The Dissertation Committee for Amanda Ann Douberley Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

The Corporate Model: Sculpture, Architecture, and the American City, 1946-1975

Committee:

Ann Reynolds, Supervisor

Anthony Alofsin

Linda Henderson

Howard Singerman

Cherise Smith

Eric Wolf

The Corporate Model: Sculpture, Architecture, and the American City, 1946-1975

by

Amanda Ann Douberley, B.A., M.A.

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Dedication

For my parents

and

In memory of Kathryn Hixson (1955-2010)

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The Corporate Model: Sculpture, Architecture, and the American City, 1946-1975

Amanda Ann Douberley, Ph.D.

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Supervisor: Ann M. Reynolds

This dissertation is a theoretical and historical account of urban sculpture in the U.S. following World War II. The title refers to an example set by corporations during the 1940s and 1950s for commissioning modernist office towers and abstract sculpture that fundamentally shaped the early history of a modern public art in the U.S. This corporate model was taken up by American cities during the 1960s in the construction of new civic centers that combined large-scale, abstract sculpture with glass and steel city office buildings. Federal funding further encouraged new sculpture commissions, which proliferated across the U.S. Emerging theories about visual communication impacted both urban planning and the corporate image during this period, as urban renewal reshaped cities for maximum legibility and corporations commissioned designers to create new trademarks. I argue that these twin aims conditioned the planning, production, and distribution of urban sculpture, whose status oscillated between the landmark within urban planning and the trademark of corporate America, between a concrete city element and an abstract symbol. I tell the history of post-war urban sculpture through three case studies. In the first case study, I examine three significant sculpture commissions for urban building lobbies realized by the architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill during the 1950s: Harry Bertoia's screen (1954) at the Manufacturers Trust Company Bank on New

York's Fifth Avenue; Richard Lippold's *Radiant "I"* (1958) at the Inland Steel Company Headquarters Building in Chicago; and Alexander Calder's mobile (1959) for the Chase Manhattan Bank branch at 410 Park Avenue. In the second case study, I trace the parallel trajectories of urban renewal in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan and Alexander Calder's fountains and stabiles made for World's Fairs and international expositions, which intersected in *La Grande Vitesse* (1969), the National Endowment for the Arts' first sculpture commission for its Art in Public Places program. In the third case study, I look at three sculptures produced by the fabricator Lippincott Inc., either as a series or in multiple editions, during its first five years of operation: Tony Rosenthal's cubes (1967-68), Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* (1963-67), and Claes Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse* (1969-71).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In this dissertation I provide a theoretical and historical account of abstract public sculpture in U.S. cities during the first three decades following World War II. From the early 1950s to about 1975, abstract sculpture came to be used by patrons including corporations, civic governments, and other institutions as a powerful public symbol in the urban environment. Instigated by modern architects and further encouraged through federal programs, the siting of abstract sculpture outside the gallery or museum's white cube initiated a new form of public sculpture rooted in studio practice rather than the tradition of civic monuments.

Through this study I seek to understand the specific historical conditions that made this new form of public sculpture possible. Two of these conditions in particular are central to my project. One is the post-war expansion of public relations, which profoundly shaped shared concepts of the public sphere during this period. The other is the federal urban renewal program, through which the government intended to remake U.S. cities, and in so doing created a space for a new class of civic monuments. I situate abstract urban sculpture at the intersection of these two conditions, as the practice of public relations was extended to include the image of the mid-twentieth-century American city.

Each chapter of the dissertation is organized around the activities of a different type of facilitator or mediator: the architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), the National Council on the Arts (NCA), and the fabricator Lippincott Inc. These facilitators acted as intermediaries between patrons and artists, and in some instances served as patrons themselves. They were each a generating force behind the creation of a group of sculptures that I use as case studies, encouraging corporate and civic patrons to spend

money on art and working with artists to realize sculptures on an enormous scale. By organizing my study around these middlemen, my approach seeks to represent cities as a product of both public and private interests, and to tell the history of post-war urban sculpture through different types of commissions, whether corporate, civic, or institutional.

Indeed, public sculpture is often defined according to patronage; it is commonly considered to be public if a government agency pays for it. Alternately, public sculpture is sometimes defined according to access; if it is visible to a large number of people but paid for by a private corporation, it still counts as public sculpture. I attend to a definition of public sculpture that engages the uses to which it was put during the post-war period: as a form of public address, and more specifically as a form of public relations. I examine, in particular, abstraction as this type of sculpture's mode of address and that mode's place within the cultural history of the period.

I am by no means the first art historian to take up this subject, and my study builds on the work of two scholars in particular that precede it: John Wetenhall, "The Ascendancy of Modern Public Sculpture in America" (1988) and Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (1992). Both authors trace roughly the same historical arc I do and begin their studies in the years following World War II. Wetenhall organizes his chapters according to patronage type, and this choice drives his argument, while Senie roughly periodizes the sculptures she discusses according to style.[1] They both use the monuments of the City Beautiful

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Abbreviations Used in the Footnotes
AAA: Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
CAO: Chicago Architects Oral History Project, Ernest R. Graham Study Center for Architectural Drawings, Department of Architecture, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
CRA: Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest, Gary, Indiana
GRCA: Grand Rapids City Archives, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
GRPL: Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

movement as foils for abstract public sculpture and emphasize the effects, as Wetenhall puts it, of the "replacement of heroic icons of societal values with monuments of artistic creativity," or works rooted in the tradition of civic monuments with sculptures rooted in studio practice.[2]

In the United States, the tradition of civic monuments peaked during the Progressive Era (1890-1920), when it was unimaginable that any important public building or monument be constructed without the input of an artist. In this golden age of American sculpture, artists helped to express what Michele Bogart calls "the civic ideal: an urban vision of patriotism, civilization, and good government."[3] Sculptors made portraits of heroes worthy of emulation and allegorical figures that conveyed lessons meant to edify the lower and middle classes. These sculpture groups decorated the pediments of classicizing civic buildings and stood as monuments in city parks and squares designed according to the Beaux-Arts principles that shaped the City Beautiful movement. The movement united artists, architects, and urban planners behind common goals to bring order, dignity, and harmony to American cities through adherence to a European tradition of civic art. City Beautiful planners like Daniel Burnham and

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HMRC: Houston Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas.
LBJ: Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, Austin, Texas.
MCA: Menil Collection Archives, Houston, Texas.
MIT: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Institute Archives and Special Collections, MIT Libraries, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
MIT List: MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
NA: National Archives, Washington, D.C.
SIA: Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C.
SOM Chicago: Project Files, Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Chicago, Illinois.

[1]Wetenhall's chapters address the patronage of corporations, municipalities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the General Services Administration.
[2]John Wetenhall, "The Ascendancy of Modern Public Sculpture in America" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford Univ., 1988), 495.
[3]Michele H. Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 3.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. emphasized converging diagonal axes that terminated in great buildings or monuments, creating formal, processional spaces meant to impress individuals as they moved through the city and to inspire civic virtue in its citizens.[4]

Artists working in the public sculpture revival of the 1960s did not continue the imitative naturalism and conventional symbolism of Beaux-Arts sculpture. Instead, many artists drew on the abstraction of their studio work to create a new form of public art and thereby introduced a new set of questions regarding public sculpture's reception. In their analyses of the period, Senie and Wetenhall both focus on an additional aspect of access, taking into account not only the visibility of public sculpture but also the spectator's ability to understand it. Senie writes:

> Recent public sculpture… often took the literal place of traditional monuments without fulfilling their memorial function. Never intended as memorials, these works nevertheless raised public expectation that they would convey some commemorative or, in any event, at least some understandable content. However, most contemporary public sculpture does not speak in a visual language accessible to those without some art background. It does not depict easily identifiable subjects, and it does not celebrate common values.[5]

Following the expectations of mid-twentieth-century patrons, Wetenhall and Senie gauge the success or failure of public sculpture with regard to their desire for accessibility: A sculpture succeeded if spectators read it as its patrons intended, as art. Often it failed because post-war public sculpture had no recognizable content and therefore "could not easily fulfill the traditional commemorative role of public sculpture."[6] Wetenhall interviewed the key players in each of his case studies and offers an excellent account of the establishment of federal programs in the U.S. that sponsored public art. Senie carries

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[4]For more on the City Beautiful movement, see William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989).
[5]Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 217.
[6]Ibid. 15.

her project all the way through the 1980s and offers the most comprehensive overview of the various artistic styles that characterize public art up to the 1990s. I employ a case study approach to examine a much narrower group of works, and use close readings of contemporary criticism to reconsider how abstract public sculpture may well have been legible to its publics during the mid twentieth century: not as art, but as a form of public relations.[7]

Another important precedent for my work is Erika Doss's *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (1995). Doss identifies controversies sparked by public art as expressions of American cultural democracy at work. She notes that these controversies are played out in the "public sphere," "that wide-ranging intersection of place, space, and human activity [that] has become a contested site of cultural authority as artists, arts agencies, politicians, and corporations vie for public favor and power."[8] Significantly, Doss draws on the theory of the public sphere put forward by Jürgen Habermas during the early 1960s and uses it to characterize the model of public culture adopted by public art agencies and artists.

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962; trans. Thomas Burger, 1989), Habermas describes how the public sphere developed from feudalism and monarchial rule, reaching its fullest development in the bourgeois constitutional state. The public sphere of civil society came to recognize itself as the abstract counterpart of public authority through a set of historical circumstances in which culture played a key role. As a commodity, culture was generally accessible, no longer a component of the

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[7]Though Senie recognizes the relationship between public art and public relations, she seems less concerned with historicizing this phenomenon than criticizing it. See, for example, her discussion of Alexander Calder's *La Grande Vitesse* in *Contemporary Public Sculpture*, 100-104.

[8]Erika Doss, *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 14.

church's or court's publicity and representation. The accessibility of the products of culture, facilitated by concerts, theaters, and museums, institutionalized the lay judgment of art. Discussion became the medium through which people appreciated art, and since anyone could access culture, the critical public was in principle inclusive. The publics formed through the critical discussion of the products of culture in coffee houses and salons facilitated the appropriation of the state-governed public sphere by a society engaged in critical public debate. The cultural public sphere engendered a political public sphere.[9]

As Doss points out, Habermas himself recognized that this model was impossible "under the tenets of late capitalism's pervasive corporate influence, mass media, and consumerism."[10] Nevertheless, according to Doss, "this model of a limited and essentially problem-free public culture has been largely adopted by public arts agencies and public artists."[11] Doss describes how this model meshed well with elite perceptions of post-war American audiences as an "irrational mass" that needed to be controlled. According to Doss, elites viewed modern art, and specifically abstract art, as "a great unifying force because it was seemingly apolitical and rational," and embraced it "as the most desirable aesthetic for the public sphere."[12]

Instead of using Habermas's public sphere of the eighteenth through the nineteenth century as the basis for an investigation of public art patronage in the mid

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[9]Habermas identifies a series of common criteria shared by the institutions of eighteenth-century French, British, and German society that are key to his theory and have been important to his critics. First, the ideal of equality was institutionalized, so that the authority of the better argument could assert itself against that of social hierarchy. Second, cultural communities established new meanings and new domains of common concern based on verbal communication among private people. Third, the issues discussed became general in their significance and accessibility. In principle, everyone had to be able to participate.
[10]Doss, *Spirit Poles*, 16.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Ibid. 43-46.

twentieth century, I historicize Habermas by attending to the second part of his book, which charts the transformation and dissolution of the bourgeois public sphere. According to Habermas, this occurred through the interpenetration of the state and society. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the state began to provide services and enacted legislation that regulated matters previously left to the private sphere. In turn, corporations took on public functions, establishing a world of work between the public and private spheres. With the rise of corporations, employees were linked to institutions, not to other individuals, leading to the emergence of the "organization man." The new field of human relations created a sense of pseudo-private wellbeing that further occluded the separation between public and private. As the occupational realm became quasi-public, the private sphere was reduced to the family. Disengaged from social labor, the family went from being defined by production to consumption. The public sphere in the world of letters was replaced by the pseudo-public or sham-private world of culture consumption. Critical discussion devolved into an exchange about tastes and preferences, since mass appeal within the market guided the production of culture; the culture-consuming sphere absorbed the political public sphere. The public sphere as a go-between state and society became a mediatized public set on the creation of equilibrium; critical publicity became manipulative publicity, a platform for advertising. Habermas diagnoses the situation as a "refeudalization" of Western society:

> Publicity once meant the exposure of political domination before the public use of reason; publicity now adds up the reactions of an uncommitted friendly disposition. In the measure that it is shaped by public relations, the public sphere of civil society again takes on feudal features.[13]

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[13]Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 195; originally published as *Strukturwandel der Öffentlicheit* (Darmstadt: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag; Neuwied, Federal Republic of Germany, 1962).

From his perspective, writing at the very beginning of the 1960s, public relations was the defining factor in the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere. Like an event staged for publicity, "the public sphere has to be 'made,' it is not 'there' anymore."[14]

Habermas was not alone in his thinking about the impact of public relations on Western society. One year before *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* appeared in German, the American historian Daniel J. Boorstin published *The Image or What Happened to the American Dream* (1961). Boorstin describes the United States as a country enslaved by "the image," a set of illusions that have taken the place of reality and created a culture defined by "extravagant expectations" that can never be fulfilled.[15] Boorstin, a historian at the University of Chicago, coined the term "pseudo-event" to describe happenings orchestrated for no other purpose than to be reproduced in the media. As opposed to the gathering and reporting of "news," which happens spontaneously, these events are shaped by experts in the field of public relations, a defining innovation of the twentieth century intended to produce a favorable relationship between an institution or person and the public.

Boorstin draws his example of this practice from *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (1923) by Edward L. Bernays, a pioneer in applying the lessons of the social sciences to shaping public opinion. Bernays describes the case of a hotel whose owners wish to increase its prestige: "In less sophisticated times, the answer might have been to hire a new chef, to improve the plumbing, to paint the rooms, or to install a crystal chandelier in the lobby." In contrast with such material improvements,

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[14]Ibid. 201.

[15]Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, 25th anniversary ed., (New York: Atheneum, 1987; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 3; originally published as *The Image or What Happened to the American Dream* (New York: Atheneum, 1961).

> The public relations counsel's technique is more indirect. He proposes that the management stage a celebration of the hotel's thirtieth anniversary. A committee is formed… and an 'event' is planned (say a banquet) to call attention to the distinguished service the hotel has been rendering the community.

As Boorstin points out, "The occasion actually gives the hotel the prestige to which it is pretending."[16] Through reporting of the event, which has been engineered precisely for this purpose, the hotel achieves its goal. It conveys an impression, an idea, an image that suggests how the public should perceive the hotel.

Boorstin sees the turn from reality to illusion everywhere: from the hero to the celebrity, traveler to tourist, shapes to shadows (*Reader's Digest*), ideal to image. Boorstin takes the "corporate image" as paradigmatic of this trend, offering "clues to all the image-thinking of our time."[17] Boorstin focuses on six characteristics of the corporate image. First, an image is *synthetic*: "It is planned: created especially to serve a purpose, to make a certain kind of impression."[18] The trademark and brand name illustrate this point. Yet Boorstin identifies "a more abstract kind of image" as "the peculiar product of our age":

> An image in this sense is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan, or an easily remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product, or service. It is a value-caricature, shaped in three dimensions, of synthetic materials. Such images in ever increasing numbers have been fabricated and re-enforced by the new techniques of the Graphic Revolution.[19]

Boorstin's "Graphic Revolution" began with the telegraph and the rotary press, two inventions that made news into a commodity. High-speed printing, advances in photography, the telephone, phonograph, radio, motion pictures, and television all

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[16]Ibid. 10.
[17]Ibid. 185.
[18]Ibid. The remaining characteristics of the corporate image follow: (2) An image is believable; (3) An image is passive; (4) An image is vivid and concrete; (5) An image is simplified; (6) An image is ambiguous. See Boorstin, *The Image*, 188-194.
[19]Ibid. 186.

followed in quick succession; Boorstin writes, "Americans crossed the gulf from daguerreotype to color television in less than a century."[20] All of these inventions encouraged the spread of "pseudo-events," as images came to overshadow reality.

Habermas and Boorstin each view post-war American society as saturated by public relations. What are the implications of their theories for a study of mid-twentieth-century public sculpture? They suggest, for one, that we think carefully about how we define the term "public sculpture." Rather than rooting sculpture's "publicness" in patronage, access, or cultural democracy, Habermas and Boorstin point to the field of public relations as another defining characteristic of public art. Locating public relations at the center of my project helps me to make connections among corporate, civic, and institutional commissions. More importantly, it encourages a revaluation of abstraction as the dominant visual language of public art during this period. Boorstin's description of the corporate image concludes with the observation: "In advertising, as in painting, the non-representational technique is apt to become more popular, to give the viewer ample scope for his unpredictable but always exaggerating expectations."[21] According to Boorstin, the corporate image must be ambiguous as well as simplified, "distinctive enough to be remembered" and "a receptacle for the wishes of different people."[22] Indeed, at the moment when corporations were commissioning abstract sculptures for new headquarters buildings, they adopted abstract symbols as trademarks.

The pervasiveness of the concept of "image" circa 1960 is further demonstrated by the appearance of a third important text, Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960). An urban planner interested in the visual characteristics of the urban environment, Lynch

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[20]Ibid. 13.
[21]Ibid. 194.
[22]Ibid. 193-94.

"refocused attention from the monumental visions of architects and planners to the urban perceptions of taxi drivers."[23] He did this by encouraging planners to use a city's legibility as a guide for urban redevelopment. Rather than thinking of the city as a thing in itself—a depopulated scale model or a planner's map—he proposed a consideration of how the city is perceived by its inhabitants. Lynch based his argument on interviews with pedestrians in three cities: Boston, Jersey City**,** and Los Angeles. By asking people to describe their routes through the city, he hoped to understand better which aspects of the built environment helped people find their way from one place to another and left an image in their minds that was powerful enough to be communicable to others. He calls this characteristic "imageability," which he defines as:

> That quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in a given observer. It is that shape, color, or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment.[24]

For Lynch imageability is a feature already present in many cities that could be adopted by urban planners and factored into their designs.

He identifies five elements that make up the city image: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. By using these elements in strategic combinations, city planners can create an "imageable landscape"[25] that transforms the city space into a place: "if the environment is visibly organized and sharply identified, then the citizen can inform it with his own meanings and connections. Then it will become a true place, remarkable and unmistakable."[26] A sense of place encourages inhabitants to be hyper-aware of their

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[23]Sandy Isenstadt, "Image Renewal: Polemic and Presentation in the Urban Theory of Rem Koolhaas and Leon Krier," in Lawrence J. Vale and Sam Bass Warner Jr., eds., *Imaging the City: Continuing Struggles and New Directions* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, 2001), 216.
[24]Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), 9.
[25]Ibid. 91.
[26]Ibid. 92.

surroundings, promoting "the deposit of a memory trace" and thereby enhancing "every human activity that occurs there."[27]

Lynch concentrates his attention on city form rather than the specific content of the five elements he describes. Anthony Raynsford argues that Lynch adapted and abstracted these elements from the civic art tradition of the City Beautiful movement; the avenue, the intersection, the wall, the precinct and the monument became the path, the node, the edge, the district and the landmark. Raynsford sees the process of abstracting these elements as a necessary accommodation to the cultural relativism of the 1950s: "Lynch was not prepared to accept the 'organic' idea, common to modernist and art historical discourses alike, that the city was, or should be, the expression of some unified cultural order." Instead of a "value consensus," the city's formal unity "implied an urban structure that was visually 'in-scale' with optical perception, construed in an open-ended, formalist sense. Hence the city could be 'read' as a unified form while also being interpreted from different subjective and cultural positions."[28] The search for coherence that anchored the modernist project could only be found, for Lynch, "at the level of the 'image,' the shared, but symbolically open ended, mental city that each individual perceiver constructed out of the existing physical city."[29]

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[27]Ibid. 119.

[28]Anthony Raynsford, "Civic Art in an Age of Cultural Relativism: The Aesthetic Origins of Kevin Lynch's Image of the City," *Journal of Urban Design* 16 (February 2011), 59. Eric Mumford argues that modernist architects promoted the "complete abandonment of the Beaux-Arts focus on historical canonical models as a source of design references. Instead, they advocated teaching a new language of visual communication shared by all the arts. They saw this approach as 'objectively valid' and based on the 'scientific visual facts' of visual perception." Mumford, *Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Discipline, 1937-69* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2009), 30.

[29]Ibid. 64. Raynsford continues, "In the same era that abstract expressionism was being proclaimed as the emblem of the anxious individual in a free society, Lynch was conceiving of the city as an open-ended network of elements within which the wandering individual could become psychologically anchored. Irrevocably separated by cultural and social differences, resistant to all notions of an artificial order imposed from above, such urban citizens could nevertheless be given a common physical reference, an existential framework, within which to map their own places, meanings and attachments."

