materials and limited time for production. In addition, the exhibition served as the catalyst for Carl Andre's first outdoor work and Lawrence Weiner's radical replacement of objects with words. While the Windham exhibition also remains greatly significant for the purposes of tracking the development of site-specificity – something that I examine closely in the pages that follow – so, too, does the oftentimes overlooked Bradford show.

The first of Siegelaub's shows occurred at Bradford's Laura Knott Gallery. The space was not extraordinary in any way – a rather typical gallery, contained by four white walls. A loggia, lined with square columns on its inner side, framed an empty, recessed exhibition space in the center that sat at the bottom of three steps. The steps ran continuously around the inside edge of the loggia.

---

[6] Then a professor at Bradford Junior College, Douglas Huebler had a large part in bringing the first show to the college. Charles Ginnever, a teacher at Windham College, helped to initiate the second exhibition. For more on the genesis of each show, see Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2003), 177, n. 38 and Suzaan Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and Landscape of the Sixties* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Ltd., 2002), 80-81.

[7] Boettger, 80-84; Alberro, 16-24.

The exhibition was sparse and spread out: two works by Weiner hung along one wall; the adjacent wall held a few works by Barry; and a single piece by Andre sat within the central space. Weiner exhibited two large 1967 *Removal Painting*s. Each consisted of a vertical, nearly-monochrome canvas out of which the artist cut a single rectangular notch from one of its corners. Barry showed paintings, too, but in contrast to Weiner's, the dimensions of his works were quite small. Barry presented tiny, six-inch-square works, set at a distance of approximately ten feet from one another along one gallery wall.[8] Andre centered a metal floor piece on the ground of the interior space.[9] He arranged one hundred and forty-four equal pieces of zinc into a twelve-by-twelve foot square on the floor.

All of the artworks presented at the Laura Knott Gallery corresponded with the ongoing practices of their creators. Weiner produced the first of his *Removal Paintings* in 1966. Barry had been crafting small panel paintings, spaced far apart, for some time.[10] Andre's piece followed the practice that he initiated in 1966 when he relinquished his process of building structures for the method of placing particles side-by-side on the gallery floor, although his use of metals was fairly new.[11] None of the pieces displayed

---

[8] The size of Barry's canvases and the distance between them are my own estimations that derive from assessing the installation photographs.

[9] Boettger and Alberro disagreed as to which work Andre included. Boettger identified generally "one of his early floor pieces consisting of thin metal squares" and pictured Andre's 1967 work *64 Steel Squares*. Boettger, 81. Alberro, though, stated that it is *Untitled (144 Pieces of Zinc)*, 1967. Alberro, 17. It remains clear from the installation photograph that the piece consisted of one hundred forty-four plates, substantiating Alberro's claim. The specific work is not identified in any of the catalogue raisonnés devoted to Andre's work.

[10] Barry described these works as an earlier interest of his and, really, the last of his paintings in a May 1969 interview with Patricia Norvell. Patricia Norvell, "Robert Barry, May 30, 1969" *Recording Conceptual Art,* eds. Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001), 90.

that February represented a one-of-a-kind piece. Therefore, it would appear that the artists did not conceive their works for the Knott Gallery. Nonetheless, the exhibition remains significant for the narrative of site-specificity for two reasons: the artists demonstrated shared interests in the relationship between their works and the surrounding space and the organizers expected the participants to create artworks for that specific location.

During the symposium held in conjunction with the show, the moderator asked the artists what, exactly, of the philosophy behind their new work was "revolutionary." Each responded by pinpointing the space surrounding his artwork. In both his answer to the question and the artworks that he submitted, Weiner clearly demonstrated that the handling of space – and making that space visible – remained fundamental to his artistic practice. Describing his recent art production to the symposium audience, Weiner invoked the concept of displacement. "The piece of art displaces a certain amount of space from the environment, from your perception."[12] To *displace*, as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is to "oust from its place and occupy it instead."[13] The term indicates more than the removal of something from its place; it designates the act of invading and ultimately inhabiting some other entity's position. For Weiner, the surrounding atmosphere existed as a material thing capable of being displaced.

---

[11] In December 1967, Andre exhibited *Periodic Table* at Dwan Gallery, which included three floor pieces just like the one on display in the Laura Knott Gallery, of aluminum, zinc, and iron.

[12] "Symposium at Bradford Junior College," *Having Been Said: Writings and Interviews of Lawrence Weiner, 1968-2003*, eds. Gerti Fietzek and Gregor Stemmrich (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004), 14.

[13] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd Edition, Revised (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. "displace."

Consider the artist's response in relation to his *Removal Painting*s. In creating the paintings Weiner manipulated the shape of his canvases. He cut a rectangular notch into a corner of each painting, causing it to appear as if he had literally extracted and disposed of an area traditionally considered part of the work. By displacing a portion of his canvases, the artist enabled the surrounding space of the gallery to occupy and expose the place of that notch. Conversely, as proposed by Weiner in his statement, the artwork supplanted a portion of the gallery space. The cut-out notch in the canvas became an area of tension – at once both a void in the artwork and a part of the surrounding environment that encroached upon the painting. The absence in the canvas allowed the gallery space, which had been displaced by the painting, to reinsert itself into the work and, therefore, into the viewer's perception. Through his *Removal Painting*s, Weiner made the invisible surrounding space visible and called attention to it as material. Futhermore, he revealed space as one artistic medium. Weiner's shaped canvases incorporated space as a component of the works and required that the viewer become newly aware of the atmosphere that surrounded her everyday and yet she often overlooked.

Robert Barry's contributions to the exhibition and symposium revealed a similar concern for space. In response to the same question, Barry identified the area surrounding the work as "revolutionary." He explained: "I try to deal with things that maybe other people haven't thought about, emptiness, making a painting that isn't a painting or that deals with the wall around the painting. For years people have been concerned with what goes on *inside* the frame. Maybe there's something going on *outside* the frame that could be considered an artistic idea."[14] His paintings, placed at a

distance from one another on the wall, were quite small in comparison to the surface on which they hung. The plain canvases deflected attention away from themselves as objects and instead directed awareness to the space between them, announcing their support – the wall – as the artist's focus. Rather than functioning as traditional paintings concerned with what appeared inside of the frame, Barry's works marked the space around them. In his own words, Barry was "involved with the space between the panels – the emptiness between the panels – and the panels really just defined that space."[15] In this statement, the artist aligned the area between his paintings with the notion of "emptiness." As a result of his installation, though, that space obtained a material quality that could no longer be described as emptiness. The space in-between two of his paintings maintained a tension. If those objects were positioned much farther apart, the tension would likely dissipate and emptiness would in fact prevail. As a result of his tiny canvases placed ten feet apart, though, the viewer perceived the void of the wall area – the typically unremarkable empty area of the gallery – as substance between paintings. As with Weiner's canvases, Barry's works called attention to the space that bordered them and incorporated that space as an essential component. While the larger *Removal Paintings* engaged only a small amount of space, though, Barry's diminutive paintings involved a much greater expanse, which therefore became a more dominant aspect of the works.

As the conversation between the three artists and the symposium moderator unfolded, it became apparent that Andre believed his position to be fundamentally

---

[14] "Symposium at Bradford Junior College," *Having Been Said: Writings and Interviews of Lawrence Weiner, 1968-2003*, 13.

[15] Norvell, "Robert Barry, May 30, 1969," *Recording Conceptual Art*, 90.

different from the others'. In response to Barry's assertion that "emptiness" was essential to his practice, Andre retorted, "I would put it in exactly the opposite way. I would say a thing is a hole in a thing it is not."[16] Andre explained that, for him, an object and the space surrounding it were one and the same: both potential, viable artistic matter. The artist underscored that materiality was the most crucial factor in his work. For Andre, space, too, could be treated as matter to manipulate. More than anything else, it appears that what Andre rejected was the idea of "absence" promoted by the others. Weiner's notches cut out of his canvases and Barry's insistence on the term "emptiness" evoked the sense that something was missing. Instead of identifying the surrounding space as negative, Andre considered it a positive factor. Nonetheless, Andre, too, seemed to invoke the idea of displacement. His statement "a thing is a hole in a thing it is not" suggests that everything maintains a presence. Therefore, an object placed on a wall or on the floor takes the place of something else that was previously there; a person standing in a room similarly displaces the space that formerly occupied her position.

Notably, of the three artists whose works were on display in the Knott Gallery, Andre remained the only one to engage with the three-dimensional field. For his submission Andre assembled one hundred and forty-four equal units of metal into a square on the gallery floor. Andre's placement of material beckoned the viewer toward

---

[16] "Symposium at Bradford Junior College," *Having Been Said: Writings and Interviews of Lawrence Weiner, 1968-2003*, 14. This is a statement that Andre used regularly in defining the terms of his work. Robert Smithson identified this declaration – "a thing is a hole in a thing it is not" – to be Andre's motto in his June 1967 essay, "Towards the Development of an Air Terminal Site," published in *Artforum*. Smithson also referenced Andre's slogan in his April 1968 essay for *Landscape Architecture*, entitled, "A Thing is a Hole in a Thing it is Not." See Jack Flam, ed., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 56 and 95, respectively. The quote is mistakenly labeled in Andre's collected writings as having occurred during the Windham Symposium when it actually was a part of the Bradford Junior College conversation. Carl Andre, *Cuts: Texts 1959-2004*, ed. James Meyer (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2005), 84.

and onto the work, demanding an interaction not only with the form but with the space hovering over it. Consider Andre's piece in relation to his declaration "a thing is a hole in a thing it is not." The work did not project into or occupy much of any space at all; rather, it lay flat along the horizontal plane of the ground. Engaging with the piece, the viewer became the "thing" displacing the surrounding space. As with Weiner's *Removal Painting*s and Barry's little square panels, Andre's metal plates directed the viewer's attention to the space outside of the work. The sculptural form advanced this concept even further: while the other artists' paintings drew the viewer's awareness to the space of the surrounding walls, Andre's floor piece revealed the volumetric space in which the spectator stood. Positioned on the piece, she became aware of her own physical experience in the room – what rested below her feet and the space she occupied above it.

Despite their distinct artistic practices and varied approaches to the address of space, Weiner, Barry and Andre all shared the exceptional and novel conviction that space itself existed as a medium with which to contend. The works submitted to the Bradford exhibition seemed to disappear as aesthetic forms and instead became arrows directing the viewer's attention to their surroundings. Weiner's shaped canvases drew the spectator's eye to the part that was missing and called her attention to the intruding space. Barry's tiny paintings worked as bookends to the greater space between them, deflecting one's focus away from themselves and forcing the viewer to consider the gallery wall. Andre's floor piece demanded that the viewer walking over it remain aware of the materials and, more importantly, the space above it that she occupied. The paintings with notches cut out, tiny square canvases, and metal plates in part denied their own concrete form. Rather than calling attention to themselves as aesthetic objects, the

works in the exhibition focused the viewer's awareness on the surrounding space. Each designated the region outside of itself as an essential material component of the artwork.

Differentiating Space and Place

As discussed in the previous chapter, Andre's 1967 wall-to-wall installation *Cuts* revealed its *place* – Dwan Gallery's room. In contrast, the twelve-foot-square Bradford piece, isolated within the larger expanse of the floor, did not call attention to the entire Knott Gallery as a specific place, but rather exposed the *space* directly outside of the work. This distinction between space and place merits further attention. Space exists everywhere. It is the area in-between a room's walls and the region separating two buildings. Weiner, Barry, and Andre took on space as the content of their works at Bradford. Their art demanded that the viewer become aware of that space that remained ever-present but continuously overlooked. Alternatively, the term place denotes a location. Works that reveal place call attention to the particular physical and social conditions of their site. Recall Anastasi's *Six Sites* and Andre's *Cuts* of the previous year. The individual characteristics and functions of those *places* became conspicuous as a result of the artists' creations.[17]

In February 1968, Weiner, Barry, and Andre demonstrated a collective concern for the space adjacent to their artworks. This shared artistic interest reveals the growing importance of a work's context for art-makers at the time. In contrast with other

---

[17] While Anastasi and Andre's 1967 shows occurred in generic gallery spaces and could be repeated elsewhere for other galleries with the same results, the two works drew the viewer's attention to her *specific* surroundings. *Six Sites*, for example, displayed photo-silkscreen representations of the very walls on which they hung. Consequentially, the gallery-goer was urged to consider her usual lack of attention towards the space around her and, in turn, the normal function of the gallery – a neutral space intended to fall away from the viewer's consciousness in order to highlight the art for sale on display. *Cuts* and *Six Sites* seem to me primary examples of what Crimp comes to call socially site-specific work, as I explained at the start of this chapter.

exhibitions that I have examined, however, where context – physical conditions and thematic framework – informed the artworks on display, in the Knott Gallery, each work pointed to the area surrounding it and, specifically, made space itself the target of attention rather than place.

The Bradford show remains relevant to the development of site-specificity for one additional reason. The artists were not alone in their concern that their works relate to the surrounding space. The exhibition organizers, too, maintained a stake in the advancement of this type of art. While introducing the Windham College Symposium – just over two months after the Bradford opening – the moderator Dan Graham revealed that the intention for the first exhibition was to have Weiner, Barry, and Andre produce artworks expressly for that college's gallery: "The Bradford show dealt specifically with a specific interior space and the artists designed works considered in terms of their contingency to the space."[18] In this statement, Graham recalled the first show as an exhibition in which artists created *for* a particular location – albeit a standard, indoor, college gallery. Similar to "Sculpture in Environment" from the previous year, one of the aims of this exhibition included the creation of works for an intended site. As at "Sculpture in Environment," though, it appears that this aim was not wholly fulfilled. While each of the works engaged with space, none related specifically – in conceptual formulation or physical structure – to its particular site. Contrary to its organizers' objectives, the Bradford show presented works by Weiner, Barry, and Andre that

---

[18] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," reel-to-reel audio recording, Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.. The reel appears to have been mislabeled, as the symposium occurred at the exhibition's opening on April 30.

Dan Graham, had no role in the Bradford show. Siegelaub was present at the Windham symposium, however, and did not correct Graham's characterization of the first exhibition. This suggests that his description of the intention for it was accurate.

represented their recent practices and, therefore, already existed in conception and – according to their 1967 dates – construction. The artists did not create those works for the Knott Gallery specifically. The walls on which Weiner and Barry's works hung could have been interchanged. Each work could have existed in the same form in another position within that gallery – or in another gallery altogether, for that matter – and would have acted in exactly the same way, calling attention to the surrounding space.[19] Nonetheless, this exhibition still remains integral to the development of site-specific art. Perhaps the organizers of the show could not clearly pinpoint what exactly was developing. It certainly appears, though, that there existed a common regard for space on the part of both artists and curators at this moment.

Locating Place: Physical Site and Social Function

On April 30, two months after the closing of the Bradford show and only weeks after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., the second of the two exhibitions opened. This show, titled "Exterior Situations," remained critically important for scholars as a primary instance of both conceptual art and the development of earthworks.[20] Its relevance for my purposes lies in the artistic vetting of the concept of place.

---

[19] Weiner indicated that his own studio dictated formal elements of the *Removal Paintings* more than the gallery space where he would exhibit them. According to a statement he made during the Bradford symposium, the artist determined the scale of the works by his ability to move them out of his workspace: "They [the paintings] couldn't be higher because that was the height of my studio, and they couldn't be wider than forty-eight inches because they couldn't go out the door without taking them off the stretcher, and that was a tremendous bother, so the biggest is forty-two by a little under eight [feet] and the other is thirty by a little under eight. That was the motivation for their scale." As a result, they demonstrated no physical relationship to their intended destination and, in turn, could have been placed anywhere. Weiner did not consider the space of the Knott Gallery in choosing the size of the works. Unlike Robert Morris's 1967 proposal for the airport site discussed in the previous chapter, Weiner's paintings would not be scaled to their place. "Symposium at Bradford Junior College," *Having Been Said: Writings and Interviews of Lawrence Weiner, 1968-2003*, 15.

Once again, Siegelaub invited the same three artists – Weiner, Barry, and Andre – to produce works for a "specific location." "Exterior Situations" became the first exhibition in which artists were called on to produce new artworks in response to an outdoor environment.[21] The three artists displayed temporary, sculptural installations on the campus of Windham College in Putney, Vermont, during the month of May. They designed their works for individually-chosen places on the college grounds, employed materials native to the region, and involved students in the activity of construction. All three artists executed large-scale works that would be impossible to display inside a then typical gallery space. Weiner cordoned off a seventy-by-one-hundred-foot rectangular area within a field by placing stakes in the ground that he then strung together into the shape of a grid using twine. Barry, demonstrating once again his interest in the overlooked, empty space between objects, employed nylon cord to mark out a plot of land separating the library and the Student Union. Four ropes traversed the space overhead, hanging twenty-five feet in the air and spanning a length of approximately seventy to one hundred yards.[22] Andre connected the surrounding woods to the populated campus with a row of one hundred and eighty-three hay bales placed end to end and, altogether, measuring approximately five hundred and fifty feet long. This

---

[20] Alberro demonstrated the value of this exhibition for the development of conceptual art and, more specifically, Seth Siegelaub's role as independent curator. Alberro, 16-24. Boettger, on the other hand, examined "Exterior Situations" primarily for its part in initiating Andre's very first outdoor work. For her, the show represented an important step in the advance of Earth Art. Boettger, 80-84.

[21] Charles Ginnever confirmed, "As far as I know, this was the first time artists were asked to build a show around whatever situation they found operating at a preordained location and time, with the additional handicap of a nearly nonexistent budget." The organizers required that each artist spend no more than $50, which explains, in large part, their choice of mediums: Weiner's staples, stakes, and twine, Barry's woven nylon cord, and Andre's local bailed hay. *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966-1972* (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 46-47.

[22] Ibid, 46 and Boettger, 82.

remarkable exhibition not only prompted Weiner, Barry and Andre to turn their attention to the outdoors, but also encouraged both the artists and the Windham students to become newly aware of the places that they encountered everyday, as will become clear in the coming pages.

When compared with the works included in the previous exhibition, these artworks alternatively demonstrate a relationship to place. At the symposium held in conjunction with the opening, Graham initiated the conversation by introducing the terms he believed to be at the core of the exhibit:

> I thought in dealing with this particular show one of the concepts that I wanted to introduce was the idea of place. The show is done for a specific place and it involved, I guess, placing as a verb as well as a noun. I wanted to mention that the word place comes from the Greek word *platius*, meaning flat or broad. Then it got to the Latin, *platia*, meaning a street, area, or a courtyard.[23]

In this statement, Graham posited that "Exterior Situations" existed only for the campus of Windham College, suggesting that the artists were called upon to create one-of-a-kind works intended for the college grounds. Next, he went on to define the ways in which the concept of place remained central to the show. The moderator highlighted the importance of both the artistic act of situating the works (place as verb) and the site itself (place as noun). In naming "place as verb," Graham identified the artistic process as essential to the artists and their final works. In acknowledging "place as noun," he designated the significance of the artworks' locations. Finally, he provided the word's

[23] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art. Seth Siegelaub confirmed that the "question of 'place' was very much discussed with and between the artists" and himself at the time. Correspondence with author, July 25, 2008.

etymology. With its origins in "flatness" and "broadness," *place* as Graham defined it evokes an expansive, horizontal plane, which, in turn, calls to mind the contour of the earth.[24] His references to "street" and "courtyard" – two different types of outdoor locations – support the association of place with the land but suggest a contained, manmade area. The concept of *place* presented by Graham applies not only to a discussion of the works on display at Windham College, but also to a number of contemporary artistic practices, as will become evident in this chapter and the next.

During the winter prior to the Windham exhibition, the artists travelled together to the campus to survey the surroundings, select their sites, and devise the works they would contribute.[25] Upon arrival to the college grounds for final construction and installation, however, each artist made changes to his original conception: Weiner adjusted his materials; Barry opted for a different location altogether; Andre shortened his row of hay bales.[26] These modifications suggest that the artists tailored their final works to the

---

[24] Chapter Three presents the importance of both artistic process and the horizontal plane – two factors introduced here – for site-oriented practices.

[25] During the symposium, Barry and Weiner both recalled the trip that they all took to the campus "a couple of months" before the show. "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art.

[26] Each artist relayed his reasons for modifying his work upon arrival to the campus. Weiner spoke of his original intentions to use barbed wire for the piece. According to Barry, "I was going to use a particularly flat area and when we got here we just couldn't use it because it was too muddy or they were seeding there and there was a piece of sculpture there already which wasn't going to be taken down, and so forth. So I had to rethink and come up with something else. But I wanted to use the land, drive something into the land, circle it in some way, try and emphasize it, create something in proportion to the buildings around it, to the piece of land itself." Andre recollected the change in his work: "Originally the hay was supposed to come out of the woods and go up the hill until it reached a stopping point at the crest of the hill, which turned out to be a group of trees. So it would be stopped by the roots of the trees. But about a third of the hay that was assigned to me unfortunately got broken up, so we didn't get all the way there." Ibid.

Notably, in recent correspondence, Siegelaub emphasized that the school was "in the process of being built" at the time of the show. Of course, if areas were under construction, the changing terrain would have impacted the artists' plans and their final works. I have not been able to confirm that the campus was, in fact, under construction, however. According to records, the school was founded in 1951 and most structures were extant. No one at any point mentioned the building process or its effect on the

particular situations that they encountered in Putney, Vermont, in May 1968. This on-site rethinking by Weiner, Barry, and Andre represents the tendency toward site-specific practices.

On closer consideration, however, it appears that any of the pieces could have been installed almost anywhere on the college campus – or any outdoor space, for that matter – without wholly changing the work's effect. While the artists made some last minute decisions in response to their sites and the materials available, none of the resulting works related in concept or physical structure to the particularities of Windham College, its mission, its history, or its student body despite Graham's claim that "the show [was] done for a specific place." The same exhibition could have been executed at another northeastern institution, educational or otherwise.

The artists remained aware of their works' mobility and commented on it in the symposium. In describing his piece, Lawrence Weiner stated, "… [It] could have been placed anywhere. All that it required was a reasonably flat area of land."[27] Notably, this sole condition aligned with Graham's definition of place. Weiner continued,

> I had preconceived the idea of displacing seventy feet by a hundred feet and I think I could have put the piece either in the center between the two large buildings or over where Carl's piece is or where it is now or out in the middle of the state highway and I don't think it would have affected the piece itself. The piece would have existed wherever it was put. It was

exhibition during the course of the symposium. No pictures from the exhibition reveal ongoing construction. Correspondence with Siegelaub, July 25, 2008.

[27] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art.

> in relationship to an outdoor space as opposed to in relationship to a specific outdoor space.[28]

Weiner did not design his piece for a certain physical location – the field between two student dormitories – or social situation – the Windham campus. Furthermore, the artist invoked the term space to describe his intention for siting the work. So, then, did Weiner and his contemporaries disagree with Graham's introduction to the terms of the show? Not exactly. During the course of the symposium, all of the artists explained the importance of the concept of place for their works.

Once again Weiner invoked the notion of displacement. Displacement continued to be a major focus of his practice at the time.[29] For his submission to "Exterior Situations," the artist planned to oust an expanse of space, as he had done on a much smaller scale inside the Knott Gallery. However, displacing gallery space and displacing an outdoor, trafficked space on college grounds remained two separate and distinct acts, regardless of whether or not the artist anticipated it. In fact, despite his intentions to displace space at Windham College, in the end Weiner revealed place. Although the artist suggested that he was more interested in the general outdoor environment as the site of his work than any particular locale, his form did disclose its site as a specific place. In the end, Weiner's work exposed both the physical and social particulars of the field he selected. The twine grid called attention to the various characteristics that made the

---

[28] Ibid.

[29] Weiner invoked the idea of *displacement* more than once in the Windham symposium. Early on in the conversation, in response to the question of how his work related to the concept of place, the artist replied, "It's a matter of what you can displace with what you're doing to the place." He introduced displacement for a third time when closely describing his piece *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf*: "So the idea of taking theses stakes that were already around and then just stringing them into a form, which would displace a certain amount of space on the ground, just became very intriguing." Ibid.

ground beneath it unlike other similar areas on campus and disclosed its use for student activities.

For his submission, titled *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf*, Weiner marked out a grid form in a plot of land using stakes. He then stapled cord to the posts, so that the string lattice hovered a consistent six inches above the ground. Maintaining his practice of displacement, Weiner left one rectangular, corner area of the structure unstrung. The overall form materialized as a blown-up *Removal Painting*, laid down on the horizontal plane of the ground and projected up into space.

In comparing this work with Weiner's paintings on display in the Bradford show, the distinction between space and place – and between the foci of the two exhibitions – becomes especially clear. Each shaped canvas hanging in the Knott Gallery that February called attention to the rectangular void at its corner and demanded that the viewer perceive the empty space surrounding the frame. When Weiner greatly enlarged the dimensions, divided the rectangle into a grid, and constructed it outdoors with stakes and twine, the same form functioned much differently. The displaced corner section of *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf* remained inconspicuous. Now entirely transparent – with the exception of its string skeleton – the whole piece contained empty space. The barely-visible twine cord, raised a half-foot in the air, marked the frame of the work and provided it structure. Space moved in, around, and through the form. Rather than drawing awareness to the single empty space as material, as he did months earlier in Massachusetts, this time Weiner directed focus to the plot of land that lay underneath his work, a field ordinarily taken for granted.

With his artistic intervention, Weiner created an artwork that subtly revealed both itself and its site to the unsuspecting viewer. As he described:

> The idea of building a piece of sculpture outdoors has always intrigued me because you can't at all ever compete with the outdoors. So the best thing to do is to build a piece of sculpture that [doesn't become] completely integrated into the place but exists within the place and can be discovered by the person viewing or the person involved in the sculpture. …Now, if a piece of sculpture can exist within a landscape in that sense, whatever is around the landscape is heightened and brought out and whatever is in my case underneath the landscape is heightened and brought out.[30]

Weiner's work increased awareness of the physical details of a space typically considered unremarkable, thereby redefining it as a place. Despite the artist's insistence that *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf* could exist equally in a variety of locations on the college grounds, he took notice of the final site's details that the work did unveil:

> When I was building the piece, certain things, like two poles on the side of a building became tremendously heightened after the piece was completed, and they weren't noticed at all before the piece was started or built. And there was one little thing sticking out of the ground. It became

---

[30] Ibid. In an interview the following year, Weiner stressed his intentions that all of his outdoor works be discretely situated within the landscape: "… the outdoor pieces are all done as naturally and unobtrusively as possible." He was not interested in emphasizing the physical object. Norvell, "Lawrence Weiner, June 3, 1969," *Recording Conceptual Art,* eds. Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001), 106.

> a very, very important part of the landscape, and I don't think anybody ever again will not notice that portion of landscape.[31]

By staking a nondescript area of ground between campus buildings and creating a network of twine there, Weiner demanded that students consider the physical place and regard it anew. The temporary work adjusted the Windham students' perceptions of that piece of land in a lasting way. Weiner revealed the plot of earth beneath *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf* as a place, a specific location with unique physical characteristics.

In addition to calling attention to the individual features of the site, Weiner's work also exposed the ways in which people used that place – in other words, its social function. The stakes and hovering twine prohibited students, faculty, and staff from mindlessly continuing their regular passage across the field that the work inhabited. It impeded normal traffic and routine activities, including pick-up ball games between class periods. Furthermore, passersby could not ignore it. The delicate grid demanded attention and compelled interaction.[32] According to the artist, "it has to be walked over and it has to be walked through."[33] Bothered by the obstruction and denied their recreational area, students disapproved of Weiner's intervention and swiftly retaliated.

---

[31] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art. This evokes Brian O'Doherty's description of Anasasi's *Six Sites*: as a result of the artist's intervention, a gallery-goer would never again be able to view the Dwan space without paying attention to the electrical sockets and air vents that Anastasi's silkscreens made so prominent.

[32] Alberro addressed the uniquely performative nature of this work in comparison to those previously produced by Weiner and positioned it in relation to contemporary Happenings and Fluxus activities. The scholar classified the field in which Weiner inserted his twine grid as a public space and, consequently, questioned the social function of the work. Alexander Alberro and Alice Zimmerman, "Not How It Should Were It To Be Built But How It Could Were It To Be Built," in *Lawrence Weiner* (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), 45.

[33] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art. The manner in which this form functions – and my discussion of it – recalls the problems produced by Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* in 1981, one work closely associated with the designation site-specific, particularly in terms of its social repercussions.

They destroyed the work so as to return their playing field to its previous condition. The artist later recalled the turn of events: "I built my piece where the jocks practiced their touch football. It's very hard to play touch football with those stakes and twine, so they cut it."[34] When the students damaged Weiner's work, they attempted to restore their playground to its familiar state. In doing so, though, they acknowledged the value that particular piece of land possessed for them. Ultimately, the work revealed the social function of its place by demanding that people modify their usual passage across campus and accommodate the obstacle Weiner set in their way

Still, *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf* cannot be defined as wholly site-specific even though it exhibits site-specific characteristics and reveals its place. Weiner did not generate the work in response to the unique physical conditions or social functions of that field.[35] Nor did he expect the kind of reception it would earn. The artist confirmed as much in the symposium when he listed the range of sites where he considered placing the piece. Nonetheless, Weiner's artwork transformed people's perceptions of a part of their campus from a common public *space* into a *place* that possessed a distinctive topography

---

[34] Weiner retrospectively pointed to this moment as the one responsible for his rejection of object-making altogether and his move to embrace language instead. He recalled, "That's the classic turning point. I built my piece, which consisted of stakes and twine in the form of a rectangle with another rectangle removed, where the jocks practiced their touch football. It's very hard to play touch football with those stakes and twine, so they cut it. At this time, the last vestiges of heavy metal macho sculpturehood still existed and that led to some sort of vigilante posse getting ready to undo the philistine's damage. When I got there and looked at it, it didn't seem as if the philistines had done the work any particular harm. And that was it. I realized it didn't matter." "Early Work: Interview by Lynn Gumpert" (1982), *Having Been Said: Writings and Interviews of Lawrence Weiner, 1968-2003*, eds. Gerti Fietzek and Gregor Stemmrich (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004), 122. As scholars Anne Rorimer and Ann Goldstein have since pointed out, "because the work had been initially formulated in language, Weiner determined that, paradoxically, its permanence was ensured." Subsequently, the artist constructed the statement that has accompanied all of his works after that, declaring that the forms may or may not be built by the artist. Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer, *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995), 222.

