CARL ANDRE

SCULPTURE

November 27, 1984 — January 8, 1985
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the Paula Cooper Gallery for their assistance and cooperation in organizing this exhibition and to Smithtown Concrete Products Corp. for generously supplying the cement clocks used to construct Carl Andre's new work.

I would also like to thank everyone who was involved in the installation of this exhibition, especially Susan Chorpenning, Pete Pantaleo, Ken Fehling and the SUSB Physical Plant staff, and the Gallery interns, guards, and volunteers.

Most of all, I wish to thank Carl Andre for sharing his work with the Stony Brook community.

Rhonda Cooper
Director

•1984 The Fine Arts Center Art Gallery, State University of New York at Stony Brook

Cover: Smithereens, 1984
AN INTERVIEW WITH CARL ANDRE

You have been described as a Renaissance Man; skilled as a novelist, poet, musical composer, painter, and sculptor. Why have you chosen sculpture as your primary form of expression?

I have absolutely no talent for prose, or music, or painting. My adult life has been spent combining masses to make sculptures and combining words to make poems. Why this is so could probably be explained by a minutely detailed account of the first five years of my life. Because such an account would be excruciatingly boring to everyone but my mother, I will not attempt to supply it.

Many critics have alluded to the influence of Frank Stella and Brancusi on your early work. What other artists played a role in the development of your aesthetic viewpoint?

The critics have alluded to the powerful influences of Frank Stella and Constantin Brancusi because I have told them so. Other artists who have had great influence on me are Patrick and Maud Morgan, Michael Chapman, and Hollis Frampton.

Your sculptures have been described as literally "useless" and "good for nothing." Do you see any inherent conflict between form and function in the creation of art?

Works of art are fetishes; that is, material objects of human production which we endow with extramaterial powers. My works are intended to give pleasure, nothing else.
In the early 1960's, you worked as a brakeman and conductor for the Pennsylvania Railroad. What influence did this have on your work as an artist?

On the railroad I worked intimately with masses of many hundreds of tons. As a result I do not have the typical American sculptor's romance with the gigantic.

How do you respond to critics who view your entire body of work as essentially a "put-on" with little validity as works of art?

There may be ten people in the world whose opinion of my work would be vital to me. People who think I am putting them on believe that I have them in mind when I work. I don't.

What caused the major shift in your work from essentially architectural to less vertical compositions in the mid-1960's?

My work has never been architectural. I began by generating forms, then generating structures, then generating places. A place in this sense is a pedestal for the rest of the world.

You have said: "If my work has any subject matter at all, it is the immense potentiality of the things around us." Could you explain what you meant by this?

Lao Tse said that the uncarved block is richer than any utensil you can carve from it.

Writers have generally described you as a "minimalist" or as a "conceptual" artist. How do you feel about labeling of this sort in general, and where do you see yourself in terms of those particular movements?

I think artists are either Paleolithic or Neolithic. I am decidedly the latter. My work has never been conceptual in any way. My sculptures are combinations of masses that are the "lineaments of Gratified Desire," not the materializations of mental forms. "Minimal" means to me only the greatest economy in attaining the greatest ends. The names of so-called art movements occur most frequently when thoughts are most absent.

Some critics have suggested that reductivism has already been taken as far as it can go. Do you anticipate your own work becoming more complicated in the future?

My work has not been about the least condition of art but about the necessary condition of art. I will always try to have in my work only what is necessary to it.

The art that seemed so radical in the 1960's is no longer the topic of controversy that it was twenty years ago. Do you now see yourself as a member of the artistic establishment? How important is it for an artist to work close to the cutting edge?

There is far less acceptance of my work in the New York art world now than there was 15 years ago. A kind of aesthetic Gresham's Law is operating today: coarse art tends to drive fine art out of circulation. Membership in the art establishment is determined solely by wealth. I have never made enough money to be a part of it.