Instead of using the monument of the City Beautiful movement as a foil for mid-twentieth century public sculpture, I follow Lynch and propose the landmark as a lens for understanding the role of abstract sculpture in the urban environment. Lynch proposes that almost anything can be a landmark, as long as it is unique and memorable: "[Landmarks] are usually a rather simply defined physical object: building, sign, store, or mountain."[30] We can add to this list "signs, store fronts, trees, doorknobs, and other urban detail."[31] What defines a landmark for Lynch is its difference from its surroundings, or singularity. Objects become landmarks "if they have a clear form; if they contrast with their background; and if there is some prominence of spatial location."[32] Though Lynch does not make sculpture the focus of his discussion of landmarks, I argue that abstract urban sculpture can also—and did—operate in a similar manner, heightening the imageability of the city.

As a landmark, abstract sculpture helped observers identify a particular place and make that place more memorable. Lynch describes an embodied relationship between pedestrians and the landmark, which is key to the reading of abstract sculpture that I put forward. Whereas the abstract sculptures commissioned for corporate architecture were intended to become repositories for subtle advertising messages, similar to corporate trademarks, Lynch's landmark functions as a container to be filled with the memories and associations of passersby. The landmark so conceived offers an alternative to the didacticism of traditional monuments. The monument commemorates a specific person or event and is often located in a site with historical significance. Part of the monument's function is to draw attention to its site. By contrast, the landmark becomes meaningful

[30]Lynch, *Image of the City*, 48.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Ibid. 78-79.

through the viewer's experience of it in relation to its site. This is not a closed circuit of meaning, as with the monument, where the sculpture and site refer to each other and speak in one voice. In fact, the landmark says different things to different people, contributing to their unique mental image of the city.

The 1950s and 1960s was a period of crisis in American cities, a situation to which Lynch and other writers, including Jane Jacobs, responded. Their primary target was urban renewal, a widespread belief in the power of large-scale clearance and rebuilding to eliminate blight and revitalize the built environment.[33] In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jacobs criticizes city planners for the ineffective and even destructive consequences of their designs, which she faults for being rooted in the outmoded ideals of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, Le Corbusier's Radiant City, and the City Beautiful movement.[34] Rather than relying on "principles derived from the behavior and appearance of towns, suburbs, tuberculosis sanatoria, fairs, and imaginary dream cities,"[35] such as the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition that first articulated City Beautiful principles in the United States, Jacobs encourages planners to look to the street: "The way to get at what goes on in the seemingly mysterious and

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[33]Lynch and Jacobs each received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation research program for Urban Design Studies, which was established to promote alternatives to urban renewal. See Peter L. Laurence, "The Death and Life of Urban Design: Jane Jacobs, The Rockefeller Foundation and the New Research in Urbanism, 1955-1965," *Journal of Urban Design* 11 (2006): 145-172.

[34]Jacobs surveys the first fruits of urban renewal and sees nothing to like. She writes, "Look what we have built… Low-income projects that become worse centers of delinquency, vandalism and general social hopelessness than the slums they were supposed to replace. Middle-income housing projects which are truly marvels of dullness and regimentation, sealed against any buoyancy or vitality of city life. Luxury housing projects that mitigate their inanity, or try to, with a vapid vulgarity. Cultural centers that are unable to support a good bookstore. Civic centers that are avoided by everyone but bums, who have fewer choices of loitering places than others. Commercial centers that are lackluster imitations of standardized suburban chain-store shopping. Promenades that go from no place to nowhere and have no promenaders. Expressways that eviscerate great cities. This is not the rebuilding of cities. This is the sacking of cities." Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961; reprint 2002), 4.

[35]Ibid. 6.

perverse behavior of cities is, I think, to look closely… at the most ordinary scenes and events, and attempt to see what they mean and whether any threads of principle emerge among them."[36] Like Lynch, Jacobs believed that city planning and design should be based on the ways that ordinary people actually used cities instead of on abstract theories. She set out to show how the apparent disorder of cities need not be corrected, but instead could be studied and interpreted for clues to better inform urban design. Given the scale of many renewal projects and the irreversibility of bulldozer clearance, the stakes for writers like Lynch and Jacobs in reorienting urban planning were high.[37] The problems confronting cities were also deeply entrenched.

Many mid-twentieth-century observers of American cities recognized an image problem, one that threatened the urban core's role as the center of city life. Particularly in the Northeastern quadrant of the country and in the Midwest, physical deterioration of the urban fabric was seen as a major issue as early as the 1940s, with "aging metropolises… perceived as relics in radical need of rehabilitation and restructuring."[38] American cities had boomed through the 1920s, as new residents migrated to urban hubs so they could live closer to good jobs in manufacturing, retail, and business. Yet the 1940 census showed that, after more than a century of growth, the population in eight of the nation's ten largest cities had either declined or grown at a slower rate than the national average

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[36]Ibid. 13.

[37]In addition to Jacobs' *Death and Life*, early critical surveys of urban renewal policy in the United States include Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer: A Critical Analysis of Urban Renewal, 1949-1962*, Publication of the Joint Center for Urban Studies (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964) and Jeanne R. Lowe, *Cities in a Race With Time: Progress and Poverty in America's Renewing Cities* (New York: Random House, 1967). For a less polemical view of the issues, see Scott A. Greer, *Urban Renewal and American Cities: The Dilemma of Democratic Intervention* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966) and James Q. Wilson, ed., *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, Publication of the Joint Center for Urban Studies (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1966).

[38]Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940-1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1990), 11.

during the previous decade.[39] In fact, decentralization of residents, retail, manufacturing, and some businesses had begun earlier in the century. Residents moved to the suburbs in search of more space and a healthier environment, away from the air and water pollution of the city.[40] Retail and services followed residents to their new homes. Manufacturers were drawn to larger sites outside the urban core, where they could build single-story facilities with innovative horizontal assembly lines. All of these changes were accelerated by the automobile, which freed people from public transportation and encouraged them to spread outside the city center. The streetcars that had transported people within cities from their houses and apartments to commercial and entertainment districts gradually were eliminated, and city streets became choked by increased automobile traffic, with insufficient parking for the large numbers of cars. By the 1940s, it was clear that decentralization would leave the suburbs richer and the cities poorer, with falling property values, empty storefronts and factories, and a shrinking tax base to service the residents who remained in urban centers.[41]

City officials, business leaders, and urban planners united to renew the American city and identified blight as their greatest foe in the battle to stem the tide of decentralization. According to Jon Teaford, "when they spoke of blight," city leaders "meant the process of physical deterioration that destroyed property values and undermined the quality of urban life."[42] Given their focus on blight, it is not surprising

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[39]Ibid. 10.

[40]In some city centers, construction of upper-middle-class housing virtually came to a halt after World War I. Federal policies exacerbated the problem by encouraging outward migration. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), created in 1934 to insure low-interest, long-term mortgages, did not invest in risky properties, which were generally defined as older central-city neighborhoods. Instead, FHA promoted new construction in the suburbs.

[41]For a history of downtown in the first half of the twentieth century, see Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880-1950* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2001). See also Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004).

[42]Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance*, 11.

that city leaders viewed wholesale demolition, clearing, and rebuilding as the best solution to the city's problems. In Pittsburgh, for example, local government partnered with businessmen to clear nearly sixty acres of land and make way for the Golden Triangle, transforming an area known to be a slum into a booming business district. The organization that led this initiative, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, served as a model for other cities, including St. Louis and Baltimore; however, with Richard King Mellon as patron, Pittsburgh proved the exception rather than the rule. Most cities would have to wait for federal aid to battle blight through large-scale clearance.

The initial involvement of the federal government in urban renewal did not aim to rebuild the urban core but instead focused on housing. Under Title I of the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Housing Act of 1949, the federal government would pay two-thirds of the net cost incurred by local government in purchasing and clearing blighted sites, with a proviso that these projects cleared predominantly residential slum tracts or prepared land for predominantly residential redevelopment. The first federal projects consisted primarily of moderate-income housing; prior to the late 1950s, the funds flowing from Washington for renewal were steady but relatively small.

During this same period, the function of downtown was narrowing. As people continued to move away from the city center to the suburbs in the 1950s, downtown became primarily a center for corporate offices, banks, business services, and complexes housing performing arts and other cultural institutions. This decrease in residential use coincided with skyrocketing demand for office space. A sharp rise in the number of white-collar workers fueled this demand as the financial, insurance, and business service sectors of the economy outpaced manufacturing and retail. Furthermore, the need for more space to house new office equipment meant that the square footage required per

office worker rose around 20 percent between the late 1940s and the early 1960s.[43] The result was an office-building boom that in some cities merely updated the pre-World War II skyline of neo-Gothic and Art Deco skyscrapers with glass curtain-walled towers, and in others transformed entire districts into skyscraper canyons.[44] Early twentieth century visions of workers who walked or took public transit from urban residences to jobs in manufacturing, retail, and business were replaced by a new paradigm, wherein white collar workers traveled from suburban homes to downtown via car for work in tall office buildings and for entertainment in cultural centers.

New legislation in effect made the vision of downtown as a place for work and entertainment official policy. The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 guaranteed rapid transit via car from outlying suburbs to downtown and bolstered the rise of the suburbs over urban living for the middle and upper classes. Amendments to the Housing Act in 1959 and 1961 broadened the scope of projects that qualified for urban renewal funding, giving cities the means to invest in glittering downtown showpieces. These projects were intended to demonstrate the vitality of cities and boost their images in the eyes of residents as well as business leaders. Through urban renewal, cities could wipe out blight and replace rundown, outmoded structures with corporate, municipal, and federal office buildings, hotels, and cultural centers, all of which, it was hoped, would return downtown to its symbolic place at the center of city life. At the beginning of the 1960s, cities seemed poised to make a comeback or, at the very least, to stabilize the rapid decline perceived by many observers. Though proponents of renewal and critics like Jacobs and

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[43]Ibid. 131.

[44]The conversion of New York City's Park Avenue from high-end residential buildings to office towers is one notable example. See Jane Jacobs, "New York's office boom," *Architectural Forum* 106 (March 1957): 104-113; James S. Hornbeck, "A Review of the New Skyscraper," *Architectural Record* 121 (March 1957): 227-249; and "Office Building Boom is Going Nationwide," *Architectural Forum* 118 (May 1963): 114-119.

Lynch disagreed about the best way to revitalize cities, they did share the same goal: to "promote social and economic vitality in cities."[45]

Sculpture's potential role in remaking the city emerged from the thinking of modern architects, who viewed the integration of architecture, painting and sculpture as an important goal that would not only put their work on a par with the great architecture of the past, but also add an expressive element to the stripped-down, functional aesthetic of the International Style. This idea was first theorized by the proponents of "The New Monumentality," whose interest in the central city's need for new symbolic spaces is reflected in a 1943 manifesto by Josep Lluís Sert, Sigfried Giedion, and Fernand Léger. In the manifesto, they demanded more from architects than solutions to the utilitarian problems such as housing tackled by the modern movement:

> The people want the buildings that represent their social and community life to give more than functional fulfillment. They want their aspiration for monumentality, joy, pride and excitement to be satisfied… Sites for monuments must be planned. This will be possible once replanning is undertaken on a large scale which will create vast open spaces in the now decaying areas of our cities.[46]

In Europe, the New Monumentality addressed the bomb-scarred cities left behind by World War II. In the United States, this type of large-scale replanning would be undertaken through urban renewal.

New parks and plazas in renewed city centers would yield "vast open spaces" as foci for public gathering.[47] Crucially, the New Monumentality sought to bring art to these

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[45]Jacobs, *Death and Life*, 4.

[46]"Nine Points on Monumentality," in Sigfried Giedion, *architecture, you and me: the diary of a development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 49. Giedion expands on these ideas in "The Need for a New Monumentality," in Paul Zucker, ed., *New Architecture and City Planning, a Symposium* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944). For a summary of the debates around this issue, see Christiane Crasemann-Collins and George R. Collins, "Monumentality: A Critical Matter in Modern Architecture," *Harvard Architectural Review* 4 (1985): 15-35.

[47]Some modern architects made sure to distance themselves from the City Beautiful-inspired civic centers constructed in the United States after World War II. By "civic center" they simply meant a gathering place

centers of public gathering and to provide an alternative to the city's main form of public address, commercial advertising. When Sert spoke at the 1951 Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) symposium, "How to Combine Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture," he emphasized this point and urged planners to include the arts in urban design:

> Commercial advertising is in touch with the people, but the works of the great creators are not… Unfortunately they go from the artist's studio to the deep-freeze compartment of the museums. There they are gathered and belong to history. They join the past before they meet the present.[48]

By bringing art to renewed city centers, architects and planners could create new civic symbols, a desire voiced by other participants in the symposium.[49] Yet the practical terms of the relationship between artists and architects were less certain. In the symposium at MoMA, architects voiced a number of concerns over how best to combine art and architecture. First, should they be combined through juxtaposition, or was integration the better route? Furthermore, could an architect simply select a finished sculpture for the building, as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe had done for the Barcelona Pavilion (1929)? Or should an entirely new artwork be commissioned? And perhaps most pressing of all, "If you commission the greatest artist, are you going to get his greatest work?"[50]

If some modern architects were eager to work with artists, then mid-twentieth century sculptors had good reason to view their enthusiasm with skepticism. A few months after the symposium at the MoMA, *American Sculpture 1951* opened at the

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for citizens rather than a group of administrative buildings. See S[igfried] Giedion, "The Humanization of Urban Life," *Architectural Record* 8 (April 1952): 121-129.

[48]"A Symposium on How to Combine Architecture, Painting and Sculpture," *Interiors* 110 (May 1951): 103. The complete proceedings are in the archives of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

[49]For example, Ben Shahn remarked, "some of the basic concepts of our society have only the meagerest imagery and symbolism. It might not be amiss if some of these concepts found their way into the public architecture." Ibid. 102.

[50]Philip Johnson, introductory remarks, Ibid. 101. Sert designed the Spanish pavilion at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris. The building featured three commissioned artworks: Alexander Calder's *Mercury Fountain* (1937), Joan Miró's *The Reaper* (1937), and Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* (1937).

Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Sculpture has been in a bad way for quite some time in America," begins Henry McBride's review of the exhibition. He continues: "The causes for sculpture's decline are several, the most obvious being, I suppose, the increase in city skyscrapers."[51] The eighty-five year-old critic goes on to describe his observation over a period of years of the *Admiral Farragut Monument* (1881), a collaboration between Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White that was installed on Fifth Avenue at Madison Square in 1881, a little more than a decade before its creators helped to launch the City Beautiful movement and to popularize the Beaux-Arts style in architecture at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (Figure 1.1). McBride writes,

> It had been my habit previously, when en route to the Café Martin, to go out of my way to see it, for the figure had a sturdy posture and a commanding air quite holding its own against the comparatively low buildings north and south on the Square and was, so I thought, about the best piece of sculpture America had produced up to that time.[52]

All of this changed when tall office buildings replaced the hotels on Broadway and "*Farragut* completely lost control of the situation… I could no longer look upon his embarrassing plight." In 1936 New York City officials removed *Farragut* for restoration. When the sculpture returned to Madison Square three years later, it was not placed in its original position on Fifth Avenue but instead sited in the middle of the park where, according to McBride, "no one now suspects that once he was a very good bronze indeed—for in his relationship to the skyscrapers he has become a midget." McBride concludes, "This mishap has been repeated so often that no self-respecting New York sculptor would consider for a moment the task of decorating any of the main crossroads

[51]Henry McBride, "Met Meets U.S. sculpture," *Art News* 50 (January 1952): 18.
[52]Ibid. 18-19.

of the town were the chance to do so offered him." He adds, "And what chance is there that such an offer would ever be made? None, and you know that."[53]

McBride was not too far off the mark in blaming the skyscrapers of the 1920s for the demise of civic sculpture. The corporations that built them emphasized pragmatism, efficiency, and functionalism, and demanded buildings expressing these values. As Bogart writes, "Moral lessons would be taught through advertising, not sculpture."[54] Furthermore, as the social cohesiveness of the City Beautiful movement collapsed, civic art became less of a concern for city planners. Though architectural commissions and sculpture for public places continued to be produced, notably the federally funded projects through the WPA during the Great Depression, commemorative works increasingly took the form of "living memorials." Andrew Shanken describes the latter as "useful projects such as community centers, libraries, forests, and even highways that were marked in some fashion, usually with plaques, as memorials."[55] Sculptors effectively lost their role in the public realm. The new institutions that sprang up to promote modern art redefined the meaning and purpose of sculpture as a matter of subjective meaning rather than collective belief. As early as 1929, around the time of the MoMA's founding, one observer noted: "If sculpture is not designed to be a monument, a fountain, a park ornament, [then] the only place for it is the museum."[56] A new generation of artists sought the freedom and independence of easel painters and avoided

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[53]Ibid. 19.

[54]Bogart, *Civic Ideal*, 307.

[55]Andrew M. Shanken, "Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II," *Art Bulletin* 84 (March 2002): 130.

[56]Agnes Rindge, *Sculpture* (New York: Payson and Clarke, 1929), cited in Daniel Robbins, "Statues to Sculpture: From the Nineties to the Thirties," in *200 Years of American Sculpture* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1976), 158.

the municipal bureaucracy. They created sculpture for the gallery or the museum, not the public sphere.

In the years around 1950, then, American sculpture was at a crossroads. Nowhere was this more evident than in the exhibition that inspired McBride's observations, *American Sculpture 1951*. The second of three juried exhibitions organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in an effort to increase its activity in the field of contemporary American art, the show's installation in the museum's Great Hall also dramatized the stylistic divergence that characterized American sculpture at the time.[57] On one side of the Great Hall stood the work of more traditional sculptors like Paul Manship, whose contribution to the exhibition—an over-life-size plaster called *Buddies*—depicted two shirtless G.I.s in photographic detail, from dog tags to carefully delineated shoe laces. On the other side of the hall stood the work of more modern sculptors like Alexander Archipenko, who gave his monumental iron sculpture—the largest work in the exhibition at a height of 14'—the evocative title *Figure*, but through its abstraction, left the subject of his sculpture up to the viewer.[58] Intended as an even-handed representation of contemporary American sculpture, the exhibition buttressed the Metropolitan's objective while also seeming to pit these two camps against one another, creating an opposition between figuration and abstraction that today seems artificial. Yet

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[57]The Metropolitan launched its contemporary art initiative after the Whitney Museum of American Art withdrew from a 1947 agreement amongst the Whitney, the Metropolitan, and the Museum of Modern Art that would have divided the focus of each museum as follows: the Whitney Museum in American art, the MoMA in both American and "foreign" modern art, and the Metropolitan in older or "classic" art. See Robert Beverly Hale, "The American Moderns," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 16 (Summer 1957): 18-28. *Sculpture at the Crossroads* was the title of a 1948 survey of twentieth century sculpture at the Worcester Art Museum that took the opposition between traditional and modern sculpture as its theme.

[58]Critics panned sculptures on both sides of the hall; Howard Devree dubbed Archipenko's *Figure* "an aerial bomb with fins," while more than one writer likened Manship's *Buddies* to clothing store mannequins. "'Sad, Sad Commentary'," *Art Digest* 26 (1 January 1952): 11. See also "Mish-Mash at the Met" *Art Digest* 26 (15 December 1951): 5 and Belle Krasne, "'American Sculpture, 1951': The Met Makes Contrast Paramount," *Art Digest* 26 (15 December 1951): 9, 34.

much was at stake for sculptors at this pivotal moment, as the controversy sparked by the exhibition attests.

The loudest protest against *American Sculpture 1951* came from the National Sculpture Society (NSS), then one of the nation's oldest associations of artists. The protest committee, led by sculptor Donald De Lue, laid out the Society's numerous objections to the exhibition in a letter, which soon after its release Lloyd Goodrich summed up for readers of *The Art Digest*:

> [The letter] begins as a protest against the makeup of the three-man Jury of Awards… and the awards they made; but it then launches into a general denunciation of the exhibition itself, the "Modernistic Movement," the alleged plans of the modernists to take over control of the Metropolitan Museum and its $100,000 purchase fund for sculpture, the dangerous effect of the exhibition on school children, the teaching of art in schools and colleges, where it seems "the students are being systematically indoctrinated in the philosophy of imaginative anarchy in the creative arts," the alleged psychopathic character of modern artists, and the alleged link between modernism and totalitarianism.[59]

As several critics pointed out, the objection to the Jury of Awards was dubious since one of the three jurors, José de Creeft, was a NSS fellow. Charges that linked modernism with totalitarianism were equally preposterous, given the well-established fact that communist and Nazi propagandists had rejected modern art. More to the point, however, was the fear of De Lue and other traditional sculptors that they would not benefit from the Metropolitan's one hundred thousand dollar purchase fund for American sculpture.[60] As

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[59]Lloyd Goodrich, "Editorial: A New Low in Controversy," *Art Digest* 26 (1 March 1952): 5. For the controversy, see Alfred M. Frankfurter, "Vernissage: Graven Images," *Art News* 50 (February 1952): 11 and Aline Louchheim, "Modern Art Again Misrepresented," *New York Times*, 10 February 1952. The College Art Association (CAA) reprinted the National Sculpture Society's letter, along with statements by the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the American Federation of Arts, Sculptor's Guild, Artists Equity, and CAA. See *College Art Journal* 11 (Summer 1952): 280-289.