[35] Siegelaub conceded that if any of the participating artists designed his work in direct response to his chosen site, it would be in a "mostly physical" way, not social or conceptual. Correspondence with author, July 25, 2008.

and served a special purpose. Previously regarded as an ordinary, in-between space on campus, the area between dormitories became recognized as a specific physical and social place. Notably, often-overlooked sites, such as this one, become the subject of site-specific practices; through their artistic interventions, artists reframe unremarkable locations and reveal them to the viewer as individual places. Much like William Anastasi's gallery piece *Six Sites* from the previous year, Weiner's *Staples, Stakes, Turf, Twine* altered the viewer's awareness of place through his artwork.

Andre's contribution to "Exterior Situations," *Joint* – a string of one hundred and eighty-three bales of hay laid end-to-end linking the Windham College grounds with its surrounding forest – acted in much the same way. When asked during the symposium to relate his work on display to Graham's idea of place, Andre, whose practice arguably had involved place for some time, defined it by opposing the idea to environment. Early in the decade, the term environment had become associated with work by artists such as Claes Oldenburg and Edward Kienholz. As presented in the Introduction, these artists produced thematic tableaux by fusing their sculpture with the architecture of the gallery. Consequently, the viewer became enveloped in a scene. In 1968, Andre, alternatively, drew a line between those earlier artworks and what he and his contemporaries were producing. He defined place as entirely distinct from environment:

> [Place] is not to be confused with an environment. I think it's futile for an artist to try to create an environment because you have an environment around you all the time. The only people who don't have an environment are the dead, after all. Or an astronaut [who] gets slipped out of his capsule in space has lost his environment. Any living organism has an

> environment. What a place is is an area within an environment which has been altered in such a way as to make the general environment more conspicuous. Everything is an environment, but a place is related particularly to both the general qualities of the environment and the particular qualities of the work that has been done.[36]

Andre defined environment as the circumstances that surround a person at any given time: one travels from environment to environment, always existing within a set of immediate conditions regardless of whether or not she remains aware of the individual elements that comprise it. This understanding of environment seems analogous to the concept of space that I outlined earlier in the chapter. Place, alternatively, remained more specific for Andre. With the term place, Andre designated something both distinct from the earlier tableaux-type art and much more precise than the concept of space that he, Weiner, and Barry had confronted in the Bradford exhibition. Within an artistically manipulated place, a person acquires a heightened sense of her context.

In order to elucidate his and Weiner's definition of place for the symposium audience, Andre quoted Wallace Stevens's poem "Anecdote of the Jar," which opens: "I placed a jar in Tennessee, And round it was, upon a hill. It made the slovenly wilderness, Surround that hill. The wilderness rose up to it, And sprawled around, no longer wild."[37] Stevens' verse clearly conveyed the artists' point: setting an object in an environment, or space, restructures one's perception of that environment so as to produce a place. The

---

[36] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art.

[37] Andre recapped his understanding of the poem a second time during the symposium: "A placement in an environment is a dislocation of that environment in terms of the way it was before." Ibid. Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar," *Harmonium* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923).

individual physical characteristics that compose the place and the relationship among those elements become pronounced. In distinguishing between the terms environment and place, Andre opposed the construction of new situations that a person might inhabit and, instead, promoted artistic interventions that brought the viewer's awareness to her already-existing surroundings in a new way.

Both *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf* and *Joint* exemplified this idea. Andre's five hundred and fifty feet of hay bales bridged a populated part of the Windham campus with a peripheral area less traveled. During the symposium, one student remarked that Andre's artwork drew him to explore the woods – another in-between, remote area of the property not a part of students' daily traffic patterns – for the first time in months. Another student – one who assisted the artist in *Joint*'s assembly – divulged his shifting reaction to the parade of hay bales. While at first he found the project "ridiculous," after he "started working on it and piling the hay next to each other, [he] felt a piece of the woods growing out along the campus."[38] The student became aware of his own college grounds as if experiencing them for the first time.

Again, it seems relevant to consider these artistic developments in relation to their historical context – the Spring of 1968. Suzaan Boettger recognized in Andre's symposium comments a reference to the ongoing Vietnam War. She interpreted Andre's reference to the deceased as an example of those without an environment, together with his adoption of degradable, natural materials for the work, as products of the year's violence. However, I am not convinced by Boettger's reading.[39] The artist alluded to the

---

[38] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art.

dead – without specifying any cause of death – in order to illustrate concretely his definition of environment versus place. His choice of hay as medium derived from concerns about cost and accessibility.[40] Furthermore, *Joint* was not unique among Andre's oeuvre in its lack of permanence; all of his works from this time period remained temporary, disassembled at the close of their exhibitions. Andre's comment, his work, and the contributions of Weiner and Barry, I contend, did not directly tackle the violence at home or in Vietnam. What does seem significant, though, is the fact that during the

---

[39] Boettger stated, "This remarkable illustration of the absence of an environment by reference to human death presents an eruption of emotionally charged material in the midst of an abstract discussion of dematerialized art. The linkage by an artist aligned with the antiwar effort may have resulted from the strong presence of violence in Vietnam in recent news, and the intensification of antiwar efforts in New York…. Within a body of work with strong visual consistencies, Andre's unusual organic version of his "causeway" form, photographed against its forest backdrop was, in the late 1960s and 1970s, one of his works most frequently illustrated. Its iconic status as a pivotal work of 1968 can be attributed to a combination of idiosyncratic uniqueness and the manifestation of the values of its time: Made with minimal manual labor and high conceptual quotient, it is temporary, site-specific, and constructed of humble, uncommodified materials that are biodegradable, and within a few years, did so." Boettger, 84.

While Boettger's book offers an unparalleled account of the development of Earth Art and all of the issues associated with it, I disagree with several of her claims. Andre's examples of astronauts and the dead to differentiate between environment and place – what the scholar describes as an "eruption of emotionally charged material" – seem to me more of an attempt to make this abstract discussion more concrete for the audience of students. Andre associated sculpture as medium with the tomb, grave, and sepulchre in his writings, without any specific political or historical reference. What's more, Boettger did not similarly address Andre's mention of astronauts – another contemporary citation – as the second illustration of a person lacking an environment. She chose to highlight the example that supported her position that Andre's work responded to the war in Vietnam rather than the general social historical conditions of the time. Boettger also mentioned Andre's involvement in the anti-war effort – which did not occur until the following year – as evidence of the relationship between his statement and the politics of the time. Furthermore, she attributed a conceptual component to Andre's work, something the artist refuted.

As for her insistence that Andre's choice of a medium related directly to the world situation strikes me as somewhat reductive. By 1968, artists had been employing natural materials and practicing process art for several years. The hay does appear inconsistent with Andre's usual materials; however, he did employ other atypical mediums in the preceding years, including Styrofoam, plastic blocks, and sand, and, as I will show in the coming pages, he continued to do so. All three artists commented on the budgetary limitations for the show and the repercussions *that* had on their choice of materials. Andre affirmed, "Of course it was the budget problem. Like, for me, I had to work with material that was available at all… A bale of hay is a particle of sufficient size to remain in a coherent array." The artist went on to explain that, although the hay would decompose over time, that was not his concern because he was not making a work for sale. "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art. In contrast to Boettger's direct association between the Vietnam War and Andre's *Joint*, I argue for a more general relationship between the radical artistic practices that occurred here and the social historical context of the moment: a rethinking of established systems and accepted norms.

Finally, Boettger designated *Joint* as site-specific, yet did not define the term; it appears, for her, to broadly signify that the work was built on site, not to be moved.

[40] "Windham Symposium, March 1968," Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art.

several-hour-long symposium in April 1968 – just weeks after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination – none of the artists or audience members raised the issue of the social and political state of the world at all. Surely this absence is noteworthy. No one claimed any relationship between the current circumstances, the dominant interest in place, and the actual artworks created for the Windham campus. The innovative nature of the exhibition, though, requiring Weiner, Barry, and Andre to construct works on-site in response to chosen outdoor locations, supports the assertion that during these turbulent times, members of the art world – like the general public – sought new strategies to old problems.

Alternative Siting Introduced

Shortly after completing his first outdoor piece on the campus of Windham College, Andre encountered another opportunity to work in an alternative setting, remote from the established art centers of New York City and Los Angeles. In the summer of 1968, he joined the shortlist of important contemporary artists invited to Aspen, Colorado, to participate in the new Aspen Center of Contemporary Art's artist-in-residence series.[41] In reconstructing the program's history, the former Aspen Art Museum Director, Dean Sobel, recently pointed out that many of the artists temporarily working in Aspen for the summer turned to their surroundings as inspiration for new

---

[41] Artists who took part in the program included Larry Poons and James Rosenquist (1965), Friedel Dzubas and artist and critic Max Kozloff (1966), Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Les Levine, and Robert Morris (1967), and Carl Andre, Donald Judd, and Robert Indiana (1968). The series, initiated in 1965, offered these artists a place to live and work, as well as the opportunity to share their art and ideas with one another and the community. Their only responsibilities included participation in panel discussions and exhibiting their work. As presented in the local newspaper, "The purpose of the program was to bring leading artists working in the contemporary field to Aspen with freedom to pursue any activities they wish. Their association with one another provides cross fertilization of ideas, especially in the atmosphere of Aspen, which is so much less turbulent than that of New York or any other city where artists usually work." "Residency Plan Making Aspen Art Center," *Aspen News*, Thursday, July 13, 1967, 14. See also Dean Sobel, *One Hour Ahead: The Avant-Garde in Aspen, 1945-2004* (Aspen: Aspen Art Museum, 2004), 35-61.

works.[42] While at first Sobel's assessment seems to pertain to Andre's art production during his tenure there, upon closer consideration it becomes clear that Andre, rather, continued to pursue his recent artistic interests: he exhibited metal floor pieces much like the one on display in Bradford, Massachusetts, earlier that year and, in keeping with his Windham College venture, produced two additional works outside.

For *Rock Pile*, Andre amassed large pieces of local sandstone into a single heap in Woody Creek Canyon, just northwest of Aspen proper. The artist described the work to Howard Junker: "These hunks of native stone are naturally occurring particles which I simply display in a natural, unmodified manner."[43] The work followed Andre's method of privileging material, arranging matter without affixing it, and utilizing the space of the ground. Moreover, its form recalled Andre's sand heap, *Grave*, which he created for the "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies" exhibition in March of the previous year.[44] The second work, *Log Piece*, consisted of approximately twenty-five blocks of semifinished lumber, laid end to end, stretching a distance of roughly one hundred feet along the forest floor. One cannot overlook all that this work shared with *Joint*: the use of a natural, local medium; the side-by-side positioning of units of material; the simple, elongated form.

---

[42] The former museum director cited Gerald Laing's 1966 *Water Sculpture* as an early example of artists-in-residence responding directly and specifically to the Aspen environment in their works. He described Laing's piece as "sited specifically for the Roaring Fork River." Sobel, 40.

[43] Howerd Junker, "The New Sculpture, Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty," *Saturday Evening Post*, November 2, 1968, 44. It is worth noting that in this article Junker did not allow for the possibility that artists working inside might engage with place. It is part of my project to demonstrate that this is not the case.

[44] Although critics have discussed both of these works – *Grave* and *Rock Pile* – with regard to burial mounds, no scholar has related the two works to one another. On *Rock Pile*, see Sobel, 53 and Boettger, 138. On *Grave*, see Boettger, 78-80.

Sobel characterized both of these outdoor pieces as "site-specific works."[45] *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* certainly demonstrated the current interest in alternative sites and, in their use of natural materials and placement in the land, represented an advance toward the development of earthworks. But were they site-specific? For Sobel, site-specific seemed to denote any artwork created in an outdoor location and, therefore, physically linked to its site. As I have delineated in the preceding pages, site-specificity involved a greater collection of conditions: not only a physical, but also a social and conceptual correlation to its site. As with Andre's Aspen interventions, an artwork may meet one of these provisions – say, the physical connection to its site – and not the others. The more complete and complex examples of site-specific art, I contend, occur when all aspects of site are investigated.

Each artistic engagement with place, however, contributes to the full development of the concept, and *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* do exhibit site-specific tendencies. As with *Joint*, Andre allowed the Aspen environment to dictate the works' mediums. He obtained his sandstone and lumber from the local region, thus linking *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* to their sites through material.[46] The forms related to their physical locations in that they conformed to the unique terrain of the ground beneath them. Counter to Sobel's implication, however, no evidence suggests that Andre conceived these works in response to their intended, specific sites. Rather, the two outdoor pieces represented exercises in ongoing interests in the artist's oeuvre. The similarities between *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* and Andre's other recent artworks – *Grave* and *Joint* – indicate that Andre

---

[45] Sobel, 53.

[46] Andre described the materials as "native" and "naturally occurring particles." Junker, 44.

did not derive the forms of the Aspen projects from their individual places. Both *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* could have been produced elsewhere – on other sites in Aspen or any outdoor environment – and retained their forms, functions, and physical bond with their new site. These two works related more to the artist's recent practice than to the specifics of the Aspen landscape.

Although not wholly linked to their particular places, *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* did show evidence of Andre's recent experimentation with alternative siting – a significant component in the development of site-specificity. Located in the landscape of Aspen, Colorado, the two outdoor works Andre created in the summer of 1968 remained distant from the New York art world. Unlike his previous work, including *Joint* which also existed outdoors, these sculptures could not be accessed easily by an avid gallery-goer, even one visiting the Rocky Mountain resort town.[47] Andre situated the works in unmapped territory: a canyon and forest in the outlying Aspen terrain. As with other site-related works from this time, *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* directed attention to typically unnoticed places. However, in the case of these works, Andre did not merely reveal overlooked sites; instead, he chose to involve locations concealed by nature. Despite their inaccessibility, the stone heap and sequence of wood blocks did not remain completely unseen by viewers. They existed in another, more available form. Photographs of these works appeared on the walls of Dwan Gallery's New York

---

[47] It seems worth noting that Andre never exhibited these two works during his tenure in Aspen. While there, the artist showed indoor metal floor pieces like the one on display in the Bradford Junior College show.

exhibition space in October of that year as part of a show entitled "Earth Works," which I turn to next.[48]

Alternative Siting Examined: Out Into the World

Since Robert Smithson's 1966 short-lived involvement as artist-consultant for the design of the new Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport, the artist and those he recruited to produce art for the project continued to search for a piece of land on which they could execute their proposed large-scale, outdoor works.[49] The airport assignment challenged them to design for the landscape – a place outside of the art institution. Despite the termination of that project, the group remained fervently committed to pursuing that possibility. Virginia Dwan, in a later interview, recalled visits that she and Smithson, Nancy Holt, Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, Robert Morris, and Dan Graham took to various places in New Jersey – "the pine barrens and cranberry bogs and some swamps" – in search of a site for artworks.[50] The artists and gallerist contacted New Jersey officials

---

[48] This "documentary" form of the works aligned them to a certain extent with the current conceptual art being produced, despite Andre's insistence on materiality. While Andre's works required a direct bodily encounter, it appears that few viewers experienced *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece*. Furthermore, viewing Andre's works in photographic form would deny that essential experience; however, the artist himself submitted the images of these two works months after their construction for Virginia Dwan's "Earth Works" show, which was held in New York, far away from the Aspen sites. This seems to reveal a contradiction in Andre's work. Alex Potts presented a reading of the relationship between photography and minimalist sculpture – and in particular, photography and Andre's work that supports this claim. Potts suggested a shift in Andre's attitude from his early practice to his later practice, from an acceptance of the medium to a belief that it compromised the sculptural experience: "Andre seems to have had a complex and somewhat fraught relationship with the photographic imaging of his sculpture." Alex Potts, "The Minimalist Object and the Photographic Image," in *Sculpture and Photography*, ed. Geraldine A. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 181-198.

[49] Morris, Andre, and Sol LeWitt were also to have participated. See Chapter One for a discussion of Smithson's role as artist-consultant for the airport, the involvement of the other artists, and the relationship between this project and Dwan's "Scale Models and Drawings" exhibition.

[50] Charles Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan, Archives of American Art, March 21-June 7, 1984. Smithson's mention of a visit to sites in New Jersey in his 1966 writing "The Crystal Land," and subsequent 1967 travelogue of his trip to Passaic, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey," demonstrated the individual importance that traveling out into the "slurb" held for him in particular, even

requesting the opportunity to borrow, lease, or purchase land for their temporary use.[51] Unsuccessful in their attempt to find available property and yet driven to exhibit works involving land, the group modified their plan and turned to their last possible resort: Dwan's indoor gallery space. As a result, Virginia Dwan organized the group gallery show "Earth Works," an exhibition that opened in October and showcased the artworks of ten artists who employed earth as medium and subject matter. The dealer recounted the situation and the sense of urgency that activated the group:

> In the late spring of '68, when we still hadn't found land in New Jersey to put these earthworks on, because that's what we were looking for, we decided that there was so much energy behind the whole concept – there was so much of a need to get this, to move this out into the world, that we wanted to find some vehicle, and the only thing that seemed available was the gallery space, which was very definitely our last choice. That was not what the original drive had been at all. Nevertheless we decided while

---

before the rest of the group. This continued interest on Smithson's part drove much of his work and contributed greatly to the development of earth art. Boettger granted Smithson a place of privilege in her history of both earthworks and "Earth Works": "Smithson originated the application of the engineering and archeological term *earth works* to art and was the major conceptualizer of the genre of environmental sculpture that became known as Earthworks. A consideration of the development of Smithson's artwork and thinking is primary to an understanding of the onset of what formed the earliest genre of contemporary Land Art." Boettger, 46. Robert Smithson, "The Crystal Land" (May 1966) and "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey" (December 1967). In Jack Flam, ed., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 7-9 and 68-74, respectively.

[51] Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan. Letters from Dwan to six various Town Clerks as early as April 1967 inquired about purchasing "small parcels" of land. Smithson-Holt Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C., reel 3832, frames 967-973. By March 1968, almost a year later, the South Jersey General Development Company offered a listing of upcoming opportunities to buy five- and ten-acre plots of land. Reel 3832, frames 1054-1055. Smithson himself also advocated for land on which the artists might build in a letter dated as late as May 30, 1968, to the Director of the Walker Art Center: "Let me know if you have any vacant lots or land areas available for possible earth projects. They should be flat or in some way neutral – any size is OK. The artists in the show are De Maria, Oldenburg, Morris, LeWitt, Heizer, Andre, Oppenheim, and myself…." Reel 3832, frames 1087-1088. Interestingly, Smithson requested a "flat" plot of land. This coincided with Graham's definition of place as described during the Windham symposium.

> waiting to find some earth, to find some proper land to build things on, we would go ahead and do sort of an anthology show of what we were aware of as current earthworks at that point, or of projects which were intended to be earthworks projects. So in October of '68, we opened this wonderful show, which was so satisfying, even if it wasn't on the land.[52]

Dwan's account conveyed both the sheer number and diversity of artists contending with earth in their works and the excitement they all shared about the new kind of art that they were creating. They felt rushed to share it with the world even if they could not place it out *in* the world.

The exhibition assembled a variety of "earth works." Morris contributed a scatter piece using earth as his medium.[53] He collected earth, peat, steel, aluminum, copper, brass, zinc, felt, grease, and brick from a nearby Manhattan construction site and fashioned a roughly twelve-foot-square amorphous heap atop an expanse of protective plastic in the center of the gallery floor.[54] Morris also included two drawings of other

---

[52] Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan.

[53] The piece, titled *Earthwork*, both positioned Morris amongst this group of artists working with earth and demonstrated his own theory of Anti-Form, a working methodology that he codified and published just months earlier in the April edition of *Artforum*, and which I address in full later in this chapter.

[54] It is interesting to consider how this work and others on display like it involved earth as medium but remained within the confines of the gallery. They seem to bridge the practices of process art and earth art. Dwan herself – promoter of earth art – described Morris' work as a "gallery piece": "Morris did a wonderful piece which, to me, was really a gallery piece. It really wasn't a reference to an earthwork or whatever. I mean, they were all gallery pieces in a certain sense, but this was like an object. It had more object-ness. It was a pile of dirt that he'd culled from an excavation here in Manhattan, where work had been done underground for whatever, Con Ed or something or other. He got a hold of some dirt from them, and some axle grease, it looked like, and some cables and some other elements – a rock and wire… There were a whole bunch of things that made up this kind of icky pile of stuff that was piled up on some plastic – which didn't show – onto the rug. The grease-like stuff sort of oozed over the top of it. I thought it was just terrific, as a matter of fact. It was a wonderful amorphous sculpture." Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan.

proposed works.[55] Oldenburg submitted a Plexiglas box filled with dirt and earthworms, a continuously running film showing the digging of his hole in Central Park the previous October, and two drawings for projects not yet completed. Photographs of Andre's *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece*, created in Aspen just months earlier, illustrated his recent engagement with the land.[56] Michael Heizer displayed a six-foot square backlit photographic transparency of his current intervention into Nevada's Black Rock Desert, *Dissipate #2*: five twelve-foot-long twelve-inch-deep linear depressions set at angles to one another cut into the earth. Dennis Oppenheim presented two works: a picture of a work he completed in a Connecticut swamp and a map and model illustrating an idea he developed and hoped to execute in Smith Center, Kansas in the future. This piece included a replica of the Mid-western Kansas wheat fields with concentric rings overlaid onto it, referencing the topography of the Ecuadorian Cotopaxi Volcano. Sol LeWitt displayed a photograph of his finally-buried box, first conceived as his contribution to the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport project.

"Earth Works" included pieces created expressly for the gallery (Morris's pile, Oldenburg's box, a painting by Walter De Maria), photographic and filmic documentation of works existing in the outside world (Andre, Heizer, and Oppenheim's photographs, Oldenburg's film), and models and drawings for possible future works

---

[55] My descriptions of the included works come from the exhibition's checklist, found in the Dwan Gallery Archives at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Also worth noting, the checklist confirmed that Morris's pile of earth was to sell for $4080.00 or $3.00 per pound. Interestingly, the two drawings were not for sale. The exceptional exhibition took place in a gallery, and the unconventional works were displayed to sell. According to the dealer, though, none of the works sold. Correspondence with the author, June 26, 2009.

[56] Since Andre was already named as a participant in "Earth Works" as early as May 1968 – as Smithson's letter looking for land indicates – it is conceivable that he produced *Rock Pile* and *Log Piece* with their inclusion in the October show in mind. See footnote 52 above. Dwan, however, claims that, "The works were created independently in Aspen and later included in the show." Correspondence with the author, June 26, 2009.

(drawings by Morris and Oldenburg, a model by Oppenheim).[57] As proposed in the previous chapter, the thematic framework of an exhibition – its title and the surrounding works – impacted how the audience might come to understand the works included. Some of the works on view in "Earth Works" were created for other purposes and then procured for this show, to help illustrate the variety and quantity of artists dealing with the same thematic interests. Oldenburg's *Placid Civic Monument* – a piece that he executed for "Sculpture in Environment" – now became a representative example of earth art. Similarly, a photograph of Herbert Bayer's 1955 Sculptured Garden Project in Aspen, Colorado, entitled *Earth Mound*, was included in the show. Like Dwan's "Scale Models and Drawings" show of the previous year, the dealer again turned to the conventional space of the gallery to exhibit artworks that by nature could not be erected physically or experienced fully within the confines of the white cube, and pointed to the world outside. Although she and the artists insisted that the traditional gallery space was not ideal for their purposes and sought another place to exhibit, in the end they still resorted to the established standard of exhibition practice. A significant difference, though, existed between the January 1967 show and this one: in "Earth Works," the artists displayed actual, feasible, extant works. Unlike "Scale Models and Drawings," the Earth Show did not posit the "impossible."

As argued by Boettger in her recent book *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*, the exhibition remained pivotal for the development of a new genre of art

---

[57] Grace Glueck profiled the exhibition for *Art in America*. In her preview, the writer described the inclusion of works for "prospective outdoor sites," with no mention of those contributions that documented already existing artworks. Grace Glueck, "New York Gallery Notes," *Art in America* 56:5 (September/October 1968): 110.

production – Earth Art – and, in fact, canonized it.[58] While the show received considerable attention at the time, contemporary critics remained much less certain how to best describe the works on view at Dwan Gallery that fall.[59] Grappling with their inability to attribute the artworks to any established category, many critics located the mix of objects and photographs as part of the newly defined conceptual art movement.[60] They focused on the earth workers' rejection of the object and their embrace of "Mother Earth" as both medium and geological subject. One writer, Howard Junker, further sought to identify the driving force behind these artworks. He concluded that "now the earth workers are searching for a new definition [of art], one that is concerned not with precious objects and interior decoration, but with 'place' and 'activating existing land.'"[61]

---

[58] Boettger patently rejected calling Earth Art a "movement," suggesting instead that it comprised a diversity of practices. Alternatively, she termed it a "genre," or a type. See Boettger, 1 and 147. On the show itself, see 129-154.

[59] Grace Glueck, "New York Gallery Notes," *Art in America* 56:5 (September/October 1968): 110; Grace Glueck, "Moving Mother Earth," *The New York Times*, October 6, 1968, D38; Peter Hutchinson, "Earth in Upheaval: Earth Works and Landscapes," *Arts Magazine* 43:2 (November 1968): 19-21; Howard Junker, "The New Sculpture: Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty, *Saturday Evening Post*, November 2, 1968, 42-47; Thomas Meehan, "If Someone Says His Work Is Art, It's Art," *Horizon* 13:4 (Autumn 1971): 4-14; Pierre Restany, "Hyper Avant-Garde," *Le Nouveau Planète* (July 1969): 30-37; David L. Shirey, "Impossible Art – What It Is: Earthworks," *Art in America* 57:3 (May/June 1969): 32-34; Sidney Tillim, "Earthworks and the New Picturesque," *Artforum* 7:4 (December 1968): 42-45.

[60] Sol LeWitt first defined conceptual art in his seminal text "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," published in June 1967. Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *Artforum* 5:10 (June 1967): 79-83. Reviewers and critics of the Dwan Gallery show viewed the works on display as resistant to the concrete object and, therefore, exemplary of conceptual art. Glueck, "New York Gallery Notes," 110. Thomas Meehan wrote, "The earliest of the Conceptual Artists to get wide public attention were the Earth Artists, …who in October, 1968, exhibited mainly photographic documentation of their works in a group show called 'Earthworks.' 'Earth Works,' perhaps the most talked about and publicized art show of the 1968 fall season, …was actually the first major American show of Conceptual Art, although the form was then generally termed Impossible Art, for the reason that it was impossible to bring it into a gallery or to buy and sell it." With this statement, Meehan overlooked several earlier conceptual art exhibitions including Bochner's "Working Drawings" and LeWitt's "Serial Project #1, Sets A, B, C, D," both in 1966 and "Scale Models and Drawings," in 1967. These shows were all gallery exhibitions. The works on display in "Earth Works" were for sale, despite Meehan's claim otherwise. Meehan, 12.

[61] Junker, 44.

His use of the word place is significant, for it indicates the currency of the word at the time.[62]

One contribution to the "Earth Works" exhibition stands out from the others in its engagement with place and its resistance to any of the categories previously set out – gallery work, documentation of existing outdoor work, or proposal for a future outdoor work. Robert Smithson exhibited three discrete components related to one work: an aerial photograph of Franklin, New Jersey, cut into five trapezoidal bands stacked vertically and mounted on a white background so that, together, they formed a triangle; a series of five painted, wooden, trapezoidal bins positioned in order of sequentially increasing size and containing raw ore gathered from five sites in Franklin, New Jersey; and a series of twenty Instamatic snapshots documenting the sites located on the map and represented by the bins. *A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.)* was a new type of presentation recently developed by Smithson.[63] The artist traveled to a peripheral, unfrequented site – this time, Franklin, New Jersey – collected earth from this place, and transported the matter back to the gallery space where he displayed it alongside maps and photographs

---

[62] As noted in footnote 26, independent curator Seth Siegelaub affirmed to me the common interest in place amongst artists, curators, and critics at the time. Correspondence with author, July 25, 2008.

[63] As he wrote in his letter to the Director of the Walker Art Center of May 30, 1968, Smithson described his plans for the "Earth Works" piece, "At the moment, I am thinking and working only on Non-Sites as indoor earthworks. I'm getting ready for the Dwan 'Earth Show.' My Non-Site #3 will involve rock and mineral fragments from Franklin, N.J. contained by six bins that will taper into a segmented three dimensional perspective – thus forming a kind of geological artifice." Smithson-Holt Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C., reel 3832, frames 1087-1088.