Would you like to comment on your inclusion in the current exhibition, "BLAM: The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism, and Performance 1958-1964," at the Whitney Museum of American Art?
Seventeenth Copper Cardinal, 1977
When Barbara Haskell informed me that I was going to be included in an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art of innovative works executed from 1958 to 1964, I asked to be omitted. Because of the cultural atmosphere which pervades New York art institutions, I was certain that if I were included the record of my activities would be distorted and the issues of that day would be misrepresented. Unfortunately works of mine are included in the current "BLAM" exhibition and, much worse, the passages in the catalogue which have any bearing on me or my works do distort and misrepresent as I feared they would. I feel it is my historical duty to set the record straight. What follows are Haskell's sentences and my corrections.

"It was the bold, immediate impact of Stella's paintings that attracted Donald Judd and Carl Andre, who were fascinated by the 'objectness' of his work and its implications for sculpture."

I do not know when and where Donald Judd first saw one of Frank Stella's black stripe paintings but I was present at one time or another at every stage of their creation. When I first met Stella in 1958, he was painting very loosely striped canvases with intruding, flatly painted rectangles. Some of the paintings had words scrawled on them. What I witnessed was the evolution of the mature black paintings from these powerful but unfocussed beginnings. The impact of Stella and his work on me was anything but "immediate" — it was as slow and inexorable and powerful as a glacier. Never have the black stripe canvases appeared to me to be anything but examples of abstract painting at its most rigorous. It was not basically the appearance of Stella's paintings that influenced my sculpture but his practice. The prevailing convention of abstract painting in 1959 was gestural and rhythmic. Frank set off in an entirely different direction — neutralizing gesture by using uniform brush strokes that trace a metrical pattern over the whole canvas. By increments of identical gestures the ground of the canvas was transformed into the field of the painting. My Pyramid has the cross section of Brancusi's Endless Column, but the method of building it with identical, repeated segments of 2 x 4 lumber derives from Stella.

"Stella's influence on Andre, who was a close personal friend, was more visual than theoretical."

Stella's influence on me was practical and profoundly ethical. What he demanded from himself and from those for whom he had respect was that an artist must discover between himself and the world that art which is unique to him and then to purge that art of all effects that do not serve its ends.

"Art excludes the unnecessary," is the first sentence of my Preface to Stripe Painting written for the 1959 "Sixteen Americans" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. That is the only true sense for me of "minimalism."

"For a time in the early 1960s, Andre worked in Stella's studio, turning the notched corners and zigzag patterns of Stella's paintings into sculptural equivalents."

Frank invited me early in 1959 to carve in his studio when he was not using it, and the chisel-carved Ladder was the last work I ever did there. In June 1959, I returned to my parents' home in Quincy, Massachusetts, for a month's stay. While there I made a number of small wood sculptures which I carved by cutting on my father's radial-arm saw. Each pass of the saw blade through the block reminded me of Stella laying down a brushstroke. These works had notches and curves and angles and zigzags, but they were done the year before Frank Stella painted the first notched silver paintings. After 1959 I never worked in Stella's studio again and never used it for anything but storage.
“The original versions of most of these sculptures were later burned as firewood when Andre left them behind after one of his frequent moves.”

Hollis Frampton wrote the following entry for my 1969 Haags Gemeentemuseum catalogue: “That winter (1959) I took a very big apartment, mostly empty. Carl Andre moved his radial saw into it and in three months made 8 or 9 large ‘pyramids.’ They were built of ordinary 2 x 4 lumber, notched together stepwise in the manner of American wilderness log construction... In September of 1960, I gave up the apartment. The new tenant, the art dealer Richard Bellamy, agreed to store the pyramids since Carl hadn’t room. Curiously enough, Bellamy, who was to show considerable prescience in the Pop Art area and its adjacent precincts, saw fit to burn the pyramids for firewood during that winter.”

“Other of Andre’s Minimalist works from this period existed only as drawings or as small models until the early seventies; at this time he began executing earlier designs, probably on larger scales than had originally been envisaged.”