[60]The NSS was founded in 1893 by a group of distinguished architects and sculptors "to foster the development and appreciation of sculpture" in the United States. As Michele Bogart has argued, professional organizations like the NSS were vital to the sponsorship at the turn of the twentieth century of municipal sculpture, which relied on networks of artists, architects, and patrons for its success. Although the NSS was not founded to support a particular artistic style (and still exists today), during the mid-

Goodrich takes care to note, the NSS was not only one of the most conservative organizations in the art world but also one of the richest, with assets of more than half a million dollars. Its members received the lion's share of federal commissions; the eleven sculptors partaking of more than two hundred thousand dollars' worth of commissions from the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), which decorated American cemeteries overseas after World War II, were all society members.[61] But as Aline Louchheim observed, "[T]imes have changed. A new architecture has been rising throughout America, much of it designed by architects who find the traditional N.S.S. kind of sculpture inappropriate." Furthermore, "Museum directors and critics have found validity in other forms of sculpture and many have preferred to give space and attention to the more modern work, which they feel is a truer expression of our age."[62] Indeed, although the terms of their attack were outrageous, fears that the NSS would lose control over public sculpture were not unfounded. Within a few years, abstract sculpture would come to dominate new architectural commissions, and even the federal government would embrace abstraction.

In the chapters that follow, I trace a number of intersections and coincidences that should help to illustrate how I chose my case studies. SOM, the architecture firm I address in the second chapter, not only pioneered commissions for abstract sculpture in its corporate headquarters buildings during the 1950s, but also played a role in early civic commissions for abstract sculpture during the 1960s. For example, the firm designed the

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twentieth century it was dominated by sculptors who worked in the Beaux-Arts tradition of its founders. See Bogart, *Civic Ideal*.

[61]Louchheim, "Modern Art Misrepresented." On the ABMC, see Kate Lemay, "Forgotten Memorials: The American Cemeteries in France from World War II," (Ph.D. diss, Indiana Univ., 2011). In addition to federal commissions, the NSS controlled representation of the U.S. in international exhibitions. One month after *American Sculpture 1951* opened, the State Department invited the NSS to assume responsibility for representing American sculpture in the international outdoor exhibition that summer at Arnhem, The Netherlands. See "In-Group Exports," *Art Digest* 27 (1 January 1952): 5.

[62] Louchheim, "Modern Art Misrepresented."

buildings and plaza in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where the first commission for the NCA's Sculpture Project, later renamed the Art in Public Places program, was dedicated in 1969. William Hartmann, a lead architect on the project, was instrumental in convincing Alexander Calder to accept the commission. Calder had perfected the industrial fabrication of his monumental stabiles over the course of the previous decade. He served as an important example for the artists who initially worked with the fabricator Lippincott Inc., and for the fabricator as well. In a letter in the archives of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where Calder realized his first commission for a monumental stabile in the United States, J. Gordon Lippincott, who helped his son, Donald, establish Lippincott Inc., inquires about the cost of commissioning Calder's sculpture. The elder Lippincott was himself an industrial designer who specialized in the corporate image, including the design of trademarks. That his son would establish the foremost sculpture fabrication firm in the United States seems especially apt.[63]

The case studies are arranged chronologically, but again there is a great deal of overlap across chapters. For example, the final commission discussed in my chapter on SOM, for Jean Dubuffet's *Group of Four Trees* (1972) at One Chase Manhattan Plaza, was not dedicated until 1972. The last sculpture discussed in my chapter on Lippincott Inc., Claes Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse, Scale X – Red* (1971), was dedicated in 1975. Though Calder's sculpture in Grand Rapids was not dedicated until 1969, it was the culmination of events that had unfolded since the 1940s in Grand Rapids in terms of urban renewal, and within Calder's practice. There is a pronounced time lag in dealing with projects for the built environment in comparison with art created for a gallery

[63]J. Gordon Lippincott to Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 10 May 1966. Registrar's Files, Calder 1966.002 Correspondence. MIT List.

exhibition. This means that a sculpture can seem outdated soon after its dedication, as I discuss in the conclusion of this study.

Chapter 2: Building the Corporate Image

Life magazine's guide to art in commercial buildings, published in the August 9, 1963 issue, attests to the success of corporate commissions for art in modern architecture during the previous decade. The sheer number of artworks listed—nearly fifty examples—and their geographic distribution—from New York City to Washington State—indicates that the trend was not only notable but also widespread. The list also reflects current corporate taste, a shift from figurative works with traditional subject matter to abstract paintings and sculptures. As the accompanying text explains:

> The summer tourists all over the country this year are getting an eyeful of contemporary art without setting foot in museum or art gallery. As they wander around the cities—window shopping, admiring the architecture, dropping into a bank to cash a traveler's check—they come upon murals, mosaics and sculpture done by some of the finest artists in the country for businesses and new buildings. Most of it is modern, far removed from old-style scenes showing the early industries of a town or those inevitable statues of the pioneer woman striding into the sunset. Some of the new art springs right out at you as you go past and some of it needs a little neck-craning to find. Almost all of it is well worth going a few blocks out of the way to see.[64]

Rather than looking to the past for legitimation, this art, much like the companies that sponsored it, looked boldly to the future. Newer materials like aluminum and stainless steel, along with the works' extreme abstraction, signaled the progressiveness and modernity of corporate patrons. Abstract art was also meant to humanize the corporation through its emotional impact. In the face of the increase in automation that came with the introduction of computers, as well as the dizzying abstraction of corporate capitalism itself, art was intended to show the company's concern for its employees by visually enriching the everyday work environment, and for the general public by enhancing the urban environment. *Life*'s summer tourists epitomize the intended audience of the

[64] "*Life* Guide: Art in Buildings," *Life*, 9 August 1963, 14.

corporations listed in the guide, soaking up the modern art on display as they roam through city streets.

The cartoon that accompanies the guide, however, tells a different story. Instead of curious tourists discovering modern art in the streets of the big city, the cartoon shows an abstract sculpture gone wild (Figure 2.1). It menaces an archetypal businessman—as signaled by his suit and briefcase—who looks back in horror as the sculpture springs to life, its bared teeth echoing the sharp spikes of an abstract composition, with a raised pedestal offering the only barrier between man and monster. At first glance, the threat posed by the sculpture could be interpreted merely as the unintelligibility of abstract art, yet the cartoon merits further analysis. In fact, it incisively upends the message intended by its subject, Seymour Lipton's *Hero* (1957), a sculpture commissioned by the Inland Steel Company and installed in 1958 in the executive suite of a new corporate headquarters building in Chicago's Loop (Figure 2.2). Like Lipton's title, the cartoon anthropomorphizes the sculpture, which originally was intended to celebrate the steel industry. In a biting critique of the humanizing capacity of corporate art, however, the cartoon transforms Lipton's hero into a monster. The cartoon suggests that the public relations message of corporate sculpture commissions is clear; whether it is believable is a different matter.

Missing from the above are the architects who encouraged corporations to include art in their new headquarters buildings. This chapter addresses the rise of mid-twentieth-century corporate art commissions by using one of its greatest proponents, the architects Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, as a frame and examining the three significant abstract sculpture commissions for urban building lobbies realized by the firm in the United States during the 1950s: Harry Bertoia's screen (1954) at the Manufacturers Trust Company Bank (1951-54) on New York's Fifth Avenue; Richard Lippold's *Radiant "I"*

(1958) at the Inland Steel Company Headquarters Building (1955-58) in Chicago; and Alexander Calder's mobile (1959) for the Chase Manhattan Bank branch (1959) at 410 Park Avenue. Scholars have addressed these sculptures primarily within the terms of then-contemporary debates on how to integrate art and architecture, which revolved around questions about whether sculptors could maintain their artistic integrity while submitting to a modernist architect's vision of a building as a total work of art.[65] Although I do not discount the importance of this approach, in this chapter I address the place of SOM's architectural sculptures within the specific physical context of the mid-twentieth-century American city. Through formal analysis and close readings of contemporary criticism, I consider how SOM used abstract sculpture as a part of its architectural compositions to draw the viewer's gaze through the glass curtain wall into each building while at the same time visually projecting these sculptures as images out into the city. In SOM's architecture of the 1950s, transparent window walls and brilliant illumination appeared to dissolve distinctions between interior and exterior spaces, creating a space in dialogue with midcentury display culture that was intended to confuse lobby with streetscape, and visual art with commercial sign. By extending the experience of architecture to include the urban environment, SOM opened up a space to take in both sculpture and architecture as viewed from the street. During the 1950s, while SOM was still a young firm, it provided an influential model for using abstract sculpture as a marker within the city. A decade later, the firm and other organizations, including the federal government, transferred this model from inside corporate architecture into the open-air plazas of new civic spaces wrought by large-scale urban renewal.

[65]The best example of this approach is Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture*.

The historian Stuart Ewen has argued that during the 1950s the popularity of television encouraged corporations to focus increasingly on the visual: "the notion of *projecting an image* to a public that never assembled as such was becoming the ascendant definition of corporate public relations activity."[66] From the time the term "public relations" was coined, companies have endeavored to legitimize their power and to counter negative images by cultivating favorable impressions in the minds of consumers. On a more basic level, large corporations have labored simply to maintain a recognizable identity. As Edward Hall, Vice President of one of the earliest companies to recognize the value of public relations—the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) — complained in 1909, "The public does not know us… it has never seen us, never met us, does not know where we live, who we are, what our good qualities are. It simply knows that we are a corporation, and to the general public a corporation is a thing."[67] The "corporate image" solved this problem by providing the corporation with an image that was instantly recognizable. This image was intended to humanize the corporation by giving it a distinct personality that would appeal to its various publics, from stockholders and employees to consumers, potential customers, and members of the local community. It encompassed not just advertising, but also "trademarks, packaging, stationery, reception rooms, general offices, reports to stockholders, and color schemes," all of which, it was suggested, should "be saying the same things about the company."[68]

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[66]Stewart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 389.

[67]Hall quoted in Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Business Imagery in American Big Business* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998), 8. Marchand's book is a comprehensive history of public relations in the United States through the Second World War. See also Richard S. Tedlow, *Keeping the Corporate Image: Public Relations and Business, 1900-1950* (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1979).

[68]Pierre Martineau, "The Corporate Personality," in Lee H. Bristol Jr., ed., *Developing the Corporate Image* (New York: Scribner, 1960), 13. Ewen marks 1956 as the year when recognition of the power of images took off. Around this time, articles about the "corporate image" began to appear in both marketing and business journals. For example, see J. Gordon Lippincott and Walter P. Margulies, "The Corporate Look: A Problem in Design," *Public Relations Journal* 13 (December 1957): 4-6, 27 and Wilbur K.

The corporate image was defined most explicitly in SOM's architecture by the glass curtain wall, the gleaming skin of glass and steel that wrapped around each of the buildings considered in this chapter. The curtain wall fulfilled the twin imperatives of flexibility and standardization demanded by office building construction in the post-war period and allowed SOM to deliver maximum usable floor space at minimum cost. In its articulation of corporate organizational structure, the curtain wall became the "emblem of a powerful bureaucratic and technical rationalism" embraced by businessmen in general during the 1950s.[69] SOM tailored each design to suit its occupants through detailing, often using the client's product in a building's construction. For example, the architects highlighted Inland Steel's product with generous use of gleaming stainless steel throughout its headquarters building and especially in the building's façade; the electrically powered window washing machine featured at SOM's first office building, Lever House (1950-52), was ideally suited to the headquarters of a soap manufacturer. The curtain wall became an expression of the corporate image by symbolizing the company's product, creating a building-size billboard in the middle of the city. The lobby and plaza restated that message on the ground.[70]

McKee, "The Corporate Image," *Challenge* 6 (February 1958): 22-25. The first book-length studies, some based on conferences, appeared during the 1960s. See, for example, John W. Riley, Jr., ed., *The Corporation and Its Publics: Essays on the Corporate Image* (New York: Wiley, 1963); FHK Henrion and Alan Parkin, *Design Coordination and the Corporate Image* (London: Studio Vista; New York: Reinhold, 1967); and George Alexander Flanagan, *Modern Institutional Advertising* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967). The corporate image aspired to the same level of vertical integration achieved by industry itself, which helped corporations to produce and distribute their products by the most efficient means possible. Ironically, vertical integration had also contributed to a growing need for companies to differentiate themselves in the first place, as mechanization and standardization made products indistinguishable from each other.

[69]Joan Ockman, "Midtown Manhattan at Midcentury: Lever House and the International Style in the City," in Peter Madsen and Richard Plunz, eds., *The Urban Lifeworld* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 185-6. For more on the curtain wall's symbolism, see also Reinhold Martin, *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), especially chapter three, "The Physiognomy of the Office."

[70]For the tower as trademark and billboard, see Alexandra Lange, "Tower Typewriter and Trademark: Architects, Designers and the Corporate Utopia, 1956-1964" (Ph.D. diss., New York Univ., 2005),

SOM helped its clients to project a forward-looking image through innovative designs, yet the firm did not neglect the traditional expressive function of architecture. Craftsmen decorated the facades of early skyscrapers with emblems of their patrons, from the embossed terracotta motif that symbolized the fecundity of the Midwest's natural resources on Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange (1893-94) to the replicas of Chrysler radiator caps that adorn William Van Alen's Chrysler Building (1928-1930).[71] SOM found new ways to unite industrialized architecture and decoration. The direct expression of a company's product in the curtain wall is one example. Another is the firm's use of visual art in its buildings. Surprisingly, SOM partner William Hartmann reveals that the firm's use of art was rooted in the aesthetics of modern architecture, which explicitly rejected decoration:

> The modern architecture we identified with eliminated decoration. Basically it was an evolution from a handicraft kind of building technology to an industrialized building technology. That was the key to it. When you gave up the handicraft part, you gave up the artisan and the craftsmen who would carve limestone and wood and these different materials that led to the expression of a building. In industrialized architecture, you were using components that were made by machine, and decoration wasn't appropriate for the machine. So when you come to decorate an industrialized building, you decorate with an artist.[72]

The "decorations" described by Hartmann generally fall into two categories: first, paintings, sculpture, and works on paper purchased from galleries as decoration for public areas and private offices within the building; and second, sculpture commissioned from an artist specifically for the building. Like SOM's architecture, the art purchased for

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especially chapter three, "Tower as Trademark: The Corporate Curtain Wall From Lever House to Black Rock."

[71]For early skyscrapers in Chicago, see Joanna Merwood-Salisbury, *Chicago 1890: The Skyscraper and the Modern City* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009). For New York, see Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1996). For the Chrysler Building, see David Stravitz, *The Chrysler Building: Creating a New York Icon, Day by Day* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).

[72]Oral history of William Hartmann, interviewed by Betty Blum, CAO, 1991 (revised edition 2003), 78.

the office buildings addressed in this chapter was modern in spirit, much of it created around the same time as the architecture. It was made to conform to the corporate image through the client's collecting practices, including preferences for various styles as well as thematic and materials-based associations with the patron's industry. During this same period, SOM refined its approach to how design shaped the corporate image, eventually establishing an interior design department that gave the architects control over the entire building, inside and out. The expanding awareness that a carefully crafted corporate image was the key to success in modern business inspired the creation of public relations and human relations departments in many organizations. Visual art combined with modern office interiors to extend the architecture's symbolism of these dramatic changes in management style and culture. Art fell under the new organizational heading of public relations, with public relations specialists sitting on corporate art collection acquisition committees along with architects, executives, and museum curators.

Inside the office, modern art became a key component of an up-to-date office interior; from the street, commissioned sculpture became an overt symbol of the corporation. Rather than applying sculpture to the curtain wall, SOM used the façade's transparency to its advantage and sited sculpture inside the building, behind the glass walls. Sculpture identified the building at the scale of the pedestrian, much like an allegorical figure carved over a door, or even a sign that spelled out the building's name in earlier architecture. Commissioned sculptures were the most visible part of the art collections discussed in this chapter, yet these works fulfilled a different set of demands from a painting or sculpture placed inside an office. While art inside the office helped shape a total environment that became a backdrop for everyday business activities, lobby sculptures were focal points freighted with meaning about the patron company. They became an overt symbol of the corporation, much like a logo or trademark.

Whereas critics lauded SOM's corporate modernist towers as embodiments of the bureaucratic rationalism of American big business, they praised the art inside the buildings for the opposite reason. Modern art was seen as introducing humanist values to the architecture and, by extension, to the corporate image. By providing inviting quarters for employees as well as customers, corporations demonstrated that they cared about more than money. Furthermore, writers made explicit links between the expressive function of modern art and the emotional life of the corporation, adding another dimension to the "humanizing" force of public relations. As we will see, modern art's abstraction became an important factor in determining the value of art in the office. Modern architecture projected a forward-looking image for the organization it housed; abstract art reinforced this message.

In a much-cited article entitled "Art as Architectural Decoration," the critic Aline Saarinen considers the intelligibility of abstract art circa 1954:

> True, modern art frequently substitutes abstract or symbolic images for representational—but why not? Why does the architect fear them? Realistic, representational story telling [sic] is not only better taken care of by the comics, the camera, the movies and TV, but we live in an age that understands abstractions and signs and symbols. We accept them in their easiest forms in our daily life: we understand the Red Cross, X for US Steel, the twisting S-sign on the highway. On a higher level, we realize that abstract relations of colors and lines and forms and space—ordered and disciplined—can appeal to and lift the spirit.[73]

For Saarinen, the edifying story of a social realist mural painting and the symbolism of an allegorical sculpture have no place in modern life. Storytelling takes time, but the fast pace of the modern city requires signs and symbols that can be taken in at a glance. The only time allowed is the accumulated experience or familiarity that comes with repetition. To paraphrase the designer Herbert Bayer, it is through repetition that simplified abstract

[73]Aline Saarinen, "Art as Architectural Decoration," *Architectural Forum* 100 (June 1954): 135.

forms can make a place for themselves and remain recognizable in the world of symbols, whether as markers of corporate identity or of a specific location.[74]

Following Saarinen, I use the visual language of trademark design as a lens for understanding corporate sculpture commissions. The trademark not only relates these sculptures to the larger corporate identity programs of which they were a part, but also provides a different way to think through ideas about abstraction and visual communication during this period. Abstract sculpture humanized the corporation by showing that the company cared about more than money; art could reflect the corporate soul. At the same time, the explicit lack of content in abstract sculpture meshed well with the "free feeling" created by contemporary advertising. Like the increasingly abstract trademarks devised by graphic designers, abstract sculptures functioned as containers for a constellation of associations. Critics and, perhaps, other observers found that abstract sculpture possessed the same qualities of legibility and immediacy that made a good trademark stand out, whether on a product package or within the urban environment.

In what follows, I think about the sculptures commissioned by SOM from Bertoia, Lippold, and Calder through consideration of each sculpture's place within the design of a building, a larger corporate art collection, and finally a public relations program that strove to consolidate a distinctive image for each corporation. Before turning to the sculpture commissions SOM realized in the 1950s, however, it is important to trace the source of these achievements within the firm's architectural practice to better understand what was at stake in convincing corporate clients to invest in art.

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[74]See Herbert Bayer, "On Trademarks," in Egbert Jacobson, ed., *Seven Designers Look at Trademark Design* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1952).

SKIDMORE, OWINGS & MERRILL AFTER WORLD WAR II

SOM was founded in 1936, and in the years following World War II, the firm garnered a reputation for its fresh take on traditional architectural typologies.[75] From the start, founding partners Louis Skidmore and Nathaniel Owings set out to build in the vernacular of their age, using a modern vocabulary of simplified forms and new materials. They structured their firm like a "modern Gothic builders guild," as Owings put it, combining expertise in design as well as engineering, interiors, and urban planning in a group practice dedicated to having "both economy and aesthetics."[76] Skidmore and Owings established their partnership in Chicago, where the brothers-in-law had led the design team for the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition. Soon after, they launched a New York office with an eye toward attracting work for the 1939 New York World's Fair and added John O. Merrill, an engineer, to their partnership. The firm treated each new building as a design problem solved through careful study of the client's needs and projected future growth. Yet the firm retained the lesson of showmanship learned at the fairs, where "hard-line national corporations and basic industries across the continent were given concrete proof that the building dollar could be an advertising dollar; that architecture could be idea expressive as well as weather protective."[77]

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[75]For a comprehensive overview of the firm's work up to the present, see the monographs published by SOM, beginning with *SOM: Architecture of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1950-1962* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1962; New York: Monacelli Press, 2009). The firm also publishes *SOM Journal*. For more on SOM from the perspective of the 1950s, see "Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Architects, U.S.A.," *Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 18 (Autumn 1950): 4-21; "$2-Billion Worth of Design by Conference," *Business Week*, 4 December 1954, 96-97, 100-104; "The Architects from 'Skid's Row'," *Fortune*, January 1958, 137-140, 210, 212, 215; and "Designers for a Busy World: Mood for Working," *Newsweek*, 4 May 1959, 97-100. In addition to monographs on individual architects, more recent scholarly treatment of the firm includes Nicholas Adams, *Skidmore, Owings & Merrill: SOM Since 1936* (Milan: Electa Architecture, 2006) and Hyun Tae Jung, "Organization and Abstraction: The Architecture of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill from 1936 to 1956" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Univ., 2011).