Smithson created the first non-site, originally entitled *A Nonsite (an indoor earthwork)* and then later renamed *A Nonsite (Pine Barrens, New Jersey)*, in January, 1968, and displayed it in his solo show at Dwan Gallery that March. In a later interview, the artist explained his concept behind these works: "And so I created the dialectic of site and non-site. The non-site exists as a kind of deep three-dimensional abstract map that points to a specific site on the surface of the earth. And that's designated by a kind of mapping procedure. And these places are not destinations; they're kind of backwaters or fringe areas." Smithson's use of an aerial map in the non-sites demonstrated a continuation of the ideas first pursued when he was involved in the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport project. Paul Cummings interview with Robert Smithson, July 14, 1972, Archives of American Art, New York City.

documenting the site of origin. The work included both a physical gallery object and conceptual photographic evidence of the artist's work outside of the gallery. However, the documentation of Smithson's remote site, in contrast to Andre's, Heizer's, or even Oldenburg's, displayed no mark of the artist's actions on the land. Smithson left no trace of his presence in the New Jersey mining region. Rather, he brought the site into the gallery. As Virginia Dwan later recalled of these works, "Instead of being an earthwork on the ground, it was an earthwork in the gallery, essentially."[64]

A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.) also stands out among the submissions to "Earth Works" for its complex engagement with place. Unlike Morris's dirt pile, Smithson's work did not present a heap of earth that had been dug up from an unknown site and brought into the gallery; rather, he presented a specific place through a network of representations.[65] The photographic map of *A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.)* identified the location involved: a visibly homogenous and unbounded mining landscape in great contrast with the address of Dwan Gallery, situated on the urban island of Manhattan. Smithson, though, took great effort to define Franklin as a specific place. By imposing a shape upon the map, he organized and contained the undefined terrain. By dividing the photograph into five sections, he individualized different areas of the region. The artist also carefully measured the plot and recorded the mineral contents of the region. In a text

[64] Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan. Dwan herself participated in Smithson's trips out to New Jersey and, at times, helped to collect the materials for his works. She often took photographs along the way; in fact, the gallerist captured the image that became the "Earth Works" advertisement, which appeared in *Artforum* 7:2 (October 1968): 9. They also took trips to Virginia and Pennsylvania, among other destinations.

[65] Smithson's work might be described as "allegorical," a notion that, according to Craig Owens, both generated site-specificity and marked a break with modernism. Craig Owens, "Earthwords," *October* 10 (Fall 1979): 121-130 and "The Allegorical Impulse: Towards a Theory of Postmodernism," *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 67-86.

placed along the bottom edge of the map that described the piece, Smithson conveyed the physical and geologic specificity of the place: "5 sub-divisions based on the mineral ore deposits in the vicinity of Franklin Furnace Mines as shown on an aerial map (Robinson Aerial Surveys) at a scale of 1 inch = 200 feet. Of the more than 140 minerals found in this site, at least 120 are found in the sinc ore deposits, and nearly 100 are found only in those deposits."[66] The artist communicated the earnestness and agency with which he approached this project. Through his manipulation of the map on the wall and the accompanying written account, Smithson transformed the expansive landscape of Franklin, New Jersey, into a specific place. Making the remote place even more real for the Manhattan gallery viewer, Smithson offered in the text, "Tours to sites are possible."[67]

The aerial photograph shared its structure with the gallery object, or series of bins, and pinpointed the source of the rocks on display. The five containers acquired their own title; this was the *Non-site*. Continuing his careful and precise methodology, Smithson named each trapezoidal bin (1,2,3,4,5) and ascribed a letter to each division of the map (A,B,C,D,E) in the written text. He then went on to describe the relationship between parts: "The 5 sub-divided parts of the *Nonsite* contains raw ore from sites 1.A, 2.B, 3.C, 4.D, 5.E, – sites are shown on the map."[68] We deduce that each trapezoidal container corresponded to one section on the map and held rocks from that individual area. The rocks physically pointed back to their individual places of origin. However, Smithson

---

[66] "Earth Works" exhibition checklist, Dwan Gallery Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Geology always remained a great interest of Smithson's.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

insisted that – in keeping with the undefined nature of Franklin as site – the relationship between the material in the bins and its site of origin was not so ordered: "The rocks from the 5 sites are *homogenized* into the *Nonsite*."[69] This statement is fraught with ambiguity. While it appears that Smithson went to great lengths to define the distinct contents of the *Nonsite* bins, his use of the word "homogenize" suggests a uniformity.[70] Did Smithson distribute a combination of ore from all five sites into each of the containers, or did he carefully match the matter from each individual area on the map with its corresponding box? The vague description confused the viewer's ability to point back and forth between the gallery work and the indicated site and complicated any single reading of the work. Smithson's work jumbled a literal notion of site-specificity. While each rock held a specific connection to its original site, the viewer could no longer reconstruct those relationships. Nonetheless, Smithson demonstrated his dedication to the concept of place in his works: the indefinite nature of the work paralleled the openness of the site itself. The specificity of Smithson's choice and his careful handling of place in *A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.)* contrasted greatly with his colleagues' more superficial attention to place in their "earth works" on display in the same gallery space.

---

[69] Ibid. Italics are my own, for emphasis.

[70] In Jack Flam's book of Smithson's writings, the caption that accompanies the image of this work suggests a direct correlation between the sites as divided on the map and the material contained in the bins: "Each of the trapezoidal wood bins corresponds to a sector of the aerial photo-map of the site, and contains ore from, and proportional in amount to, the area." Flam, 174. Smithson's description of the work in his planning stages seems somewhat less clear, as one would expect from him: "This Non-Site will display physical disintegration within exact limits, fractured material within an artificial topographic structure." Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3832, frames 1087-1088. In an interview, Dwan relates stories of collecting and throwing dirt into the trunk of the car, and, Boettger, in her account, shows no attention paid by Smithson to keeping materials separate and identifiable when shipping back rocks from far-away places. Both of their stories support the conclusion that the rocks perhaps were not so specific to their place. However, I have not been able to locate records to support either position with certainty. Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan, and Boettger, 131.

Finally, the third element of *A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.)* – twenty Instamatic photographs – visually bridged the conceptual cartographic document and the actual pieces of earth Smithson removed from New Jersey, both explicit representations of the specific place. Smithson went out into the world, to a site both remote from the New York art scene and unexceptional to any typical gallery-goer, and appropriated this place as the subject for his submission to Dwan Gallery's exhibition. He transformed a visually undefined location into a specific place using a meticulous and controlled approach. In employing multiple components to signal one locale, Smithson challenged the viewer to consider what, exactly, defined a place and, in the end, presented a great deal of material that together defied any single, clear understanding of Franklin, New Jersey. The topographical map, text, rocks, and photographs could not communicate an experience of the Site.

Nonetheless, Smithson certainly pursued the gallery as another focus of this work. Every aspect of *A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.)* pointed to a place wholly contrary to its current context. The Dwan Gallery space was intended to be neutral, to disappear from the viewer's consciousness and enable her to direct complete attention towards the objects in the room. If the blank gallery space did in fact melt away, causing the disparity between Smithson's work and its surroundings to remain at all unclear to the viewer, Smithson emphasized this great difference in his written text: "The 5 outdoor sites are not contained by any limiting parts – therefore they are chaotic sites, regions of dispersal, places without a Room – elusive order prevails, the substrata is disrupted…"[71] Defining his five sites as unbounded and diffusive places, Smithson distinguished the

---

[71] "Earth Works" exhibition checklist, Dwan Gallery Archives.

Franklin landscape from the enclosed, pristine, white space of the gallery. His use of the capital letter R highlighted the word "room" and formalized the interior space. It would be nearly impossible for a thoughtful viewer to overlook the association between the artist's mention of "Room" and Dwan Gallery and, in turn, to ignore the relationship between the work and the place that she occupied.

In a 1972 interview, Smithson confirmed the dual nature of his non-sites: both an abstraction of a real place and a reflection on the contrast between that real place and the construct of the gallery. He explained,

> The Nonsite exists as a kind of deep three-dimensional abstract map that points to a specific site on the surface of the earth. And that's designated by a kind of mapping procedure… And [the Nonsite] then reflected the confinement of the gallery space so that the site itself was open and although the Nonsite designates the site, the site itself is open and really unconfined and constantly being changed. And then the thing was to bring these two things together.[72]

These dialectical works – comprised of open site, discrete non-site, and confined gallery – arose from Smithson's own critical regard for established art practices. He challenged the making of discrete art objects for a gallery space:

> I began to question very seriously the whole notion of Gestalt, the thing in itself, specific objects. I began to see things in a more relational way. In other words, I had to question where the works were, what they were about. The very construction of the gallery with its neutral white rooms

[72] Cummings, Interview with Robert Smithson, 1972.

> became questionable. So I became interested in working – in a sense bringing attention to the abstractness of the gallery as a room, and yet at the same time taking into account less neutral sites, sites that would in a sense be neutralized by the gallery. So it became a preoccupation with place.[73]

In part, Smithson developed his non-sites in direct response to the site of the gallery. The artist aimed to expose the white cube for which artists were required to produce individual objects. He chose places with distinct characteristics as the subject of his works, places like the mining "slurbs" of New Jersey, which would plainly counter the gallery's lack of specificity. He then created his version of a discrete object – an abstract double of his site – to situate in the gallery. Rather than serve as an autonomous thing to be looked at and experienced in the Room, the Non-site instead gestured back to its place of origin outside of the four gallery walls. Of course, the gallery space did counteract Smithson's Non-site, transforming the specific form into any gallery object. As suggested by the artist himself, these dialectical works served as an investigation of place. Place remained central to his work and theory and, according to Smithson, to that of all the most "compelling artists today."[74]

In his essay "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," published just the month before "Earth Works" opened, Smithson contrasted the work of his colleagues in the show – de Maria, Andre, Heizer, Oppenheim – and their concern for place with the large-scale, abstract, steel structures of Anthony Caro. Smithson described a photograph

---

[73] Ibid.

[74] Robert Smithson, "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," *Artforum* 7:1 (September 1968): 44-50. Reprinted in Flam, 104.

of Caro's 1966 sculpture *Prima Luce* that appeared in that year's September-October issue of *Art in America*. In the image, Caro's form sat in a cultivated garden. According to Smithson, the work remained completely separate from its surroundings; its placement was "thoughtless."[75] Conversely, Smithson advocated for art "concerned with 'place' or 'site.'"[76] His introduction of these terms and, significantly, the use of quotation marks around them are significant. Smithson's reference to place and site once again underscores the value of these terms to artists at the time. Furthermore, by setting the words apart with quotations, he described the new artistic interest as more than just a physical location but a complex concept. At the time Smithson wrote this essay, certainly artists, curators, and critics were in the midst of sorting out these terms and their meaning for contemporary art.

According to Smithson, Caro's *Prima Luce* exemplified modernist art. The monumental, stable work, which ignored its setting, was best exhibited in an ideal, tamed, pastoral landscape where it could be easily observed and appreciated. Alternatively, the art of Smithson, de Maria, Andre, Heizer and Oppenheim existed out in the world, related deliberately to site, and resisted any single, straightforward perceptual experience. Their works changed as the world around them changed. As opposed to the passive relationship between Caro's form and its setting, Smithson insisted that the work he and his colleagues produced "generate[d] a set of conditions."[77] Such works maintained a dynamic interaction with their surroundings. Although not definitively site-specific, *A*

---

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

Nonsite (Franklin, New Jersey) engaged with its surroundings and demonstrated the value of place for Smithson, as expressed in "Sedimentation of the Mind." As his practice developed, his engagement with place was further complicated. This will become clear in the next chapter.

A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.) called attention to the complex relationship between the new genre of earthworks and the art establishment, and critically exposed the function of the art gallery as its own place. Inside of the institutional space, Smithson's work revealed Dwan Gallery's physical and social limitations. Notably, though, Smithson did not target its economic system. Participating in typical gallery practice, the artist ascribed a value to each component of the work. He priced the photographs and aerial map each at $350 and the Non-site itself at $2,800.[78]

While Smithson's engagement with place maintained a certain specificity that many of the other works on display lacked, Virginia Dwan's "Earth Works" exhibition as a whole remains significant for the development of site-specific art. None of the objects on display related to their gallery surroundings in any direct physical way. Those pieces created for outdoor sites mostly acted as markers on the earth more than examinations of place. None linked formally or socially with its context. However, the "Earth Works" artists demonstrated an interest in working outside the four walls of the gallery and using materials not typically found in that institutional space. By turning their attention to alternative sites that comprised more individual features than the neutral white cube, these artists were forced to contend formally, conceptually, and socially with those specifics.

[78] "Earth Works" exhibition checklist, Dwan Gallery Archives.

Alternative Siting Examined: Expanding the Gallery System

In a review published in *The New York Times* two months after Virginia Dwan dismantled her Earth Show, Philip Leider named "Earth Works" one of two exhibitions that foretold "the closing out of what might be called 'Phase One' of the adventure that has been called 'Minimal,' 'Object,' or 'Literalist' art."[79] The October show – in its inclusion of Morris's dirt heap and photographs of far-away rock piles and holes – marked a shift away from the mid-1960s artistic production of discrete objects to be directly experienced in the contemplative space of a gallery. For Leider, the other show representing this major sea change in contemporary art was Leo Castelli Gallery's December exhibition, "9 at Leo Castelli."

The exhibitions occurred in two different exclusive New York gallery spaces a few months apart, and included works by two different rosters of artists. Robert Morris remained the only individual who was involved in both shows. As a participating artist in "Earth Works," he laid a mass of raw materials on the floor of Dwan Gallery. For the Castelli show, however, Morris performed an altogether different role. He did not exhibit any of his own artworks, but rather assumed the task of curating "9 at Leo Castelli."[80]

Morris had spent the summer of 1967 in Aspen, Colorado as a member of the Aspen Center of Contemporary Art's artist-in-residence program, one year before

---

[79] Philip Leider, "'The Properties of Materials': In the Shadow of Robert Morris," *The New York Times*, December 22, 1968, D31.

[80] Irving Sandler explained the genesis of "9 at Leo Castelli." He suggested that Lucy Lippard's "Eccentric Abstraction" show, on display at Fischbach Gallery from September 20-October 8, 1966, inspired Castelli and Morris to organize their exhibition. While Morris's current artistic interests certainly aligned with this idea and made Morris an obvious choice for participation, Sandler neglected to describe how, exactly, the artist and writer – one of Castelli's stable at the time – came to curate the show. He mistakenly included Morris among the list of artists who contributed their own works to the show. According to both exhibition photographs and reviews of the show, this was not the case. Morris acted only in an organizational position. Irving Sandler, *American Art of the 1960s* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988), 317.

Andre's tenure there. While there, Morris began experimenting with a new material – industrial felt – in a way that contradicted his construction of minimal objects during the preceding years.[81] Rather than composing a discrete form with the felt, he lumped, piled, and hung the material, allowing it to determine its own final shape. At the end of his residence in Colorado, Morris continued to employ felt and developed a series of works that he debuted at Leo Castelli Gallery in April 1968. That same month, an essay by the artist-writer entitled "Anti Form" appeared in *Artforum*, outlining the terms of his new working method. In the text, Morris reflected critically on recent minimal forms and presented his current interests, which conflicted with the previous practice. His specific objection towards "object-type art" lay in the disjunction between the chosen matter and the order, or form, an artist enforced onto it: "What remains problematic about these schemes is the fact that any order for multiple units is an imposed one that has no inherent relation to the physicality of the existing units."[82] Minimal artists, Morris among them, determined a work's form in advance of setting out to carefully assemble it; artistic process remained veiled behind the finished, well-built product. In April 1968, with his new theory of "Anti Form," Morris came to instead privilege soft, limp materials that responded to gravity, the direct handling of those materials without the intervention of tools, and completed pieces that revealed the artistic process responsible for their form.

Such were the concepts that drove the December show, which Morris himself organized and Castelli Gallery supported. While the nine artists involved in the show represented a range of artistic practices, each shared an interest in material properties,

---

[81] Sobel indicated that Morris first investigated with felt during his time in Aspen, Colorado, as an artist-in-residence – the summer of 1967. Sobel, 46.

[82] Robert Morris, "Anti Form," *Artforum* 6:8 (April 1968): 34.

gravity, and process. Critics recognized the relationship between these common concerns and Morris's recent practice and written philosophy. The show garnered great attention, with reviews and illustrations of the works on display appearing in *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, and *Arts Magazine*. Each review of the show included references to Morris's April essay; two reporters went so far as to directly classify those involved in "9 at Leo Castelli" as "the Anti-form group."[83]

Felt, fabric, cotton, latex, rubber, lead, steel, and fencing – all raw, industrial materials with their own distinct, individual properties – constituted the list of media employed in the exhibit's sixteen works. Many artists barely directed their matter, merely laying, piling, scattering, and throwing.[84] For instance, a visitor to the show

---

[83] Gregoire Műller, "Robert Morris Presents Anti-form: The Castelli Warehouse Show," *Arts Magazine* 43:4 (February 1969): 29-30 and Clement Meadmore, "Thoughts on Earthworks, Random Distribution, Softness, Horizontality, and Gravity," *Arts Magazine* 43:4 (February 1969): 26-28. The latter named the group the "Anti-Form people" and "Anti-Form artists."

An image of Richard Serra's *Splashing* both graced the cover and appeared embedded in the pages of *Artforum*'s February 1969 issue, which also contained two essays addressing the December exhibition. Max Kozloff, the author of the only rigorous review to appear in *Artforum*, did not use the term Morris had first coined in that journal's very pages nine months earlier. Kozloff did, though, discuss the issues Morris introduced in his seminal essay. Kozloff, "9 in a Warehouse: An 'attack on the status of the object,'" *Artforum* 7:6 (February 1969): 38-42.

Notably, Leider, the Editor of *Artforum*, did not directly use the term "Anti-Form" in his analysis of the show. However, Leider was the only one to directly quote the essay: "…Morris has written, 'A direct investigation of the properties of these materials (i.e., non-rigid ones) is in progress… Considerations of ordering are necessarily casual and imprecise and unemphasized. Random piling, loose stacking, hanging, give passing form to the material. …Disengagement with pre-conceived enduring forms and orders for things is a positive assertion.'" Leider, D31. Worthy of note, many of these critics characterized the "9 at Leo Castelli" works as part of the conceptual movement, privileging the idea for the works over their material.

[84] It is important to note that not all submissions to the show displayed "anti form" characteristics; however, since they were included in Morris's exhibition, they were perceived by critics as sharing his recent artistic intentions. Eva Hesse offers one such example. She exhibited two works: *Aught*, a latex and polyurethane wall piece (Figure 39, back wall), and *Augment*, a floor piece made of latex over canvas. While Hesse shared the others' interest in new, soft materials, her works were intentionally manipulated, constructed forms; they defied gravity and evoked meaning; and were not created on site. For an account of her work in "9 at Leo Castelli," see Lucy Lippard, *Eva Hesse* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 132-138. For Hesse's own description of her practice, see Cindy Nemser, "An Interview with Eva Hesse," *Artforum* 7:9 (May 1970): 59-63. Bill Barrette, a former studio assistant of Hesse's, suggested that the artist's work was both influenced by the "anti-form" movement and personally expressive. Bill Barrette, *Eva Hesse: Sculpture* (New York, Timken Publishers, Inc., 1989), 14, 190-195.

encountered a forty-foot long swathe of cyclone wire fence that ran along the entire length of the exhibition space. One twist in the wire lattice remained the only trace of William Bollinger's manipulation.[85] If the same form rested outside, at the edge of a field, one might have imagined that a staked barrier had been blown over into its contorted position by a strong wind. The curves, bends, and crooks reflected the nature of that length of that particular material. Bollinger's work occupied a great expanse of space, but also remained transparent and intangible. As a viewer passed by it, the mesh form appeared to move and change, denying any experience of it as a single, contained object. As if to illustrate Morris's plea that "random piling, loose stacking, hanging, give passing form to the material," Alan Saret and Steven Kaltenbach contributed formless heaps of matter arranged on the floor. Keith Sonnier and Richard Serra not only challenged the convention of creating an object, but also refused to choose between the realms of sculpture and painting altogether. Instead, these artists bridged the gap between the two: Sonnier hung materials from the wall that trailed along the floor below, while Serra leaned grounded forms against the room's structural supports.

The turn away from producing discrete objects and towards making works that relied on the material properties of the medium, the natural force of gravity, and process placed new emphasis on the physical environment. Each work's immediate surroundings factored into shaping the final form. Bollinger's ribbon of fence, for example, responded directly to its place in the gallery. Its dimensions and contour remained dependent upon

---

[85] Max Kozloff criticized Bollinger's piece as "too emphatically purposeful to be placed within the overall sensibility." Surely, Bollinger's material was more rigid than those employed by many of the other artists; however, I find similarities in his minor handling of the matter that do in fact elide his work with that of the others. Serra's prop piece, for instance, seems no less intentional to me. Of course, each artist is individual; they should not, really, be considered as a whole, single entity. Kozloff, 42.

that particular location; if the artist positioned it elsewhere, the material would have taken on a different configuration. This reliance of form on place signals the development toward site-specific art – works that ultimately derive conceptually, physically, and socially from their place. The pieces created for "9 at Leo Castelli," though, had no obvious social association with their locale. In fact, the "anti-form" artworks refused meaning altogether. They privileged material process over all other possible qualities of an artwork.[86] However, most of the passing forms – only on view for twenty-four days – were created on site and therefore correlated physically with their individual, specific placements within the room.

Among the exceptional works on display, those most actively engaged with place and, coincidentally, most praised by critics belonged to Richard Serra. The young artist presented three pieces. In one, he distributed scraps of latex and rubber across the floor in irregular heaps. In another, Serra propped a rolled sheet of lead up against the wall, in turn pinning in place a square expanse of the material. His most celebrated work, though, and the one least definable as object and most reliant on place, entailed nothing more than a simple residue of lead at the intersection where the wall met the ground.[87] Masked for protection and armed with an industrial tool, the artist poured the molten metal into the marginal space. He then allowed it to solidify in its place, leaving behind a cast of the

---

[86] Morris, "Anti Form," 34.

[87] Kozloff and Leider both cited Serra's works as among the best in the show; *Splashing*, in particular, garnered great attention and appeared in the most illustrations. Kozloff, 42; Leider, D31. It is worth noting that the reviewers addressed *Splashing* mostly in historical terms. Many raised the issue of gesture in their discussions of it, relating Serra's act to Jackson Pollock. Of course, Morris viewed Pollock as an important past example of an artist whose finished works remained visible traces of his painting practice, thereby making Pollock central to his idea of anti-form. Kozloff, 41; Meadmore, 26; Müller, 29. The other major issue raised by critics was the impact of minimalism on these works – relating them to the surrounding space. This has been taken up by recent scholars in defining the terms of site-specificity. Kozloff, 42; Meadmore, 28; Müller, 30.

corner and flyaway splatters on the floor and lower part of the wall, evidence of the force of his action. *Splashing*, as Serra named it, existed as the trace of that process.[88]

The form Serra produced originated entirely from and – for the duration of the show – remained physically attached to its site. *Splashing*, therefore, remains crucial for the history of site-specificity. In efforts to define the concept, contemporary scholars have continuously referenced the 1968 work; however, all have ultimately focused their attentions on Serra's much later controversial and fated *Tilted Arc* of 1981 as most paradigmatic of site-specific art. None has analyzed the initial value of *Splashing*, other than to describe the physical bond with its place.[89]

---

[88] Action and process remained at the center of Serra's early works. In 1967-1968, the artist penned his "Verb List," a simple register of over one hundred verbs, the great majority in their infinitive form. His works from this period, then, appear as exercises that perform "Verb List" entries in real space and real time. Notably, the list included "to splash," "to heap," "to scatter," "to distribute," "of equilibrium," all of which describe the three pieces Serra submitted to "9 at Leo Castelli." In each work, the artist's focus was trained on the activity and artistic practice rather than any finished aesthetic form. Of the one hundred and eight word pairs catalogued, seventeen differ from the infinitive standard: "of gravity," "of context," and "of time" turn up toward the end of the list and convey other more abstract values of Serra's, which are also evident in the works.

Serra's chosen tense carried certain implications. The New York artist's privileging of the infinitive form stressed the pure action of each verb. In an analysis of Serra's list and its relationship to his work, Rosalind Krauss explained that the infinitive verbs had further importance: "these verbs describe pure transitivity. For each is an action to be performed against the imagined resistance of an object; and yet each infinitive rolls back upon itself without naming its end." While all of the verbs required an object in order to be enacted, for Serra the object's identity and the degree to which it was acted upon remained inconsequential. As Krauss pointed out, the verb's infinitive format also held temporal implications: "An action deprived of an object has a rather special relation to time. It is not a time within which something develops, grows, progresses, achieves. It is a time during which the action simply acts, and acts, and acts." *Splashing*, *Untitled (Prop)*, and the *Untitled* scatter work all represent Serra's emphasis on process and continuous action over form. Rosalind Krauss, "Richard Serra/Sculpture," *Richard Serra/Scultpure*, ed. Laura Rosenstock (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 16. Richard Serra, "Verb List." In *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews* (Chicago: University of Chicag Press, 1994), 3-4.

[89] Both James Meyer and Miwon Kwon referenced Serra's *Splashing* in their critical efforts to define site-specificity. Meyer briefly addressed Serra's splash works and their transient nature, opposing them to his definition of the "literal site" – something permanently linked to its singular, physical location. *Tilted Arc* served as the scholar's example of the latter form of site-specific art. Kwon utilized *Splashing* representatively to problematize the re-installation of temporary works. However, she never addressed it in its original manifestation or considered its own import for the development of site-specificity. A discussion of *Tilted Arc* and Serra's well-known retort to opponents of the work – "to remove the work is to destroy the work" – opened her essay. Nick Kaye also cited Serra's famous words at the outset of his book, as one definition of site-specificity. Douglas Crimp, in his influential essay of 1986, which he wrote for the occasion of Serra's first American retrospective and in the midst of the *Arc* debate, introduced *Splashing* as

The work ought to be considered more thoroughly in relation to the terms of site-specificity that I have outlined: not only the physical association, but also the social and conceptual implications. The physical relationship between *Splashing* and its site parallels that of many of the other works that I have discussed: while it remained fixed to a particular junction of wall and floor, *Splashing* could have been easily enacted elsewhere with the same result.[90] In fact, Serra remade the work for an exhibition held at the Whitney Museum, entitled "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials," the following year. The work would have existed, secured to its place, wherever the act had occurred. The specific site was not central. Once completed, though, the lead trail, including its individual drips and splatters, reflected the unique intersection of Serra's chosen medium, his movement at that moment, and the room's topography. The precise form could never be repeated, moved, or sold.

Not only did *Splashing* reflect and remain joined to its physical site, Serra's work also subtly exposed the social circumstances of its place. The lead spray both concealed and revealed its corner of the gallery.[91] In covering over a part of the room often taken

---

the forerunner to *Tilted Arc*: "There it was, attached to the structure of that old warehouse on the Upper West Side, condemned to be abandoned there forever or to be scraped off and destroyed. For to remove the work meant certainly to destroy it." Crimp treated *Splashing* as an early illustration of site-specificity, but neglected to examine it in the terms he set out. Meyer, "The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity," 24-25. Kwon, 39 and 48. Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 1-2. Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site Specificity," 41-42.

[90] This point seems a part of Kwon's discussion, an explanation in part for the possibility of repeating – at another time and in another place – such individual and site-oriented works. Andre's pile of sand, *Grave*, from the previous year comes to mind. As discussed in Chapter One, the heap's form revealed the quality of Andre's chosen material, the artist's movement, the effects of gravity, and the physical conditions of the site itself. Andre could have repeated the act elsewhere with similar – but not altogether exact – results. The artist created *Grave*, like the majority of his works, for a *kind* of place and not a specific place. *Splashing* and many other works that I have presented share this characteristic.

[91] Benjamin Buchloh asserted that, "With his *Splashing* deliberately inserted in the right angle between wall and floor, Serra had made a point of visually canceling that angle and thus dissolving the architecturally defined 'artificial' cubic space by eliminating its demarcation lines." Although I agree that Serra's lead

for granted, Serra incorporated that space into his piece and called attention to it. He denied the viewer the customary experience of gallery-going that she anticipated – walking into the "neutral" gallery and examining artworks. Instead, the artist required her to consider the odd space where the wall met the floor. Serra forced her to reflect on the conditions of viewing art. Finally, the character of the space, as I will soon describe, may help explain Serra's decision to throw his risky, molten medium, thereby indicating a relationship between the conception of *Splashing* and its place. Amongst the works on display in "9 at Leo Castelli," *Splashing* appears to have fulfilled the terms of site-specificity most completely.

It remains relevant to discuss the show as a whole, as well, for its part in furthering the acceptance of alternative sites. Like "Earth Works," "9 at Leo Castelli" represents yet another instance of artists turning to unorthodox places outside of the boundaries of the established art world for production and display of their works. The title of the exhibition was somewhat misleading. While the exhibition did showcase the work of nine artists, as the name implied, the show did not occur at the "blue chip" gallery's posh Upper East Side space. Rather, on December 4, 1968, "9 at Leo Castelli" opened on the second floor of a warehouse building situated at the border between Manhattan's Upper West Side and Morningside Heights. Castelli had recently leased the large, open space – baring cement floors, exposed brick walls, and pipelines – from art-handling company Hague Art Deliveries for storage.[92] Far more remote from its East 77th

---

splash annuls the juncture between wall and floor, I also insist that it calls attention to and exposes that space. Buchloh, "Process Sculpture and Film in the Work of Richard Serra" (1978), reprinted in *Richard Serra*, eds. Hal Foster and Gordon Hughes (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2000), 11.