Late in 1959 and early in 1960 I diagrammed a set of works called the Element Series which were to be various combinations (L’s, T’s, U’s, posts-and-lintels, etc.) of uncarved, unattached, identical 12” x 12” x 36” timbers. Prior to the Element Series, most of my sculptures had been made from materials scavenged from the streets and construction sites of New York. Sets of 12” x 12” x 36” timbers simply were not available for midnight requisition and all efforts to raise money to buy them failed. Having no other source of income, I went to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a yard brakeman in New Jersey in March 1960, and until I quit in March 1964, I had very little contact with the art world. In 1970 the Element Series were realized in exactly the same size and scale as had been contemplated in 1960. No other drawings existed and the numerous small sculptures produced in 1958-1960 were not models for anything but themselves. Well (Wallraf-Richartz Museum) and Redan (Art Gallery of Ontario) executed in 1964 for the “Shape and Structure” show (Tibor de Nagy, January 1965) employed identical 12” x 12” x 36” timbers but were not part of the 1960 series.

Far more important than Barbara Haskell’s inaccuracies about my activities from 1958 to 1964, is her misrepresentation of the issues and conflicts in the art of the period. Of course meaningless terms like “Pop” and “Minimal” can be “Blammed” together but my art has always been deeply antagonistic to the ever increasing urge of the New York art world to trivialize and vulgarize all art. In 1963 I wrote about an artist represented in the “Pop Art” section of “Blam”: “He too is an idealist in paint... but he derives his ideal forms from exactly those places where we have learned by bitter tasting to expect s - - - . Marilyn Monroe was a woman whose guts had been so grossly fiddled with in the course of her career making cheap celluloid imitations of movies that she could not bear a living child. Advertising is the stillbirth of the sensibilities. To turn to these horrors for one’s conventions is to believe that those excrescences in the street are strawberry tarts... All I ask of any painter is that his marks on the canvas demonstrate to me an aspect of the world which has escaped my seeing. Marilyn Monroe and Ford automobiles have not escaped me. They have been dunned into me by persons paid to dun.”

November 1984
Smithereens, 1984
CARL ANDRE

Born 1935, Quincy, Massachusetts. Lives in New York City.

ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1984
- Richmond College, Dallas, Texas
- Westsalischer Kunstderein, Munster, West Germany
- Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany
- Galleria Primo Piano, Rome, Italy
- Galerie Im Kornerpark, Berlin-Neukolln, West Germany

1983
- Heath Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia
- Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, California
- Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris, France
- Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York

1982
- Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, Germany
- Alberta College of Art, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York, New York
- Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, Florida
- Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado

1981
- Susan Caldwell Gallery, New York, New York
- Seagram Plaza, New York, New York
- Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York

1980
- Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts
- Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York
- Lopoukhine Nayduck Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts
- David Bellman Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

1979
- The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
- University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, California
- Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, Texas
- Musee d' Art Contemporaine, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
- Reese Bullen Gallery, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California

1978
- Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, England
- Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, Texas
- The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio
- The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York
- Sperone Westwater Fischer Gallery, New York, New York
- Art Agency Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan
- Pinacotheca, Melbourne, Australia
- Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany
- Ace Gallery, Venice, California
- Ace Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
1977  Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, California
       Joseloff Gallery, Hartford Art School, Connecticut
       Sperone Westwater Fischer Gallery, New York, New York

1976  Division Art Center, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
       The Clocktower, New York, New York
       Installation of “Prime Terrane,” Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Michigan
       Kabinett fur Aktuelle Kunst, Bremerhaven, West Germany
       Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minnesota
       John Weber Gallery, New York, New York
       Barbara Cusack Gallery, Houston, Texas
       Ace Gallery, Los Angeles and Venice, California
       Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany
       Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France

       Barbara Cusack Gallery, Houston, Texas
       Lisson Gallery, London, England
       Gian Enzo Sperone Gallery, Rome, Italy
       Sperone Westwater Fischer Gallery, New York, New York
       Ace Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
       Daniel Weinberg Gallery, San Francisco, California
       Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland
       The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England

1974  Wide White Space, Antwerp, Belgium
       Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany
       Ace Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

1973  Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, Oregon
       Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts
       Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts
       Thayer Academy, Braintree, Massachusetts
       Max Protetch Gallery, Washington, D.C.
       Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany
       John Weber Gallery, New York, New York