[76]Nathaniel Owings, *The Spaces In Between: An Architect's Journey* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1973), 66.

[77]Ibid. 51.

None of the founding partners had a particular interest in visual art, but the men they invited to join the partnership did. Gordon Bunshaft and Hartmann, longtime leaders in SOM's New York and Chicago offices, respectively, collected art, sat on museum boards, and actively pursued art commissions for SOM's projects. Bunshaft, who joined the firm in 1937 and effectively controlled design at SOM through 1960, established close relationships with artists, in particular Isamu Noguchi, with whom he worked on at least six realized projects. Bunshaft followed the example of Mies van der Rohe in his use of sculpture to dramatize spatial axes and to fuse interior and exterior spaces.[78] Indeed, in SOM's architecture under Bunshaft, abstract sculpture became a crucial design element.[79] Hartmann, who joined the firm in 1945, focused his energy on sculpture for large-scale civic projects at SOM-designed building complexes, such as the Picasso sculpture (1967) at the Chicago Civic Center and Calder's *La Grande Vitesse* (1969) at Vandenberg Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which I discuss in my third chapter. Through the efforts of these two men, commissions for visual art became a defining characteristic of SOM's architecture.

A passion for art in modern architecture was not enough, however; the firm needed to persuade companies to pay for painting and sculpture commissions.[80] In this

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[78]See "Georg Kolbe in the Barcelona Pavilion," in Penelope Curtis, *Patio and Pavilion: The Place of Sculpture in Modern Architecture* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum; London: Ridinghouse, 2008).

[79]For Bunshaft, see Carol Herselle Krinsky, *Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill*, American monograph series (New York: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988) and David Jacobs, "The Establishment's Architect-plus," *New York Times Magazine,* 23 July 1972. See also Andrea O. Dean, "Bunshaft and Noguchi: An Uneasy But Highly Productive Architect-Artist Collaboration," *AIA Journal* 65 (October 1976): 52-54.

[80]Writing in the 1962 monograph on SOM, Henry-Russell Hitchcock observes how skills in the art of persuasion set the firm apart from other architects, "It is not irrelevant that several partners are themselves active and knowledgeable collectors of contemporary art; but so are several other rival architects who have had on the whole considerably less success in converting clients to their own tastes or in persuading them, regardless of personal taste, to spend corporation money on such often controversial extras." Hitchcock, introduction to *SOM 1950-1962*, 11. Among SOM's peers, Eero Saarinen matched the firm's success in realizing commissions for art in modern architecture and even designed St. Louis's *Gateway Arch* (1965),

endeavor they were assisted by a variety of people, including top-level executives who had lobbied to hire the firm for their companies' projects in the first place. As we will see, many of these executives were themselves avid art collectors who believed strongly in the place of art in modern architecture. Then it was up to the executives and SOM to convince other members of corporate boards not only to spend money on art, but more specifically on modern art. Curators from local museums were often consulted on the selection of artists, and sympathetic critics did their part to promote and explain the relationship between art and architecture. It was a calculated risk, since a controversy could spell disaster for an otherwise successful project. Yet the architects succeeded, and used the positive press prompted by early commissions to convince other more reluctant clients to invest in art, establishing a trend that was firmly entrenched by the early 1960s.

TERRACE PLAZA HOTEL

"In 1948 a new kind of hotel was opened in Cincinnati with great fanfare," declared the August 1956 issue of *Architectural Forum*. "Today, a second look reveals that its art has proved even more successful than its architecture."[81] It would be hard to overstate the influence that the Terrace Plaza Hotel, SOM's first major project to include commissioned paintings and sculpture, had on the firm's subsequent development. Murals by Joan Miró and Saul Steinberg, along with a mobile by Calder, were widely publicized and became touchstones in contemporary debates on the integration of art and modern architecture. They complimented the architecture's modern style and added an expressive element to the hotel interiors. Terrace Plaza proved to the firm and to

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the largest public sculpture of the era. He may have surpassed SOM's influence if not for his untimely death in 1961.

[81]"Terrace Plaza Revisited," *Architectural Forum* 105 (August 1956): 131. The magazine already had devoted an article to Terrace Plaza's art collection in advance of the building opening. See "Barroom Art in the Modern Manner," *Architectural Forum* 88 (April 1948): 148, 150.

prospective clients that the place of art in modern architecture was not just a matter of aesthetics; it was sound public relations.

The client, John J. Emery, did not set out to build a hotel. He began developing a half-block site on the edge of Cincinnati's central business district by signing leases with two department stores, J.C. Penney and Bond's. Then he sent the building program to six architecture firms and asked them to calculate the most profitable cap for the retail base. Emery was "not really an advocate of the International Style," but like many public-spirited developers, he believed "that a public building should reflect the spirit of the age and contain examples of the best contemporary art."[82] He was impressed by SOM's modern design, as well as their savvy calculation that a hotel would earn 2 percent more than an office building on the site. Furthermore, Emery "felt that precisely its architects' lack of experience in hotel design would make them more likely not only to come up with something unhackneyed but to work cooperatively with him."[83] This spirit of cooperation would extend to working with the artists commissioned to create art for the hotel.

In addition to being President of Thomas Emery's Sons, Inc., Emery also led the Cincinnati Art Museum board of trustees. The firm proposed an eleven-story hotel set atop the department stores at street level, the whole an ultramodern building faced in brick (Figure 2.3). With Cincinnati Art Museum curator Philip R. Adams and SOM interior designer Ben Baldwin as guides, Emery selected "appropriately 'fresh' works of top-flight contemporary artists" to match the hotel's non-traditional architecture.[84] In place of a chandelier for the lobby, Calder created a mobile that danced on the currents of

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[82]Oliver Wick, " 'Je vais t'emporter en amérique. Prépare-toi': A Long Road to Monumental Dimensions – Beyond Painting," in Elizabeth Hutton Turner and Oliver Wick, eds., *Calder Miró* (Washington, D.C.: Philip Wilson Publishers in collaboration with the Phillips Collection and Fondation Beyeler, 2004), 79.
[83]Joan Ockman, "Art, Soul of the Corporation: Patronage, Public Relations, and the Interrelations of Architecture and Art after World War II," *SOM Journal* 5 (2008): 172.
[84]"Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza," *Architectural Forum* 89 (December 1948): 84.

the hotel's state-of-the-art air conditioning system (Figure 2.4). Plastic light sculptures by James Davis floated off the wall behind the bar in the cocktail lounge. SOM also paid special attention to the hotel's two dining rooms. Steinberg painted a 1,080-square-foot mural that surveyed everyday life in Cincinnati for the lobby level Skyline Room. The star of the program was Miró's abstract mural for the penthouse restaurant, which the MoMA showcased in its lobby prior to the mural's installation in Cincinnati (Figure 2.5).[85]

The mural's appearance in the museum paradoxically underscored its difference from Miró's studio art. During World War II, Miró had worked on a series of paintings that he called *Constellations*. Despite their small size, the compositions suggested works of much larger dimensions with free, spontaneous drawing: "The artist, disillusioned by war, hoped these images or expressions of an ephemeral poetic force would speak directly to people's hearts."[86] According to Oliver Wick, the mural for Terrace Plaza was an expression of these ideas, which would resonate in Miró's work for years to come. Yet praise for the mural was based purely on its success as decoration, even if a modern master painted it. Of the mural, MoMA curator James Thrall Soby writes:

> Through constant revisions, with painstaking conscience toward plastic balance and range of intensity, [Miró] has created a decoration whose effect is spontaneous and exuberant, almost headlong. We do not need to know precisely what the panel's subject is or means. It is designed to beguile and stimulate, not to puzzle or tax.[87]

Soby's observations are curious coming from a curator, but they were calculated to head off criticism on at least two fronts. To those proponents of high art who might denigrate

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[85]The best account of the Calder and Miró commissions is Wick, "Beyond Painting." For Steinberg and Davis, see Ockman, "Soul of the Corporation."
[86]Wick, "Beyond Painting," 69.
[87]Press release, "Museum of Modern Art Shows Newly Commissioned Mural by Joan Miró," 3 March 1948, http://www.moma.org/learn/resources/press_archives/1940s/1948 (accessed 1 December 2011).

the mural for its intended destination in a restaurant, Soby offers an argument for its utility as decoration. The bright colors and perhaps even the abstraction of Miró's mural would create a distinctive atmosphere for the hotel's Gourmet Room, as intended by the artist. To those at the other end of the spectrum, who might object to the mural's abstraction, Soby makes the same point but to a different purpose: because the mural is meant to be decorative, its meaning is irrelevant. He continues, "[I]t is meant to be absorbed pleasurably rather than studied, like music heard through a summer window." Critic Aline Louchheim makes a similar case in the *New York Times*, advising readers not to look for meaning in the mural, but simply to enjoy it: "The function and success of this mural are deliberately as decoration. In fact, it further substantiates the growing conviction that extreme abstract painting is most suitable as a part of modern décor." She goes on to quote Emery, who offers his own advice on the best way to appreciate the mural: "The Cincinnati Modern Art Society has prepared the city for such art, but there will probably be a lot of controversy… Yet I believe that what is not accepted as a significant masterpiece may seem very charming over a few drinks in a cocktail lounge."[88]

The example of Terrace Plaza demonstrates how art sited outside of museum walls was assumed to fulfill a different set of demands from studio art. These demands were set in part by the aesthetics of the architectural context. The Terrace Plaza Hotel's modern interiors eschewed fussy wood paneling and wallpaper in favor of stainless steel and marble, a stripped-down aesthetic that nevertheless made "every plane, every surface and color, carry its freight of decorative expression."[89] As project manager Bill Brown

[88]Aline B. Louchheim, "New Miró Mural Placed on Display," *New York Times*, 3 March 1948.
[89]"Cincinnati's Terrace Plaza," 84.

put it, art was "framed by the architecture as a complement to the décor."[90] In subsequent projects, SOM made visual art integral to its architectural design, going so far as to include sculpture in building models. This was no guarantee, however, that sculpture in architecture would be realized; this was the lesson of Lever House.

LEVER HOUSE

"Kind of barren." So concludes Bunshaft's evaluation of the plaza at Lever House, published in *Newsweek* a little over seven years after the building opened in April 1952.[91] By most accounts Lever House should have been a source of unqualified pride for the architect, who was lead designer on the project, for the building came to define the design aesthetic of SOM. Lever House's green and blue tinted glass curtain wall quickly became iconic, not just as good advertising for Lever Brothers, but as a symbol for the future American city (Figure 2.6). Vincent R. Impellitteri, Mayor of New York City, went so far as to call Lever House "the building of tomorrow which promises to set the pattern for the city of tomorrow."[92] The building was also seen as expressing the benevolence of corporate America, boasting light-filled offices, air conditioning, a rooftop recreation area for employees, and the large open ground floor plaza. Its lush green garden and sumptuous materials created an urban oasis on Park Avenue that commentators praised as a gesture of generosity since rental-income-producing stores were the norm. But to Bunshaft's eye, the building would remain imperfect and the plaza empty, perhaps even when filled with people. As the architect told *Newsweek*, "We were going to put sculpture there… but the Lever people changed their minds."[93]

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[90]Brown quoted in Wetenhall, "Modern Public Sculpture," 169.
[91]"Mood for Working," *Newsweek*, 98.
[92]Impellitteri quoted in "New Lever Glass House Dazzles New Yorkers," *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, 29 April 1952. Cited in Adams, *SOM Since 1936*, 64.
[93]"Mood for Working," *Newsweek*, 98.

The plaza space resulted from SOM's innovative interpretation of New York City's 1916 zoning law, which permitted a tower of unlimited height without setbacks covering 25 percent of the lot. The twenty-four-story tower at Lever House rose out of a three-story donut-shaped base on piers, creating a rooftop terrace adjacent to the fourth-floor employee cafeteria and a large open plaza on the ground floor. A raised marble platform planted with shrubs and a willow tree extended across the well of light created by the third-story donut above it. The platform appeared to pierce the glass-walled lobby, eliding the gap between inside and out implied by the lobby's transparent walls. The ground floor strip of greenery ran parallel to Park Avenue, drawing passersby into a refuge from the surrounding city.

Building on the success of Terrace Plaza, SOM made sculpture integral to the Lever House design concept. A preliminary model features a raised platform ringed with greenery that supports a long white lozenge-shaped form, which represents the architect's vision for the plaza sculpture (Figure 2.7). The long white lozenge shape appears to hover over the platform when viewed from above, its rounded form in stark contrast with the sharp angles of the building that rises around it. We can imagine the sculpture's scale as being slightly larger than the human body. Viewed from the plaza level, it would mark a transition from the scale of the building to that of the pedestrian. As the focal point of the space, it defines the plaza's function as a place to look at art. The plaza, then, is not simply a garden; it is a sculpture garden.

For the commission Bunshaft initially approached Jacques Lipchitz, who proposed a giant ball for the open courtyard. The architect felt "that it would… obscure the pedestrians' view of his architectural design" and concluded, "Not in my lifetime."[94]

[94]Bunshaft quoted in Wetenhall, "Modern Public Sculpture," 171.

Next he contacted Noguchi, who signed a contract to produce a model of sculptures for the plaza in September 1951, a year and a half after architectural plans for the headquarters building were finalized and made public.[95] In his proposal for Lever House, Noguchi built on SOM's initial concept for a sculpture garden in a raised planter, turning the platform into a stage for stone sculpture and greenery (Figure 2.8). The main element was a circular pool with three carved granite columns representing the family. Noguchi's sculpture seems an appropriate symbol for a corporation, many of which have represented themselves as a family, but Lever Brothers declined to execute Noguchi's abstract marble landscape, and the building opened without sculpture in April 1952.[96]

In her review of Lever House for the *New York Times*, Louchheim hints at the benefits sculpture would have provided:

> This spectator longs for some organic, enlivening shapes to play a counterpoint with the rectilinear regularity of the building and to make dynamic transitions from arcade to lobby and from the street level through the open well, to the cafeteria terraces. There seems to be a need for some arresting element to give the spatial area human as well as architectural meaning.[97]

The fact that another proposal was commissioned from Noguchi in February 1953 shows that Lever Brothers agreed; nevertheless, this proposal, which retained the platform and pool but substituted different sculptural elements for the family, including a take on Constantin Brancusi's *Endless Column* (1918), was not realized either. Noguchi blamed the situation on suspicions about his new bride's Communist ties. In light of the rejection of his design for an abstract landscape at the United Nations playground around the same

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[95]Lever Brothers purchase order for a preliminary model, Lever House file, Noguchi Museum and Archives, Long Island City, NY.

[96]Noguchi also proposed seating elements dispersed among the building's stainless steel-clad columns. For details, see the chapter on Lever House in Ana Maria Torres, *Isamu Noguchi: A Study of Space* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2000). The family was the theme for Noguchi's sculptures at SOM's Connecticut General Insurance Company Headquarters, completed in 1957.

[97]Aline Louchheim, "Newest Building in the New Style," *New York Times*, 27 April 1952.

time, he also may have suspected that abstract art was not to the executives' liking.[98] Correspondence shows that finances were another factor.[99] In a building already over budget, it was difficult for SOM to justify the expenditure of additional funds on sculpture. Lever Brothers dropped the commission permanently.[100]

MANUFACTURERS TRUST COMPANY BANK

In March 1953, just one month after Lever Brothers commissioned a new study from Noguchi for the plaza at Lever House, SOM contracted with Bertoia to create a sculpture for the Manufacturers Trust Company Bank.[101] More specifically, Bertoia would design a hand-wrought metal screen for the main banking hall.[102] Whereas Noguchi's sculpture was added to the Lever House model after the fact, SOM included Bertoia's sculpture in the presentation model for Manufacturers Trust. As far as the client and the press were concerned, the building did not exist without the sculpture.

The bank's president, Horace "Hap" C. Flanigan, hired SOM to address a problem he had noticed during the Great Depression; namely, that the neo-classical marble temple of conventional bank architecture posed a big problem if the bank failed since the distinctive building type could not easily be put to another use. SOM answered his request for a more flexible design with a glass curtain walled box "as transparent as

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[98]Masayo Duus, *The Life of Isamu Noguchi: Journey without Borders*, trans. Peter Duus (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2004), 267-68. On the playground, see Thomas B. Hess, "The Rejected Playground," *Art News* 51 (April 1952): 15.

[99]A letter dated 31 December 1953 from Donovan, Leisure, Newton & Irvine states the project will not go ahead due to costs. Lever House file, Noguchi Museum and Archives, Long Island City, NY.

[100]When a developer restored the building in 2001, the seating elements designed by Noguchi were added to the plaza. Allen Freeman, "Proving Ground," *Landscape Architecture* 95 (January 2005): 88-95.

[101]Harry Bertoia to Gordon Bunshaft, 25 March 1953. Harry Bertoia Papers, AAA. Bertoia first presented the architects with preliminary studies of the screen, then about a month later created scale units to show the client, which were included in the building model.

[102]In addition, one of Bertoia's *Cloud* sculptures was hung from the ceiling over the escalator that linked the ground floor with the mezzanine level.

an aquarium"[103] (Figure 2.9). The design reflected fundamental shifts in the banking industry that had taken place after the Great Depression, when deposits became federally insured. As Flanigan told *Architectural Record*: "[B]anking today is selling a service, and is to a great extent comparable with department stores and specialty shops where the aim is to provide inviting quarters and an attractive atmosphere as well as to sell quality merchandise."[104] To that end, Manufacturers Trust hired Eleanor Le Maire, a specialist in department store display, as the interior design consultant for the project.[105] Illuminated ceilings with high candlepower fixtures dematerialized glass walls and showcased what was inside the bank both day and night, "an old merchandising trick," according to *Architectural Forum*, that expressed the new retail-orientation of banking.[106]

Situated on Fifth Avenue, a major shopping street and pedestrian thoroughfare, Manufacturers Trust was in direct dialogue with the thriving window display culture of the early twentieth-century city. While television and the post-war movement to the suburbs contributed to an eventual decline in the custom of strolling and window-shopping, particularly at night, historian Leonard Marcus describes how, as recently as the mid-fifties, "hundreds of people gathered, complete with police barricades, along the

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[103]Jack Alexander, "The Bank That Has No Secrets," *Saturday Evening Post*, 30 November 1957, 36.

[104]Flanigan quoted in "The Record Reports," *Architectural Record* 114 (October 1953): 10.

[105]Eleanor Le Maire (d. 1970) began her design career in 1929 with the interiors of a Bullock's department store on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles. She is known for her long-standing relationship with Neiman-Marcus and also designed stores for Burdine's in Florida and Rich's in Atlanta. Following her work for Manufacturers Trust on Fifth Avenue, Le Maire undertook a long-range modernization program for the bank's 112 branches. For more on Le Maire, see "Prime Mover without Pretenses: Business Interiors by E. Le Maire," *Interiors* 116 (May 1957): 118-24 and Eleanor Le Maire, "American Designer's Color Credo," *American Fabrics* 32 (1955): 86-7. Le Maire's work at Manufacturers Trust is recounted in detail in "Manufacturers Trust Company – New Midtown Branch: 510 Fifth Ave. Fact Sheet on Work of Eleanor Le Maire Interior Design Consultant," typescript, Box 1, Eleanor Le Maire Papers, AAA.

[106]"Modern Architecture Breaks Through the Glass Barrier," *Architectural Forum* 101 (December 1954): 104. SOM's use of the luminous ceiling at Manufacturers Trust was an important precedent for the illumination of the Seagram Building by Mies van der Rohe, architect, and Richard Kelly, lighting designer. See Dietrich Neumann, *Architecture of the Night: The Illuminated Building* (New York: Prestel, 2002) and Margaret Maile Petty, "Illuminating the Glass Box: The Lighting Designs of Richard Kelly," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 66 (June 2007): 194-219.

window banks of the New York stores known for the best displays."[107] Contemporary critics praised Manufacturers Trust as "the most exciting show window on a street of show windows" and "the epitome of showmanship."[108] In large part the window dressing amounted to the business of banking that took place in elegantly appointed interiors visible through the building's glass walls, but the main attraction at street level was the bank vault (Figure 2.10). While bank vaults were typically hidden away in the basement, SOM called on industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss to restyle the vault door and then placed the vault 10' behind the glass on Fifth Avenue, a spectacle that reportedly drew constant crowds.[109] SOM left the Fifth Avenue façade of the building unbroken, emphasizing the parallels with show window retail display, and located the bank entrance on 43rd, the minor street, rather than on Fifth Avenue.