[92] Castelli rented the warehouse space from September 1968 to August 1971. "9 at Leo Castelli" served as the first of eleven exhibitions held there. In September 1971, Castelli opened a downtown gallery at 420

Street namesake in character than in distance, the warehouse provided a venue unique in scale, tone, and flexibility. Leider described the West 108th Street location as, "neither plush nor heated, but, fortunately, enormous."[93] The critic's account of the space directly opposed it to the swish, warm, intimate Leo Castelli Gallery, ideal for viewing art objects. The scale and grit of the warehouse, in contrast, allowed for sprawling works of untraditional and even messy media that engaged directly with their surroundings, which was precisely what Morris displayed in his show. No sculptures sat atop pedestals; no plastic tarps protected the floor beneath works. The unconventional location encouraged the artists to push their thinking beyond the object and altered the expectations of those viewers who trekked up to the rough neighborhood to see the show. Morris and Castelli's turn to a place outside of the established norm effaced the limiting conditions of the gallery that required Dwan's artists to produce scale models and drawings of their oversized objects just the previous year. Despite their radical selection of the warehouse, though, Castelli and Morris produced a show that retained the name of one of New York's choice galleries, seemingly expanding the boundaries of the art establishment to meet their needs rather than overturning the institution's limitations altogether.

During this pivotal year, we witnessed the continuation of the narrative of site-specific art that began in 1967. New artistic developments that showed evidence of site-specific ways of working included the persistent search beyond the art institution's

---

West Broadway, another building developed by Hague Art Deliveries. This very building, on the up-and-coming fringes of the art scene, housed several of the company's clients, all high-end galleries: in addition to Castelli, Ileana Sonnnabend, John Weber, and Andre Emmerich leased space there. "Wouter F. Germans, Developer of Soho Gallery Building," *The New York Times*, August 31, 1998, A17. See also "9 at Leo Castelli" files in the Historical Exhibitions Archive, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

[93] Leider, D31.

boundaries for alternative spaces in which to make and exhibit art, the canonization of the Earth Art genre, and the prevalence of the terms *space* and *place* in conversation amongst artists, critics, and curators.

Radical choices for siting and displaying artworks – including college campuses, the Rocky Mountain landscape, and a warehouse space inaccessible to the typical Midtown gallery-goer – indicated the sustained attempt to reject the established yet limiting conventions of the art world and instead to pioneer new artistic practices that skirted the system. Such resistance, as I have argued, paralleled the public's activist response to the horrific events of the time – war, civil rights struggles, and general social unrest. Both citizens and art world participants sought fresh answers to current problems. One such revolutionary artistic act involved going outside of the gallery – out into the land – to create and exhibit artworks. In 1966, Robert Morris had proposed,

> Why not put the work outside and further change the terms? A real need exists to allow this next step to become practical. Architecturally designed sculpture courts are not the answer, nor is the placement of work outside cubic architectural forms. Ideally, it is a space without architecture as background and reference, which would give different terms to work with.[94]

In 1968, this possibility finally became not only practical, but a salient option, even for artists and curators whose objectives did not include public art. During 1968, Carl Andre produced his first outdoor works; Virginia Dwan organized an exhibition to showcase the great diversity of practices that centered on the theme of earth as medium, content, and

---

[94] Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part II," 20-23.

placement. The move outside – to in-between places – shattered the white cube. Artists no longer faced restrictions of scale nor felt compelled to create objects for a neutral space. New factors, such as the specifics of an overlooked environment's physical characteristics or social function, informed novel works.

In the previous chapter we observed the early impact of context – physical conditions and thematic framework – on both the artistic shaping and viewer reception of an artwork. With their concern for space in the Bradford Junior College exhibition, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, and Carl Andre produced works that rather than being influenced by their surroundings conversely gestured towards that space around them. Just months later, the same group of artists and curators demonstrated an interest in defining place. Although their chosen sites did not greatly impact the finished works, the artists ultimately revealed the particular traits and usages – that until then went unnoticed – of the places on the Windham College campus that they addressed. Still, the 1968 season only began to witness site-specific works that exhibited complex responses to their surroundings. The list of terms that contributed to the development of such work continued to grow.

CHAPTER THREE

1969: "THE TERRESTRIAL STUDIO"

In 1969 we witness a continued investigation of the artistic concern for space and place, as well as the persistent "dematerialization" of the discrete art object. Instead of paintings hung on walls and individual things placed on pedestals, the new works included piles of unusual materials strewn on the floor, temporary installations, and interventions into the world outside the walls of the art institution. Often these pieces were exposed to the conditions of nature and, therefore, changed over time, maintaining no stable form. In many cases, the unique treatment of materials, with specific attention to their ephemeral nature, connected the artwork to its unique environment – both its location and its moment in time. Artists, critics, and scholars acknowledged these tendencies and recognized a shift in the art production of their era.[1]

In the following pages, I examine the correlation between time and site-specific art. Along with, and in relationship to such concerns as scale, context, space and place, time arises as another key concern for artists and critics in the late 1960s, and becomes fundamental to an understanding of the development of site-specificity. Pamela Lee has described "an insistent struggle with time, the will of both artists and critics either to

[1] See Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1973). In addition, on November 29, 1969, Lippard delivered a lecture, entitled "Toward a Dematerialized or Non-Object Art." For the transcript, see Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Box 32, "Lectures – Notes and Texts" file, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.. In the coming pages a number of examples of contemporary artists, critics, and scholars who pointed out this transition away from the art object will come to light. They included Jack Burnham, Dennis Oppenheim, Willoughby Sharp, Seth Siegelaub and Robert Smithson, among others.

master its passage, to still its acceleration, or to give form to its changing conditions" during the 1960s.[2] Many of the artworks that contribute to the narrative of site-specificity illustrate Lee's observation and, ultimately, maintain a dynamic relationship with time – one component of the set of circumstances that surround a work.

In other words, *time* remains a fixed part of a work's context. The gallery traditionally guards works of art from the conditions of the outside world, including time's passage. In 1969 new outdoor works suddenly became subject to the effects of time – both the circumstances of a certain time of year and its passage. An installation in place for just a few days and a work constructed in a winter landscape both remained engaged with the specific time period in which they existed. Just as artists called attention to immaterial space in their late-1960s works, they, too, simultaneously began to address time – another aspect of daily life often taken for granted. By creating temporary pieces with ephemeral materials, artists countered the notion of art as timeless and eternal, preserved forever in its original state in the museum.[3] Artworks constructed with organic materials or positioned outdoors and therefore exposed to the shifting conditions of daylight and weather could not be viewed in the same way again and again. They evolved in real time. Such works appeared different with each individual experience and, consequently, challenged viewers to notice the specificity of both the artwork's and their own inimitable position in place and time.

---

[2] Pamela M. Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2004), xii.

[3] In 1973, Daniel Buren argued that the traditional role of the museum (and the gallery) was to preserve, collect, and serve as a refuge for works of art. The motivation to conserve depended on the ideal notion that art was meant to remain eternal and timeless. See "Function of the Museum," *Artforum* 12:1 (September 1973): 68.

Over the course of the last four decades, since the period under discussion, the shifting concept of site-specificity – a method of art making in which a place variously drives the artist's concept, the work's physical form, and its social meaning – has become equated with permanence. Of the works addressed in my narrative thus far that demonstrate site-specific tendencies, however, none remained fixed to its place forever. What's more, most consisted of a form that changed with time, even while rooted to its location. The case studies that I address in this final chapter – Dwan Gallery's installation showcasing the work of Fred Sandback, titled "Five Situations; Eight Separate Pieces," and the first ever museum exhibition devoted to "Earth Art" – illustrate that real time, in fact, remained an essential and dynamic factor in the relationship between an artwork and its site. The appearance and then frequent recurrence of the term, too, in symposia and critical writings demonstrate its contemporary value for artists. In this chapter, time emerges as a significant factor for the concept of "situation," a term drawn from Sandback's title that serves to facilitate my reading of "Earth Art" and account of site-specificity.

Additionally, my analysis of "Earth Art" reveals the connection between an artist's conception for a work of art and its eventual location. The opening chapters of this thesis establish the physical and social associations between an artwork and its surroundings during the late 1960s. For this exhibition, which was held on Cornell University's campus, artists designed works expressly for the Ithaca museum and its landscape. Curator Willoughby Sharp invited a group of artists, including Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, Hans Haacke, and Dennis Oppenheim, to create works using natural elements either inside the gallery or in the surrounding areas of the campus. The works

produced at Cornell remained not only physically bound to and, in some cases, socially engaged with their locations, but also conceptually linked to their destinations. In a *conceptually* site-specific work, the particularities of the site motivated the artist's idea for the work. Oppenheim chiseled into Cornell's frozen Beebe Lake. Smithson chose local salt mines as the subject, as the source of material, and as one of the sites for his submission. The presentation of these works in the Ithaca landscape was only temporary though: with the changing winter weather and its impact on the terrain, the works included in "Earth Art" remained wholly ephemeral.

Introducing the Element of Time: Site versus Situation

Fred Sandback's "Five Situations; Eight Separate Pieces" was the first exhibition slated for Virginia Dwan's New York gallery in 1969. The show, which ran from January 4th – 29th, included five drawings, each of which corresponded to one of five successive installations, and eight individual works that were reserved for display during the final days of the exhibition. The works on paper were simple line drawings: axonometric projections of the bare gallery space with little added detail other than straight lines indicating four angled planes stretching from wall to floor in various places throughout the rooms. The locations, shapes, and sizes of the angled planes depicted in each work on paper differed slightly. Each drawing became the basis for a sculptural display that lasted several days and was then disassembled and replaced with another. In order to translate each drawing into its related installation, or "situation," Sandback strung steel rods, wire, and colored elasticized cord into large open trapezoids that he anchored to the gallery's walls and floor.

The thin cables framed fields of space that visually coalesced into "volumes."[4] Sandback's constructions compelled the viewer to perceive the marked-out air as material form. Some of the elastic cord sculptures spanned larger areas of the floor than the wall.[5] When this occurred, the forms seemed to deny viewers access to certain areas of the gallery space unless she stepped "inside" the trapezoid. Such an act was likely unthinkable, as the forms appeared to have substance.[6]

During the exhibition and in the months following, both the organizers and reviewers attempted to identify how these forms related to recent artistic practices by comparing this work to those belonging to other movements including constructivism,

---

[4] Multiple critics used the term "volume" to describe Sandback's "Five Situations." See G.E.S., "Frederick Sandback," *Pictures on Exhibit* (February 1969): 13; Don McDonagh, "Sculpture on the Move," *The Financial Times, London*, March 7, 1969, 3; and James R. Mellow, "New York Letter," *Art International* 13:3 (March 20, 1969): 59-60. This term emerged, additionally, in an undated, unpublished document that seems to be the exhibition's press release. The name John W. Weber, Dwan Gallery's Director, appears at the top of the page. Note that I refer to this documents as "John Weber, undated press release" from this point on. Dwan Gallery Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Recent scholars have discussed Sandback's work and his manipulation of space in terms of "volume" and "material," as well. See Yve-Alain Bois, "A Drawing That Is Habitable," *Fred Sandback*, eds. Friedemann Malsch and Christiane Meyer-Stoll (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006), 27-38. Edward Vazquez examined the manner in which this particular exhibition of Sandback's installations directed the viewer to perceive the otherwise-overlooked space of the gallery in his dissertation "Aspects: The Art of Fred Sandback" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2009), 66-80.

[5] Reviewers writing for *Time* magazine and *Pictures on Exhibit* both referred to the work as "sculpture." The former called them "space sculptures" and the latter assessed that "as sculpture they were factual." "Art in New York," *Time* 93:4 (January 24, 1969) and G.E.S., 13.

[6] Virginia Dwan recounted her experience of the exhibition: "They described volumes which were absolutely not there, and yet they were so there, psychologically, that you wouldn't consider walking into that space. …If he outlined a rectangle sticking quite far out into the room, you would be very careful to walk around it, because you would have a sense of a volume there that couldn't be entered. It wasn't just that you would politely not enter it; there was a sense that you couldn't enter it; that it actually was a volume, had a density and everything." Charles Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan, Archives of American Art, March 21-June 7, 1984.

In two of the "situations," Sandback constructed his trapezoids across the space of doorways, requiring a viewer to walk through a form. Upon entering the gallery, she would not recognize that she was penetrating one of Sandback's planes. Once in the room and aware of the forms around her, the viewer's perception of the space she had just moved through would change.

minimalism, and a recent show of conceptual art.[7] James R. Mellow likened the rod and cord forms to the "Constructivist interest in a maximum of spatial definition with the minimum of formal equipment," referring to George Rickey's recent study of the legacy of Russian constructivism for post-war art.[8] In his short, one hundred fifty word review, Mellow characterized the air outlined by elastic cable as "slab[s] of space," "volume[s] of space," and "purely spatial volumes."[9] With these descriptions Mellow acknowledged a distinction in the quality of space that sat within Sandback's cords from the same space just beyond those narrow lines. Inside, the air appeared to possess a material presence. It became visible. In contrast, outside of the frames the same gallery air seemed unexceptional, like any other space one experienced day in and day out.

Dwan Gallery Director John Weber also defined Sandback's demarcated rectangles and trapezoids as "volumes." In addition, he referred to the space as "material" in his description of the exhibition when he stated, "the media could be said to be air."[10] Rather than reference constructivism as a source, though, Weber aligned Sandback's work with minimalist sculpture.[11]

---

[7] On the show's relation to constructivism, see Mellow, 59-60. For the comparison between Sandback's exhibition and minimalism, see Weber, undated press release. Regarding the relationship between Sandback's show and William Anastasi's of April 1967, see McDonagh, 3.

[8] In Rickey's discussion of the new generation of artists influenced by constructivism, he described their manipulation of space as a material. George Rickey, *Constructivism: Origins and Evolution*, revised edition (New York: Braziller, 1995), 105-107. This book was first published in 1967.

[9] Mellow, 60.

[10] Weber, undated press release.

[11] Ibid. Specifically, Weber pointed to the common "qualities of objectification, economy of means, directness of statement and monumentality" in the artistic practices of Sandback and the minimalists. Of course, some minimalist work has its roots in constructivism. See Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part 1," *Artforum* 4:6 (February 1966): 42-44; Annette Michelson, "Robert Morris – An Aesthetics of Transgression," *Robert Morris*, exhibition catalogue (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1969); and Maria Gough, "Frank Stella is a Constructivist," *October* 119 (Winter 2007): 94-120.

Sandback's work and minimalist sculpture shared two particular characteristics – unmentioned by Weber – that remained significant for the late-1960s development of site-related art: space and scale. Just one year prior, Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, and Carl Andre had demonstrated a collective interest in the space outside of their works while exhibiting at Bradford Junior College's Laura Knott Gallery, as we have seen. The objects on display – paintings with corners cut out, tiny canvases hung far apart, and one hundred forty four pieces of metal positioned on the floor in the shape of a square – directed the viewer's attention to the surrounding space. During the accompanying symposium, each of the three artists confirmed his interest in the area outside of the works. Andre even described the empty space of the room as "matter." Less than a year later, Sandback had actually employed space in this way. He not only called attention to empty space, but actually framed it, enclosed it, encased it. Rather than point to the surrounding space, Sandback's works appropriated it. The artist tautly suspended wires from the walls and pinned them to the floor to delineate forms. The rods and cords did not serve as the sole medium of the artworks, but merely defined their edges. The air itself became the forms' matter and comprised the tangible-seeming shapes.

As discussed in Chapter One, monumental scale remained an essential term for the development of site-specific art. In the second half of the 1960s, artists imagined creating forms that could not fit within the walls of a gallery. Consequently, they produced works that challenged established norms of exhibition display, as seen in Dwan Gallery's 1967 show "Scale Models and Drawings," and storage, like Andre's Aspen works and Richard Serra's *Splashing*. These artists sought alternative sites on which to build such forms.

Sandback managed the problem of scale in yet another way. Despite their transparent, immaterial nature, his trapezoids spanned large areas of the gallery: one measured ten feet by ten feet and stood out one foot from the wall, while another stretched nearly seven and a half feet by fourteen feet and projected two feet into space.[12] "Determined by length of the gallery's wall space and the height of its ceiling," they filled the space of each room.[13] Although these works defined large expanses of space, the materials that comprised them occupied very little room. Precisely because of the nature of their medium – wire, cord, and air – and its difference from the materials enlisted by other artists seeking large spaces for new works, Sandback's sculptures remained manageable and portable. In fact, over the course of the twenty-five day exhibition, the individual "situations" were only on view for several days at a time before they were swiftly dismantled and new ones erected. While they appeared quite material, the forms existed as nothing more than temporary installations of thin, flexible material that, when taken down, remained rather negligible in mass and volume. As Weber perceptively noted, "it is possible to carry a large exhibition around in one's pocket. Though no criterium [sic] of art, this quality has its conveniences when faced with the now common problem of enormous unwieldy sculptures."[14]

Though Sandback's "situations" related to minimalist work in simplicity of form, geometry, space, scale, and impact, important distinctions remained. Weber acknowledged one such discrepancy: the degree of materiality.[15] If not careful, a viewer

---

[12] Exhibition checklist, Dwan Gallery Archives, Bard College.

[13] G.E.S, 13.

[14] Weber, undated press release.

[15] Ibid. Interestingly, Weber referred to the minimalists as "Maximalists" in his statement.

might bump into one of Morris's fiberglass polyhedrons, resulting in a loud thump and a minor bruise. Despite the heightened visibility of those demarcated planes of air, Sandback's forms had no such potential to make sound or cause damage; the only risk involved their accidental destruction. Instead, they were "ambiguous," as Weber suggested, entirely immaterial.

The third person to assess and art historically situate "Five Situations" associated it with William Anastasi's conceptual show that took place in the same space nearly two years earlier. In his review, Don McDonagh overlooked important commonalities between the two.[16] The critic focused on the two artists' fixation on the physical structure of the gallery itself and the effect of the temporary shows on gallery-goers' awareness of that environment: "For some secret reason the walls of the Dwan Gallery have a powerful attraction to younger artists. Last season, one of them painted pictures, only slightly reduced, of the bare walls including moulding and electrical fittings and then hung them in situ. For a moment it was a grand illusion and then faded as explained slight of hand always does. Sandback's 'situations' dissipated as easily."[17] McDonagh ended his comparison there. Sandback's installation "Five Situations" notably evoked "Six Sites" in title and in concept, as well.

The titles assigned to the two exhibitions closely paralleled one another. Each consisted of a number, which accounted for the quantity of works in the show, followed

---

[16] McDonagh, 3.

[17] Ibid. Anastasi's *Six Sites* were exhibited in April 1967, not the "previous season," as McDonagh suggested.

by a variation on the Latin root "situs," meaning place or position.[18] Anastasi's April 1967 show adopted the term *site*, which, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is "the place or position occupied by some specified thing, frequently implying original or fixed position."[19] Anastasi's images demanded that the viewer acknowledge the Dwan Gallery as a particular place despite its seeming neutrality. With scaled-down photo-silkscreens and an exhibition title that underscored his intentions, the artist marked each of the six individual walls that supported the paintings as its own site, its own place with a unique, unchanging configuration of electrical sockets and air vents currently being occupied by an image of itself. The "sites" remained fixed. As Brian O'Doherty retrospectively pointed out about the show, no viewer who returned to Dwan Gallery after experiencing "Six Sites" would ever be able to disregard those walls and outlets and air vents.[20] The show had forever changed his perception of that space; he now viewed it as a fixed place, a *site*.

The word *situation* shares the same root with site and, therefore, relates more directly to place than one might expect. However, *situation* implies a greater set of circumstances that only partially involve place. Other factors that contribute to a situation include time and climate. Artists began to focus on all three of these elements in their works – both indoors and out – as we will see in the coming pages. The involvement of active, changing factors like time and weather determines that a situation

---

[18] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 2nd Edition, Revised (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), s.v. "site" and "situation."

[19] Ibid.

[20] Brian O'Doherty, "Inside the White Cube [1]: Notes on the Gallery Space." *Artforum* 14:7 (March 1976): 30.

is temporary and unfixable, unlike a site. It is the relational, momentary nature that sets *situation* apart from *site* and distinguishes the two Dwan exhibitions.

Situation is defined as the "place or position of things *in relation* to surroundings or each other."[21] No single entity in isolation may comprise a situation. Rather, one must involve a series of conditions, whether a group of objects arranged in dynamic relation to one another and their place for a distinct period of time or a single form subjected to particular weather and light conditions. Sandback constructed individual situations by positioning "planes of air" throughout Dwan Gallery in January 1969. As a result of the artist's interventions, a viewer became aware of the relationships among the forms and between the forms and the gallery structure.

For "Five Situations," Sandback arranged a series of sculptures throughout the gallery, or site, that called attention to the framed spaces as distinct, tangible entities, even though they consisted of the very same material that comprised their surroundings. When taken in relation to one another and the room itself, the group of elastic cord sculptures became components of a larger overall installation, a single *situation*. Sloping down from the upper corners of the walls and into the floor space, they temporarily revised the shape of the room. Ultimately, the "planes of air" altered the viewer's experience of the gallery as a fixed place. Sandback constructed a set of situations.

A second meaning attributed to *situation* is "a place or locality in which a person resides, or happens to be *for the time*."[22] Despite their seemingly fixed, material nature, the forms changed in shape and size and moved throughout the gallery during the course

---

[21] *Oxford Dictionary of English*, s.v. "situation." Italics are my own, for emphasis.

[22] Ibid. Italics are my own, for emphasis.

of the exhibition. Every few days, Sandback dismantled the group of planes on view and constructed a new "situation." The viewer's experience of the place was transformed once again. A returning viewer would recognize that every few days Sandback introduced different cord and rod sculptures and arranged them in different positions within the gallery, therefore creating new relationships. She would be able to mentally compare the individual situations to one another.[23] Unlike Anastasi, Sandback did not reveal the unique characteristics of the gallery, but rather constructed a number of temporary circumstances. The same electrical sockets and air vents that Anastasi made so conspicuous seemed to disappear again with Sandback's work on display: while critics of the first show named Dwan's walls as the focus of Anastasi's attention, those who reviewed "Five Situations" pointed to the space of Dwan Gallery as Sandback's primary consideration.[24] It is important to note that Sandback's works did not respond to a specific situation; instead he produced a series of situations. Later, I will introduce artworks created for particular sets of circumstances, or situations.

The emphasis on place that dominated Anastasi's April 1967 exhibition nonetheless persisted. This common interest in the last years of the 1960s is observed both in the choice of titles and in an analysis of the works themselves. Anastasi's sites demanded the viewer regard Dwan Gallery as a specific place unlike other galleries,

---

[23] The poster advertising Sandback's show listed the individual dates of the five situations: "January 4-7, 8-11, 11-15, 16-19, 20-23." This information encouraged attendance for each installation. Sandback exhibition poster, Dwan Gallery Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Vazquez also focused on the role of temporality in "Five Situations." He claimed that the involvement of time was a defining feature of the situations, setting them apart from individual objects, and one that initiated Sandback's mature work. Vazquez, 68-69, 77, 79.

[24] For a close examination of the terms *space* and *place*, see Chapter Two.

rooms, or offices. Sandback's situations did not reveal their place directly, but engaged with it as one of a group of interrelated components of the work.

While the term *site* suggests a fixed place, the word *situation* evokes the conjunction of a number of circumstances, including both location and time. Similarly, the term *site-specific* brings with it associations of permanence, duration and stability. These characteristics, though, are hardly essential for art engaged with place. The notion that site-specific art must be forever rooted to its place developed in the period that followed the crucial years addressed in this dissertation, with artworks by Donald Judd and Richard Serra and the critical definition of the term and its institutionalization. Site-specific art need not be lasting. In fact, all of the works analyzed thus far were only linked to site for a brief period of time. From Andre's *Cuts* and Claes Oldenburg's *Placid Civic Monument* of 1967 to Weiner's *Staples, Stakes, Twine, Turf* and Serra's *Splashing* of 1968, those works produced in the late 1960s that engaged with their individual sites also tended to involve a greater range of circumstances, not the least significant of which was time. Each of those pieces lasted only for a short duration. With the temporal component in mind, *situation-specificity* more accurately characterizes the artistic practices that I will describe next than the established term *site-specificity*.

Investigating the Relationship between Time and Place

Less than two weeks after Sandback's show closed, the Cornell University museum in upstate New York opened "Earth Art," a revolutionary exhibition of artworks, sited both indoors and out, that involved earth as medium. This groundbreaking display serves as a case study for introducing *conceptually* site-specific art as well as for considering the role of time in works linked to their place. In the following pages, I first

trace the origins of the show and its role as one of a series of proposed interrelated exhibitions. Next, I address the logistical arrangements for "Earth Art," as they dictated the location and time of year for the show and, ultimately, set the boundaries within which the artists worked. Finally, I examine submissions by Robert Morris, Hans Haacke, Dennis Oppenheim, and Robert Smithson. Through the course of my analysis, I deploy the term "situation" as I have just defined it to works that bring the narrative of site-specificity into focus.

Conceiving "Earth Art"

During the summer of 1967 independent curator Willoughby Sharp – an advocate of the recent tendency to dematerialize the art object and an ardent champion of contemporary artists who created kinetic art with the use of current technologies – envisioned a series of four traveling exhibitions thematically devoted to the four natural elements of classical tradition: air, earth, fire, and water. "Air Art," the first of the shows, opened on March 13, 1968 at Philadelphia's Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association (YM/YWHA) and, after its showing there, traveled to four other national institutions over the course of the following year.[25] In keeping with the curator's interests, the artworks on display involved movement and sound. Six of eleven included electricity; four centered around smoke or bubbles. In the accompanying catalogue Sharp reiterated an observation shared by other critics and artists of the time – among them Jack Burnham, Lucy Lippard, and Dennis Oppenheim – when he announced, "object art is

[25] Following is the exhibition schedule for "Air Art": YM/YWHA, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 13 – 31, 1968; The Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, April 25 – May 19; Lakeview Center for the Arts and Sciences, Peoria, Illinois, June 7 – 28, 1968; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, California, January 13 – February 16, 1969; Lamont Gallery, The Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire, February 25 – March 18, 1969.

over."[26] Privileging instead immaterial and ephemeral practices, he chose to exhibit works that did "not occupy space, they create[d] space."[27] Like both the exhibition in Bradford, Massachusetts, on view at the very moment that "Air Art" opened, and Sandback's "Five Situations," Sharp's show displayed works that accentuated the atmosphere surrounding them. According to Peter Selz, Director of one of the participating museums, "our atmosphere becomes the material of art."[28]

As with the other two exhibitions, the artists involved in "Air Art" did not conceive of their works solely for the ultimate site of display; however, once again, place became an active component of the installations. For the Bradford College display, Barry positioned his small canvases according to the measurements of the Laura Knott Gallery's wall. Sandback determined the measurements of his trapezoids to fit individual walls in Dwan's gallery, running cord from corner to corner. Similarly, for "Air Art," Preston McClanahan and Robert Morris constructed pieces with the directive that they "fill available space."[29] The dimensions of the YM/YWHA room where each piece was displayed dictated the work's actual size. When the show moved to The Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati, McClanahan's *Smoke Room* and Morris's *Steam* conformed to

---

[26] Willoughby Sharp, *Air Art* (New York: Kineticism Press, 1968), 4. Burnham's "Systems Esthetics" presented a transformation from object-oriented art to systems-oriented art. This essay will be discussed further in the coming pages. Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," *Artforum* 7:1 (September 1968): 30-35. Lippard recognized the tendency to move away from the object in *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966-1972*. In notes related to his submission for the "Earth Art" exhibition, Oppenheim expressed the shift in artistic attention from object to place. This, too, will be addressed later in this chapter. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

[27] Sharp, 4.

[28] Ibid, 2. Note that in the catalogue, the Director of The Contemporary Art Center loosely tied the making of such work to the historical context of the time: "Because of the space program and the present concern for atmospheric conditions, some artists have turned to air as an esthetic medium." Ibid, 3.

[29] Ibid, 23 and 27 respectively.

their new locations. As a result, they acquired new measurements. While the works were not site-specific, they certainly called attention to space as material and engaged with their changing places.

Still in the summer of 1968, months after "Air Art" first opened, Sharp continued to peddle the show to other institutions with the hopes of sharing the current work with a greater audience and, practically speaking, minimizing organizational costs. The curator contacted Cornell University's Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art as a possible venue.[30] Thomas Leavitt, the Museum's Director, was enthusiastic about bringing such an innovative exhibition to Ithaca and planned to meet Sharp in New York City in August to discuss the possibility.[31] Following their encounter, talk of the "Air Art" show appearing at Cornell dissipated and instead the two began a conversation about a new exhibition – the second in Sharp's series dedicated to the elements – that would open at the college campus.

Executing "Earth Art"

"Earth Art" would be the very first *museum* exhibit devoted to earth as both artistic medium and subject matter. Despite a similar title to Dwan's October 1968 "Earth Works" and an overlap in participating artists, this show would involve the

[30] Correspondence between Sharp and both faculty and staff members at Cornell University began on June 3, 1968. The first letter, written by Sharp to Assistant Professor of Art History William Lipke, was passed along to the Museum's Director, Thomas Leavitt. After initial contact, Leavitt remained the point of contact for all future correspondence. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives.