1972  Friends of Contemporary Art, Denver, Colorado
       John Weber Gallery, New York, New York
       Janie C. Lee Gallery, Dallas, Texas
       Lisson Gallery, London, England
       Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany

1971  The St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri
       Dwan Gallery, New York, New York
       Locksley-Shea Gallery, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany
Galerie Yvon Lambert, Paris, France
Wide White Space, Antwerp, Belgium
Heiner Friedrich Gallery, Munich, West Germany

1970
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, New York
Ace Gallery, Los Angeles, California

1969
Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, The Netherlands
Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany
Dwan Gallery, New York, New York
Wide White Space, Antwerp, Belgium
Gian Enzo Sperone Gallery, Turin, Italy

1968
Stadtisches Museum, Monchengladbach, West Germany
Heiner Friedrich Gallery, Munich, West Germany
Wide White Space, Antwerp, Belgium
Irving Blum Gallery, Los Angeles, California

1967
Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles, California
Dwan Gallery, New York, New York
Konrad Fischer Gallery, Dusseldorf, West Germany

1966
Tibor de Nagy, New York, New York

1955
Tibor de Nagy, New York, New York

Ferox, 1982
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Measurements are given in inches, height preceding width preceding depth unless otherwise indicated. All works are on loan courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, New York.

   Zinc
   36-unit square, 3/8 x 12 x 12” each, 3/8 x 72 x 72” overall

2. 144 Tin Square, New York, 1975
   Tin
   144-unit square, 3/8 x 12 x 12” each, 3/8 x 144 x 144” overall

3. Seventeenth Copper Cardinal, New York, 1977
   Copper
   17-unit line extending from base of wall, 5 x 50 x 50 cm each, 5 x 50 x 850 cm overall

   Redwood timbers
   38-unit installation, 12 x 12 x 36” each, 36 x 300 x 36” overall

5. Ferox, New York, 1982
   Weathered hot rolled steel
   91-unit triangle, 5 x 50 x 50 cm each, 5 x 650 x 650 cm overall

6. Smithereens, Stony Brook, 1984
   Cement blocks
   210-unit rectangle, 4 x 8 x 16” each, 8 x 109 x 128” overall

PHOTO CREDITS

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©eva-inkeri, NYC: Seventeenth Copper Cardinal
©Petroske: Smithereens
PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS AT THE ART GALLERY

1975  FACULTY EXHIBITION
1976  MICHELLE STUART
      RECENT DRAWINGS (AN AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS EXHIBITION)
      SALVATORE ROMANO
1977  MEL PEKARSKY
      JUDITH BERNSTEIN
      HERBERT BAYER (AN AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS EXHIBITION)
1978  LEON GOLUB
      WOMEN ARTISTS FROM NEW YORK
      JANET FISH
      ROSEMARY MAYER
      THE SISTER CHAPEL
1979  SHIRLEY GORELICK
      ALAN SONFIST
      HOWARDENA PINDELL
      ROY LICHTENSTEIN
1980  BENNY ANDREWS
      ALEX KATZ
      EIGHT FROM NEW YORK
      ARTISTS FROM QUEENS
      OTTO PIENE
      STONY BROOK 11, THE STUDIO FACULTY
1981  ALICE NEEL
      55 MERCER: 10 SCULPTORS
      JOHN LITTLE
      IRA JOEL HABER
      LEON POLK SMITH
1982  FOUR SCULPTORS
      CECILE ABISH
      JACK YOUNGERMAN
      ALAN SHIELDS
      THE STONY BROOK ALUMNI INVITATIONAL
      ANN McCOY
1983  THE WAR SHOW
      CERAMIC DIRECTIONS: A CONTEMPORARY OVERVIEW
      CINDY SHERMAN
      THE FACULTY SHOW
1984  BERNARD APTEKAR: ART AND POLITICS
      ERIC STALLIER: LIGHT YEARS
      NORMAN BLUHM: SEVEN FROM THE SEVENTIES
      EDWARD COUNTY 1921-1984

Director ........................................ RHONDA COOPER