Responsibility for visual art at Manufacturers Trust was divided between Le Maire in her role as interior design consultant and the architects. SOM collaborated with Bertoia on the architectural screen, the work of art most closely tied to the building. Le Maire, known for her creative use of color as a fundamental element of interior design, selected a group of paintings, works on paper, and smaller sculptures for the bank's most exclusive spaces: the board room, executive dining room, and president's office. A writer for *Interiors* magazine describes how "art works [sic] were carefully studied… for appropriate feeling as well as colors."[110] These works of art were not purchased as a formal art collection for the bank. Instead, the selection of modern art was rooted purely in the aesthetics of the building, as at Terrace Plaza, and fine-tuned to complement the

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[107]Leonard Marcus, *The American Store Window* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1978), 49.
[108]Minoru Yamasaki and Alan Burnham, quoted in "One Hundred Years of Significant Building 11: Commerce," *Architectural Record* 121 (April 1957): 203.
[109]Lewis Mumford, "Crystal Lantern," *New Yorker*, 13 November 1954, 200.
[110]"The Manufacturers Trust Company," *Interiors* 114 (January 1955): 133.

color schemes of individual offices. Although more interior decoration than art collection, it is worth briefly considering these artworks because of the important precedent they set.

The building was SOM's first to feature art purchased specifically for executive offices.[111] Much as they purchased art to hang in their homes, businessmen had long bought paintings and sculptures to decorate their workspaces. Corporate collecting originated in 1939 when International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) invited Alfred Barr to assemble nearly eighty paintings for its exhibition at the New York World's Fair. During the 1940s, companies such as Encyclopedia Britannica and the Miller Company followed IBM's lead by purchasing tightly curated collections related to their products or industry that were circulated as exhibitions to educate the public and to demonstrate corporate support for the arts. Companies like the Container Corporation of America employed artists to create paintings for advertisements or used art from the open market in advertising campaigns. Pepsi-Cola sponsored art competitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which included prizes and a calendar featuring reproductions of winning paintings.[112] These one-time projects had the feel of public relations stunts, and by the early 1950s critics encouraged corporations to use art in a

[111]Oral history of Gordon Bunshaft, interviewed by Betty J. Blum, CAO, 1990 (revised edition 2000), 174.
[112]The topic of corporations and the arts is a huge subject that has received relatively little attention from scholars. For a history of visual art and advertising, see Michele Bogart, *Artists, Advertising, and the Borders of Art* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995), especially chapter six, "Artists and Organizations." For a concise history of corporate collecting during the first half of the twentieth century, see the introductory essay by Mitchell Douglas Kahan in *Art Inc.: American Paintings from Corporate Collections* (Montgomery, Ala.: Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in association with Brandywine Press, 1979). For IBM's 1939 exhibition, which traveled to the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco, see *Contemporary Art of 79 Countries* (International Business Machines Corporation, 1939). For the Miller collection, see Henry Russell Hitchcock, *Painting Toward Architecture* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1948). For the Container Corporation, see Egbert Jacobson, *Modern Art in Advertising: Designs for Container Corporation of America* (Chicago: Paul Theobald, 1937). Pepsi's sponsorship of art eventually resulted in a sculpture garden for its Purchase, New York headquarters. See Donald M. Kendall and Donna Stein, *The Donald M. Kendall Sculpture Gardens at PepsiCo* (PepsiCo, 1986).

more holistic manner.[113] The idea that companies should purchase art for the office grew out of this sentiment and developed over the course of the decade, in large part through SOM's example.

Unlike Leigh Block of Inland Steel and David Rockefeller of the Chase Manhattan Bank, the corporate executives considered later in this chapter, Manufacturers Trust President Flanigan did not collect art and "never professed to understand the abstractions." According to the *Saturday Evening Post*, "Miss Le Maire would pick up an abstraction and have it installed. Flanigan, jolted on seeing it for the first time, would stew over it for a week and then, almost invariably, O.K. its purchase." His agreement to devote company funds to art apparently was rooted purely in the aesthetics of the building. As Flanigan told the *Saturday Evening Post*, "[T]hey seem to belong in a building of this kind."[114] He believed that modern architecture projected a forward-looking image for the organization it housed and that abstract art reinforced this message. Critics identified paintings and sculptures by Fernand Léger, Pavel Tchelitchew, Mark Tobey, Afro, Steinberg, Ben Shahn, and other artists installed in the bank when it opened.[115] By calling the work of these artists "abstractions" rather than modern art, Flanigan was not necessarily describing the appearance of the artworks so much as using the rhetoric of bewilderment and confusion inspired by "abstract" art to underscore the

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[113]See, for example, Aline B. Louchheim's criticism of Pepsi's and Encyclopedia Britannica's collecting practices in "Business, Artists and Patronage," *New York Times*, 29 October 1950. She writes, "I believe the only sound relationship between business and art is one in which business forgets sugar-coated notions of patronage and instead supports art because it is useful."

[114]Flanigan quoted in "The Bank That Has No Secrets," 106.

[115]Ada Louise Huxtable, "Bankers' Showcase," *Arts Digest* 29 (1 December 1954): 13. I have been unable to locate a checklist of art at Manufacturers Trust. While Le Maire selected works of art for the fifth floor, she chose not to include the art in her detailed written accounts of the building. Only later, when the corporate art collecting trend took off during the later 1960s, did she begin to list this aspect of the project in biographical statements.

Bank's adventurous spirit and to create an image of Manufacturers Trust as a bold and exciting organization in the eyes of the public.

For the critic Mumford, modern art did not have to be sensationalized to bring something important to Manufacturers Trust. He believed that modern art's expressive qualities signaled the introduction of humanist values to the office. In his review of Manufacturers Trust, he observes how works of visual art "bring into this highly rationalized interior some of the more subjective emotional elements that are usually absent from the surface operations of a banker's mind, and certainly absent from the kind of art that banks have in general patronized."[116] Modern prints, paintings, and sculptures provided a welcome contrast to the architecture and humanized both architecture and the corporate image by showing that the bankers at Manufacturers Trust were not concerned solely with money. The "subjective emotional elements" of modern art revealed that the corporation had a soul.

The sculptural screen created by Bertoia is the ultimate luxury decorative element at the same time that it is the largest and most publicly sited work of art in the building, hinting at the less accessible art on the executive floor (Figure 2.11). Whereas the art selected by Le Maire and Flanigan had to match the color scheme of blue, pewter, and silver on the executive floor, it was the golden bronze tones of Bertoia's screen that dictated the interior design choices on the second floor. Unlike the historical murals of traditional bank decoration, the screen did not tell a story and had no overt significance. Similar to Miró's mural at Terrace Plaza, it was envisioned as a backdrop for everyday activities. Yet as we will see, critics directly related the screen to the business of banking, making it an instant symbol for Manufacturers Trust.

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[116]Mumford, "Crystal Lantern," 201.

Bunshaft became acquainted with Bertoia through Hans and Florence Knoll, who had exhibited the artist's work in their furniture showrooms. Knoll Associates had hired Bertoia as a designer in 1950 under a unique set of circumstances: the firm retained the artist for a period of experimentation and research, with the hope that his experiments in wire sculpture would lead to innovations in furniture design.[117] In a studio set up in Knoll's Pennsylvania factory, Bertoia created a line of open metalwork chairs, which debuted in 1952 with the standing metal sculpture screens that he developed alongside them (Figure 2.12).[118] These *Multiplane Constructions* are composed of small metal plates welded to a wire framework that echoes the chairs' wire cage shells.[119] In his sculpture, Bertoia used an acetylene torch to melt brass, nickel, and copper to the enameling steel plates, creating textured surfaces that refract light.

Bertoia sometimes gave his sculptures titles that refer to the natural world: *Sunflower*, *Cloud*, *Tree*, and *Dandelion*. Nevertheless, his constructions resemble less the

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[117]Hans and Florence Knoll established Knoll Associates, Inc. in 1946, eventually licensing classic Bauhaus furniture such as Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona chair and commissioning designs from Noguchi and Eero Saarinen, among others artists and architects. During the early 1950s, Knoll Associates and SOM both rented space in an office building located at 575 Madison Avenue. Knoll Planning Unit, the influential interior design division of Knoll Associates, consulted on several SOM projects, notably Connecticut General Life Insurance Company (1954-57). Bunshaft recalled that Hans Knoll gave him a Bertoia sculpture as a Christmas gift. See Oral history of Gordon Bunshaft, 174. For more on Knoll, see Brian Lutz, *Knoll: A Modernist Universe* (New York: Rizzoli, 2010) and Bobbye Tigerman, "'I Am Not a Decorator': Florence Knoll, the Knoll Planning Unit and the Making of the Modern Office," *Journal of Design History* 20, no. 1 (2007): 61-74.

[118]Bertoia (1915-1978), a graduate of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, worked with Charles Eames on furniture design during the 1940s in California. A dispute over design credit for the Eames chair caused Bertoia to find other work. He spent several years designing reports for Point Loma Naval Electronics Laboratory, where motion studies conducted by the lab furthered his interest in anthropometry and industrial design. He probably encountered Florence Knoll at Cranbrook, where she was also a student. The Eames chair was manufactured by Herman Miller, Knoll's greatest rival. Royalties from the chairs commissioned by Knoll helped Bertoia to focus exclusively on sculpture by 1953. For more on Cranbrook, see *Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925-1950* (New York: Abrams, in association with the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983).

[119]I draw this nomenclature from *Harry Bertoia* (Allentown, Pa.: Allentown Art Museum, 1975). For more on Bertoia, see the two monographs by June Kompass Nelson, *Harry Bertoia, Sculptor* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1970) and *Harry Bertoia, Printmaker* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1988), and Nancy N. Schiffer and Val O. Bertoia, *The World of Bertoia* (Atglen, Pa.: Schiffer Publishing, 2003).

world as observed through everyday vision than nature as seen through the microscope. One critic compared Bertoia to Calder, making a valuable distinction between the two artists' work: "[Bertoia] does not imitate nature as Calder does; he is in competition with nature and wants to make it over again."[120] The screens' standardized units recall the organic growth of cellular structures, chemical crystals, and magnetized metal shavings. They also could be elaborated *ad infinitum* like any modular system, a visual analogue for the techniques of mass production through which Knoll manufactured the chairs Bertoia designed, whose success eventually allowed Bertoia to focus on sculpture full-time. But rather than the factory, for contemporary observers Bertoia's sculptures conjured the laboratory. Critics touted Bertoia's work in sculpture and furniture design as "pure design research," comparable with corporate research and development:

> His counterpart in the sciences has long been a familiar sight in big corporations such as DuPont—which employs scientists to engage solely in pure research at the company's expense, on the theory that the by-product of such pure research may well prove practically applicable.[121]

The sculptures embodied the "fundamental principles that unite the fine arts" as deduced by Bertoia and then used in the practical field of furniture design.[122] Like scientific experimentation, visual art's discoveries could be used to remake the everyday world. In this case, Bertoia's experiments would lead to a new kind of architectural sculpture.

Bertoia's small-scale screens almost immediately suggested possibilities for enlargement; on a visit to Bertoia's new studio in Pennsylvania, the architect Eero Saarinen—a colleague from Bertoia's school days at the Cranbrook Academy of Art and a fellow designer for Knoll—asked Bertoia to devise a screen for the General Motors

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[120]"Harry Bertoia at Knoll Associates," *Art News* 51(January 1953): 44.

[121]"Pure Design Research," *Architectural Forum* 97 (September 1952): 143.

[122]Exhibition brochure, "Sculpture, Paintings, Furniture by Harry Bertoia," 10-20 December 1952, Knoll Associates, Inc., 575 Madison Avenue, New York City. Bertoia artist file, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Technical Center (1948-56), then under construction in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.[123] The commission from Saarinen gave Bertoia an opportunity to work on a scale he would not have attempted of his own initiative. Bertoia had no studio so he built the screen outdoors in sections, hiring an assistant to help with the work. He coped with the screen's enormous size by taking its composition one day at a time:

> When doing(?) [sic] small scale, in my mind I will think of it as being big, big as it should be and then when I actually came [sic] to do it in the actual scale I have to reverse my mentality, think of it as rather small, you know. Well that much can be done in a couple of days or this much in order to really force my courage in tackling it because if I had said it all at once I really would have shied away from it.[124]

The screen took about a year to build, and Bertoia was disappointed when it was installed in the cafeteria at General Motors (Figure 2.13). The screen was set far from the window. As a result, Bertoia felt it picked up very little light. Outdoors, the screen worked as a light modulator with a play of light and opaque surfaces; inside the cafeteria, it became a dark silhouette.

When Bunshaft told Bertoia the size of the commission for Manufacturers Trust, the sculptor dropped the telephone.[125] At 70' in length and 22' in height, it is nearly twice the size of the screen for General Motors. Bertoia shifted his operations to a garage near his home to accomplish the work for Manufacturers Trust. The basic unit of the design is a 7 ½" by 30" metal panel. There are eight hundred panels arranged in varying depths throughout the screen. Bertoia assembled the screen over a period of eight months in six 10' by 16' by 2' sections to accommodate transportation by truck from Pennsylvania. In New York, the sections were arranged in six vertical tiers and held in place by steel

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[123]Joan Marter, "Sculpture and Painting," in *Cranbrook Vision*, 256.
[124]Oral history of Harry Bertoia, interviewed by Paul Cummings, 20 June 1972, typescript, 19, AAA.
[125]Ibid. 20.

connecting bars. Spotlights and floodlights concealed behind aluminum plates in the ceiling illuminated the screen.

Considered in formal terms, the screen restated and inverted the luminous ceiling used throughout the bank's first two floors. The screen's metal panels take the form of long rectangles similar to the ceiling grid. But whereas the gridded support in the ceiling was opaque, it was the screen's panels that were solid, creating a play of opposites between ceiling and screen wall. The screen's 2' depth further encouraged a play of transparency and opacity, especially if viewed from a slight angle rather than head-on. In many ways the screen echoed the form of the building itself, a shimmering apparition that fluctuated between solid volume and void.

Bertoia's sculpture for Manufacturers Trust glowed under the building's luminous ceiling and commanded the spectator's attention. It was interior decoration but became exterior architectural ornament, too, when viewed through the glass curtain wall, drawing the visitor's gaze upwards to the bank's mezzanine level. The screen turned out to be so important a symbol of the bank that Manufacturers Trust used a detailed rendering of its surface for the cover of the promotional brochure published in celebration of the branch's opening (Figure 2.14).[126]

Critics noted the screen's integration into the overall architectural scheme as well as its symbolic significance. In her review of Manufacturers Trust, Ada Louise Huxtable praised the high level of cooperation between artist and architect and emphasized the screen's contrast with the rest of the structure as central to its meaning: "The screen wall is a note of Byzantine splendor in an otherwise austerely elegant interior. Brilliant gold in color, primitive in texture and pattern, it is the perfect accent for the polished

[126]Eleanor Le Maire Papers, AAA.

surroundings."[127] *Architectural Forum* focused more explicitly on symbolism and called the screen "the most appropriate art a bank ever had, looking like a great wall of abstract wealth."[128] Mumford's analysis touched on points made by both critics, but he pushed his reading of the screen's metaphorical connotations even further:

> The screen is a feature that I gravely doubted when I saw the preliminary illustrations, but the truth is that it lifts the whole composition to a higher plane… Though it is purely abstract, making no effort at symbolic significance, it humanizes these quarters even more effectively than the living plants, mainly because it suggests something frail, incomplete, yet unexpected and defiant of rational statement and thus lovable, a note that is not audible in most of the representative architectural expressions of our time.[129]

In contrast with the iconic vault door, for contemporary critics the screen served a more ambiguous, expressive function in the building, whether as a complementary element that "accented" and "humanized" SOM's "rational" architecture, or else through its contribution to the overall spectacle that was Manufacturers Trust by signifying the wealth locked away in Dreyfuss' vault.

The bank branch was a public relations coup for SOM and Manufacturers Trust, and the *Saturday Evening Post* called the branch "an advertising jack pot."[130] After two years of operation, the annual rate for new accounts was three times that of the branch's former building, a neoclassical marble temple located just across the street. The bank even became a tourist attraction for visitors to New York. True to the dictates of the corporate image, its success was due not only to SOM's fresh design and flair for showmanship, but also to the unified message advertised by each constituent part of the building in the same stylistic vocabulary. The transparent glass curtain wall, Dreyfuss'

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[127]Huxtable, "Banker's Showcase," 13.
[128]"Big Banking and Modern Architecture Finally Connect," *Architectural Forum* 30 (September 1953): 136.
[129]Mumford, "Crystal Lantern," 202.
[130]"The Bank That Has No Secrets," 37.

show window vault, and Bertoia's gold-toned screen produced a spectacle that became instantly identified with Manufacturers Trust, similar in effect to a giant sign or billboard in the middle of the city. In fact, the architects relegated the only conventional sign on the building that spelled out "Manufacturers Trust Company Bank" to the entrance on 43rd, the minor street, rather than Fifth Avenue.

INLAND STEEL COMPANY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

Several years after the Inland Steel Company opened its new headquarters, the corporation contacted a public relations firm to survey the building's name recognition amongst Chicagoans.[131] Specifically, Inland Steel wanted to know how its investment measured up to its main rival in architecture and luxury office space rentals, the Prudential Building (1952-55) (Figure 2.15). Completed three years before Inland Steel, the Prudential was "no design experiment." It hewed to the model of pre-World War II architecture like Rockefeller Center with a vertical limestone slab "conceived as a gigantic spectacle dominating the Chicago lakefront." Rather than using art as architectural ornament, architects Naess and Murphy employed signs. The Prudential's name glowed along the penthouse wall in 16' high neon letters, reportedly visible at night from Gary, Indiana, thirty-five miles away.[132] The architects hired sculptor Alfonso Iannelli, who had collaborated with Frank Lloyd Wright on Midway Gardens (1914), to carve the Prudential's logo, the "Rock of Gibraltar," directly onto the building's façade (Figure 2.16).

In 1958 Block, the Inland Steel Company Vice President in charge of the organization's headquarters building project, told *Time* magazine, "We wanted a building

[131]"Building Recognition Survey 8/60," Inland Steel Company Collection, CRA.
[132]"Chicago's Prudential Building," *Architectural Forum* 97 (August 1952): 91.

we could be proud of. One that spelled steel."[133] In contrast with the sign that literally spelled out the Prudential's name, SOM treated structure and engineering as ornament and advertisement (Figure 2.17). The building boasted a number of firsts, including the longest clear span of any office building ever built. Office floors uninterrupted by columns gave SOM maximum flexibility in devising the layout for offices. The exterior columns that held the structure's weight were pulled out from the curtain wall and articulated with stainless steel fins that projected from the façade. During the day, the stainless steel cladding made the entire building appear to glow, albeit not so brightly as to be visible to the residents of Gary.

Steel's importance to the war effort had contributed to greater federal oversight of the industry. In the wake of the establishment of price controls and labor regulations, steel producers turned to marketing and client relations to distinguish their companies from competitors. In 1953, Chicago area steel producers topped Pittsburgh, the long-time hub of the steel industry, in overall output. As the only Big Steel firm headquartered in Chicago, Inland Steel aimed to create a symbol of the region's rise as the center of U.S. steel production and of its own ambitions in the industry with a tall office building, the first to rise in the Loop, Chicago's core business district, since the completion of the Field Building in 1934.[134] In bringing the Loop's construction lull to an end, Inland Steel

[133]Block quoted in "How to Spell Steel," *Time*, 10 February 1958, 82.

[134]The Inland Steel Company published two histories of the organization: Wayde Grinstead, *Fifty Years of Inland Steel, 1893-1943* (Inland Steel Company, 1943) and Jack H. Morris, *Inland Steel at 100: Beginning a second century of progress, 1893-1993* (Inland Steel Industries, Inc., 1993). Inland achieved peak employment in its mills during the late 1960s and then followed the rest of the U.S. steel industry into a sharp decline over the next two decades. The British steel producer Ispat International purchased Inland Steel in 1998. For more on the company around the time it moved into the headquarters building, see Herbert Solow, "Inland Steel Does It Again," *Fortune*, July 1958, 94-100, 230, 232.

also initiated the renewal of downtown Chicago, which would follow the corporation's lead in combining first-class architecture and works of art.[135]

SOM's presentation model for the Inland Steel building included a model sculpture whose placement identified the building and the Inland Steel Company with art. An abstract, biomorphic metal form, the sculpture perched just over the building entrance on Monroe Street in place of a sign spelling out the building's name (Figure 2.18). This sculpture would be the most visible work of art in the building, signaling the paintings and sculptures located on the floors occupied by Inland Steel.

The visual art program at Inland Steel is important because it exemplifies the diverse publics addressed by the corporate image. In addition to the lobby sculpture, the program included a collection of steel-themed paintings and sculptures by American artists and the winning paintings from an employee art contest that were installed on the building's executive floor. All three components of the art program aimed to position visual art directly in relation to Inland Steel's industry, but to very different ends.