[31] For Leavitt's eager response see letters dated August 8, August 26, and September 27, 1968. Ibid. Also, see Suzaan Boettger's account of the exhibition's conception. *Earthworks: Art and Landscape of the Sixties* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Ltd.., 2002), 158-159.

outdoors as more than simply a place to gather materials.[32] As part of the new exhibition, works would be sited both inside the Museum and outside in the forest, lakes, and ravines of the campus grounds.[33]

The spectacular Ithaca landscape, though, was not the driving force behind the exhibition and did not determine its organization. So, then, how did "Earth Art" come to take place at Cornell and how did that particular environment acquire so much meaning for the artworks on display? An understanding of the exhibition's development remains crucial to my analysis of the roles of time and place for the included works.

Notably, Sharp and Leavitt decided when and where "Earth Art" would take place based on logistical considerations. To begin, the choice to open the show at Cornell was a matter of convenience. As noted, Sharp conceived of the exhibition as the second in a series of four shows dedicated to the natural elements. For him, "the problem was to find the most suitable place to initiate these projects."[34] The curator sought a host willing to collaborate on such a radical idea and an environment conducive to the outdoor requirements. In its autonomy within the college and its setting of lakes, woods, and

---

[32] Carl Andre, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Robert Morris, Dennis Oppenheim and Robert Smithson were named as participants in both shows. Ultimately, Andre, De Maria and Heizer did not exhibit in "Earth Art." For more on the "Earth Art" roster, see page 150, footnote 43 below.

[33] The display of artworks outside of the museum as part of an exhibition was revolutionary at the time and unfathomable to many Cornell students. "Earth Art Symposium" unpublished transcript, Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1257, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.. Furthermore, the fact that the outdoor works would be ephemeral seemed entirely counter to many viewers' understanding of art and, therefore, made some skeptical of the show altogether: "Impermanence is one aspect that makes many viewers question the show's validity. Director Leavitt recognized this difficulty, but added that it is a 'visual experience which can be exciting both in the creating and the viewing." Jane Marcham, "Earthy Art, an 'In' Thing, Draws Campus Comment," *The Ithaca Journal* (February 21, 1969), 11.

[34] Willoughby Sharp, "Genesis of the Earth Art Exhibition," *Earth Art* (Ithaca: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, 1970), n.p..

gorges, Cornell's Andrew Dickson White Museum met both of those conditions.[35] As for when the exhibit would occur, early on in the negotiations Leavitt offered the dates that best fit the Museum's schedule – February 3 through March 9, 1969 – and Sharp did not dispute the timing.[36]

With regard to the siting of the show, Leavitt proposed both the interior of the Museum and the potential for outdoor locations. In a letter to Sharp from late August 1968, he stated, "I am enclosing a brochure on the museum which contains on the inside a plan of the building on which I indicated the measurements of the various galleries that would be available for the exhibition. There might also be outside area available, but we must keep in mind that Ithaca in February and March is likely to have temperatures below 0 and about three feet of snow."[37] The concern about weather faded quickly, though. By early October, after Sharp had traveled to Ithaca to "case the situation," the two seemed settled on an outdoor component to the show, regardless of winter conditions.[38]

Once they had chosen the dates and location for the exhibition, the resulting circumstances demanded that certain kinds of outdoor works be produced. Artworks created for a winter landscape in upstate New York would be very different from those conceived, for example, for the southern California coast in summertime. Nevertheless, just as they had done with "Air Art," the organizers expended great effort towards

---

[35] Ibid.

[36] Letter from Leavitt to Sharp dated August 26, 1968, "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives. In the end, the show ran from February 11 through March 16.

[37] Ibid.

[38] A letter written from Leavitt to Sharp, dated September 27, 1968, noted the visit. Another on October 9, 1968, from Sharp to Leavitt confirmed the decision to use the outdoors. "Earth Art," folder 3, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Archives, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

marketing the show to other institutions – in other climates and at other times of the year – in order to promote the new art and, more importantly it seems, to defray costs.[39] The practical problems inherent in moving this particular show and reproducing its works elsewhere initially went unacknowledged by the "Earth Art" organizers. Leavitt sent letters, approved by Sharp, to at least eleven institutions throughout the United States and Canada inviting them to host the show anytime after April.[40] The Director of the La Jolla Museum of Art responded to the invitation eagerly and requested dates in "mid-June; mid-July; mid-August; mid-September."[41] Certainly artworks conceived for a snowy forest or a frozen river in Ithaca would not quite translate to the San Diego beaches in summer or early fall. For Sharp and Leavitt the outdoors remained a vital component of "Earth Art"; however, during the show's planning stages, they seemed to overlook the importance of place and time. The organizers failed to recognize that those artworks that would be positioned outside would ultimately remain fixed to their icy sites both physically and conceptually. Once the show opened, however, Sharp admitted to a reporter that "while "Earth" is not movable, the artists are, and the show could be

---

[39] Leavitt appeared anxious about the proposed budget in his letter to Sharp written on January 9, 1969, just one month prior to the exhibition's opening: "If other institutions were sure of participating, and we could expect to recoup some of the costs, I would feel a little easier. But we simply do not have the funds to increase the budget for the show if we are going it alone." Ibid.

[40] These institutions included The Santa Barbara Museum of Art; The Georgia Museum of Art, Athens; The Isaac Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans; The Art Museum of South Texas; The Saint Paul Art Center; The Minneapolis Institute of Arts; The Milwaukee Art Center; The Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis; The Portland Museum of Art; The Edmonton Art Gallery; and The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. They represent a range of climates and terrains. In correspondence with Sharp, Leavitt noted that the response was encouraging, particularly from the institutions in Texas, Edmonton, and Georgia. Ultimately, though, the show never traveled. Many of the museums and galleries found the idea too radical; certainly these potential locations would have required a completely different set of artworks due to their weather and topography. Correspondence found in "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives, Bard College.

[41] Letter from Thomas S. Tibbs to Leavitt dated November 29, 1968. Ibid.

recreated someplace else."[42] Exhibiting in La Jolla, California, or Edinburgh, Texas, or Athens, Georgia, or Edmonton, Alberta, would require the artists to reconceive their artworks. An "Earth Art" exhibition at any of those places would look entirely different. The same could be said if the show were to occur at Cornell at a different time of year. "Earth Art" remained dependent upon both its place and its fixed period of time.

Exhibiting "Earth Art": The Works on View

A group of nine American and European artists participated in the show: Jan Dibbets, Hans Haacke, Neil Jenney, Richard Long, David Medalla, Robert Morris, Dennis Oppenheim, Robert Smithson and Gunther Uecker.[43] Organizers provided each with a floor plan of the Museum, photographs of the surrounding land that might "serve as exhibition space," one hundred dollars for materials and construction costs, and a

---

[42] Marcham, 11. There is no mention of another version of the show.

[43] The list of participating artists originally included Andre, De Maria and Heizer, as well, for a total of twelve. Ultimately, however, only the nine listed exhibited works. Andre dropped out prior to the group's trip to Ithaca for installation. De Maria and Heizer both installed works, but, in the end, those works were not included as part of the show. Heizer did take part in the symposium held on February 6 that accompanied the show, but neither he nor De Maria was represented in the catalogue. Several reviewers explained their omission. According to an article by John Perrault, "Reportedly [De Maria's] work consisted of a room full of dirt with the words "Good Fuck" inscribed. The Museum, perhaps understandably, had kept it curtained off." A writer for *The Ithaca Journal* reported that "two works were withdrawn from the show after conflicts upon which the museum refused to elaborate. One was a pile of dirt blazoned with a four-letter word, discreetly screened from the view of children, which vanished." In her account of the exhibition, Suzaan Boettger suggested that Heizer, "presumably acting in solidarity," pulled out along with De Maria. Perrault, "Earth Show," *Village Voice* (February 27, 1969): 18; Marcham, 11; and Boettger, 165. See also correspondence between Leavitt and Sharp – dated January 7, 1969 and January 9, 1969 – regarding who was invited and who had agreed to participate. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives and "Earth Art," folder 3, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Archives, respectively.

In the section of his catalogue essay devoted to the "Genesis of the Earth Art Exhibition," Sharp explained, "Financial considerations dictated that the number of participating artists should not exceed a dozen, because a unique feature of the exhibition was that the artists would be invited to Cornell to execute their works *in situ* from locally available rock, soil, etc." *Earth Art,* n.p.

In her analysis of this exhibition, Boettger flatly declared that all of the participants "made site-specific works outdoors or inside the museum." Boettger, 158. This is not entirely true. Several of the works – such as Jenney's shelf construction and Uecker's *Sandmühle* – did not exhibit site-specific tendencies, while those that did engaged with their sites in very individual ways. In the coming pages, I will investigate the range of site-related practices that appear in this show. Note that I will not address works by all of the contributing artists, but rather a sampling of both indoor and outdoor pieces by a few representative ones.

ticket for travel to the campus the week prior to the opening for installation, a symposium, and opening receptions.[44] The artists selected their own sites.[45] Most appeared to have conceived of their artworks prior to arrival on campus for production; however, several of the submissions changed once the artists began working *in situ*.[46] Haacke, Jenney, Morris, and Uecker chose individual galleries inside the museum's walls, while Dibbets, Medalla, and Oppenheim resolved to work outside on the college grounds. Long and Smithson opted for both; each developed a single work that could be viewed within the confines of the museum but also extended beyond its architectural boundaries.

Several of the artists – challenged by the possibility of working outdoors and inspired by the gorgeous Ithaca terrain – constructed a second piece for the show. The winter landscape served as a place for the artists – both those who decided to work there and those who initially did not – to explore the elements of site and time in a way that the gallery did not allow. As Leavitt explained in the exhibition catalogue's Introduction,

---

[44] Sharp, "Genesis of the Earth Art Exhibition," *Earth Art*, n.p.

[45] Ibid. Leavitt testified to this in his catalogue introduction as well. "Foreword," *Earth Art*, (Ithaca: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, 1970), n.p. Sharp elaborated on the degree of autonomy given to the artists when he stated, "We are using the Museum as a nerve center to send out twelve artistic energies into the environment and they have total freedom." "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1250.

[46] All but Medalla – who was in India at the time – and Morris traveled to Ithaca to produce their works on site in the days preceding the exhibition's opening. Therefore, many made last-minute decisions. This is the explanation, according to Leavitt's "Foreword," for the catalogue's late publication in 1970, an entire year after the show. *Earth Art*, n.p.

The degree to which the artists arrived at Cornell with their pieces already worked out in their minds, however, remains debatable. In a press release for the *Cornell University News* dated January 23, 1969 – just weeks before the show was set to open – Leavitt suggested that the artists would conceive of their works on site when they arrived for the installation. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives. During the symposium, however, the museum's Director conceded a bit more planning on the part of the artists than he had before. Contradicting Leavitt, though, Sharp – who seemed to take pride in the way the organizers allowed the artists great license – claimed that even at this late date, some of the artists remained without a plan for their works. "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frames 1250 and 1255, respectively.

"Many of the artists did not limit their art activities in Ithaca to the one project needed for the exhibition. Their creative energies which were stimulated by the geological conditions and the climate of Ithaca led them to produce additional pieces which provided a dividend to visitors to the exhibition."[47] When the show opened on February 11, artists who had selected indoor sites, like Haacke, and those who had chosen to design for the landscape, like Oppenheim, had additional outdoor works ready on display. However, not all of these supplementary pieces positioned in the Ithaca terrain appeared on the exhibition map designating the locations of outdoor works; none were mentioned in the accompanying symposium or included in the catalogue, with the exception of the brief reference by Leavitt mentioned above and a few uncaptioned photographs in its last pages.[48] Despite the Museum Director's characterization of these works as an added offering to the public, they remained fairly inaccessible. During a symposium held for Cornell students on February 6, 1969, just prior to the artists' installation, Sharp

---

[47] Leavitt, "Foreword," *Earth Art*, n.p. Sharp expressed a similar sentiment during the symposium. "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1250.

[48] Of the outdoor works, only Dibbets' *A Trace in the Wood in the Form of an Angle of 30° Crossing the Path*, Haacke's *Spray of Ithaca Falls: Freezing and Melting on a Rope*, and Oppenheim's *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* were illustrated on the map. Long's *Untitled, 27 East Avenue, Ithaca, New York*, Medalla's *Untitled*, Oppenheim's *Gallery Transplants* and Smithson's *Cayuga Salt Mine Project* did not appear. It is not clear why certain ones were included while others were not.

Furthermore, the idea for a map pointing to the locations of outdoor works did not come to the organizers until the symposium, merely five days before the exhibition's opening, at which point the artists were already in the process of executing their works. When a questioner asked if, in fact, some of the works would be positioned outside of the walls of the Museum and, if so, where they would be, Leavitt seemed to consider distributing a map for the first time. Surely all of the works – both those considered primary submissions and the ones thought to be somewhat unofficial – could have been included on the map. Regardless of which works were publicized to the exhibition's attendees, it seems that the organizers did not expect many viewers to see any of them anyways. In the symposium, Sharp stated, "Some of them are very far away, and you probably wouldn't want to go there because it would require maybe, well, a forty-minute walk through the woods and then back." "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1258.

The catalogue was published in 1970, well after the exhibition, so there is no reason why the additional works could not have been included there. The fact that the organizers did not think to encourage visitors to see the outdoor works suggests that those pieces were considered somewhat auxiliary to the ones on display in the museum and that the experience of viewing the outdoor pieces was not essential to the exhibition.

described the additional works as "other works for [the artists] themselves which aren't pieces that are to be exhibited."[49] The organizers did not consider them a formal part of "Earth Art."

The fact that the participating artists chose to create additional outdoor works that were not considered a part of the exhibition and that the organizers felt no need to direct viewers to their sites suggests an experimental attitude toward this new art practice. Enthused about the rare opportunity to work in the land and inspired by the Ithaca landscape, Dibbets, Haacke and Oppenheim developed projects on site without regard for whether or not an audience would ever see them.[50] It seems that the process of conceiving and making the works was their main concern; the finished forms retained less importance. An impulse to make works for the specific landscape – and the specific situation of winter in Ithaca – motivated these artists.

While the list of participating "Earth Art" artists represented a wide range of practices, the works they displayed shared several qualities. First, all of the submissions demonstrated an interest in employing earth – and other unusual materials, such as seed, ice, and salt – as the work's medium.[51] Second, most of the artworks on display were ephemeral in nature, lasting only for a short duration. In many cases, these two features were interrelated: a work involving ice, for instance, melted with time. The organic,

---

[49] Ibid.

[50] Recall that for the "Earth Works" exhibition just a few months earlier, Dwan resorted to a gallery show since she and her artists were unable to procure land on which they could construct their works.

[51] A statement published in the *Cornell University News* announcing "Earth Art" presented the show as a respite from current technological art and the artists as sharing in common the use of earth as medium: "Their reasons for using earth substances vary widely, but all the artists share a concern for the elements, the basic stuff of which our planet is made. As a group they offer an intriguing alternative to the current obsession with technology in art." "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives.

variable nature of the media determined that the forms were subject to change. Third, the artworks included an emphasis on the ground plane. Regardless of the artist's choice to work indoors or out, the horizontal plane of the gallery floor or the land beneath the work remained central to each display. This did not necessarily mark a major turning point in the participating artists' practices. In fact, many began exploring the space of the floor in previous years, as witnessed in Andre's Styrofoam, brick and metal floor pieces, Morris's felt works, and Smithson's non-sites. Nevertheless, by involving the horizontal plane of the floor, the individual sculptural pieces remained engaged with their sites. Sharp pointed this out in his catalogue essay: "Of especial importance in the context of site is the work's relation to the floor or the ground. The new sculpture does not stand remote and aloof on a pedestal. It is laid down on the ground or cut beneath its surface. The floor or ground often forms an integral part of the piece, as may the wall plane."[52] Here, the curator referenced interior and exterior works equally. Rather than make a claim specifically for earthworks, he emphasized the primary role of site for both gallery and outdoor artworks when in contact with the ground. By manipulating organic materials in their natural states on the ground plane, the involved artists allowed gravity to momentarily fix the works to their sites until other situational factors, like time and sunlight, intervened. The three common and inextricable characteristics – non-art materials, temporary nature, and horizontal positioning – contributed to a relationship between the artworks and their sites and recalled anti-form practices introduced the previous year.

---

[52] Sharp, "Notes Toward an Understanding of Earth Art," *Earth Art*, n.p.

Robert Morris

Morris, who most clearly defined the terms of anti-form in his 1968 essay by the same name and his part in "9 at Leo Castelli," and Haacke both displayed loose piles of organic material on the floor of their galleries.[53] The former artist, though, was one of only two who never set foot on the Cornell campus during the course of the exhibition. At the last minute, Morris could not make the trip from New York City to Ithaca due to inclement weather and consequently telephoned the Museum with directions for the completion of his work.[54] He asked that his proxies – Museum staff and students – divide the eighteen by twenty-eight foot gallery into a grid of one-foot units and then place various amounts of locally derived earth, anthracite coal, and long fiber asbestos into specific sections on the plastic-protected floor. The piece recalled in many ways Morris's submission to Dwan's "Earth Works" exhibition just four months earlier – a single heap of materials including earth, metals, and grease, taken from a nearby construction site. The new work, however, occupied its own gallery and presented multiple mounds corresponding to one another. Still, Morris conceived of the piles relative to their position on the grid rather than their placement within the specific room. The same work could have been executed in any of the galleries.

Hans Haacke

The German-born Haacke, on the other hand, created a work that maintained a relationship with its specific indoor location. He deliberately "selected the gallery most

---

[53] See Chapter Two for a discussion of Morris's anti-form and "9 at Leo Castelli."

[54] "The Exhibition: Robert Morris," *Earth Art* (Ithaca: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, 1970), n.p. Howard Junker also reported that Morris called in instructions. "Down to Earth," *Newsweek* (March 24, 1969), 101. Morris never traveled to Ithaca during the preparations for or the installation of the show. In a letter written to Leavitt on January 10, 1969, the artist sent along a list of materials for his piece. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives.

exposed to sunlight" for his floor piece.[55] For his submission to "Earth Art," Haacke created a work that developed from his recent interest in systems and processes as they occurred in real time.[56] According to a statement that the artist made describing his practice at that time:

> The working premise is to think in terms of systems; the production of systems, the interference with and the exposure of existing systems. Such an approach is concerned with the operational structure of organizations, in which transfer of information, energy and/or material occurs. Systems can be physical, biological or social, they can be man-made, naturally existing or a combination of any of the above. In all cases verifiable processes are referred to.[57]

Haacke's focus on systems was greatly influenced by the critic and theorist Jack Burnham, who had recently published his seminal essay "Systems Esthetics" in *Artforum* the previous September.[58] In his writing, Burnham used the language of technology to

---

[55] "The Exhibition: Hans Haacke," *Earth Art* (Ithaca: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, 1970), n.p.

[56] For Haacke's description of his own practice, see *Hans Haacke* (New York: Howard Wise Gallery, 1968), n.p. Reproduced in Lippard, 37. For additional contemporary assessments of his work see Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," 35 and Jack Burnham, "Real Time Systems," *Artforum* 8:1 (September 1969): 49-55. For more recent scholarship on Haacke's work from this period see Walter Grasskamp, "Real Time: The Work of Hans Haacke," *Hans Haacke* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004), 28-81.

[57] This quotation was extracted from a letter written by Haacke on April 3, 1971 to "All interested parties" regarding his cancelled Guggenheim show of that year. It appears that the artist borrowed the statement from an announcement for an exhibition he had at Howard Wise Gallery in 1969. Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frames 295-297.

[58] Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," 30-35. Grasskamp credited Burnham with introducing systems theory and structuralism into 1960s art discourse through this essay and others published in the ensuing years. Grasskamp, 41-42. Burnham's concept evokes one presented by Mel Bochner in his December 1967 essay "The Serial Attitude," in which the artist acknowledged a methodology that appeared in a diverse number of recent artistic practices. According to Bochner, the "serial attitude" was found in artworks that were driven by a systematic, a priori process; that privileged order over execution, and that exemplified a restrained form and self-exhausting system. Recently, Pam Lee addressed the history of systems theory

describe a cultural shift that he saw occurring and what he perceived to be a developing alternative to object-centered artworks. Burnham wrote, "We are now in transition from an *object-oriented* to a *systems-oriented* culture. Here change emanates, not from *things*, but from *the way things are done*."[59] In contrast to autonomous, self-contained art objects, the new art originating from this change focused on a network of relationships within a given system, any system – art-related, social, or otherwise. Burnham's concept of the system remained entirely open, involving everything from people to information to weather. As a result of the emphasis on a set of associations, a work's physical form, which traditionally relied on visual perception, and its commodity status – attributes precious to Greenberg's modernist art – no longer retained their value. Burnham provided an alternative model that privileged other factors. Concept and information became more important than the object. A viewer's physically and mentally integrated experience of the work replaced one that favored sight alone. The work remained dependent upon a relationship to its context. All three of these concerns had consequences for the development of site-specificity. According to the theorist, "art does not reside in material entities, but in relations between people and between people and the components of their environment… [In the past] sculpture defined the environment." With this new systems-oriented approach, "the environment defines what is sculptural."[60]

Burnham's theory and his characterization of contemporary art became major talking points among artists and critics at the time, despite the fact that many found fault

---

and the relevance of Burnham's essay for art of the late-1960s, employing Haacke's work as an example in *Chronophobia*, 62-81.

[59] Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," 31. Italics are original.

[60] Ibid, 31-34.

with his essay.[61] "Systems Esthetics" attracted the attention of those affiliated with the Cornell exhibition. Each of the catalogue's three introductory essays recognized the trend among contemporary artists to resist making discrete objects, to involve the viewer in a total experience, and to engage with processes and matters outside the realm of art.[62]

Burnham's ideas appear applicable to – and can be placed in conversation with – the terms that I have been developing to define the origins of site-specific art, namely "situation" and "environment."[63] His systems evoke *situations*, which I described earlier in my discussion of Sandback: an ephemeral set of circumstances concerning a particular place and moment in time. In fact, the theorist even aligned the two words in his essay: "Any situation, either in or outside the context of art, may be designed and judged as a system."[64] He continued,

> Inasmuch as a system may contain people, ideas, messages, atmospheric conditions, power sources, etc., a system is, to quote the systems biologist, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a 'complex of components in interaction,' composed of material, energy, and information in various degrees of

---

[61] In Patricia Norvell's collection of interviews from 1969, she raised the subject of Jack Burnham's "Systems Esthetics" with six of her nine subjects: Dennis Oppenheim, Seth Siegelaub, Robert Morris, Robert Barry, Sol LeWitt, and Robert Smithson. Oppenheim accepted the theory as "apt." Morris agreed with much of what Burnham wrote regarding the value of systems and process above commodifiable objects, but negated the critic's emphasis on technology. LeWitt and Smithson disagreed with Burnham. Smithson declared, "System is a convenient word, like object. It is another abstract entity that doesn't exist." See *Recording Conceptual Art*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001): 21, 28, 65, 97, 119-120, and 133, respectively.

[62] See Leavitt's "Foreward;" Sharp's "Notes Toward an Understanding of Earth Art, "Common Aspects of Earthworks," and "The Esthetic Significance of the New Sculpture;" and Lipke's "Earth Systems," *Earth Art*, n.p.

[63] Lee recently acknowledged that "Systems theory was applied to emerging forms of digital media, yes, but it also served to explain art not expressly associated with technology today: conceptual art and its linguistic propositions, site-specific work and its environmental dimensions, performance art and its mattering of real time, *minimalism* even." Lee, 68.

[64] Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," 32.

> organization. …Where the object almost always has a fixed shape and boundaries, the consistency of a system may be altered in time and space, its behavior determined both by external conditions and its mechanisms of control.[65]

Both *system* and *situation* refer to a collection of interrelated parts acting in conjunction with one another. However, each concept proposes a very different relationship to time. *Situation* describes a momentary yet static set of circumstances. When the conditions change, a new "situation" prevails. As demonstrated by Sandback's installations, *situation* implies a temporary duration. Burnham's dynamic "system," alternatively, remains constantly in flux, changing, evolving in real time. Environment, or context, maintains a distinct meaning for each term, as well. As noted earlier, *situation* shares its etymology with *site* and, therefore, directly implicates place.[66] For the extent of its duration, a situation remains engaged with its fixed location. While physical place is not essential to the definition of a "system," context remains an inextricable component of the system. The environmental conditions in which a system exists largely determine its function, according to Burnham. Furthermore, the individual parts of each system are only able to contribute to the operation through their relations with the other components, with their immediate context. As Burnham described, "The components of systems – whether these are artistic or functional – have no higher meaning or value. Systems

---

[65] Ibid.

[66] See page 140, note 18 of this chapter.

components derive their value solely through their assigned context."[67] In other words, a system remains wholly dependent on its environment.

What is the meaning of all of this for the development of site-specific art? We witness a surge of interest at this time in the relationship between a thing – be it a technological system or a work of art – and its surroundings by artists, curators, and theoreticians. The regular appearance of the term *situation* to describe artworks that decentralize the object and Burnham's systems are just two more instances of this tendency.[68] When the trend is manifest in art, the outcome is a work engaged with its context, which of course includes place. In artworks that involve multiple components in conjunction with their environment, the element of time is implicated. A static, unchanging relationship among parts is impossible. The modernist notion of a piece of art preserved forever in its original condition within the pristine white cube is challenged by the involvement of time. The new works exist in real time, continuously shifting, even if at an imperceptible pace. As context changes over time, so too does the artwork; when pried from its place, the piece no longer functions.

Burnham viewed Haacke's practice as exemplary of systems esthetics and used it to illustrate his theory: "Since the early 1960s Hans Haacke has depended upon the

---

[67] Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," 34.

[68] The word "situation" was adopted as the title for Sandback's show. Burnham used the term in his essay, as noted. Many other occurrences appeared at this time, too. Smithson referred to the site of his submission to "Earth Art," an underground salt mine, as a "situation": "There you have an amorphous room situation, an interior that's completely free." "Fragments of a Conversation" (1969), ed. William C. Lipke. In Jack Flam, ed., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 189. In October 1969, Victor Burgin published "Situational Aesthetics," where he, too, addressed the recent artistic trend away from object-making and toward a system of dynamic interrelated conditions: "aesthetic systems are designed, capable of generating objects, rather than individual objects themselves. Two consequences of this work process are: the specific nature of any object formed is largely contingent upon the details of the situation for which it is designed; through attention to time, objects formed are intentionally located partly in real, exterior space and partly in psychological, interior space." *Studio International* 178:915 (October 1969): 119.

invisible components of systems. In a systems context, invisibility, or invisible parts, share equal importance with things seen. Thus air, water, steam and ice have become major elements in his work."[69] Light was the unseen driving force that powered the work Haacke submitted to "Earth Art." In the context of a show centered on earth, Haacke chose to focus on the process of plant growth.[70] In order to achieve this, the artist combined a cubic yard of local topsoil and peat in a nine-foot across and three-foot tall cone-shaped heap on the floor of the museum. He then seeded the mound with quick-growing winter rye and annual rye seeds and watered it.[71] Over the course of the exhibit, Haacke's real-time system, entitled *Grass Grows*, transformed from seeded soil to a mountain of plush grass and ultimately to a pile of lifeless matter.

Its development likely would have occurred if the work were situated elsewhere. However, the site that Haacke chose – a room with natural light radiating from windows situated on two of its four walls – impacted the work's progress and changing appearance throughout the show. During the symposium held in conjunction with "Earth Art," the

---

[69] Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," 35.

[70] Haacke described his piece to the audience in attendance at the symposium: "I'm not interested in the form. I'm more interested in the growth of plants…" "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frames 1244-1245. It is also worth mentioning that Haacke's work remained reliant on time. Sharp acknowledged this in his catalogue essay. Sharp, "Common Aspects of Earthworks," *Earth Art*, n.p.

[71] For the work's dimensions, see Via Wynroth, "Back to Earth: Come with an Open Mind," *Ithaca Journal* (Saturday, February 22, 1969): 20. The museum staff acquired local soil and peat for Haacke's piece. According to correspondence between Leavitt and Haacke, though, it appears that Haacke brought the seeds with him. See letters from Leavitt to Haacke dated January 10, 1969, and from Haacke to Leavitt dated January 24, 1969.

Although photographs show Leavitt and Sharp watering the pile using watering cans, apparently a water source was intended to continuously hydrate Haacke's grass throughout the exhibition. In a letter written to the artist on January 10, 1969, Leavitt confirmed that the museum's superintendent had been working on constructing a covered fountain in Haacke's chosen gallery. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives.

artist explained his reasons for electing to display the piece indoors rather than on a flat piece of land outdoors, as well as the importance this gallery had:

> In this case here we have a room that has natural light on two sides and artificial light and no light on the other two sides. The result is most likely to be that grass will grow toward the natural light and will be much longer on that side and will be meager on the side that is facing the artificial light. These are ecological phenomena which I am very much interested in.[72]

In addition to a general concern for growth as a phenomenon, Haacke exhibited an interest in the specific effects of the system, or situation, on the form of his work. The artist's placement of the piece in that particular gallery dictated the speed at which the seeds and soil produced grass and the thickness, direction, and color of the blades. *Grass Grows* related to and literally responded to the *physical* conditions of its place and its existence in time.

However, nothing about the White Museum or its role as a part of the campus of Cornell University inspired this particular artwork; in other words, *Grass Grows* did not relate to its specific site in *conception*. Haacke had envisioned the work before he arrived in Ithaca and simply sought out the location most suited to his work. He did not even use local seeds. Alternatively, for a second piece created for the show, Haacke responded to a chosen location – the more than one hundred foot cascade of Fall Creek's Ithaca Falls. For this artwork, entitled *Spray of Ithaca Falls: Freezing and Melting on a Rope*, the artist suspended a length of nylon rope across the waterfall.[73] Over the course of a few

---

[72] "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1264.