In contrast to the acquisitions policy of Manufacturers Trust, which relied solely on the approval of company president Flanigan, Inland Steel formed an art committee to select works of art for the building. By leaving decision-making to a group, Inland Steel modeled the process of selecting art on its own corporate structure, which was overseen by a board of shareholders. The art committee also followed the model of museum acquisitions boards, which are similarly based on a consensus of taste. The committee's composition reflects the stakes for art in SOM's architecture: Daniel Catton Rich and

[135]The renewal of Chicago's Inner Loop is described in Ross Miller, "City Hall and the Architecture of Power: The Rise and Fall of the Dearborn Corridor," in John Zukowsky, ed., *Chicago Architecture and Design, 1923-1993: Reconfiguration of an American Metropolis* (Munich: Prestel; Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1993). The Loop came to be punctuated by three large plazas along Dearborn Street, each of which featured a notable work of public sculpture: Civic Center plaza with the "Chicago Picasso" (1967), First National Bank plaza with mosaic murals by Marc Chagall (1974), and Federal Center plaza with Calder's *Flamingo* (1974). Inland Steel sits opposite First National Bank plaza (now Chase Tower plaza).

Katharine Kuh of the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as the dealer Edith Halpert, represented the expertise of art establishments in Chicago and New York that were invested in promoting corporate spending on art; David Dillman, the consultant hired by Inland Steel to publicize the building's construction, made plain art's importance to public relations; and Hartmann, Bruce Graham, and Davis Allen of SOM safeguarded art's relationship to the building's architecture, including the interiors.[136] Inland Steel vice president Block and his wife, Mary Lasker, led this group of advisors in art, architecture, and the corporate image. As noted collectors of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, the Blocks were the driving force behind the art collection. The couple could have loaned works from their collection to decorate Inland Steel's offices.[137] The fact that they chose instead to assemble a new collection for the company signals art's intended status as more than something to fill blank walls.

Block echoed Flanigan when he told *Time* magazine: "Of course, the most important thing is the sale of steel… But on the other hand, we believe that painting and sculpture belong in a modern office building to enhance its beauty."[138] Aside from the lobby sculpture, art at Inland Steel was planned primarily for the executive floor, where

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[136]The committee also included William E. Geidt and interior coordinator John C. Murphy. Unfortunately, the art collection files did not make it into Inland Steel's corporate archive at Indiana University Northwest. Mary Caroline Simpson visited the company prior to the destruction of these files. For a reconstruction of the Inland Steel art collection, see her dissertation, "The Modern Momentum: The Art of Cultural Progress in Postwar Chicago," (Ph.D. diss., Indiana Univ. Bloomington, 2001).

[137]Leigh B. Block (1905-1987) and Mary Lasker Block (1904-1981) married in 1942 and bought the painting that started their art collection on their honeymoon. Twenty-five years later, the Block Collection was exhibited at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. See *100 European Paintings & Drawings from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Leigh B. Block* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967). Leigh became a trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1949 and served as president and chairman of the museum from 1970 to 1975. Mary founded the Art Institute women's board. Her father, Albert D. Lasker, founded the advertising firm Lord and Thomas, where Mary was vice president prior to her marriage. The Blocks supported the construction of a museum at Northwestern University, which opened in 1980 and bears their name today.

[138]Block quoted in "How to Spell Steel," 82.

offices were designed with the art collection in mind. The offices are the first major statement by SOM's interior design department headed by Allen, who would help to define the firm's corporate modernist interiors.[139] In contrast with the primary colors used on the general office floors, which served as principal decoration there, Allen selected a distinguished color palette of brown, grey, and black for executive offices, which would allow painting and sculpture to visually pop off of walls and pedestals. Allen highlighted the company's product through his use of steel in desks, steel-based sofas, and custom stainless steel wire mesh chairs that are unique to the building. As a result of Allen's efforts, the building spelled steel inside and out.

The art collection shared this emphasis on its patron's product. The Inland Steel art committee had established an industrial theme for the collection that would represent steel. This choice gave it a character more closely tied to the earlier phase of corporate collecting rooted in advertising; however, the theme was deemed necessary to convince executives and share holders to invest in art for the headquarters building. Willem de Kooning's large abstract canvas *Bolton Landing* (1957), the centerpiece of the painting collection, is the best example of how the art committee creatively interpreted the industrial theme (Figure 2.19). The painting does not depict a steel mill or any aspect of the steel industry. Rather, a connection to the collection's industrial theme is established by way of the painting's title, which pays tribute to the location of the studio where de Kooning's friend David Smith fabricated his steel sculptures, which Smith named the Terminal Iron Works, after the shop where he had learned how to weld. This chain of references might not have been apparent to a viewer of the painting, but could be used to justify its purchase, if necessary.

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[139]For more on Allen, see Maeve Slavin, *Davis Allen: Forty Years of Interior Design at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990).

As Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. remarked in his winter 1957 preview of the building, "[O]ffices represent surroundings different from the public or company lobbies."[140] Whereas commissioned sculptures embody the attitudes of the company, works of art displayed in private offices can reflect the preferences of the occupant. The art committee anticipated a diversity of individual tastes by choosing art in a wide range of styles, all the while conforming to the industrial theme. Executives selected paintings and works on paper for their offices from a pool that featured regulars of committee member Halpert's Downtown Gallery, including Arthur Dove, Ben Shahn, Niles Spencer, and Georgia O'Keeffe, abstract canvases by Hedda Sterne and Karl Knaths, as well as work by Chicago artists Francis Chapin, Eleanor Coen, Max Kahn, and Margo Hoff, among others. Art also decorated the executives' lounge and dining rooms. Wallpaper by Calder covered the north wall of the employee cafeteria. All told, the committee purchased about forty paintings and works on paper by American artists.[141]

During the mid-1950s, the Inland Steel Company had around thirty thousand employees. Of these, only 530 would work in the new Chicago headquarters building. Worried that company spending on art would not appeal to employees, in particular those plant workers who had instigated strikes over wages earlier in the decade, executives announced an employee art contest as a way to suggest a direct relationship between art and industry.[142] Active Inland Steel employees, their wives, husbands, and children over eighteen years of age, as well as retired employees, were eligible to enter one framed

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[140]Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., "The Inland Steel Building and Its Art," *Art in America* 45 (Winter 1957-58): 27.
[141]The contents of the Inland Steel Company art collection are listed in an undated brochure. Calumet – Sales Office Series, Box 10 Folder: Articles/Artwork, Inland Steel Company Collection, CRA.
[142]"Inland Art Contest," *Inland News*, June 1957, 13. The announcement precedes an article about Lipton's sculpture for the Inland Steel offices. Titled "The Artist at Work," it emphasizes the fact that Lipton was a self-taught artist and describes other works in the Inland art collection as "paintings that depict industrial scenes."

painting that depicted some aspect of the steel industry. Winning paintings by Inland's "Sunday painters" were to be hung permanently in minor areas of the executive offices and in the dining facilities alongside "works by well-known American painters and sculptors."[143]

The contest was a product of the amateur art craze, which reached its zenith in the second half of the 1950s. Part of what Karal Ann Marling calls "the new age of leisure," art making became a mass phenomenon through paint by number kits, correspondence courses, and television programs that encouraged Americans to use the extra time afforded by a forty-hour work week to tap into creative outlets that were promoted as a release from an increasingly mechanized and regimented society.[144] Art had been used as a form of therapy during the Second World War for hospital-bound G.I.s and those stranded in remote locations, particularly in the Pacific theater. After the war, museums promoted art making as a way to understand abstraction and to elevate the taste of consumers, who would then be encouraged to decorate their new homes with examples of "good design" and perhaps even original works of art. With its art contest, Inland Steel followed the lead of the Chicago pharmaceutical company Abbott Labs, where amateur art had received national attention. The company had purchased art for use in its own promotional magazine beginning in the 1930s and by 1956 had amassed a million-dollar collection of paintings that decorated its North Chicago headquarters.[145] Beginning in the late 1940s, a group of "Abbott Artists" gathered weekly to paint from models, sponsored

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[143]Ibid.

[144]See "Hyphenated Culture: Painting by Numbers in the New Age of Leisure," in Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1994).

[145]Sue Avery, "Art Collection Aids Business of Abbott Labs," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 21 October 1956. See also *A Corporation Collects: A Selection of Paintings from the Abbott Laboratories Art Collection* (New York: American Federation of Arts, 1959).

lunchtime lectures by artists at the office plus trips to galleries and museums, and mounted an annual exhibition with awards for outstanding work.[146] Art at Inland Steel did not inspire similar programs, but contest winner Betty Gawthrop, wife of a tin mill accounting supervisor at Indiana Harbor, told *Inland News* that she planned to use part of the five hundred dollar prize money for further lessons in art.[147]

The winning paintings brought the steel mill to the headquarters building in that most pictured Inland Steel's Indiana Harbor Works located in Gary, Indiana. Employee art also followed a logic similar to that of the art collection of which it was a part. The décor of Inland Steel's executive offices indicated the company's sophistication as well as its prosperity. If amateur art represented a new age of leisure, then art by employees affirmed Inland Steel's wealth and success through the products of its employees' leisure time, even if it was executives rather than regular employees who would ultimately enjoy it.

The most visible component of the Inland Steel art collection was the sculpture commissioned for the building lobby, which received special attention from the Blocks and SOM project manager Hartmann. No evidence exists to suggest whether the architects had a particular artist in mind when crafting the sculpture for the building model. The Blocks may have been eager to take part in the decision-making process, since commissioning an original sculpture went well beyond the scope of their private collecting. Indeed, the Blocks and SOM engaged numerous sculptors in discussions about the commission.

The Inland Steel lobby established a new paradigm for the use of art in modern architecture. Traditionally, the lower floors of office buildings contained interior arcades

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[146]"Artists in the Laboratory," *Art News* 51 (September 1952): 8.
[147]"Inland Art Contest," *Inland News*, December 1957, 12-16.

that were promenades for shops serving workers and the public. SOM turned this concept inside out at Inland Steel; shops were eliminated and the public amenity became open space around the building. The ghost of retail persisted, however, inside the Inland Steel Building lobby. SOM used a Marlux luminous ceiling that Nicholas Adams argues was carried over directly from the banking hall at Manufacturers Trust.[148] At Inland Steel, brilliant illumination transformed the building lobby into something more than a point of entry; it became a space of display.

Correspondence related to the lobby sculpture commission reveals the priorities of the firm and Inland Steel in selecting an artist. During the winter of 1956 Inland invited Bertoia to view the building site and model along with Lipton, a New York artist who had worked with the architect Percival Goodman on sculpture for synagogues, one of them in Gary near Inland Steel's main plant at Indiana Harbor.[149] Two rounds of drawings and additional visits with the artists over the next eight months did not yield a satisfactory plan. The form of Bertoia's proposal is unclear, but a June 1956 letter from Hartmann to Lipton indicates what the proposals lacked as well as what the architects had in mind:

> It seems to us that a sculpture at this location should be conceived as part of the total space in which it will be placed. Most of the sketches indicate pieces which would be, more or less, suitable for placement in any position; and we think that something designed for this specific situation might be more appropriate. As we see it, the sculpture should probably commence on or near the floor rather than be mounted on a high pedestal and should relate to the window wall.[150]

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[148]Adams, *SOM Since 1936*, 105.

[149]Kimberly J. Elman and Angela Giral, eds., *Percival Goodman: Architect, Planner, Teacher, Painter* (New York: Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia Univ., 2001).

[150]William E. Hartmann to Seymour Lipton, June 8, 1956. Main File – Inland Steel Sculpture, SOM Chicago.

If Bertoia did indeed propose a screen, it might have read as being too decorative. Inland Steel instead purchased one of his sculptures for the dining floor. Inland Steel eventually commissioned Lipton's *Hero* as a floor sculpture for the executive offices, which likely appeared too anthropomorphic and detailed for the lobby.[151] Correspondence shows SOM and Inland Steel also considered Theodore Roszak, another veteran of Goodman's projects, but Lippold ultimately won the commission.

During the autumn of 1956 Lippold was big news; his *Variation within a Sphere, No. 10: The Sun* (1953-56) had been unveiled at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on July 18, the first work commissioned by the museum with no commemorative or decorative function (Figure 2.20). Lippold first proposed the sculpture to the Met in 1950, a few months before the installation of his *World Tree* (1951) at Walter Gropius' Harvard Graduate School building, a project that incorporated art by a number of artists.[152] Lippold had also used gallery exhibitions to create large-scale work, and his third solo exhibition at the Willard Gallery in New York consisted of a single environmental sculpture, *Variation within a Sphere, No. 7: Full Moon* (1949-50), which the MoMA purchased from the show (Figure 2.21).[153]

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[151]For Bertoia's *Small Tree*, see *Art in Chicago Business* (Fairweather Hardin Gallery, 1966). For *Hero*, see Lori Verderame, *An American Sculptor: Seymour Lipton* (Univ. Park, Penn.: Palmer Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State Univ., 1999).

[152]Gropius and The Architects Collaborative engaged Lippold as well as Josef Albers, Bayer, Miró and Hans Arp to create works of art integrated with the architecture. For more on the commissions, see Eleanor Bittermann, *Art in Modern Architecture* (New York: Reinhold, 1952), 66-67, 148-150. For Lippold's *World Tree*, see "Whatnot at Harvard," *Time*, 12 February 1951, 63.

[153]Richard Lippold (1915-2002) studied Industrial Design at the Art Institute of Chicago and set up his own studio in Milwaukee before giving up design to teach at the University of Michigan, where he made his first sculptures. He moved to New York City in 1944 so that his wife, a dancer, could study with Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. Lippold grew very close to the composer John Cage, to whom he dedicated several early works. Lippold had his first one-man show at the Willard Gallery in 1947. That year he was considered for his first architectural sculpture commissions at SOM's Terrace Plaza Hotel and the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace, both of which went unrealized. Lippold spent the summer of 1948 at Black Mountain College, where he met Anni and Josef Albers, who became early supporters of his work. For Lippold, see Curtis L. Carter, Jack W. Burnham, and Edward Lucie-Smith, *Richard Lippold: Sculpture* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Patrick and Beatrice Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette Univ., 1990).

To create *The Sun*, Lippold straightened, cut, stretched, and welded nearly two miles of twenty-two carat gold-filled wire to evoke beams of light emanating from a rotating central sphere. The sculpture appeared to float in space, surrounded by Persian rugs in the museum's Oriental wing, which Lippold had envisioned as the destination for his sculpture from the first sketch. Through its placement at the Met, Lippold aimed to heighten viewers' awareness of the relationship between East and West. As he remarked,

> If this work, assisted by a tranquil and contemplative atmosphere and spacious proportions, helps to illuminate a possible rapport between such seeming opposites, it will have fulfilled its intent and justified its existence beyond a mere object of decoration or private expression.[154]

Lippold often claimed cosmic and even political significance for his work, irritating critics such as Hilton Kramer. In his review of *The Sun*, Kramer dismissed Lippold's statements about the sculpture as "claptrap":

> What we are left with is not art but a designer's simulacrum of art; not sculpture, but a kind of charade of sculpture which, while hinting at vast conceptions, makes its points very much as window decoration catches the eye, and with just about as much 'meaning'.[155]

Behind this biting criticism lurks Kramer's distaste for Lippold's training as an industrial designer; however, the criticism also illuminates how Lippold's sculpture might be well suited to the lobby of the Inland Steel Building.

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[154]Press release, "THE SUN, MODERN CONSTRUCTION BY RICHARD LIPPOLD NOW COMPLETED FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART," 12 July 1956, Vertical file, Richard Lippold, Smithsonian American Art Museum/National Portrait Gallery Library. Lippold initially approached the museum with the proposal in December 1950, following the protests against the Met's exhibition of American painting discussed in the introduction. This was also the first year of the Korean War, which certainly played a role in Lippold's conception of the sculpture.

[155]Hilton Kramer, "Month in Review," *Arts* 31 (October 1956): 51. Lippold wrote extensively about his work and published many articles. See, for example, "Variation Number Seven: Full Moon," *Arts & Architecture* 67 (May 1950): 22-23, 50 and "How to Make a Sculpture," *Art in America* 44 (Winter 1956-57): 27-29. Kramer was not the only writer critical of Lippold's claims. See Lawrence Campbell, "Richard Lippold," *Art News* 61 (March 1962): 16-17.

If the lab-coated scientist of industrial research and development was Bertoia's corporate counterpart, then the engineer was Lippold's. Critics used the comparison to describe the precision of Lippold's work, which they linked to the machine as well as the efficiency of corporate America: "His work has the impersonal perfection of a snowflake, or of a machine that is its own highest esthetic expression… It is an appearance which seems to reflect, in an art form, a social tendency in favor of efficiency."[156] Like the engineer, the creative part of Lippold's sculpture, according to one critic, was not in the execution but the planning: "In this Lippold displayed the method and efficiency of some super-organization like General Electric."[157] Nevertheless, the artist crafted his sculptures by hand, a practice that posed problems as the scale of his work increased.

Lippold's reputation probably brought him to the Blocks' attention and helped him to win the lobby commission. It didn't hurt that he was a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, but the sculpture also fit Hartmann's description of what the lobby required. Sculptures like Lippold's *Full Moon* are essentially space frames, much like the glass-walled lobby at Inland Steel. Lippold proposed a steel asterisk form suspended in a network of gold, steel, and red enamel wires that enlarged this concept to the scale of the lobby, dividing rather than occupying space but nevertheless creating a strong visual focal point. He called the sculpture *Radiant "I"* for "Inland" and the personal pronoun, since Lippold saw the 18' by 13' sculpture as marking a transition from the scale of the building to the scale of the human body (Figure 2.22).[158]

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[156]Lawrence Campbell, "Lippold Makes a Construction," *Art News* 55 (October 1956): 31. The article details construction of *The Sun*.
[157]Ibid. 33.
[158]Richard Lippold, "Radiant 'I'," 1958, typescript. Richard Lippold Papers, AAA. The plaque in the lobby of the Inland Steel Building mistitles the sculpture *Radiant One*.

The commission entailed a great deal of collaboration between artist and architect. Lippold worked closely with Graham, the SOM designer who saw the building through to its completion. *Radiant "I"* required structural changes to the building, including the movement of a granite wall and the addition of a drop ceiling above the sculpture and a pool of water below it. Lippold also sought help from the architects in finding a shop that could fabricate the sculpture's central steel asterisk form. In addition, its lighting required special attention. Lippold enlisted the help of Richard Kelly, with whom he was then working on a sculpture for the Four Seasons Restaurant at the Seagram Building in New York. The lighting consisted of custom-designed fixtures that made *Radiant "I"* appear as a shimmering apparition, a floating star that subtly changed with the spectator's movements through the lobby. The sculpture was visible day and night to spectators both inside and outside of the building.

Unlike the more nuanced readings of Bertoia's screen at Manufacturers Trust, critics simply and uniformly described *Radiant "I"* as a symbol of steel, similar in that regard to the rest of the building: "Richard Lippold's steel wire construction… is typical of the sensitive means chosen to demonstrate various facets of the company's product."[159] Indeed, the sculpture arguably surpassed even the spectacular display of stainless steel in the building's cladding, its gleaming, gravity-defying appearance in the building lobby dramatizing Inland's product to great visual effect. In its black-velvet-lined gallery at MoMA, *Full Moon* was praised for encouraging contemplation, its tensed wires suggesting the state of humanity in a world after the atomic bomb.[160] Outside the rarefied space of the art museum and inside the show window at Inland Steel, this sculptural concept was positioned as a sign for all of the shiny gadgets made of Inland's steel, from

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[159]"The Flexible Formula at Work: Inland Steel Co., Chicago," *Interiors* 118 (October 1958): 113.
[160]For example, see "Moon Sculpture," *Life*, 12 June 1950, 59.

household appliances to automobiles. The asterisk, then, can be understood to serve a double function, as a sculpture and something more like a trademark; that is, a legible, memorable sign for a range of products and services.

What is a good trademark? In answering the question, Egbert Jacobson writes that "it would have to be simple in conception, easy to understand, unique in shape and style, reproducible in any size and in any medium."[161] *Radiant "I"* fulfills all of these requirements. The asterisk form is simple and striking. It is easily taken in at a glance. The wires that appear to radiate outward from this central element slightly complicate the composition, adding visual interest. The sculpture was not reproduced and circulated as a graphic symbol by the company, but in an analogous process, passersby on the street viewed it repeatedly. In this way, Lippold's sculpture became a marker of both corporate identity and a specific location, a symbol for the company and a Chicago landmark.

Yet perhaps the relationship between sculpture and corporation was not so transparent after all. Or, at least not as transparent as the logo carved directly into the Prudential's headquarters building. Consider a letter to the editor published by the *Chicago Daily Tribune* soon after the Inland Steel Building opened and titled, "Will It Flinch?" The letter reads, "Dear Sir: The Inland Steel company has a 'thing' in its new building on the first floor. All wires, etc. Pretty, but there is considerable doubt that it is sufficiently advanced to make a sandwich during the commercial."[162] The joke turns on the word "advanced," with the term alluding to the ambitious positioning of *Radiant "I"* as avant-garde art, at the same time that it proffers an image of Lippold's sculpture as a television-watching robot, albeit one not advanced enough to go from living room to kitchen and back during a commercial break. By collapsing these two worlds—the

[161]Egbert Jacobson, introduction to *Seven Designers Look at Trademark Design*.
[162]Ralph Huston, "Will It Flinch?" *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 February 1958.

sophisticated realm of the corporate lobby and the crass milieu of televised advertising—the letter cleverly asks whether *Radiant "I"* is excellent sculpture or mere advertising, humorously upending the relationship between art and the corporate image promoted by Inland Steel and SOM. It indicates that Chicagoans understood very well the stakes of Lippold's sculpture, what Joan Ockman has called "the implicit contradictions between 'art-as-art' and 'lobby art'—between high modernism and corporate public relations."[163]

THE CHASE MANHATTAN BANK

The Chase Manhattan Bank made fine art intrinsic to its corporate identity by amassing—in consultation with SOM—the largest corporate art collection ever assembled for its offices and bank branches.[164] Beginning in 1929, the Chase National Bank had displayed a collection of "Moneys of the World" in its head office at 60 Cedar Street. In the wake of a merger with the Bank of Manhattan, in 1956 the display of seventy-five thousand items moved to the street floor of the R.C.A. Building on the side fronting Sixth Avenue, which became a museum open to the general public.[165] The transition from office decoration to a bank-sponsored museum in a high traffic area heightened the public relations effectiveness of the collection. It also put tangible dollars and cents in the past, anticipating the initiation of the bank's own charge plan, forerunner of the credit card, in 1958. When the Chase Manhattan Bank opened a new corporate headquarters building in 1961, visual art, much of it created within the preceding few years, served as its primary decoration (Figure 2.23). The branch at 410 Park Avenue,

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[163]Here Ockman does not describe *Radiant "I"*, but I think the characterization applies. See "Soul of the Corporation," 181.

[164]The bank has published two books on the art collection: *Art at Work: The Chase Manhattan Collection* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984) and *Art at Work: Forty Years of the Chase Manhattan Collection* (Chase Manhattan Corporation, 2000). See also the exhibition catalogue *Chase Manhattan: The First Ten Years of Collecting, 1959-1969* (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1982).

[165]"Exhibit of Money in New Quarters," *New York Times*, 11 July 1956. See also *Moneys of the World* (Chase Manhattan Bank, 1956).

whose interiors were designed by SOM and completed in 1959 for a pre-existing building, served as a test-run for the art collection then being discussed for the corporate headquarters downtown.

The new corporate headquarters building and art collection were emblematic of an organizational restructuring that introduced modern management techniques to the Chase Manhattan Bank, including specialized departments for marketing, management development, and organizational planning. Rockefeller, who as Vice Chairman of the Board in the late 1950s directed planning and development for the bank, including the new building, oversaw these initiatives. With the merger, the Chase transformed itself "from a stodgy wholesale bank… into an outgoing, versatile outfit which lures accounts with bayberry-scented candles and shells out $3.1 million annually in advertising to proclaim: 'You have a friend at Chase Manhattan'."[166] From 1930 to 1961, advertising and public relations were part of the same unit. When the bank moved into its new headquarters, advertising became part of the marketing department and a separate public relations division was organized. As Rockefeller told the *Saturday Review*:

> Unless banks act so as to assure public acceptance of their practices and policies they may, in the long run, find that their activities will be so circumscribed as to make them ineffective in their commercial role… To ignore the public interest in our actions is to court disaster.[167]

The public relations division included staff to oversee the bank's art collection as well as guides who gave tours of the headquarters building. The new corporate headquarters, in turn, codified the corporate image to such an extent that the bank's

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[166]"Chase Manhattan Wins 'Friends' – and Influences People," *Newsweek*, 8 April 1963, 74. Retail banking was the great strength of the Bank of the Manhattan Co., which brought 67 metropolitan branches to the merger with Chase National Bank, a powerhouse of wholesale banking. For a history of the Chase Manhattan Bank, see John Donald Wilson, *The Chase: The Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A., 1945-1985* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 1986).

[167]Rockefeller quoted in L. L. L. Golden, "Public Relations: No More Starched Collars," *Saturday Review*, 11 February 1967, 76.

graphic identity came to be based on the structure of One Chase Manhattan Plaza: "Following the building's architectural pattern of basic, interchangeable modules, a series of modular grids was developed for… various printed pieces," stated the designers. "As with the interior of the building, these grids enabled us to maintain an overall design discipline, while permitting a certain amount of flexibility."[168] The Chase Manhattan Bank would take the vertical integration demanded by proponents of the corporate image to an extreme by closely aligning graphic design with its architecture. The bank's printed material also incorporated a new abstract logo and specialized typeface designed by Chermayeff & Geismar, to be discussed in greater detail below, which were used throughout the headquarters and in the bank's branches.

The prospectus for the art collection is the most cogent expression of themes we have seen in other SOM designed buildings, beginning with art's relationship to architecture. Here visual art was regarded not only as decoration; art at the Chase Manhattan Bank was explicitly intended to complete the building:

> No building… is intended to stand by itself unadorned. As a complete expression of the purposes and personality of the people who built it, modern buildings such as this lend themselves to and, indeed, demand embellishment in the form of works of art which reflect the character and interests of its occupants… The purpose of this program is, in a sense, therefore, to complete the building by the display of works of art which will be effective and appropriate to the building and the Bank.

Visual art enhances the expressive potential of modern architecture by reflecting the character of the patron company. It is important to note that this passage does not use the bank's name, however, but instead invokes "the people" who built the building, which

[168]"Chase Manhattan's Design 'System'," *Print* 18 (March/April 1964): 39. Peter Gee developed the design system in collaboration with Ralph Watson, the bank's production adviser.

underlines the belief that art can humanize the corporation. This notion is clearly articulated under the heading, "The Program's Purpose":

> It is the belief of the architects and of the Bank's Public Relations Department that a program of this kind can vivify the image of the Bank in the minds of the customers, employees, and the public by dramatizing the breadth and scope of the Bank's activities, and also underlining its awareness of human values as exemplified by the emotional impact of the works shown.

Once again, visual art is tied to emotion and "human values" and serves as a corrective to perceptions of the corporation as inhuman and detached.

This vivified image of the bank is aimed at the general public and customers as well as employees. At the Chase, visual art was a function of public relations as much as human relations:

> In a period when there is… an increasing stress on mechanization in many fields of bank operations… No simpler or more direct way of expressing the management's awareness of the emotional needs of its employees suggests itself than the visual enrichment of their working environment.[169]

With the introduction of computers to the bank, visual art was intended to emphasize management's concern for employees and to minimize parallels between staff members and machines. The fine arts program was also to include changing exhibitions with didactic materials to educate the staff.

The Chase Manhattan Bank art collection originated with a Saturday morning shopping spree in Manhattan's galleries by Bunshaft and Dorothy Miller, a curator at the MoMA.[170] Rockefeller had used his strong ties to the museum, where he was chairman of the board, to enlist the help of Barr and Miller, both of whom, along with Bunshaft and

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[169] "A Fine Arts Program for No. 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza," typescript, n.p. Box 13 Folder 27, Dorothy C. Miller Papers, AAA.

[170] Dorothy Miller, interviewed by Peter Morrin, "The First Ten Years of the Chase Art Committee, An Interview with Dorothy Miller," in *First Ten Years of Collecting*, 9.

several other museum curators, would eventually sit on the Chase Art Committee.[171] Soon after the opening of 410 Park Avenue, the committee met quarterly to vote on new acquisitions and eventually spent half a million dollars on art for the new headquarters, accommodating a wide range of tastes. For the test-run at 410 Park Avenue, Bunshaft and Miller were less restrained in their selections. According to Miller, "Anything we saw that we liked, we'd say 'send it to 410'."[172] In consultation with Rockefeller and Chase board chairman John J. McCloy, they purchased twenty-one paintings, sculptures, and works on paper to decorate the bank branch.

The Chase Manhattan Bank is the first instance of a corporate collection that featured art as something of value in and of itself, beyond an industry-related theme or decorator's color coordination. Even so, the rationale for the collection's assembly is rooted in the aesthetics of abstraction and, more specifically, Abstract Expressionism. In the brochure for art at 410 Park published by the bank, the assembled paintings are described as representative of Abstract Expressionism, "the predominant movement in American painting today."[173] While the collection featured some artists—including Sam Francis, James Brooks, and Theodoros Stamos—to whom this label could be applied, for others—like Josef Albers and Leon Golub—it was a bit of a stretch. As at Manufacturers Trust, what mattered here was rhetoric rather than reality. To this end a longer quotation from Barr, lifted from the catalogue essay for *The New American Painting*, is used to describe the anticipated role of art in the bank:

> [T]hese painters, as a matter of principle, do nothing deliberately in their work to make 'communication' easy. Yet in spite of their intransigence, their following increases, largely because the paintings themselves have a sensuous, emotional,

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[171]The Chase Art Committee, established in 1959, included Rockefeller, Bunshaft, Barr, James Johnson Sweeney, Perry Rathbone, and Robert Beverly Hale.
[172]"Interview with Dorothy Miller," 9.
[173]"Art at 410 Park Avenue," brochure, Box 13 Folder 27, Dorothy C. Miller Papers, AAA.

> aesthetic and at times almost mystical power which works and can be overwhelming.[174]

The response elicited by abstract painting helped the bank to demonstrate that it was interested in more than money; an art collection reflected well upon the corporate soul. The prospectus for the Chase Manhattan Bank art collection spells this out:

> In the field of banking it is particularly important to stress, by every means possible, the basic fact that banking is, above all, a personalized activity depending on human relations, on mutual understanding, and trust. Chase Manhattan must be continually on guard against the attitude which regards large banks as automated organizations concerned only with the pursuit of earnings.[175]

The expressive quality and emotional impact of abstract art was intended to humanize the bank, while at the same time showing the corporation's concern for its employees and customers. More specifically, it was hoped that the individuality and freedom associated with Abstract Expressionism would counter negative images of the Chase Manhattan Bank as mechanized and impersonal.

The bank commissioned two major works specifically for 410 Park: a mural by Francis for the boardroom (Figure 2.24) and a mobile by Calder for the main banking hall (Figure 2.25). According to Miller, the bank did not consider any other artists for these commissions.[176] Miller had included Francis in her 1956 *Twelve Americans* exhibition at MoMA, where he showed the boldly contoured and brightly colored abstract canvases for which he had already become known. The large size of his work lent itself well to the long wall at 410 Park, where Francis eventually installed a 38' mural.[177] When Francis

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[174]Alfred Barr, introduction to *The New American Painting as Shown in Eight European Countries, 1958-1959* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959), 17. If the "mystical power" of abstract painting was the paradigm for art collected by the bank, then it is not surprising that no examples of Pop art were purchased during the 1960s, despite a policy to collect art by younger artists.

[175]"A Fine Arts Program for No. 1 Chase Manhattan Plaza."

[176]"Interview with Dorothy Miller," 9.

[177]For more on the mural, see *Sam Francis: Studies for the Chase Manhattan Bank Mural and Related Works* (Manny Silverman Gallery, Los Angeles, 1997).

received the Chase commission, he was in his early thirties and just establishing his reputation. Calder, in contrast, was at the height of his career. MoMA gave Calder a retrospective exhibition in 1943 and in 1952 he represented the United States at the Venice Biennale. Winning the grand prize in sculpture, Calder cemented his reputation as an international talent. Around this time he was hard at work on two important commissions for monumental standing sculptures, or stabiles, that would contribute significantly to the development of the artist's outdoor sculpture and put his work quite literally on the world stage: *Whirling Ear* (1958) for Expo '58 in Brussels and *La Spirale* (1958) for UNESCO in Paris.[178] By selecting Francis for a major commission, the Chase followed the example of MoMA, where Barr had endeavored to purchase work by important artists before their reputations (and prices) skyrocketed. Nevertheless, the bank chose Calder for its most prominent commission in the main banking hall, where the mobile would be clearly visible to passersby on Park Avenue.

Calder worked out the formal vocabulary of his mobiles during the 1930s, when he moved away from motor-driven reliefs and satisfied his desire for less predictable motion by focusing his efforts on constructions that relied on systems of weights and balances. His early mobiles include elements attached to wire or string that rotate slowly and bob gracefully up and down. Calder showed his mobiles and stabiles in annual exhibitions at the Pierre Matisse Gallery and during this period earned several important commissions for architecture, including a mobile for the new MoMA in 1939 and another for Wallace K. Harrison's Hotel Avila in 1941. The former, *Lobster Trap and Fish Tail* (1939), was Calder's largest mobile to date with a length of 9.5' (Figure 2.26). That year Calder had moved into a new studio that enabled the fabrication of larger works. During

[178]I discuss these commissions and Calder's stabiles in greater depth in chapter three.

the late 1930s the scale of Calder's stabiles increased as well. *Black Beast* (1940) nearly reached the ceiling in the Pierre Matisse Gallery (Figure 2.27).

Following World War II and an end to wartime restrictions on metals, the number of Calder's architectural commissions increased. He created a mobile, discussed above, for SOM's Terrace Plaza Hotel in 1946 and in 1957 a monumental mobile, *.125*, for the firm's International Arrivals building at Idlewild (now Kennedy) Airport (Figure 2.28). During the decade between these commissions, Calder had dramatically increased the size of his work, collaborating with a commercial ironworks to fabricate the huge metal elements needed to complete the 45' width of *.125*.[179] Along with this increase in scale came a graphic precision that *.125* and the Chase Manhattan Bank mobile share. SOM positioned the delicate mobile at Terrace Plaza near the ceiling, where its shadow on an adjacent wall would be shown to greatest effect. The Chase Manhattan Bank mobile traded playfulness for legibility. Regularized geometric shapes replaced the more organic forms of the 1940s, lending the sculptures of the 1950s a greater visual impact. Although hung inside the main banking hall, Calder's mobile had a clear relationship with the building's exterior, where it became part of an abstract composition created by the building's curtain wall construction (Figure 2.29).

Contemporary critics confirm that Calder's mobile grabbed attention, no small feat in the visual cacophony of New York City. Yet we might follow Kramer in asking a difficult question—"what it all means."[180] Whereas the sculptures of Bertoia and Lippold provided materials-based associations with the industries they represented, critics described the iron mobile simply as art, and famous art at that: "Alexander Calder… is to

[179]For Calder's work during the 1950s, see Mildred Glimcher, *Alexander Calder: The 50s* (New York: PaceWildenstein, 1995).
[180]Kramer, "Month in Review."

mobiles what Chase Manhattan is to banking."[181] This assertion is supported by the brochure discussed above, where the cover photograph juxtaposes the bank's name on the building with the sculpture and seemingly equates the two, linking the bank with the individuality, freedom of expression, and elevated taste associated with abstract art.

The Chase adopted an abstract symbol for its new logo in 1961, signaling by the absence of letters its aspiration for a global reach (Figure 2.30). The logo's consistent use in the bank's advertising, checks, letterhead, publications and even as architectural decoration was meant to cement its association in the minds of consumers with the organization, to the point that the symbol would become synonymous with the Chase Manhattan Bank. Although the bank had jettisoned its "Moneys of the World" exhibition from the corporate headquarters, designers Chermayeff & Geismar gave the logo an octagonal shape intended to recall ancient coins and to represent the long history of banking. At the same time, the designers employed a modern vocabulary of simplified abstract forms that brings to mind Calder's mobile at 410 Park. The trademark suggests a way of thinking about abstraction and visual communication in sculpture that would prove influential in the coming decade, when cities embraced abstract art as an element of urban design. As at the Chase Manhattan Bank, abstraction could be marshaled to express humanism, but it also proved effective in accommodating the flexibility required by a new class of public symbols.

ONE CHASE MANHATTAN PLAZA

By way of a conclusion I want to discuss the art at One Chase Manhattan Plaza, the bank's new headquarters building designed by SOM and occupied in 1961. It was here that Bunshaft finally realized the plaza sculpture that had eluded him at Lever

[181]Vartanig G. Vartan, "Abstract Art Adds Zip to Banking," *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 November 1959.

House, but only after a fifteen-year search for an artist. The commission for One Chase Manhattan Plaza required a sculpture in excess of 30' tall, an enormous size for any artist at the time. The new scale was driven by the sculpture's location, a two and one-half acre open-air plaza. The sculpture's size and location raised new questions about symbolism. As we have seen, abstract sculptures located inside building lobbies were read in a manner similar to a sign or logo for the corporation and as a symbol of elevated taste. But what happened once sculpture moved outdoors, to a plaza that blurred the distinction between corporate space and public amenity? Questions about the power of sculpture as a symbol and the new stakes of sculpture on the plaza seem to have stymied the commission for Chase plaza.

The plaza was the centerpiece of SOM's 1955 proposal for the building. The plaza at SOM's Lever House and that of its neighbor, the Seagram Building, enhanced the monumentality of each headquarters and served as popular lunch spots for Park Avenue office workers. SOM had much grander aspirations for Chase plaza; it was to be the center of an entirely new community. The firm envisioned a "twenty-first-century edition of the Boston Common" in a downtown Manhattan revitalized by urban renewal.[182] Eventually, the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association's scheme for a World Trade Center replaced Owings' vision of a "city within the city," including row housing for white-collar workers. Still, in its generosity and urbanity, the two and one-half acre plaza became a physical manifestation of the bank's new slogan, "You've Got a Friend at the Chase Manhattan Bank."[183]

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[182]Owings, *Spaces Between*, 167.

[183]"A Friend at the Chase," *Business Week*, 21 December 1963, 24, 26 describes Rockefeller's role in the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association and the World Trade Center.

As the bank and the architects made sure to point out in promotional materials, the plaza was the result (first) of rational planning principles. The Chase had bought a sixty-four thousand square-foot parcel of land on Liberty Street just east of its headquarters on Pine. Compared with a plan to build one tower on each of its two blocks, the bank could achieve more flexible office space by closing, with the city's permission, the section of Cedar Street that ran between the two blocks and building a tower of unlimited height on 30 percent of the lot. In return for widening the sidewalks around the superblock's perimeter, the city also agreed to 30 percent unlimited height coverage. The sixty-story rectangular tower without setbacks maximized flexibility and efficiency by putting the structural columns on the building's exterior. The plaza was a direct result of the series of compromises with city officials to achieve the best office space possible.

While the other buildings examined in this chapter maintained a strong relationship with the street via glass-walled lobbies that doubled as show windows, visitors entered the Chase's new headquarters from the plaza. As *Architectural Forum* observed, this posed a problem of symbolism, since "Chase Manhattan's directors understandably did not want their establishment to say, simply, 'office building.' They wanted it to say 'bank' in no uncertain terms." A lobby bank branch was out of the question since the space was needed for circulation in such a large building. SOM solved the problem by putting "the operations that look like 'bank' on conspicuous public view."[184] The bank's sloping site permitted construction of a below plaza-level bank branch off of Pine Street. To showcase the branch and add light to its interiors, the architects sank a show window directly into the plaza and commissioned Noguchi to install a work of art behind the glass. SOM thus transferred the successful formula of

[184]"Tower with a Front Yard," *Architectural Forum* 106 (April 1957): 114.

lobby sculpture and curtain wall directly to a new architectural typology: the public plaza. The circular light well and Noguchi's sculptured water garden became a focal point for the concourse-level bank branch and the plaza above (Figure 2.31).

The garden functioned less as a legible, memorable symbol for the bank than as an amenity for the plaza, helping to characterize this large open space as an oasis in the skyscraper canyons of lower Manhattan and as the village green for a revitalized part of the city. The garden consists of a 60' diameter pool, fountain, and concentric circles of granite cube pavers, which represent the raked gravel in more traditional Japanese gardens and radiate out from seven large basalt rocks that Noguchi pulled from the bottom of Japan's Uji River.[185] Eventually, the water garden was joined by a monumental freestanding sculpture on the plaza—Jean Dubuffet's *Group of Four Trees* (1972)—, which reinforces this theme (Figure 2.32). When the plaza officially opened in 1963, a monumental version of the Chase Manhattan Bank's trademark was affixed to the building's exterior over the main entrance, which the sculpture would ultimately mark.

The great irony of the plaza sculpture is that it took SOM and the Chase over fifteen years and proposals from no less than six artists to arrive at a sculpture that closely resembles the firm's original concept. The first published plans for the building, which featured a rectangular sunken court that earned the plaza the nickname "little Rockefeller Center," also included a pair of treelike metal sculptures (Figure 2.33).[186] The architects placed their miniature "trees" near the plaza-level entrance to the building, opposite two

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[185]For the water garden, see "Total Sculpture," *New Yorker*, 14 December 1963, 46-47 and "A Lung for New York's Financial District," *Progressive Architecture* 45 (September 1964): 214-215. Around this time, Noguchi collaborated with Bunshaft on a sunken plaza for the Beinecke Library at Yale University. See Isamu Noguchi, "New Stone Gardens," *Art in America* 52, no. 3 (1964): 84-89 and Dore Ashton, "Art," *Arts & Architecture* 80 (November 1963): 6-7. In 1969 Claes Oldenburg erected *Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks* in the plaza adjacent to the library. See my chapter four for more on the sculpture's relationship with Beinecke Library.

[186]"Towering Chase Manhattan Building will let Light into Wall St. Canyon Area," *Architectural Forum* 104 (May 1956): 12.

flagpoles and perpendicular to a stand of six natural trees. A curved stair led down from the plaza to the sunken court, where a pool and fountain adorned the public banking floor. In this scheme, the architects created an artificial oasis that used sculpture and landscaping to make a corporate modernist garden. Instead of the overt signifiers of corporate identity used in its corporate lobbies of the 1950s, here SOM emphasized the merits of open space. The gift of light, air, and trees would be strengthened through its translation into the language of art, and this would become part of the corporation's public image as a spatialization of the bank's corporate identity program.