[73] This work was left out of the symposium and catalogue, with the exception of an uncaptioned photograph in the publication's last pages. However, it did receive attention from Howard Junker and John Perreault in

days, spray from the gushing water froze to it, creating a hanging structure of snow and ice. With changes in the weather, though, the icicles disappeared by the time the New York press traveled to Cornell to view the show. Nevertheless, devoted reporters braved the conditions and, according to the caption printed alongside their photograph in front of the falls, "the ones who wore their boots troop[ed] to the foot of Ithaca Falls to see rope strung by 'Earth' artist [Haacke] to gather icicles. February thaw melted most of the icicles, but they stayed to admire the falls."[74] Even if the stunning patterns of ice dissipated and only the rope in its plain form remained, the work drew a willing audience into the spectacular Ithaca landscape. With *Spray of Ithaca Falls*, Haacke demanded that viewers perceive that spot – not often experienced in the dead of winter – as an individual place. The site of Ithaca Falls acted as the inspiration for the work and, as its context, remained responsible for the constantly changing nature of the piece in real time. In exchange, through the work Haacke revealed the waterfall to be a unique place.

Dennis Oppenheim

While Morris never traveled to Cornell, others elected to make preparatory trips as early as the previous fall. In mid-November 1968, Oppenheim and Smithson – both artists who ultimately created works in the Ithaca landscape – journeyed together along with Sharp to the college campus to examine the grounds, consider potential sites, and begin to develop their pieces.[75] Oppenheim felt compelled to create something other than

---

their reviews of the show and Burnham, seven months later, in his essay "Real Time Systems." Junker, 101; Perreault, "Earth Show," *The Village Voice* (February 27, 1969): 20; Burnham, "Real Time Systems," 52.

[74] Marcham, 11.

[75] Andre, Heizer, Oppenheim and Smithson accompanied Sharp on the visit to Ithaca on November 20-21, 1969. It appears that Haacke traveled to Cornell separately the following month, on December 17-18. See letters written by Leavitt and Lloyd Carter dated October 17, November 6, November 17, and December

an object that would be displayed in a gallery. As he stated in an interview just one month earlier, "To me a piece of sculpture inside a room is a disruption of interior place. It's a protrusion, an unnecessary addition to what could be a sufficient space in itself."[76] Rather than impose on an already existing locale, he aspired to make works that generated their own sense of place. The artist maintained that in order to achieve this, current art – freed by minimalism – ought to move beyond the object and its home in the gallery. His attention now focused intently on place – place outside of the boundaries of the art institution: "This displacement of sensory pressures from object to place will prove to be the major contribution of minimalist art. However, when ones [sic] energy can be absorbed so wantonly by the 'place you put your thing'… it's time to consider a more deserving location. The terrestrial studio cannot accept the stringencies of this minimalistic influence."[77]

The artist opted to work with Ithaca's Beebe Lake, a manmade body of water with falls at either end. Based on his first visit, Oppenheim planned to dig a trench in the lake's surrounding shore and then continue that cut right into the surface of the frozen water. Upon his arrival at the campus for installation in early February, however, the artist altered his plans and decided rather to focus all of his attention on the lake itself. Disregarding the shore, Oppenheim wielded a chainsaw to slice into the ice-covered lake,

---

10, 1968 for information regarding the artists' travel plans. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives.

[76] "Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, Smithson" (December 1968-January 1969), interview by Willoughby Sharp, *Avalanche Magazine* (Fall 1970), 3. The interview was reprinted in Germano Celant, *Dennis Oppenheim: Explorations* (Milano: Edizioni Charta, 2001), 40. Note that in the republication, Oppenheim's use of the term *place* is exchanged for *space*, amending his statement to, "To me a piece of sculpture inside a room is a disruption of interior space."

[77] Oppenheim sent this statement to Leavitt – along with other information – in response to an inquiry for materials that would represent each artist in the exhibition catalogue. "Earth Art" file, Historical Exhibition Archives.

carving two snaking, parallel incisions in the surface, each two hundred feet long and several feet apart from the other. Oppenheim positioned the cuts approximately eight feet in distance from the edge of one of the falls. After severing the frozen surface, the artist shoved the remaining loose chunks of ice from between the cuts over the waterfall. *Beebe Lake Ice Cut*, also called *Accumulation Cut*, appeared as an interruption in the surface of the lake.

Oppenheim conceived of *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* for "Earth Art," for the Ithaca, New York winter landscape, and for Beebe Lake specifically. While the ice cut most certainly could not be moved elsewhere and, therefore, remained physically linked to its site, the work also was conceptually site-specific. The artist determined its siting eight feet from the edge of the falls and its length in response to the physical limitations of that unique, manmade body of water. What's more, the artwork remained rooted to its moment in time. The freezing temperatures and solid surface of the lake made Oppenheim's work possible. With the spring thaw just around the corner, *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* was not only immobile, it was also temporary and unable to be preserved. If Cornell had planned the exhibition for another season or the La Jolla Museum of Art had indeed hosted the show, Oppenheim would have had to invent an entirely new work.

As a result of the creation of enduring works by artists like Judd and Serra in the early 1970s, as well as the establishment of the concept of "site-specificity" in scholarship of the late 1970s and 1980s, the term has come to connote permanence, a work forever fixed to its location.[78] In the early stages of its development, however, most artworks maintained temporary relationships to their places. While *Beebe Lake Ice Cut*

---

[78] The changing notion of site-specificity as it relates to permanence will be examined further in the dissertation's Conclusion.

demonstrated site-specific characteristics – remaining both physically connected to and conceptually derived from its place – the work existed for only a short period of time. It is vital to note that a work of art can be both specific to its site and ephemeral. In fact, nearly all initial examples of site-related art may be defined that way. As Sharp noted in his catalogue essay, "Outdoor works such as Oppenheim's ice cut in Beebe Lake present the dynamics of elements in the environment. …The spectator has to experience the different stages of the system if he wants to experience the whole work, which has its own life span."[79] Not only did the work's existence depend upon wintertime, but *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* also changed with time and required a viewing experience in time. Such a work maintained an active and dynamic relationship to time.

For a second project Oppenheim initiated a dialogue between the Museum and its surroundings. In an interview that occurred just months before "Earth Art" opened, the artist identified the moment in 1967 when he first worked with earth as the point at which he also considered place as a factor in art-making. This was the very same moment that he confronted the physical limitations of the gallery for the first time. "At that point I began to think very seriously about place, the physical terrain. And this led me to question the confines of the gallery space."[80] The additional work that Oppenheim created for the exhibition directly addressed all three of these concerns: the land, place, and the gallery. *Gallery Transplants* realized a concept that Oppenheim had been working with over the past couple of years. It even materialized in his submission to

---

[79] Sharp, "Common Aspects of Earthworks," *Earth Art*, n.p.

[80] "Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, Smithson" (December 1968-January 1969), 3.

Dwan's recent earth exhibit, titled *Mt. Cotopaxi Transplant*.[81] For the earlier piece, which consisted of a map and model, the artist presented the idea of superimposing the topography of the Ecuadorian Cotopaxi Volcano onto Smith Center, Kansas, by carving out concentric rings in the Mid-western wheat fields. Oppenheim constructed a variation of this work for "Earth Art." Rather than install a model and documentation within the confines of the gallery, he executed the piece outdoors. Instead of overlaying the characteristics of a distant terrain onto a local one, he actively engaged two nearby sites. The artist "transplanted" the floor plans of the White Museum's galleries into the surrounding land – Oppenheim's chosen, "deserving location" – literally marking out the dimensions of the rooms in the snowy earth.

Oppenheim displaced the floor plans of the gallery spaces from their original contexts. He marked out the plan of the museum's first floor Sculpture Room, which measured fourteen square feet, into the gravel and asphalt surface of the Ithaca Municipal Airport's landing strip. Gallery One, eighteen square feet in size, appeared at the site of an icy, leaf-covered pond in a bird sanctuary. The artist relocated the floor plan of a second floor gallery to a construction site comprised of mineral aggregate located on the University's grounds, and sited Gallery Ten A – fourteen by sixteen feet – in snowy swamp grass near Hanshaw Road.[82] At first, the markings appeared quite simple and

---

[81] See Chapter Two, page 107 for the mention of Oppenheim's work in Dwan's "Earth Works" exhibit. Other works by the artist that also demonstrate this recent practice of transferring physical elements of one place onto another included *Removal Transplant – New York Stock Exchange*, dated February 2, 1969 – just days before the February 11 opening of "Earth Art" – in which Oppenheim relocated heaps of paper debris from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange to the roof of 381 Park Avenue South, an uptown building; and *Gallery Transplant* in which he superimposed the dimensions of a seventy square foot gallery in Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum onto a dirt field in New Jersey.

[82] Information regarding specific galleries and transplanted sites confirmed by labeled maps and photographs found in the "Earth Art," photography folder, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Archives.

standard. However, each of the rectangular forms traced into the surface of the land maintained its distinct shape, with openings indicating the placement of doors, and recesses and projections corresponding to niches in the galleries' wall planes. Just like the rooms in the Museum, no two transplants were the same. Similarly, Oppenheim chose a range of very different outdoor locations as the sites for the displaced floor plans. Dispersed across the Ithaca landscape, the *Gallery Transplants* remained physically distant from both the context of the museum and from one another. Rather than components of a single architectural edifice, they became a network of transported locations.

By simply delineating the museum's floor plans in various places around Ithaca, however, Oppenheim did not alter, interrupt, or displace the actual galleries and their contents in any way. Nor did he implicate what was then on display in those very rooms. Those places still existed in their normal states. "Earth Art" viewers experiencing Morris's piles of dirt and Haacke's *Grass Grows* within the walls of the White Museum witnessed no trace of the *Gallery Transplants*. No sign alluding to Oppenheim's acts hung on the walls; no images appeared in the catalogue. The works did not even turn up on the exhibition map and, so, remained apart from the show and its traffic.[83]

While the *Gallery Transplants* seemed peripheral to the events taking place at the Cornell University museum, that very building remained at the core of Oppenheim's

---

[83] Contemporary reviewers have also neglected to address Oppenheim's *Gallery Transplants*, as exemplified by Suzaan Boettger in her recent discussion of the exhibition. Very few scholars have examined the work, but those who have focus solely on the example situated in the Bird Sanctuary. See Thomas McEvilley, "The Rightness of Wrongness: Modernism and Its Alter-Ego in the Work of Dennis Oppenheim." *Dennis Oppenheim: Selected Works 1967-90 and the Mind Grew Fingers*, ed. Alanna Heiss (New York: The Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 17-20. See also images in Celant, 67-69. Note that the scholars who discussed the bird sanctuary piece designated the floor plan as Gallery 4; however, according to archival records, the gallery transplanted to that pond site was, in fact, Gallery 1. Ibid.

work. The artist elected Cornell's art institution to be the subject for his relocation; notably, he did not choose the university's science lab or the library. The site of origin drove the artist's conception for the piece. Oppenheim then selected areas of land as the destinations for the *Gallery Transplants*, marked them, and in doing so, referred back to the site at the center of the exhibit. He figuratively moved the galleries – the spaces and places intended for the display of artworks – by inscribing their forms on the ground outdoors. Each site's conditions became the focal point, the matter that occupied that "room": snow, swamp grass and gravel as opposed to sculptures and paintings. The precious, contained space reserved for quiet whispers and thoughtful assessments was forced out into the open, dirty, chaotic, living world. While subtly rejecting the art institution, Oppenheim appropriated the local airport runway, a nearby pond, and a construction site as his "galleries." Notably, his outdoor locations lacked specificity. Any number of sites could have been used interchangeably, albeit with slightly different outcomes. What he carved out into them, however, remained entirely specific. In concept, the *Gallery Transplants* revealed to an informed viewer the confining nature of the museum space and the limitations that such an institution imposed on the display of art. The work engaged in social critique.

The artist took a single place with a single function – the White Museum – and theoretically dismembered it, scattering the various galleries throughout Ithaca. Traditionally, the galleries displayed artworks. The physical structures of the individual rooms, each with its own footprint, dimensions, and openings, typically went unnoticed. When "transplanted," the galleries became individual places. The various floor plans traced into the surface of the ground exposed distinct shapes and dimensions. The

Gallery Transplants called attention to the galleries as different sites. Additionally, the works revealed their specific outdoor environments as individual. Oppenheim created a series of separate places, each with a unique form and setting.

Both *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* and *Gallery Transplants* might be described as superficial marks inscribed on the surface of an outdoor site. Both works were ephemeral. The duration of Oppenheim's projects remained dependent upon weather conditions and the function of the individual site. If snow fell after the artist's installation or the temperatures warmed, the works disappeared. If an airplane landed or birds alighted in the center of one of the denoted floor plans, its appearance changed. Despite their lack of permanence, though, both pieces remained firmly rooted to their places.

Robert Smithson

Oppenheim's *Gallery Transplants* shared much in common with Smithson's recent artistic practice and, specifically, with his contribution to "Earth Art." While both artists had incorporated elements of the outdoors into their works previously, for the Cornell show Oppenheim and Smithson each initiated an exchange between the *local* landscape and the gallery space. Whereas Oppenheim made reference to the museum in the surrounding landscape, Smithson alternatively moved the outdoors *into* the institutional space. Smithson was part of the group of artists – Oppenheim included – who traveled to Ithaca in November 1968 to prepare for the upcoming exhibition.[84] During the visit, Smithson determined that he would make use of both a local

[84] In his thorough description of Smithson's piece, Robert Hobbs suggested that the artist visited the Cornell campus in October 1968; however, as noted previously, a letter from Carter to Sharp dated November 6, 1968, included plane tickets for the group's upcoming travel. I have not found any indication that Smithson also went to Ithaca the month before in either records from the exhibition or the Smithson-Holt Papers. Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: Sculpture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981), 132.

underground mine operated by the Cayuga Rock Salt Company, located less than ten miles north of the Cornell campus, and a gallery in the White Museum. He planned to contribute to the show a variation on his site/non-site works, a practice he first began the previous year that entailed moving natural materials from an outdoor, fringe site into the space of a gallery. The basic concept involved marking the salt mine as Site and then transporting rock salt crystals, as Non-site, into the museum, just as he had done with New Jersey limestone for Dwan's "Earth Works" show four months earlier.

However, Smithson's submission to "Earth Art" differed from *A Nonsite (Franklin, N.J.)* in several ways. First, the artist did not label the work according to the system that he had developed the preceding year. Typically, Smithson's titles for this series of works consisted of the term "Non-site," coupled with the location of the material's origin.[85] Despite similarities with the 1968 non-sites, this work included multiple components in addition to site and non-site and, so, acquired the umbrella term "project."[86] *Cayuga Salt Mine Project* comprised a Site, a Non-site, a trail connecting the two, a Sub-Site, a Sub-Non-site, and documentation.[87] While this work garnered the most attention in the exhibition catalogue with a total of six pictures on four pages, only the first three parts were represented.

---

[85] Works from 1968 included *A Nonsite, Pine Barrens, New Jersey*; *A Nonsite, Franklin, New Jersey*; *Nonsite "Line of Wreckage," Bayonne, New Jersey*; *Nonsite (Palisades, Edgewater, New Jersey)*; and *Mono Lake Nonsite*, amongst others. Uniquely, Smithson named the Cornell piece *Cayuga Salt Mine Project*.

[86] In an interview with Norvell on June 20, 1969 – a few months after "Earth Art" – Smithson divided his recent practice into three categories: the non-sites, the mirror displacements, and earth maps or material maps of nonexistent sites. The *Cayuga Salt Mine Project*, though, seems to bridge the first two classifications. It was not until the Yucatan trip that Smithson created a work that could be considered solely a mirror displacement piece. Norvell, "Robert Smithson: June 20, 1969," 128.

[87] The terms "Sub-Site" and "Sub-Non-site" are drawn from Hobbs' description of the work; they are included as part of the title he gives. Hobbs, 132.

The artist incorporated a material that he had not previously used in his non-sites into all elements of this work – mirrors.[88] The reflective glass suggested, metaphorically, the ongoing dialogue between Site and Non-site, each of which contained elements that referred back to the other. During the symposium held just prior to the "Earth Art" installation, Smithson explained what the Site component of his work would entail: "I'll arrange these mirrors in various configurations, photograph them, and then bring them back to the interior along with rock salt of various grades. As you can see, the interior of the Museum somehow mirrors the site and I'm actually going to use mirrors. So it's like a mirror situation with actual mirrors in it."[89] For *Cayuga Salt Mine Project*, the artist positioned and re-positioned eight mirrors throughout the tunnels of the mine and amongst the piles of rock salt there, captured pictures of the situations, and then transported all of the materials back to the gallery.

Mirrors possessed a dualistic nature. While they remained tangible, solid, sharp-edged objects, mirrors maintained the ability to dissipate before one's eyes, reflecting – and therefore merging with – their surroundings. They constructed illusions by juxtaposing disparate parts of an environment, for instance the ground and the reflected ceiling of the mine. Describing the significance of the mirrors for this work, Smithson stated: "The mirror is a displacement, as an abstraction absorbing, reflecting the site in a

---

[88] While Smithson had used mirrors in works as early as 1964, he had not employed the material in any of his previous Non-sites. The artist incorporated mirrors into *Red Sandstone Corner Piece* in late 1968 and then continuously throughout 1969 in works like *Mirror Wedge (Mirror Span), Montclair, New Jersey*; *Rocks and Mirror Square II*; *Mirror and Shell*; *Mirror Shore, Sanibel Island, Florida*; and ultimately, *Mirror Displacements* of "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan." For more on Smithson and his use of mirrors, see Hobbs, 59-64, 130-140, 151-154.

[89] "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1243. Excerpts of this quotation also published in "The Symposium," *Earth Art*, n.p.

very physical way. It's an addition to the site."[90] In the mine, each glass plane covered the particular place where Smithson positioned it and at once replaced that area with the reflected image of another nearby part of the mine. The mirrors caused both a visual interruption and a sense of continuity since the underground terrain consisted of a homogenous mix of dirt, rocks, and salt.[91] The reflected images did not differ too much in appearance from the areas that lay underneath the objects themselves. While the mirrors deflected attention away from their very place, they simultaneously marked it and revealed the unique characteristics of the Cayuga mine. Smithson performed a much more active engagement with this Site as compared with his treatment of Franklin, Bayonne, and Edgewater, New Jersey, where he imposed nothing on the landscapes and simply gathered material for the Non-sites.

The *Mirror Displacements*, as Smithson named them, however, were only momentary. The artist explained, "I don't leave the mirrors there. I pick them up."[92] He photographed the temporary installations before reconfiguring them and ultimately displayed the pictures in the museum alongside geological maps and the Non-site. The *Displacements* designated Smithson's Site. The pictures, in turn, captured the brief

---

[90] "Fragments of a Conversation" (1969), ed. William C. Lipke. In Jack Flam, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 189-190.

[91] Smithson's use of mirrors in the mine recalls Morris's inclusion of the material in his 1968 installation *Threadwaste*. Smithson invoked Anton Ehrenzweig's notion of scattering in a discussion of *Cayuga Salt Mine Project* he had with Lipke, just as Morris had done in "Notes on Sculpture, Part 4: Beyond Objects" *Artforum* (April 1969): 50-54. Smithson stated, "There's a sort of rhythm between containment and scattering. It's a fundamental process that Anton Ehrenzweig has gone into." Smithson's concerns, though, deviated from Morris's interest in anti-form. He went on to say, "I'm not all that interested in the problems of form and anti-form, but in limits and how these limits destroy themselves and disappear." Ibid, 189-191. See also Norvell's interview with Smithson for another contemporary instance in which the artist referenced Ehrenzweig. Norvell, "Robert Smithson: June 20, 1969," 131. For a discussion of the mirrors and their use in the mine, see Gary Shapiro, *Earthwards: Robert Smithson and Art after Babel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995) 94-95.

[92] "Fragments of a Conversation" (1969), in Flam, 190.

moment in time before Smithson repositioned his materials. As he described in an interview several months later, "part of the idea of the photograph is to pick out instances or moments in time and present those along with the other deposits."[93]

The artist transported "more than a ton of material" from the mine to his chosen gallery in the Cornell Museum.[94] He fashioned nine rather equal piles of rock salt along the length of the room just a short distance from the wall, each approximately one foot tall at its highest point and four feet in diameter.[95] Each pair of heaps supported one square mirror, positioned horizontally midway up the piles, facing upwards. The earthen material, then, alongside any documentation, was not the only element connecting the gallery work to its source. The mirrors situated in the museum also referred back to Smithson's Site and the time he spent there. The artist displayed two additional arrangements of salt and mirrors at the center of the gallery. Towards one end, he constructed *Closed Mirror Square*, a large mound of salt that measured nine feet square by twenty-two inches tall with a large mirror buried just beneath its surface. The edges of the glass remained covered, but its center was exposed. Again, the reflective surface pointed toward the ceiling. *Rock Salt and Mirror Square* sat at the other end of the gallery. Smithson stood four rectangular mirrors, each six and a half feet by ten inches, up on their long edge to form a square. Low piles of salt placed around all four sides on both the inside and outside stabilized the glass. A fourth composition of mirrors and rock salt rested in one of the gallery's corners. A single large mirror leaned up against one

---

[93] Norvell, "Robert Smithson: June 20, 1969," 129.

[94] "The Exhibition: Robert Smithson," *Earth Art*, n.p. Leavitt also indicated the amount of material that Smithson transported in a general letter he sent out along with the press release publicizing the exhibition. "Earth Art," folder 2, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Archives, Cornell University.

[95] Measurements approximated from installation photographs.

wall; at its foot, a pile of earthen matter partially covered the reflective glass and partly sat on the floor. Additionally, the artist installed one gallery piece without mirrors. Instead, more than a dozen photographs appeared scattered atop a single low heap of salt, emanating from a corner of the room.[96] Even without the reflective glass as a component, *Rock Salt Corner Piece with Photographs* mirrored the mine site.

According to Smithson, the Non-site reminded the viewer of the limitations of the gallery and her disconnection from the Site: "What you're really confronted with in the non-site is the absence of a site."[97] In the space of the museum, surrounded by materials taken from the mine, the viewer imagined a place that remained a distance away. Completing the gallery display, however, photographs and maps that realized the Site lined the walls. The artist considered the documentation to be "a trace of the site. It's a way of focusing on the site."[98] Nonetheless, despite the nearness of the two locales, it

---

[96] According to Hobbs, Smithson's original conception for the entire work involved photographs in lieu of mirrors. The artist intended to photograph the interior of the mine and then arrange the resulting pictures throughout the salt rocks. He would then photograph the mine again. This second series of photographs would be transferred back to the gallery along with salt rock. Preparatory drawings by the artist, dated 1968, corroborate this plan. *Rock Salt Corner Piece with Photographs* seems to be a remnant of that conception. However, I have not found any documentation describing this work, the photographs in it, or its place amongst the other components of the Non-site, aside from a single image published in Hobbs' account that crops its context from view. I have concluded that the piece was displayed in the gallery, tucked away in an interior corner that is not seen in full in any installation photos. A hint of a pile of salt appears in one of the installation photographs. It remains unclear what exactly the photographs pictured; however, it seems that they included images of the Site with mirrors installed. Hobbs, 132-34.

Photographs of the gallery installation reveal four works that involve mirrors and salt and one of salt and photographs. However, in an affidavit signed by Smithson's wife, Nancy Holt, in 1980, she discussed "five untitled rock salt and mirror sculptures by Robert Smithson, originally constructed at Cornell U. for the "Earth Art" exhibition at the Andrew Dickson White Museum, 1969." No close description of the works, though, was included. "Earth Art," folder 7, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Archives. In his analysis of the project, Hobbs did not offer details of the individual works. Hobbs, 132-137.

[97] Norvell, "Robert Smithson: June 20, 1969," 126-127. Smithson explained this differently in the symposium: "Well in my case, the piece is there in the Museum, abstract and it's there to look at, but you are thrown off it. You are sort of spun out to the fringes of the site." "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1248.

[98] Norvell, "Robert Smithson: June 20, 1969," 128.

remained impossible for the viewer to perceive both the place referenced – the Site – and the works before her at the same time.

In contrast to *A Nonsite (Franklin, New Jersey)* and other such works of the previous year, *Cayuga Salt Mine Project* did not include a built structure containing material from the Site. Smithson reversed this configuration. The salt removed from the Cayuga mine buttressed the reflective glass that the artist paired with it. "The material becomes the container," Smithson explained. "In other non-sites, the container was rigid, the material amorphous. In this case, the container is amorphous, the mirror is the rigid thing."[99] Since Smithson did not construct a shaped bin to hold the material, there was no form to inscribe over a site map that might be used to join a specific collection of salt to a particular position in the mine. In another deviation from the earlier Non-site, Smithson made no direct link between each pile of salt deposited in the gallery and the precise location within the mine from which he had collected it. The relationship between site and non-site in the "Earth Art" piece remained much looser than in the previous works.

Smithson further complicated this project by multiplying its constituent parts. Intensifying the degree of doubling already present in the work, he created a Sub-Site and a Sub-Non-site. The Sub-Site, a counterpart to the half-mile underground mine, paradoxically sat above ground at the neighboring Cayuga Crushed Rock Company's stone quarry. There, Smithson installed mirrors and took pictures once again. The artist transported rocks from the Sub-Site into the Museum's basement, where he piled them up so that they supported a mirror measuring two square feet, just as he had done with rock

---

[99] "Fragments of a Conversation" (1969), in Flam, 190. See also Hobbs, 132. Junker made this observation in his review: "Now he lets his material be its own container." Junker, 101.

salt in the gallery upstairs. This became the Sub-Non-site. Notably, no reference to the *Cayuga Salt Mine Project*'s sub-components appeared in the exhibition catalogue. Smithson made no mention of them in the symposium. It is likely that few people viewed – or were even aware of – either one. The Sub-Site and Sub-Non-site were supplementary aspects of the work, deemed comparable to the other "additional pieces" not considered part of the exhibition, such as Haacke's *Spray of Ithaca Falls* and Oppenheim's *Gallery Transplants*.[100] Nonetheless, they further expanded and complicated Smithson's system. Ultimately, each of the four parts shared elements with and referred back to the others.

Still another feature of the *Cayuga Salt Mine Project* distinguished it from Smithson's earlier site/non-site practice. The artist conceived of yet one last element for this work. In addition to the *Mirror Displacements*, which marked out the Ithaca salt mine as a Site, and the compositions of rock salt and mirrors situated in the gallery, which referred back to their origin and drew a comparison between the mine and gallery as two distinct places, Smithson positioned mirrors along the trail between the Cayuga Rock Salt Company and the Cornell museum.

For *A Nonsite (Franklin, New Jersey)*, the artist included a description that helped to make the far-off Site more vivid to a beholder, and he invited the viewer to see the Site for herself, stating "Tours to sites are possible."[101] Most likely, though, the average

---

[100] In his Foreword to the catalogue, Leavitt discussed the Sub-Site and Sub-Non-site in the context of the additional works. No images of Smithson's Sub-Site and Sub-Non-site appeared in the catalogue. *Earth Art*, n.p.

[101] "Earth Works" exhibition checklist, Dwan Gallery Archives. In the "Earth Art" symposium, Smithson suggested that viewers could visit *Cayuga Salt Mine Project's* Site, too. "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, D.C., reel 3833, frame 1248. In an interview a few months later, however, the artist recognized that people did not actually travel to his sites and acknowledged that even if they did, the notion of site and nonsite would still be difficult to understand. The interviewer asked whether it was important

gallery-goer never traveled the distance of more than fifty miles from West 57th Street where the Non-site remained on view to Franklin, New Jersey. Despite the fact that Smithson's words and maps brought his Site to life, the disparity between the white space of Dwan Gallery and the surrounds of Franklin Furnace Mines remained so great that the gap, therefore, seemed restrictive.[102] A Manhattan gallery-goer would have difficulty imagining herself in that New Jersey landscape, and the thought of actually traveling there would likely not occur to her. The artist acknowledged this intangible distance between site and non-site when describing the *Cayuga Salt Mine Project*: "The route to the site is very indeterminate. It's important because it's an abyss between the abstraction and the site: a kind of oblivion. You could go there on a highway, but a highway to the site is really an abstraction because you don't really have contact with the earth."[103] In this statement, Smithson used the word "abstraction" to indicate two different meanings. With the first use, he referenced the Non-site. With the second, however, he suggested that the lack of a concrete connection with the land between site and non-site – as a result of traveling by car on a manmade road – gave rise to the indefinable expanse between the two. He continued: "A trail is more of a physical

---

for viewers to go to see the sites, and Smithson responded, "Yeah, but that's very unlikely – that they will. It's very strange because I always have people telling me how interested they are in the sites, and yet they never go there. A few people have. And, like most of them have the experience but miss the meaning. So that there's no way of grasping the site." Norvell, "Robert Smithson: June 20, 1969," 129. Smithson explained that even those who traveled to a site did not necessarily comprehend the meaning of the site and, therefore, the relationship between site and non-site. It would seem necessary that a viewer attempt to consider both components – site and non-site – at once in order to fully understand the relationship between the two; however, when immersed in one environment, it would be difficult to do so.

[102] The physical distance between some of Smithson's other selected sites – such as Bayonne, New Jersey and Edgewater, New Jersey – and their non-sites positioned in the Dwan Gallery, however, was only about eleven miles, much closer to the approximately ten-mile expanse between the Cayuga Rock Salt Mine and the Andrew Dickson White Museum. Even so, according to Smithson, viewers did not visit those sites. Norvell, "Robert Smithson: June 20, 1969," 129.

[103] "Fragments of a Conversation" (1969), in Flam, 189-190.

thing. I'll designate points on a line and stabilize the chaos between the two points. Like stepping stones. …Oblivion to me is a state when you're not conscious of the time or space you are in. You're oblivious to its limitations. Place without meaning, a kind of absent or pointless vanishing point."[104] In order to clarify the dialectic relationship between site and non-site, avoid "oblivion," and establish a place that retained meaning, Smithson marked a physical path between the Cayuga Rock Salt Company and the Andrew Dickson White Museum. Notably, the artist avoided a manmade highway and instead chose to establish an unmarked route. He used a United States Geological Survey map to designate equally spaced points along the trail. At each location, the artist positioned one of eight mirrors and captured a photograph. Images of *A Mirror Trail with Mirror Displacements from the White Art Museum to the Cayuga Salt Works* hung on the gallery walls. By marking the path, Smithson rejected the possibility that it be defined as indistinct or abstract and instead revealed it as its own place.

Consistent with the artist's working methodology, however, contradictions remained. While he demonstrated a desire for clarity and a material way of linking the Site with the Non-site, Smithson employed reflective glass – an elusive and evasive substance – to mark the route. Placed outside in the snow, the mirrors transported sunlight, the sky, and trees down to the ground. Despite their concrete, unchanging form, the objects projected unstable images that transformed as the photographer moved around them. The reflective nature of mirrors seemed to dislocate rather than fix place.

Smithson's work complicates a strict notion of site-specificity. The site/non-site projects certainly define place. By physically marking his chosen locales and providing

---

[104] Ibid.

supplementary materials that help to define them for the viewer, the artist presents the distant mines as individual sites. By positioning limestone and rock salt inside the gallery, he reveals the institution's limitations and calls attention to the gallery as a unique place. At the same time, however, the dialectical relationship between the component parts, continuously referring back and forth to one another, disrupts any clear notion of a stable site and, in fact, facilitates a perceptual blurring and invites "oblivion."

In comparing the works produced for "Earth Art" to those created for the Windham College campus the previous year, it appears that the Cornell projects maintained more direct and integral relationships with their sites. In Putney, Vermont, Weiner had constructed a twine grid in a field; Andre had connected the college grounds to the adjacent woods with a line of hay bales; and Barry had strung cords between campus buildings. Each of these works revealed its place as distinct. However, none of the artists had conceived of his work specifically for its individual location. Upon arriving for the installation, the Windham artists made changes to their plans: one adjusted his materials, another his form, and the third his chosen location. The "Earth Art" artists who altered their initial plans for individual works did so to engage more directly with the selected site and the winter conditions, as we witnessed with Oppenheim's *Beebe Lake Ice Cut*. Those who made "additional works" not considered a part of the exhibition devised them on-site, in response to the specific place and situation.

Framing "Earth Art": A Shared Set of Terms

In their catalogue and symposium, the organizers of "Earth Art" recounted the origins of the show and its unifying principles. Initially, Sharp first proposed it as one of

a series of four exhibitions devoted to the classical elements. Of those – air, earth, fire, and water – "earth" was the only element later hailed by scholars as an art movement.[105] In 1969, however, Sharp insisted that "earth art" did not exist and that the artists who participated in the exhibition did not represent a formulated group or a single artistic direction.[106] Each project presented in the exhibition was entirely individual. The range of artistic practices represented ought not to be categorized under one title. Even with the common use of earth, each artist maintained a different reason for adopting the material and a very distinct practice.[107]

While the participating artists all used earth as medium, the exhibition organizers noticed other concerns that bound the group and their counterparts who might have exhibited in Sharp's "Air Art" or the other anticipated shows. Sharp, Leavitt and Lipke each acknowledged the tendency of artists to expand their practices beyond the making of discrete objects and to incorporate non-art materials and approaches into their work. In his catalogue essay, Sharp classified the work of the "Earth Art" group among the recent

---

[105] As suggested by such studies as Boettger, *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties*; John Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape* (New York and London: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1984); Alan Sonfist, *Art in the Land: A Critical Anthology of Environmental Art* (New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc., 1983); and Gilles Tiberghien, *Land Art* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).

[106] "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1240. He reiterated this in his catalogue essay, published the following year. "Sources and Inspiration of Earthworks," *Earth Art*, n.p. Leavitt concurred and wrote as much in his introduction. "Foreword," *Earth Art*, n.p. The artists agreed as well, of course. For similar assertions to this effect see Jenney, "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1257, and Junker, in *Newsweek*, 101.

[107] According to Haacke, he used earth because "it is the material in which growth takes place." Jenney claimed that he chose to use the medium because of its convenience. Earth was inexpensive and accessible. Heizer, who participated in the symposium prior to withdrawing his work from the show, stated that he preferred the "simplicity" of earth as material. "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frames 1264, 1256, and 1256 respectively.

anti-form practices of Morris and the artists who exhibited in "9 at Leo Castelli."[108] As the Director of the White Museum, Leavitt focused on the repercussions of this trend for art museums. Lipke argued the need for a new analytical model to assess recent artistic practices and ultimately settled on Burnham's systems esthetics.

For Sharp, the "Earth" artists were simply participating in the current practice of utilizing a broad range of non-art materials in a way that privileged artistic process and the unique physical properties of the material.[109] The "variety of configurations" produced for "Earth Art" was just a sampling of the great range of works artists were creating at the time, using such matter as air, charcoal, dust, felt, fire, grease, hay, moss, steam, tar, and water.[110] Works that emphasized the physical nature of their unusual materials – like a pile of felt or a room filled with steam – typically related directly to their placement. According to Sharp, "A natural consequence of the features singled out above is the intimate relation which the work bears to its site. Many pieces are improvised in situ."[111] The curator recognized that when an artist allowed a material to act in accordance with its own nature, its context became implicated and acquired meaning. Such a work could not be pried from its position without being altered or destroyed. Morris's mounds of earth, anthracite, and asbestos were not objects to be moved; rather, they remained engaged with the floor, walls, and invisible grid that

---

[108] Sharp even referenced that exhibition in the first page of his catalogue essay, along with "When Attitudes Become Form," "Square Tags in Round Holes," and "Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials," as examples of the new art. "Notes Toward an Understanding of Earth Art," *Earth Art*, n.p.

[109] The importance of artistic process for the works in the show is underscored by the fact that films of the artists installing their works ran at 3:30pm each afternoon while the exhibition was on display. Marcham, 11.

[110] Sharp, "Notes Toward an Understanding of Earth Art," *Earth Art*, n.p.

[111] Ibid.

surrounded them. The same might be said of Smithson's heaps of salt and Haacke's pile of dirt, peat, and seed. Furthermore, because of its proximity to windows in his chosen gallery, *Grass Grows* grew, indicating its dependency on that particular place. Sharp's observation applied to other works besides the collections of materials amassed on the floor. Oppenheim's act of cutting into the frozen lake involved a non-art medium and a treatment that emphasized the artist's process and the material's physical character. The resulting form remained fixed to its site. Rather than participating in any single movement, the group of artists who displayed works in Ithaca explored a shared set of terms fundamental to the development of site-specificity: materiality, context, place, and time.

In his contribution to the "Earth Art" catalogue, Leavitt demonstrated a concern for how this new art would impact museums. With artists no longer restricted to creating discrete objects destined for placement on pedestals and instead developing works that maintained close relationships with their sites, exhibition practices would need to change:

> If this tendency prevails, it could ultimately transform the entire structure of the art world. Museums wishing to support the efforts of contemporary artists may have to think increasingly in terms of backing projects rather than acquiring art objects or holding conventional exhibitions. …Some museums are beginning to sponsor temporary and permanent environmental projects far removed from the confines of the museum building. It appears likely that, in the future, any museum wishing to contribute seriously to the advancement of contemporary art will have to devote part of its resources to extramural projects like those in this

> exhibition. It is even conceivable that a new kind of museum, a true "museum without walls," could come into being.[112]

Here, Leavitt evoked André Malraux's "museum without walls," a concept that opposed the museum's decontexualization and arbitrary organization of artworks.[113] Instead, Malraux supported the examination of works in photographic form, thereby allowing the viewer access to the entire world of art as well as offering her the ability to make her own connections among works. Notably, this argument insisted on the importance of an artwork's context. Malraux offered the example of a work of Gothic sculpture that ought to exist in relation to the cathedral for which it was created rather than be removed to a museum gallery and juxtaposed to other kinds of artworks from its time period.[114] Recent site-related works, where context remained an integral component, especially resisted museum exhibition and collection as Leavitt recognized. Five years after the "Earth Art" exhibition, William Rubin, the Director of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, acknowledged the incompatible nature of recent earthworks and conceptual art and the conventional museum: "the museum concept is not infinitely expandable."[115] Rubin concluded that such works could only be represented in museum collections in the form of films and photographs. He did not offer a solution to this predicament other than to claim that the museum was not adaptable to all art forms.

---

[112] Leavitt, "Foreword," *Earth Art*, n.p.

[113] Andre Malraux, "Museum Without Walls," *The Voices of Silence*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953), 13-131.

[114] Ibid, 14.

[115] "Talking with William Rubin: 'The Museum Concept is Not Infinitely Expandable.'" *Artforum* 13:2 (October 1974): 51-57. In the interview, Rubin made no mention of the term "site-specific."

On display in the first museum exhibition dedicated to earth art, Haacke's *Grass Grows*, Oppenheim's *Gallery Transplants*, and Smithson's *Cayuga Salt Mine Project* all called attention to the limitations of the institution and the great divide between an immaculate gallery space and the world outside its doors. *Grass Grows* remained dependent upon its proximity to natural light, a factor not at all inherent to the White Museum or any other such institution. The *Gallery Transplants* communicated a more direct statement about the shortcomings of the museum space for the display of current art. Oppenheim transferred the floor plans of the various galleries into Ithaca's surroundings, framing the airport runway, bird sanctuary pond, and campus construction site as artistic venues. While Oppenheim transformed the local geography into sites of display, Smithson transported Ithaca-mined minerals into the Cornell museum. Like his earlier non-sites, the *Cayuga Salt Mine Project*, called attention to the gallery itself as a specific kind of place, one vastly incongruous with the sites that he explored. In the "Earth Art" symposium, Smithson, like Leavitt, demanded a rethinking of the relationship between art and the museum:

> I think that's a part of the sad thing – that most museum people aren't conscious of their museum, and they just take it for granted that artists are working in some garret and turning out objects. But I think they have to think about the limits of their spaces and how to extend them beyond the walls of confinement. I think there is really no discrepancy between the indoors and the outdoors once the dialectic is clear between the two places.[116]

[116] "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1252.

For Smithson, as long as artist, museum-worker, and viewer acknowledged the individuality and restrictions of each place, any locale could become an open site for art.

The Persistence of Time and Space

In the months that followed the Cornell exhibition, the terms *space* and *time* – two key concepts for site-specificity as I have shown – pervaded the American art scene, in criticism and debate, as well as in the form of the subject of exhibitions.[117] On March 17, 1969, Seth Seigelaub moderated a conversation amongst a group of artists entitled "Time: A Panel Discussion."[118] The independent curator and champion of conceptual art opened the dialogue by comparing the pair of terms: "You can break down the involvement of art into two very specific areas – space and time. Art as we know it at the moment deals primarily with space and its ramifications – line, composition – formal considerations in a painting or a sculpture."[119] Notably, he referred to space as a material component of art, like line, contour, color, or medium. In his allusion to the traditional mediums of painting and sculpture, however, he seemed to neglect recent works like those exhibited in the two shows that he himself helped to organize the previous year at Bradford Junior College and Windham College, works largely engaged with space and place. As for time, Siegelaub suggested that contemporary artists were just beginning to consider it in

---

[117] This was not the first instance in which artists considered time as an artistic concern. Morris insisted on the importance of time for his minimalist work. Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part 2," 24. Michael Fried, too, pinpointed the relevance of time for the experience of minimalist, or "literalist," art. Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* 5 (June 1967): 12-23.

[118] The discussion was part of a series called "Issues in Art," held at the New York Shakespeare Festival Theater for the benefit of the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. Lucy Lippard edited the transcript for publication in the November 1969 issue of *Art International*, and, so, the full manuscript – which is the source of all presently quoted material – can be found in the Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Box 32, "Other Transcripts" file, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C. Excerpts appear in Lippard, 81-84.

[119] "Time: A Panel Discussion," 1.

their artistic practices. He designated two different kinds of works involving time: those created for a specific, limited time period and ephemeral pieces intended to disappear over time.[120] Both Sandback's installations and the works on view in "Earth Art" exemplified what Seigelaub was describing. "Five Situations," for instance, represents an artwork conceived with a specific duration in mind, while *Grass Grows* and *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* were intentionally short-lived pieces. The artists who took part in Siegelaub's panel – Carl Andre, Michael Cain, Douglas Huebler, and Ian Wilson – had very different interests. Consequently, the conversation remained quite disjointed and the ways in which the artists spoke of time deviated from one another. Cain referenced the flow of time; Huebler discussed linear time as a medium capable of manipulation; and Andre advocated for an art outside of time, a "still and serene" art that provided a respite from daily life.[121] Despite their different interests, most seemed concerned with the notion of real-time. The occurrence of the panel discussion confirmed that time, as an issue for artists to contend with, was of interest to that community at the moment and was certainly associated with space.

Seven and a half months later, Siegelaub mediated another public conversation among artists, this one titled "Art Without Space," broadcast on New York radio.[122] Four

---

[120] Ibid.

[121] At first Andre seemed intent on recruiting artists to join the Art Workers' Coalition: "Every artist moans about the way he's treated, and if we moan together maybe some of the noise will be heard. That's the time I feel most strongly right now." Later, when he focused on the subject at hand, he made the observation, "I think there is a generally held view of space as a property of matter… And time is related to space in an inseparable way." Ibid, 2, 6 and 10. Huebler, a conceptual artist, explained his interest in confusing sequential, linear time in his work. Ibid, 10. Cain represented Pulsa, a collaborative group of artists who worked with electronic technology and multi-sensory perception. He described "manipulating time as a material" in Pulsa's artwork. Ibid, 3 and 9.

[122] Excerpts from this symposium appear in Lippard, 127-133. The full manuscript, from which I have taken all quotes, is available in the Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Box 30, File "Notes and Writings – Books – Six Years."

conceptual artists participated: Barry, Huebler, Weiner and Joseph Kosuth. At the start of the recording an anonymous speaker explained the event's title: "The first in this series of programs which attempts to embrace the newest trends in art deals with art without space, which until now has been referred to as conceptual art."[123] Significantly, in selecting the headline, those responsible for the symposium emphasized the distinctive relationship the art had to space rather than identifying it merely as conceptual. In doing so, Siegelaub and the radio executives defined the work by its physicality, or lack thereof. They identified a work's relationship to space as a defining feature of art at this time.

The moderator described the artists' work: "What we will be concerning ourselves with is the nature of the art whose primary existence in the world does not relate to space, not to its exhibition in space, not to its imposing things on the walls."[124] This introduction seems at first to contradict my earlier analysis of Barry and Weiner's works as they were exhibited at Bradford and Windham Colleges in 1968. Barry's tiny paintings hung at distances apart on the walls of the Laura Knott Gallery certainly involved – and revealed – the space surrounding them. They focused the viewer's attention on the wall area in between them rather than on the objects themselves. Weiner's *Removal Paintings*, with a single corner cut away, similarly pointed to the material presence of the encroaching space. In the Windham exhibition that followed, Weiner's oversized twine grid, *Staples, Stakes, Turf, Twine*, revealed its place – a field between campus buildings where students played ball. Contrary to Siegelaub's

---

[123] "Art Without Space," 1. Other installments included "Cinematography and the New Sculpture," moderated by Willoughby Sharp; "Art of the City"; and finally "The Decentralization of Art," with Lucy Lippard.

[124] Ibid, 2.

description, these works involved physical materials – objects, if you will – that called attention to the surrounding space.

Why was he now denying the significance of space? The answer is complex. First, the artistic practices of Barry and Weiner had changed over the course of the year, and their recent work, along with Huebler and Kosuth's, now conformed to Seigelaub's description in the "Art Without Space" symposium.[125] While the artists agreed that all experience involves space, Barry, Huebler, and Kosuth consented to the moderator's position. Barry concluded that the kind of space implicated in his work was different from that occupied by traditional objects.[126] Huebler affirmed that his work did not at all involve space: "There doesn't have to be a museum, gallery, or anything else for what I do, because the environment does not affect what I do and it is not affected by what I have done."[127] Kosuth also insisted that space had no place in his work.[128] Unlike his peers, Weiner, however, would not concede that space was wholly irrelevant: "I disagree wholeheartedly that there could ever be an art without space per se. Anything that exists has a certain space around it; even an idea exists with a certain space."[129] Although these artists favored the communication of an idea in their works, a physical and spatial component persisted. Nonetheless, as a promoter of the newly developing

---

[125] Weiner recalled that it was because of *Staples, Stakes, Turf, Twine* that he stopped constructing objects and instead embraced language. See Chapter Two, page 94, footnote 35.

[126] "Art Without Space," 3-4.

[127] Ibid, 3.

[128] Ibid, 4.

[129] Ibid, 2, 6.

conceptualism, Siegelaub maintained a stake in its success.[130] This serves as the second reason that the discussion moderator publicly rejected the role of space in current art. Had Siegelaub attributed any importance to space, he would have acknowledged the physical artifact that accompanied much conceptual art and therefore undermined the notion that the idea alone was sufficient. It remained essential for the moderator to privilege concept over all else. By renouncing the value of space for the new art, he reinforced the groundbreaking, anti-object character of conceptual art.

The turn away from space at this time seems at first to emerge in opposition to the movement toward site-specificity. Despite a complex relationship between conceptual and site-specific art, it is not necessary to consider them at odds with one another. Rather, both resulted from a similar approach to art making in the late 1960s in which the art object was no longer privileged. Both possessed an ephemeral nature and often existed solely in the form of documentation. The two simply sat at different points on a continuum demonstrating the amounts of concept versus physical matter involved in an artistic practice; conceptual art and site-specific art each involved some degree of both.[131] In *Grass Grows*, Haacke called attention to growth as a real-time system. The materials of soil, peat, and rye seeds were necessary components in that they made the concept visible to the spectator. However, Haacke did not emphasize the form.[132] He favored the idea – in this case, a system: "I believe we are still carrying this heavy burden of visual

---

[130] For Siegelaub's role in the advancement of conceptual art, see Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2003).

[131] In an article about current trends in art, Harold Rosenberg acknowledged the significance of concept for the earthworkers: "[their] aim is not an eye-delighting prospect but the realization of a concept." "The Art World: Art and Words," *The New Yorker* (March 29, 1969): 114.

[132] See page 161, footnote 70 for Haacke's statement in the "Earth Art Symposium" in which he insisted that the work's form held no importance for him.

art. I believe art is not so much concerned with the looks. It is much more concerned with the concepts with which something is done, and what you see is just a vehicle for this concept."[133] While Haacke certainly shared the conceptualists' interest in communicating an idea, *Grass Grows* also demonstrated an engagement with both its surrounding space and its chosen place. Oppenheim realized "ideas" in his *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* and *Gallery Transplants*, two works certainly tied to their locations. Smithson emphasized equally the material and conceptual components of his practice in *Cayuga Salt Mine Project*. The work relied on a viewer's understanding that the rock salt displayed before her eyes reflected its place of origin miles away, an inaccessible and theoretical site to a viewer standing in the gallery. As he explained to an audience of Cornell students and faculty,

> In my own work, you are confronted not only with an abstraction, but also with the physicality of here and now, and these two things interact in a dialectical method and it's what I call a dialectic of place. It's like the art in a sense is a mirror and what is going on out there is a reflection. There is always a correspondence. The reflection might be the mind or the mirror might be the matter. But you always have these two things – they are always mixed. …So that dialectic can be thought of that way; as a bi-polar back and forth rhythm between mind and matter. You can't say it's all earth and you can't say it's all concept. It's both.[134]

---

[133] "Earth Art Symposium," Smithson-Holt Papers, reel 3833, frame 1263. Additionally, the artist commented that anybody could have planted the seeds; the act carried no authorial significance. As with conceptual art, anyone could have been the "artist." Growth as a phenomenon was Haacke's sole concern here.

[134] Ibid, reel 3833, frames 1267-1268.

Smithson's *Cayuga Salt Mine Project* presented an actual tangible place and the abstraction of it. However, the Site, which existed in the physical world, remained at a distance and therefore existed theoretically to the viewer, while the Non-site, or abstraction, was physically present in the gallery space. Each component involved both matter and concept.

Certainly Siegelaub's advocacy for an "art without space" seems initially to conflict with our narrative of site-specificity. Despite his insistence that conceptual art necessarily maintained no relation to its surroundings, its emergence at this time – simultaneous to that of art practices very much concerned with space, place, and context – demonstrates shared concerns among a variety of artistic approaches in the late 1960s. In fact, site-specific art and conceptual art share a set of terms in common. Just as the development of site-specificity has proven a complicated narrative, so too is its relationship with other concurrent practices.

Regardless of Siegelaub's assessment, space remained at the forefront of artists' minds in 1969 and, consequently, sparked the attention of exhibition organizers. Further confirmation of the term's pervasiveness came in December in the form of a show, titled "Spaces," curated by Jennifer Licht for The Museum of Modern Art. The six participants represented a wide range of practices.[135] They were given their own rooms to display their works, which ultimately might best be described as installations. Rather than offering extant gallery spaces, though, the Museum constructed rooms according to the artists' needs. The artists tailored their works to very particular situations. In her introductory essay to the catalogue, Licht addressed a transformation in the meaning of

---

[135] The artists involved included Michael Asher, Larry Bell, Dan Flavin, Robert Morris, the collaborative group Pulsa, and Franz Erhard Walther.

space for artists and characterized its current usage as "material," before she went on to describe the individual submissions:

> In the past, space was merely an attribute of a work of art, rendered by illusionistic conventions in painting or by displacement of volume in sculpture, and the space that separated viewer and object was ignored as just distance. This invisible dimension is now being considered as an active ingredient… to be shaped and characterized by the artist, and capable of involving and merging viewer and art in a situation of greater scope and scale. In effect, one now… is presented with a set of conditions rather than a finite object.[136]

Licht's description recalled Sandback's exhibition eleven months earlier – a series of "situations" in which the artist treated the empty space of Dwan Gallery as his own material to manipulate, call attention to, and impose upon the viewer's experience. As with the canonization of earth art in Cornell's exhibition, by the end of the year The Museum of Modern Art had also recognized a new kind of art – one dependent upon its context and the viewer's experience of it in real time rather than a timeless, discrete object – as worthy of being exhibited in its galleries. The acceptance that the immaterial surroundings of a work of art could be essential to the piece itself presents one more step towards the establishment of site-specificity.

---

[136] Jennifer Licht, *Spaces* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1969), n.p.

CONCLUSION

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR SITE-SPECIFIC ART

After closely examining artistic production and exhibition during the years 1967 through 1969, I have come to understand the varying and sometimes broad characterization of the term site-specific by recent scholars and artists. I have argued that an extensive range of artists demonstrated an interest in their artworks' surroundings at this time and all engaged with place in individual ways. Despite the great differences amongst practices, however, commonalities existed. Those shared concerns became the key factors that drove the development of site-specificity during its primary years: scale, context, space, place, and situation.

In the following pages I consider the terms defined throughout the course of the text in one final work, a work constructed in the last days of 1969 and exhibited at the start of the new decade. Through an examination of Michael Heizer's well-known *Double Negative*, I demonstrate a new direction for site-specific art in the following decade and present some of the changes and challenges that arose as the concept of site-specificity developed early on, coalesced through scholarship of the late-1970s and 1980s, and ultimately became more precisely defined in recent years.

"New York – Nevada" – The Two Sites of *Double Negative*

In January 1970, Virginia Dwan exhibited a single earthwork recently completed by Michael Heizer. The artist did not construct the piece as part of a group exhibition, as we have consistently seen with the other primary examples of earthworks in the

preceding years, but rather on his own accord and with the support of his dealer. Dwan purchased a plot of sixty acres of land in the Nevada desert's Mormon Mesa for the artist to utilize. With the assistance of professional workers, dynamite, drills, and bulldozers, Heizer made two cuts – each fifty-feet deep, thirty-feet wide, and between three hundred and five hundred feet long – into the limestone surface on either side of a canyon.[1] The two trenches aligned, measuring 1500-feet from the end of one to the end of the other. In the act of carving out this mark into the earth, the workers displaced 240,000 tons of material, which they dumped into the open ravine below. Ultimately, it appeared as if a perfectly straight line had been drawn across the land and directly through the gorge, intersecting the uneven, rough terrain at the edge of a cliff.

Heizer named the piece *Double Negative*. As with Oldenburg's hole in Central Park and Oppenheim's slice into Beebe Lake, Heizer's work dug into the surface of the earth. It consisted of nothing more than the negative space created by the removal of matter from its surroundings.[2] The artist dislodged tons of earth, leaving behind a void. That space, when viewed from above (as the work is often illustrated), appeared as a material mark on the land. When experienced from within the earthwork, the space emerged as medium, seemingly distinct from the normal air we move through routinely. Standing inside one of Heizer's trenches – contained by fifty-foot walls of rock on either side – the open vista of vast desert disappeared and instead a viewer inhabited an alternate environment. The space within *Double Negative* acquired a different character

---

[1] For information regarding the involvement of contract workers, see Bill Vincent, "Stalking the Double Negative on Mormon Mesa," *The Nevadan*, Sunday, July 15, 1972, 6. On the measurements, see Richard Koshalek and Kerry Brougher, *Double Negative: Sculpture in the Land* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991) 11 and the exhibition checklist, Dwan Gallery Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

[2] Dwan described the work as "a sculpture in negative space." Charles Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan, March 21-June 7, 1984, Tape recording, Archives of American Art, New York.

than the open landscape at the top of the mesa: the artist marked it as separate from its setting.

Like *Placid Civic Monument* and *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* – albeit on a much grander scale – *Double Negative* incorporated space into its form, but ultimately revealed its place. By tagging a piece of earth untouched by man in the midst of the Nevada desert with an unnatural, straight line, Heizer drew attention to that terrain as distinct. He required the viewer, whether traveling to see the artwork or encountering it accidentally, to consider the Mormon Mesa. As a result of Heizer's intervention, a viewer now traveled to an unmapped territory, one she would not have considered visiting. Once there, the cuts directed her to scrutinize the mesa itself – its contours, the appearance of its limestone, its vast scale, even the untouched canyon in-between the artist's cuts – and to recognize it as an individual place. Such was Virginia Dwan's first contact with the piece: "It was a really, really special experience for me. It was rather like being in a cathedral in reverse. You had the sounds of the desert and the whistling of the wind through the space and the light changing throughout the afternoon, changing the colors within the space."[3] Heizer's modifications to the land illuminated much more than the topography of the area; *Double Negative* called attention to the immaterial properties of that site as well – the quality of light, the sounds, the blowing wind unique to that part of the Nevada desert. Heizer revealed that plot of land as a unique place.

In addition to exposing the site of the existing mesa, Heizer also *created* a new place by physically altering the terrain. Not only did the work draw the viewer's attention to her surroundings, insisting that she notice the site's conditions, but it also

---

[3] Ibid.

presented an entirely new place. From within the cuts, the viewer occupied a unique location, one possessing rock walls and an open sky above. The only views included the grain of the limestone at either side, the abyss ahead, and the sun and clouds above. Fifty feet beneath the surface of the earth, the viewer inhabited both an interior and exterior space. *Double Negative* revealed to the viewer the Mormon Mesa as well as Heizer's specific intervention into the land.

How did the public come to learn about this monumental earthwork? Didn't the piece resist the possibility of exhibition and commercial attention altogether through its scale, medium, and placement? Upon the artist's completion of the work, Virginia Dwan immediately journeyed West to view it for herself and made arrangements for an exhibition to showcase the work to the art world.[4] Of course, in both character and distance the Nevada desert remained a world apart from the gallery system of New York City. Furthermore, the very act of creating an artwork that denied any final portable form but rather existed as nothing more than a hole in the earth seemed defiant towards the commercial art market. Nevertheless, Dwan and Heizer found a way to bridge the distance between the earthwork and West 57th Street and to draw commercial attention to the cuts in the land. Dwan displayed Heizer's revolutionary work – which she designated as the "largest single sculpture in the world" – in the limited space of her white cube from January 10 through February 5, 1970 in a show titled "New York – Nevada."[5]

---

[4] As Dwan stated in her interview with Stuckey, "We managed to do it in no time at all. We managed to put together a show because it was so exciting; it just had to go out in this world immediately." In addition to the exhibition, the gallery sent out large posters and placed advertisements in art journals to promote the work. Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Heizer photographed *Double Negative* and hung the images on the walls of Dwan Gallery. No other trace of the work appeared in the exhibition space. Unlike Smithson, Heizer did not transport any physical material from the Nevada site to the gallery. The images alone represented *Double Negative* to the viewing public. According to the dealer, though, the photographs were not adequate stand-ins for the monumental work and the gallery display was not in fact the entire exhibition:

> The intention was to communicate that the real exhibition was in Nevada. All right, it was under the auspices of the Dwan Gallery; Dwan Gallery's main facility was in New York, but we also had this space out there which was a work of art, and if you really wanted to see the show, you should be out there… This is not really the exhibition. Dwan Gallery during the month of January 1970 exists out in Nevada at this moment and the work of art is there, and that is our exhibition, there.[6]

While they presented images of *Double Negative* in the gallery for sale, the artist and dealer considered the negative form itself – an immobile, non-saleable trench in the earth – to be the actual exhibit.[7] This emphasis on the off-site work differentiated Heizer's

---

[6] Ibid. It is worth noting that the show included a very few images of other select earthworks by Heizer. For instance, an etching of the 1969 *Munich Depression* hung in the rear gallery. *Double Negative* dominated the front gallery on its own, though. See exhibition checklist.

[7] The photographs did sell. See exhibition checklist.

Notably, in 1985 Dwan donated *Double Negative* to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. This demonstrates that in 1985, by the time the concept of site-specificity had become consolidated by scholars, such works were being commercially exchanged. The notion that site-specific works denied participation in the art market was proven incorrect. The off-site work became a part of the museum's permanent collection. The museum has published travel directions for visiting *Double Negative* and has included the work in at least one exhibition, "American Vernacular: Selections from the Permanent Collection," which was on view during March and June 1998. In addition, MOCA plans to exhibit *Double Negative* as a part of an upcoming exhibition, scheduled for September 2012 through January 2013, entitled "Land Art to 1977." Douglas C. McGill, *Michael Heizer: Effigy Tumuli, The Emergence of Ancient Mound Building* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990), 19. See also

exhibition from the 1967 "Scale Models and Drawings" show, where Dwan displayed concept models, or ideas, for large-scale outdoor works that did not exist in the real world. In describing her earlier curatorial approach, which responded to the large-scale art being created at the time, the dealer expressed that "If you really want to see it, build the big thing and go see it. It can't be brought into the gallery; it is a work of art; it's non-portable."[8] Now, three years later, Dwan once again presented artifacts that pointed to something outside of the gallery walls. However, this time, the sculpture actually existed. It remained very much rooted to its faraway place.

The "New York – Nevada" exhibition consisted of two components: the gallery display of photographs and the actual work in the Nevada landscape, nearly 2,500 miles away. At the top of the exhibition's price list the following description appeared: "Temporary Exhibit, Jan., New York; Permanent – Nevada."[9] Dwan slated the gallery exhibition of photographs for the month of January, while *Double Negative* itself remained on *permanent* view in the western desert for any avid art enthusiast to visit at anytime. It seems significant that at this time – before the notion of site-specificity crystallized – the artist and dealer understood Heizer's intervention to remain rooted to its site for eternity. Ecological factors like changing weather conditions interfered with the artist's cuts from the moment of the work's inception and, as a result, began changing it immediately; however, still today, forty years later, *Double Negative* can be found in its

---

Christopher Knight, "MOCA Future Exhibits (Mostly) Impressive," *The Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 2010 and the "Future Exhibitions List" posted on the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles website.

[8] Stuckey, Interview with Virginia Dwan.

[9] Exhibition checklist. Note that the earthwork did not appear on the price list as a work for sale. Only those images that hung on the gallery walls were listed.

original place.[10] The scale on which Heizer worked and the nature of the material that he chose to carve into ensured that the piece would last. Unlike *Placid Civic Monument*, Heizer's line in the desert could not be undone. When Oldenburg's gravediggers finished digging the hole in Central Park, the artist requested that they fill it back in with soil so that the process of restoring the land to its previous condition would begin. Even by returning the displaced limestone to the newly excavated trenches, the land that Heizer worked on would never revert to its original state. More likely, with the wind and weather passing through, the cuts would be left bare once again over time. While continuously undergoing the process of erosion, *Double Negative* remained a part of the Mormon Mesa and its situation. It would not disappear before the rest of its surroundings.

Placed out in the world as opposed to inside the protected interior of a gallery, Heizer's work was subjected to both environmental conditions and the passage of real time. It remained impossible to remove the work from its real-world contextual circumstances.[11] *Double Negative* maintained a fixed relationship to its surroundings, undergoing change at the very same, slow speed as the mesa itself. Not only did the work relate to and reveal its place, it engaged with its situation.

---

[10] A 1973 newspaper article attests to the changes already taking place in Heizer's form. The caption beneath a photograph of one of the cuts reads, "Wind is eroding the sand along the base of the cut." Vincent, 6.

[11] Just before Heizer exhibited *Double Negative* at Dwan Gallery, Grégoire Müller wrote about this aspect of the artist's work in an essay devoted to Heizer. Müller focused on the importance of the relationship between his work and its positioning in the real environment for the artist. "Michael Heizer," *Arts Magazine* 144:3 (December 1969 – January 1970): 42-45.

Defining Site-Specificity

In order to provide a structure for considering the origins of a concept that has come to signal an extensive and diverse body of works, I identified in the preceding chapters the terms central to the development of site-specificity and outlined the various ways in which an artwork might relate to its site: physically, conceptually, and socially, or functionally. The most simple and obvious of the three – and the most common – was the physical connection between an artwork and its surroundings. Unquestionably, Heizer's work remained physically fixed to its site. It could not be moved. Grégoire Müller described the artist's practice at the very moment *Double Negative* was under construction: "The work of art is the earth; that which is around the work of art is the earth… is the work of art."[12] The two remained inextricably bound. In addition, the artist's chosen place, the Mormon Mesa, was certainly central to Heizer's design of the piece. While Dwan's acquisition of that particular plot of land likely determined his ability to proceed with the project, the artist had to consider the specifics of the site itself in determining the scale of the work, its positioning in the land, and the logistics of executing his project. *Double Negative* maintained a conceptual connection to its site. Although indirectly, it also revealed a relationship to the social function of its place. Certainly Heizer's cuts into the earth hundreds of miles away from Dwan Gallery exposed the limitations of the art institution – both as an exhibition space and as a commercial business. *Double Negative* clearly rejected the art world's ordinary structures of creation and commodification. However, any artwork produced on a piece of land in the West would have done the same. This particular work – unlike Weiner's

---

[12] Ibid, 42.

Staples, Stakes, Turf, Twine and Serra's *Splashing* – did not respond to the specific social nature of its unique site, the Nevada desert's Mormon Mesa.

None of the works presented in this dissertation wholly fulfill all three relationships; in fact very few produced during the years 1967-1969 or those that directly follow come to mind that do.[13] While a range of artists created works that remained fixed to and revealed their surroundings in various ways, site-specific art had not yet occurred. Ultimately, no single, fixed definition of site-specificity emerged either. If one were to try to pin down a concrete, contained definition of a wholly site-specific artwork, perhaps it would involve meeting the criteria of a physical, conceptual, *and* social, or functional, relationship to its place. By the late-1970s and 1980s, when the concept finally became consolidated, those works that did reflect a more complete site-specificity had only just appeared. However, disregarding these early examples of works that engaged with their sites in only two of these three categories undermines their significance for the development of the concept.

The earliest examples in my reconstruction of site-specificity's emergence demonstrated the impact of context on artwork, a new concern in the late-1960s. The place of the gallery was the obvious first site of exploration. Whether the thematic

[13] The emblematic example of site-specificity to which all scholars refer, Richard Serra's 1981 *Tilted Arc*, does fulfill all three relationships to site. Conceived of and commissioned for the downtown Federal Plaza in New York City, the 120-foot long Cor-ten steel arc fit neatly into the allotted space. The fifteen-ton object, of course, remained physically rooted to its surroundings. It could not be moved easily, nor would it be fitting in any other place. Sized any larger and pedestrians would not have been able to move easily around the work to access the buildings on the square. Any smaller and Serra's hopes to make the public aware of their habitual movements through the city would have remained unsuccessful. The work would have acted as an object to swiftly pass by rather than as an overwhelming impediment. *Tilted Arc* was certainly conceived of for its place. What's more, if it were to be relocated anywhere else – to another city plaza or a park – it would not have functioned according to the artist's intentions. It illuminated the social function of its site. On the importance of the work for theorists of site-specificity, see Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity." Regarding the scandal surrounding its disassembly, see Harriet F. Senie, *The Tilted Arc Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

framework of an exhibition imposed new meanings on a submission, as with "Monuments, Tombstones, and Trophies," or an exhibition space determined the physical size and positioning of a work, like Andre's *Grave*, artists allowed context to factor into the perception and making of their works. This interest in an artwork's surroundings, however, remained rather superficial. Artists' attentions shifted rather quickly, though, towards a more active engagement with those surroundings. Works like Anastasi's *Six Sites*, Weiner's *Staples, Stakes, Turf, Twine*, and Serra's *Splashing* revealed their places. Through their works these artists called attention to the specifics of the physical environment and insisted that the viewer acknowledge the site as individual and unique. In these instances, however, the artists conceived of their works for *kinds* of places. Anastasi's silkscreen paintings could have been created for another room; Weiner's string grid could have been positioned in a different field; Serra could have thrown molten lead in the conjunction between wall and floor of any interior space. Although the works could not be removed from their positions while maintaining the same effects, they easily could have been recreated for other sites. With works like Haacke's *Grass Grows* and Oppenheim's *Beebe Lake Ice Cut* we begin to observe the artistic engagement with situation, which involved much more than the physical structure of a place. Situation-specific works revealed the complete conditions of their site: not only the physical environment, but also light, weather, time. Such works remained in flux, changing in response to and along with the place itself.

On the Question of Permanence

Tracking the development from artistic interest in context to place to situation – from the general to the specific – exposes a shift that occurred in art production of the

late-1960s and led toward what has come to be called site-specific art. In each of these phases we witness the creation of artworks that maintained an integral relationship with their surroundings. Notably, however, none of the works under discussion preserved an enduring association with its site. From gallery installations by Anastasi, Andre, Haacke, Serra, and Smithson to outdoor works by Haacke, Oldenburg, Oppenheim, and Weiner, none lasted much beyond the month-long duration of an exhibition. Some existed for a defined period of time – from a show's opening to its closing. Others were ephemeral, dependent upon outside conditions for their continued presence before disappearing. All remained temporary.[14]

The perception that site-specific art involves a lasting connection to its place clearly is not consistent with all artistic practices that share concern for a work's surroundings. Rather, early on when artists first appeared to critically consider place – during those years that serve as the focus of this dissertation – their works maintained only a temporary link to site. In the following decade, as the consideration for place developed, artists like Alice Aycock, Donald Judd, Nancy Holt, Mary Miss, and Richard Serra exposed a more permanent association between artwork and site.

---

[14] The temporary condition of the works I am describing here differs slightly from James Meyer's "functional site." In his essay, "The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site-Specificity," Meyer distinguishes between works that have a "literal," permanent relationship to site (like Serra's *Tilted Arc*) and those that are temporary or involve a network of "functional" sites (as in the site/non-site work of Robert Smithson). The latter includes works that momentarily mark a site and then move on. I would suggest that the "literal" site he defines is not at play during the earliest development of site-specificity. Meyer's "functional" site is applicable to the works of the late-1960s that appear in this dissertation in terms of their temporal nature, the fact that they reveal their site for a short period of time before being dismantled. However, the scholar insists that, "the functional site may or may not incorporate a physical place. It certainly does not *privilege* this place." As I argue, many of those works I describe do in fact privilege place. They do not necessarily privilege their *specific* place; however, they do exhibit a direct concern for place. Early on, the artistic concern is not for the particular place as much as for place itself. Later artists take on an interest in *that* place. In this way, I am describing something apart from the "functional" site. Meyer, "The Functional Site, or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 25.

By 1970, it seemed that artists and gallerists began to expect that the engagement with place involved greater duration, as evidenced by Heizer's "New York – Nevada" exhibition and the attribution of the word "permanence" to the checklist description of the off-site work. In the early 1970s, Judd and Serra began to create works with a lasting relationship to their sites. Still, however, no acknowledgement of site-specificity materialized in criticism or scholarship. Over the course of the late-1970s – when the concept was first named – and 1980s, during the first phase of study devoted to site-specificity, scholars consolidated their theories about the nature of the concept and presented it as a break from timeless and placeless modernist sculpture and, therefore, one telltale sign of postmodernism. By the mid-1980s, definitions of site-specificity – closely associated with Serra and his work of that time – assumed an enduring relationship between a work and its site.[15] Therefore, in the interim years between the

---

[15] While Krauss does not address the concept of site-specificity directly in her 1979 essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," she certainly points to a quality of permanence when she describes the new art in opposition to "nomadic" modernist sculpture. In particular, Krauss's category of marked sites – in which *Double Negative* and the 1970s work of Richard Serra are named as examples – consists of artworks that retain an enduring relationship with their site. These works, she states, involve the manipulation of sites and are therefore integrally bound to their place. Krauss does also allow for temporary versions of this practice, as in "the application of impermanent marks" like Smithson's *Mirror Displacements in the Yucatan* and Heizer's *Depressions*. Krauss, 41.

Craig Owens was the first and only author at this early stage in the concept's synthesis to insist on the ephemeral nature of site-specific art: "Site-specific works are impermanent, installed in particular locations for a limited duration, their impermanence providing the measure of their circumstantiality. Yet they are rarely dismantled but simply abandoned to nature; Smithson consistently acknowledged as part of his works the forces which erode and eventually reclaim them for nature. In this, the site-specific work becomes an emblem of transience, the ephemerality of all phenomena; it is the memento mori of the twentieth century." Owens focuses this discussion on Smithson's work without addressing other ways in which artworks relate to their site. Both Krauss's and Owen's texts preceded Serra's *Tilted Arc*. Owens, 71.

Serra's artwork serves as Douglas Crimp's prime example of site-specific art and his reason for examining the concept in the essay "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site-Specificity." While the scholar does not take up the factor of time or duration directly, he does suggest an enduring relationship between such a work and its place. He introduces Serra's 1968 *Splashing* as a prefiguration of the later *Tilted Arc* and describes, "There it was, attached to the structure of that old warehouse on the Upper West Side, condemned to be abandoned there forever or to be scraped off and destroyed." In a later writing in which he discusses site-specific art as evidence of the shift away from the placelessness of modernist sculpture, Crimp insists on the "wedding of the artwork to a particular environment" and the "refusal of circular mobility." Crimp, "Serra's Public Sculpture," 42 and "Photographs at the End of Modernism," 17.

more experimental period under discussion in this dissertation and the time that the notion itself was secured, we witness a transition towards more lasting works. Ultimately, when the concept of site-specificity itself was consolidated, that characterization of permanence became associated with it. This next stage in the development of site-specificity shall serve as a future focus of study.

The concept of site-specificity as artists and scholars have come to define it in the decades that follow the years of this study remains dependent upon the initial instances in which artists began to make work that responded to place. As this dissertation argues, the works produced from 1967 to 1969 set the groundwork for later practices that engage with place and scholarly definitions of the term. Heizer's *Double Negative*, for example, marks a culmination of many of the issues at stake in the late-1960s and introduces new concerns, such as permanence, that transform the notion of site-specificity. My narrative identifies the various considerations fundamental to thinking about a work's surroundings – scale, context, space, place, situation – and elucidates different relationships between art and site – physical, conceptual, social – in order to provide a structure for considering the origins of a term that otherwise has come to describe an extensive and diverse body of work over the last four decades. In this study, I have sought to trace a genealogy of the notion of site-specificity during its formative years. The concept of site-specificity is one that continues to change. What I have presented here represents only its beginnings.

WORKS CITED

Alberro, Alexander. *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.

Alberro, Alexander and Patricia Norvell, eds. *Recording Conceptual Art.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001.

Alberro, Alexander and Alice Zimmerman, "Not How It Should Were It To Be Built But How It Could Were It To Be Built." In *Lawrence Weiner* (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), 36-73.

American Craft Council Archives, New York City.

Antin. David. "Art & Information, 1: Grey Paint, Robert Morris." *Artforum* 65:2 (April 1966): 24.

Andre, Carl. *Cuts: Texts 1959-2004*, ed. James Meyer. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005.

Archives of American Art, New York City.

Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.

Art for the City (exhibition catalogue). Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, 1967.

"Art in New York." *Time* 93:4 (24 January 1969).

Aspen Art Museum Archives, Aspen, Colorado.

Barker, Ian. *Anthony Caro: Quest for the New Sculpture.* Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2004.

Barrette, Bill. *Eva Hesse: Sculpture*. New York: Timken Publishers, 1989.

Beardsley, John. *Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape.* New York: Abbeville Press, 1984.

Bochner, Mel. "Art in Process – Structures." *Arts Magazine* 40:9 (September–October 1966): 38-39.

________. *Art in Process: The Visual Development of a Structure*. New York: Finch College Museum of Art/Contemporary Study Wing, 1966.

________. "The Serial Attitude." *Artforum* 6:4 (December 1967): 28-33.

Boettger, Suzaan. *Earthworks: Art and the Landscape of the Sixties.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.

Bois, Yves-Alain. "A Drawing That Is Habitable." In *Fred Sandback*. eds. Friedemann Malsch and Christiane Meyer-Stoll. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006.

Bourdon, David. "Immodest Proposals For Monuments." *New York World Tribune*, 8 January 1967, 22.

Buchloh, Benajmin. "Michael Asher and the Conclusion of Modernist Sculpture." In *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955-1975*. Ed. Benjamin Buchloh, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000, 1-39.

________. "Process Sculpture and Film in the Work of Richard Serra" (1978). In *Richard Serra*. Eds. Hal Foster and Gordon Hughes. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000, 11.

Buren, Daniel. "Function of the Museum." *Artforum* 12:1 (September 1973): 68.

Burgin, Victor. "Situational Aesthetics." *Studio International* 178:915 (October 1969): 118-121.

Burnham, Jack. "Real Time Systems." *Artforum* 8:1 (September 1969): 49-55.

________. "Systems Esthetics." *Artforum* 7:1 (September 1968): 30-35.

Carl Andre (exhibition catalogue). Ed. Rita Sartorius. The Hague: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1987.

Carl Andre: Sculpture 1959-1977 (exhibition catalogue). Eds. Johannes Gachnang and Angela Westwater. New York: Jaap Rietman Inc., 1978.

Celant, Germano. *Dennis Oppenheim: Explorations.* Milano: Edizioni Charta, 2001.

Crimp, Douglas. "Photography at the End of Modernism." In *On the Museum's Ruins*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993.

________. "Serra's Public Sculpture: Redefining Site Specificity." In Rosalind Krauss, *Richard Serra: Sculpture.* Ed. Laura Rosenstock. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986.

Cummings, Paul. Interview with Claes Oldenburg, 4 December 1973 – 25 January 1974. Archives of American Art, New York City.

Dwan Gallery Archives, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Dwan, Virginia. Correspondence with the author, June 26, 2009.

________. Correspondence with the author, June 28, 2009.

Earth Art (exhibition catalogue). Ithaca: Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art, 1970.

Eight Sculptors: The Ambiguous Image (exhibition catalogue). Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1966.

Fietzek, Gerti and Gregor Stemmrich, eds. *Having Been Said: Writings and Interviews of Lawrence Weiner, 1968-2003*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004.

Flam, Jack, ed. *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996.

Fried, Michael. "Art and Objecthood." *Artforum* 5 (June 1967): 12-23.

F., D.. "Robert Morris, Dwan Gallery." *Artforum* 4:9 (May 1966), 13.

George, L. "Anastasi." *57th Street Review* 1:6 (18 May 1967).

Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. New York: Bantam Books, 1987.

Glueck, Grace. "Art Notes." *New York Times*, 15 October 1967, 138.

________. "Moving Mother Earth." *The New York Times*, 6 October 1968, D38.

________. "New York Gallery Notes." *Art in America* 56:5 (September/October 1968): 110.

Goldstein, Ann and Anne Rorimer. *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975*. Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995.

Gough, Maria. "Frank Stella is a Constructivist." *October* 119 (Winter 2007): 94-120.

Graham, Dan. "Models and Monuments: The Plague of Architecture." *Arts Magazine* 41:5 (March 1967): 32-35.

________. "New York: Of Monuments and Dreams." *Art and Artists* 1:12 (March 1967): 62.

Grasskamp, Walter. "Real Time: The Work of Hans Haacke." In *Hans Haacke*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004, 28-81.

Greenberg, Clement. "Modernist Painting." *Arts Yearbook* 4 (1961): 103-108.

Haskell, Barbara. *Claes Oldenburg: Object into Monument* (exhibition catalogue). Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum, 1971.

Henderson, Linda Dalrymple. *Reimagining Space: The Park Place Gallery Group in 1960s New York* (exhibition catalogue). Austin, Texas: Blanton Museum of Art, 2008.

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art Archives, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Heizer, Michael, Dennis Oppenheim, and Robert Smithson. "Discussions with Heizer, Oppenheim, Smithson." Interview by Willoughby Sharp (December 1968-January 1969). *Avalanche Magazine* (Fall 1970): 3-11.

Historical Exhibition Archives, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

Hobbs, Robert. *Robert Smithson: Sculpture.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Hutchinson, Pater. "Earth in Upheaval: Earth Works and Landscapes" *Arts Magazine* 43:2 (November 1968): 19-21.

Huxtable, Ada Louise. "Monumental Questions." *The New York Times*, 26 March 1967.

Ianco-Starrels, Josine. "Exhibit of Situational Works Opens Tuesday," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 January 1977, 71(T).

Junker, Howard. "Down to Earth." *Newsweek* (24 March 1969), 101.

________. "The New Sculpture, Getting Down to the Nitty Gritty." *Saturday Evening Post*, 2 November 1968, 42-47.

Kaye, Nick. *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Knight, Christopher. "MOCA Future Exhibits (Mostly) Impressive." *The Los Angeles Times*, 15 January 2010.

Knox, Sandra. "Two Stabiles May Stay Put After Move to Harlem." *New York Times*, 2 September 1967, 16.

Koshalek, Richard and Kerry Brougher. *Double Negative: Sculpture in the Land*. New York: Rizzoli, 1991.

Kozloff, Max. "9 in a Warehouse: An 'attack on the status of the object.'" *Artforum* 7:6 (February 1969): 38-42.

________. "New York Reviews." *Artforum* 5:7 (March 1967): 52.

Kramer, Hilton. "Bernard Rosenthal's Salon Glamour." *New York Times*, 9 March 1968, 25.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.

________. *Richard Serra/Sculpture*. Ed. Laura Rosenstock. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1986.

Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002.

Lee, Pamela M. *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s.* Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2004.

Leider, Philip. "'The Properties of Materials': In the Shadow of Robert Morris." *The New York Times*, 22 December 1968, D31.

Lewis, Jo Ann. "The Landscape of Art for the '70s," *The Washington Post*, 30 October 1977, 177.

LeWitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." *Artforum* 5:10 (June 1967): 79-83.

Licht, Jennifer. *Spaces* (exhibition catalogue). New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1969.

Lippard, Lucy. *Eva Hesse*. New York: New York University Pres, 1976.

________. "Issues in Art." *Art International* (November 1969)

________. *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972.* New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1973.

Lucy R. Lippard Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.

Malraux, André. "Museum Without Walls," *The Voices of Silence*, trans. Stuart Gilbert. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953.

Marcham, Jane. "Earthy Art, an 'In' Thing, Draws Campus Comment," *The Ithaca Journal*, 21 February 1969, 11.

McDonagh, Don. "Sculpture on the Move," *The Financial Times, London*, 7 March 1969, 3.

McEvilley, Thomas. "Intimate but Lethal Things: The Art of Lucas Samaras." In *Lucas Samaras: Objects and Subjects, 1969-1986* (exhibition catalogue). New York: Abbeville Press, 1988.

________. "The Rightness of Wrongness: Modernism and Its Alter-Ego in the Work of Dennis Oppenheim." In *Dennis Oppenheim: Selected Works 1967-90 and the Mind Grew Fingers*. Ed. Alanna Heiss, New York: The Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1992, 17-20.

McFadden, Jane. "Toward Site." *Grey Room* 27 (Spring 2007): 38.

McGill, Douglas C. *Michael Heizer: Effigy Tumuli, The Emergence of Ancient Mound Building.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990.

McShine, Kynaston. *Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptures* (exhibition catalogue). New York: The Jewish Museum, 1966.

Meadmore, Clement. "Thoughts on Earthworks, Random Distribution, Softness, Horizontality, and Gravity." *Arts Magazine* 43:4 (February 1969): 26-28.

Meehan, Thomas. "If Someone Says His Work Is Art, It's Art." *Horizon* 13:4 (Autumn 1971): 4-14.

Mellow, James R. "New York Letter." *Art International* 13:3 (20 March 1969): 59-60.

Meyer, James. *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

________. "The Functional Site, or The Transformation of Site-Specificity." In *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. ed. Erika Suderburg, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 23-37.

Michelson, Annette, "Robert Morris – An Aesthetics of Transgression." In *Robert Morris* (exhibition catalogue). Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1969.

Morris, Robert. "Anti-Form." *Artforum* 6:8 (April 1968): 33-35.

________. "Notes on Sculpture, Part I." *Artforum* 4:6 (February 1966): 42-44.

_______. "Notes on Sculpture, Part II." *Artforum* 5:2 (October 1966): 20-23.

________. "Notes on Sculpture, Part IV: Beyond Objects." *Artforum* (April 1969): 50-54.

Műller, Gregoire. “Michael Heizer.” *Arts Magazine* 144:3 (December 1969 – January 1970): 42-45.

________. “Robert Morris Presents Anti-Form: The Castelli Warehouse Show.” *Arts Magazine* 43:4 (February 1969): 29-30.

Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York City.

Nemser, Cindy. “An Interview with Eva Hesse.” *Artforum* 7:9 (May 1970): 59-63.

Newman, Sasha. “The Photo Pieces,” *Mel Bochner: Thought Made Visible, 1966-1973.* New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1995, 114-119.

O’Doherty, Brian. *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

________. “Inside the White Cube [1]: Notes on the Gallery Space.” *Artforum* 14:7 (March 1976).

Owens, Craig. “The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism.” *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 67-86.

________. “Earthwords.” *October* 10 (Fall 1979): 121-130.

Perreault, John. “Earth Show.” *Village Voice*, 27 February 1969: 18.

________. “Union-Made, Report on a Phenomenon.” *Arts Magazine* 41:5 (March 1967): 26-31.

Pincus-Witten, Robert. “New York Reviews.” *Artforum* 5:7 (March 1967): 52.

Potts, Alex. “The Minimalist Object and the Photographic Image,” *Sculpture and Photography*. Ed. Geraldine A. Johnson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 181-198.

Raikin, Lauren and Schwartz, Barry. Interview with Doris Chanin Freedman, 24 May 1971. Bard College’s Historical Exhibition Archive, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

“Residency Plan Making Aspen Art Center.” *Aspen News*, 13 July 1967, 14.

Restany, Pierre. “Hyper Avant-Garde.” *Le Nouveau Planète* (July 1969): 30-37.

Reynolds, Rebecca. “From Green Cube to Site: Site-Specific Practices at American Sculpture Parks and Gardens, 1965-1987.” Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2008.

Rickey, George. *Constructivism: Origins and Evolution*, Revised ed. New York: Braziller, 1995.

Rosenberg, Harold. "The Art World: Art and Words." *The New Yorker*, 29 March 1969, 114.

Rothkopf, Scott. *Mel Bochner Photographs, 1966-1969.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

S., G.E.. "Frederick Sandback." *Pictures on Exhibit* (February 1969): 13.

Sandler, Irving. *American Art of the 1960s.* New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988.

Sculpture in Environment (exhibition catalogue). New York City: Administration of Recreation and Cultural Affairs, 1967.

Senie, Harriet F. *The Tilted Arc Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Serra, Richard. "Verb List." In *Richard Serra: Writings, Interviews.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, 3-4.

Shapiro, Gary. *Earthwards: Robert Smithson and Art after Babel.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.

Sharp, Willoughby. *Air Art* (exhibition catalogue). New York: Kineticism Press, 1968.

Siegelaub, Seth. Correspondence with the author, July 25, 2008.

Shirey, David L. "Impossible Art – What It Is: Earthworks." *Art in America* 57:3 (May/June 1969): 32-34.

Sobel, Dean. *One Hour Ahead: The Avant-Garde in Aspen, 1945-2004*. Aspen, Colorado: Aspen Art Museum, 2004.

Smithson, Robert. "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects." *Artforum* 7:1 (September 1968): 44-50.

Smithson-Holt Papers, Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C.

Sonfist, Alan, ed. *Art in the Land: A Critical Anthology of Environmental Art*. New York: Dutton, 1983.

Stevens, Wallace. *Harmonium*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923.

Stone, Patricia. "Scale Models, Drawings." *Arts Magazine* 41:4 (February 1967): 57.

Stuckey, Charles. Interview with Virginia Dwan, 21 March- 7 June 1984. Archives of American Art, New York.

Suderburg, Erika, ed. *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

"Talking with William Rubin: 'The Museum Concept is Not Infinitely Expandable.'" *Artforum* 13:2 (October 1974): 51-57.

Tiberghien, Gilles. *Land Art*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.

Tillim, Sidney. "Earthworks and the New Picturesque." *Artforum* 7:4 (December 1968): 42-45.

Tuchman, Phyllis. "An Interview with Carl Andre." *Artforum* 8:10 (June 1970): 61.

Vazquez, Edward. "Aspects: The Art of Fred Sandback." Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 2009.

Vincent, Bill. "Stalking the Double Negative on Mormon Mesa." *The Nevadan*, 15 July 1972, 6.

Wells, Tom. *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1994.

Willard, Charlotte. "In the Art Galleries." *New York Post*, 28 January 1967, 46.

"Wouter F. Germans, Developer of Soho Gallery Building," *The New York Times*, August 31, 1998, A17.

Wynroth, Via. "Back to Earth: Come with an Open Mind." *Ithaca Journal*, 22 February 1969: 20.