By November 1956, the Chase had hired Noguchi as consultant for the plaza design. A new model, published in April 1957, likely reflects his suggestions (Figure 2.34). The rectangular court has become a circular sunken pool with rounded, geometric sculptural forms that project from the base of the pool up above the plaza surface. The model plaza sculpture no longer resembles trees but is more abstract. A vaguely star-shaped latticework metal form towers over the plaza and reaches almost to the top of the building's mezzanine level, indicating to artists that SOM sought a sculpture of significant size. Given the challenges faced by artists in realizing commissions from SOM for indoor architectural sculptures, the scale of the Chase plaza sculpture must have seemed overwhelming.

As with Inland Steel, SOM asked a select group of artists to submit proposals for the plaza sculpture. Sometime in 1956 the firm invited just two sculptors to view the model of the building and plaza: Calder and Alberto Giacometti. Both artists had considered increasing the scale of their sculpture. Giacometti had dreamed of creating sculpture for a plaza since the early 1930s, when he produced *Model for a Square* (1931-32), a small wooden sculpture with five abstract elements that would be enlarged in stone

to a height of just over 6'.[187] Like his mobiles, Calder's stabiles also suggested possibilities for enlargement, as the commissions for *Whirling Ear* (1958) and *La Spirale* (1958) would soon prove. Although neither artist was awarded the sculpture commission for Chase plaza, their proposals indicate some of the problems of scale and symbolism on the plaza.

Calder eagerly pursued the Chase plaza commission, creating five models, including one nearly 5' in height for a sculpture he called *Three Legged Beastie* (1959) (Figure 2.35). The title relates the model to *Black Beast II* (1957), a large-scale sheet steel sculpture based on a work of 1940 that Calder recreated in heavier metal better suited to the outdoors for architect and designer Eliot Noyes, who sited the sculpture in a courtyard at his home. *Black Beast II* features two main intersecting planes of steel that taper at the top and bottom to form the beast's "arms" and "legs." The composition of *Three Legged Beastie* is much simpler. This sculpture's three "legs" meet at the top of a three-pronged arch that would have created a gate-like structure on Chase plaza. However, *Three Legged Beastie* shares the standing posture of *Black Beast*, a similarity that becomes even more apparent if we consider the roughly contemporary *La Spirale* (maquette completed 1956), a plaza sculpture that rests on a base of two perpendicular steel sheets and supports a mobile element (Figure 2.36). At a height of 30', *La Spirale* realizes great size but its mobile element does not attain the sense of monumentality that Calder may have aimed for with *Three Legged Beastie*. With his truly monumental sculptures, discussed in greater detail in chapter three, Calder would create archways with the complexity of *Black Beast* and the monumentality of *Three Legged Beastie*.

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[187]See Christian Klemm, *Alberto Giacometti* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; Zürich: Kunsthaus Zürich, 2001) and Valerie J. Fletcher, *Alberto Giacometti, 1901-1966* (Washington, D.C.: Published for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

Bunshaft had been introduced to the work of Giacometti through the artist's 1948-49 retrospective exhibition in New York City at the Pierre Matisse Gallery.[188] When Bunshaft approached Giacometti about the Chase commission sometime in 1956, the architect suggested that Giacometti enlarge the sculpture *Three Men Walking* (1949) to a height of 60' (Figure 2.37). Like many of the sculptures created during the last phase of Giacometti's career, the three men are spindly, elongated figures that the artist intended to appear as if seen from a distance, no matter how close the observer drew to them. Just thirty inches tall, they cluster around the center of a small square; yet they do not appear to interact but stride past each other, their proximity making palpable each figure's isolation. SOM had envisioned One Chase Manhattan Plaza as the anchor for a "city within the city." Here Bunshaft proposed that Giacometti create a square within the square.

By this time Giacometti preferred not to travel so Bunshaft sent a scale model of the plaza to the artist's Paris studio, which he followed up with a visit in February 1957. Eventually Giacometti conceived of three figures for the plaza: a walking man, a standing woman, and a large head (Figure 2.38). At larger than life-size, they would be placed directly on the plaza, without pedestals. Giacometti modeled a number of figures as studies and in 1960 even had several of them cast in bronze, but decided not to send the sculptures to New York.[189]

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[188]The exhibition was reviewed widely in the art press and in more broad-based publications. See, for example, "Space Without Fat," *Time*, 2 February 1948, 57 and Clement Greenberg, "Art," *The Nation*, 7 February 1948, 163-65.

[189]On the Chase commission, see Reinhold Hohl, *Alberto Giacometti* (New York: Abrams, 1971), 185-86; Yves Bonnefoy, *Alberto Giacometti: A Biography of his Work*, trans. Jean Stewart (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 561-62; Toni Stooss and Patrick Elliott, *Alberto Giacometti, 1901-1966* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 1996), 182; Reinhold Hohl, ed., *Giacometti: A Biography in Pictures* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1998), 160-63, 170-72, 189-90; and Markus Brüderlin and Toni Stooss, eds., *Alberto Giacometti: The Origin of Space* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 130.

As markers of the shift between human and architectural scale, Giacometti's larger than life-size figures could have been even more effective than an abstract sculpture like Lippold's *Radiant "I"*. But how would the human figure symbolize the corporation? In September 1959, shortly before the opening of 410 Park Avenue, the exhibition *New Images of Man* debuted at the MoMA. Curator Peter Selz gathered paintings and sculptures representative of a new tendency towards figuration that he saw as being related to existentialism and a response to the horrors of World War II. Selz devoted an entire room to Giacometti, whose postwar sculpture summed up "the dread, alienation, and heroic humanism that formed the main theme of the show."[190] As we have seen, "humanism" was a key concept in formulating the art collection at the Chase Manhattan Bank. Would Giacometti's existentialist monument be the ultimate expression of this idea? Or, would the artist's alienated figures become stand-ins for the dehumanized worker in the new rationalized office?

If figuration posed a problem, then abstract sculpture did not fare much better. Calder may have titled the sculpture *Three Legged Beastie* to link the Chase plaza commission with his first commission for a large-scale work, but this name only serves to reinforce the idea that the "beast" might lurch across the plaza, stomping anyone who gets in his way. Yet a sculpture too closely identified with the bank may not have been desirable, either. A towering trademark akin to Lippold's symbol of steel could have overshadowed the careful balance of the plaza's dual function as both public and corporate space.

In 1968 Rockefeller resolved that a monumental sculpture, which he would donate in celebration of his twenty-fifth year on Wall Street, finally would be erected at

[190]Dennis Raverty, "Critical Perspectives on *New Images of Man*," *Art Journal* 53 (Winter 1994): 63.

One Chase Manhattan Plaza. In the years since Calder and Giacometti's initial proposals, each artist had returned to the commission along with other sculptors, among them Henry Moore, Dimitri Hadzi, and Noguchi. Later that year, the first exhibition of Dubuffet's projects for monumental sculptures and architecture were exhibited at the Musée des arts décoratifs in Paris. The exhibition impressed Bunshaft, who owned a Dubuffet sculpture. He approached the sculptor regarding the Chase plaza commission in December 1968. Eager to realize one of his projects, Dubuffet immediately set about work on a proposal.[191]

Dubuffet tended to work in series and during the 1960s was consumed by *l'Hourloupe*, a cycle conceived as the figuration of a world other than our own. Dubuffet populated these paintings and drawings with imagined characters in a strictly codified style: bold black lines on a white ground with red and black accents. When he moved on to sculpture and architecture, the orientation of his work changed entirely. Dubuffet's edifices and monuments were built at a human scale. As James Speyer describes it, "Instead of merely looking at a madly contrived situation, the visitor is now forced to expose himself to the situation directly."[192] Dubuffet was not just creating sculpture; he was making environments.

Over the following two years, Dubuffet worked closely with Bunshaft and Rockefeller to realize a sculpture acceptable to both the art committee and the artist. At first, Dubuffet's problem was the inverse of most artists: rather than staggering under the plaza sculpture's height requirements, he proposed an 80' tower, *Tour aux figures*, a sculpture whose scale would rival that of the building and could itself be occupied.

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[191]My account of Dubuffet's commission for One Chase Manhattan Plaza is drawn largely from the recent book-length study, *Dubuffet as Architect* by Daniel Abadie (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 2011).
[192]A. James Speyer, *Edifices and Monuments by Jean Dubuffet* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1971), 3.

Bunshaft quickly recommended a sculpture 30' to 35' in height and sent the artist plans and photographs of the plaza; meanwhile, Dubuffet developed a maquette for a group of trees "coloured only in black and white."[193] He abandoned this idea, however, upon receipt of the architectural plans because "There are already trees—real trees—on the plaza."[194]

Dubuffet devised a surprising number of studies for the plaza. Even after Bunshaft's enthusiasm for *Manège*, a group of six monumental figures, the artist declared his intention to continue working out further possibilities for the commission. All of these were made out of extruded polystyrene and then cast in resin for greater durability. Dubuffet submitted four maquettes to the art committee during the fall of 1970. In contrast with the others, he had improvised *Group of Four Trees* in mid-August by uniting four already existing elements. Dubuffet and the art committee decided that the maquette was to be enlarged twelve times in painted epoxy resin.

The sculpture's site had been decided years before, during construction, so that the plaza could be structurally reinforced to accept the load of a monumental sculpture. *Group of Four Trees* marks the axis point of the plaza's traffic: visitors walk up the stairs from Pine Street directly into the building, or from William Street across the plaza and along the length of the building towards Broadway (and vice-versa). The sculpture also marks the building's main entrance. The fact that spectators can walk through and touch *Group of Four Trees* is central to its success as a spatial marker.

In his remarks at the sculpture's dedication in 1972, Dubuffet characterized *Group of Four Trees* as an allegory:

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[193]Jean Dubuffet to Gordon Bunshaft, 27 January 1969, cited in Abadie, *Dubuffet as Architect*, 72.
[194]Jean Dubuffet to Gordon Bunshaft, 18 May 1969, cited in Abadie, *Dubuffet as Architect*, 72.

> I do not believe that these four trees, which I hope will not be taken as representations of real trees, but as semblances of the thrust and fertility of human thought, bear contradiction in any way to the site upon which they now stand. Indeed, in their capricious and aberrant graphisms, they give an impression—and this was intentional—of feverish intoxication. But they seem to me, by this same febrility, to manifest the ardent source of the enormous intellectual machinery of which this plaza is the core. I confess to being deeply moved that New York, this city so marvelously welcoming and marvelously eager to embrace every bold intellectual innovation, fearlessly accepted this allegory.[195]

These remarks echo an analogy between artistic creativity and industry that had been current in the U.S. at least since C.P. Snow's 1956 article, "The Two Cultures."[196] But whereas critics found continuities between Bertoia, Lippold, and Calder's work in the studio and the tasks performed by corporate researchers and engineers, Dubuffet's choice of words—"feverish intoxication" and "febrility"—imply a delirious state that is just the opposite of the cold calculation one finds in banking. As a writer at *Architectural Forum* argues, "[I]t is hard not to see [Dubuffet's] work as a mushrooming celebration of the irrational, irregular and spontaneous set against a computer print-out." By this critic's estimation, the sculpture could be viewed as positive or negative, as "welcomely whimsical or ridiculous on its site… Its pert scalloped leaves and gnarled trunks, basically white with energetic black reticulations, pose either laughably or laughingly amid the somber, Wall Street, grey rectilinearities."[197] There is something about the sculpture's lack of color that highlights its unreality; it is not a tree but a simulation of a tree, a form of abstraction perhaps even more appropriate to the spirit of Chase plaza than a sculpture that is purely abstract, given its dual function as both public space and corporate space.

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[195]Jean Dubuffet, "Remarks on the Unveiling of the *Group of Four Trees*," 24 October 1972, trans. Benita Eisler, *Jean Dubuffet, a Retrospective* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1973).
[196]The article was expanded and published as a book. C.P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959).
[197]"Something Else!" *Architectural Forum* 137 (November 1972): 27.

New York's 1961 zoning law codified the provision of open space as a public amenity, giving developers incentives to create open-air plazas. Later amendments to the law would encourage developers to add works of art to these spaces.[198] In the next chapter, I look at the transfer of this model of "corporate urbanism" to municipally sponsored civic spaces, where monumental abstract sculpture became a new symbol of the American city.[199]

[198]See Jerold S. Kayden, *Privately Owned Public Space: the New York City Experience* (New York: John Wiley, 2000).

[199]The architectural historian William H. Jordy coined this phrase in *The Impact of European Modernism in the Mid-Twentieth Century*, vol. 4 of *American Buildings and Their Architects* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976). See chapter one, "Rockefeller Center and Corporate Urbanism."

Chapter 3: Renewing the City's Image

On August 15, 1968, the City of Chicago celebrated the first birthday of the "Chicago Picasso," a monumental sculpture by Pablo Picasso located in the Chicago Civic Center (Figure 3.1). To mark the occasion, the city's Neighborhood Youth Corps sang the birthday song in English, as well as Spanish and French, in honor of the artist's Spanish heritage and his residence in France. Architect William Hartmann of SOM, steward of both Richard Lippold's sculpture for the Inland Steel Company Headquarters building and the Picasso sculpture, accepted a cake topped with a miniature version of the sculpture on the artist's behalf; or, perhaps, on behalf of the sculpture itself. In an article addressed to the sculpture, the *Chicago Tribune* reported:

> We love the prestige and prominence you have brought to our city. Not to mention tourists… [Picasso] is said to be pleased with the way your image is grabbing hold here and thruout [sic] the world. William E. Hartmann… visits your creator often and reports he thinks you 'looked great' on the telephone directory. He is also delighted with your likeness on ash trays, cuff links, pajamas, plates, and other items.[200]

The 50' tall, Cor-Ten steel sculpture had made national news upon its unveiling in August 1967 at the Chicago Civic Center, where it dominated the large plaza in front of a thirty-one-story International Style tower built to house courtrooms and offices for the city and Cook County.[201] A key part of the city's 1958 Central Area Plan, the civic center created open space in Chicago's Inner Loop, the congested heart of the city's commerce and civic government, through the demolition of a rundown city block.[202] The civic

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[200]Sheila Wolfe, "Pablo's Whatsit Is 1 Year Old," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 August 1968.

[201]The best source on the commission for Chicago remains Patricia Ann Balton Stratton, "Chicago Picasso" (M.A. thesis, Northwestern University, 1982). See also Wetenhall, "Modern Public Sculpture." The building was designed by C.F. Murphy Associates in association with SOM and Loebl, Schlossman & Bennett. Three charitable foundations paid for the sculpture: the Woods Charitable Fund, the Chauncey and Marion Deering McCormick Foundation, and the Field Foundation of Illinois.

[202]*Development Plan for the Central Area of Chicago* (Chicago: Dept. of City Planning, 1958). The plan proposed to accomplish three main objectives through the construction of a civic center on the northern end

center architects envisioned the plaza as a location where people could meet, a place for some tranquility, and, most significantly, a site for civic art.[203] Led by Hartmann, in consultation with Mayor Richard J. Daley, they had resolutely pursued the commission for a plaza sculpture by the world's foremost artist, Pablo Picasso. The result was a semi-abstract, open form sculpture that the artist left untitled.

As the *Tribune*'s praise for the sculpture attests, Picasso's sculpture had become an instant symbol of the city. The artist's intended meaning, however, was debated endlessly, even a year after its unveiling, prompting the *Tribune* to ask: "Does it really matter whether you are a dog, appendix, baboon, flying nun, horse, rib cage, phoenix, butterfly wings, ship, vulture, dragon, anchor on an aircraft carrier, stork, fox, woman's head, or absolutely nothing at all?"[204] Hartmann, the person who had worked most closely with Picasso on the project, cast the sculpture's capacity to accommodate different interpretations as an asset, one that created a unique connection between the artwork and individual observers. As he told the *Tribune*, "I have an idea what it is but I don't want to intrude between an artwork and the viewer… We don't all have to see the same thing. If we did, it wouldn't be Picasso's art."[205] Hartmann's formulation relies on the assumption that direct observation of the sculpture is its primary mode of reception;

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of the Loop and a federal center on the southern end: contribute to conservation measures in the downtown area by demolishing dilapidated buildings and developing vacant land; provide separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic through elevated walkways and sunken plazas; and provide public open space year round.

[203]According to Hartmann, "In my own view in the great cities around the world, the physical symbols in past ages were either government—the towers of Parliament in London—or religion—St. Paul's Cathedral in London or St. Peter's in Rome, and that in modern American cities the commercial symbols had taken over. Here was a chance to again show that the city belonged to the people and the people through their government had something that was symbolic… and so we created a plaza." William E. Hartmann, interview by Patricia Stratton, "Interview of William E. Hartmann by Patricia Stratton. August 11, 1981. Chicago Illinois," Appendix A, in Stratton, "Chicago Picasso," 213. The collaborating architects included a colossal seated figure resembling a blown-up version of the work of Henry Moore in their 1961 model for the Chicago Civic Center.

[204]Wolfe, "Whatsit."

[205]Hartmann quoted in Wolfe, "Whatsit."

however, most people first experienced the Chicago Picasso by other means. Between artwork and viewer, then, stood not the sculpture's "correct" interpretation but its image, which circulated in the press, on television, and even on the cover of the Chicago phone book.[206]

For mayors like Daley, renewing the image of the city was of prime importance during the 1950s and 1960s, when downtown's place at the center of urban American life seemed to be slipping. Demographic shifts were pulling upper and middle class residents, along with manufacturers, corporations, and businesses, to the suburbs, where open space and less pollution offered residents a higher quality of life and gave businesses proximity to employees and customers, as well as the ability to accommodate trucks and new horizontal assembly lines. These changes reduced tax revenue and took money out of city coffers, leaving officials with diminished capacity to run the city and to care for the less prosperous residents left behind. Furthermore, traffic-clogged streets planned before the automobile age and skylines that had not been updated since the Great Depression contributed to downtown's image as outmoded and decaying. To some mid-twentieth-century observers, the block cleared to make way for the Chicago Civic Center represented the very definition of blight, a "jumble of buildings" undistinguished both architecturally and in terms of the tenants who rented space there.[207] To refill the city's coffers, Daley and leaders in other American cities needed to increase tax revenue by encouraging the redevelopment of downtown with new office buildings. It was hoped

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[206]Françoise Choay writes, "Any construction, no matter what its purpose, can be put forth as a monument by the new modes of 'communication.' As such, the function of such a monument is to legitimate and authenticate the being of this visual replica, primary, fragile, and transitive, to which its value is henceforth relegated." See Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, trans. Lauren M. O'Connell (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 10.

[207]Miller, "Rise and Fall of the Dearborn Corridor," 255. Miller's essay remains the single best analysis of the Chicago Civic Center.

that these towering skyscrapers would burnish the image of the city and renew downtown.

The Chicago Civic Center was an unabashed bid on the part of the mayor to signal a new era of building in the central business district and to put municipal government on a par with private enterprise. Unlike Chicago City Hall (Holabird & Roche, 1911), a Beaux-Arts structure distinguished by its 75' granite Corinthian columns, the civic center did not use traditional architecture to reinforce an image of civic authority. As Ross Miller observes, "Daley understood how bare-bones high-rise architecture, in addition to conferring status on municipal workers, could represent publicly the raw political power he mastered in private."[208] The civic center demonstrated the city's aggressive attitude towards downtown blight and reinforced the sanitization of urban renewal, proving the mayor's ability to transform downtown. The plaza was "a perfected open space returned to the people through the beneficence of good government," crowned with a sculpture by the most famous artist in the world.[209] The Chicago Picasso further showed the progressivism and innovativeness of downtown.

The Chicago Picasso followed the model of corporate commissions for art in modern architecture discussed in the previous chapter. The sculpture marked the entrance to the building and attracted passersby to the plaza. Its monumental scale and construction in Cor-Ten matched the scale and materials of the office tower, creating a harmonious ensemble from the standpoint of design. The flexibility and standardization of the office tower's interior spaces also linked civic government with the efficiency and rationalism of the corporations that had established this model during the previous decade. At One Chase Manhattan Plaza, sculpture and open space eventually were

[208]Ibid. 254.
[209]Ibid.

combined to create a corporate modernist garden envisioned as a park for a renewed Lower Manhattan. The careful balance between public amenity and corporate public relations was reversed in Chicago, where the latter arguably took center stage.

At the same time, the commission established a new model for civic patronage of large-scale sculpture. When Roger Stevens, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), spoke at the groundbreaking for the Chicago Picasso in May 1967, he described Picasso's sculpture as the example for a new federal program then taking shape in Washington, D.C. That month, the National Council on the Arts awarded a matching grant to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the monumental sculpture commission that initiated its so-called "Sculpture Project," later renamed the "Art in Public Places" program. This program was established to insert significant works of art into major civic spaces like the Chicago Civic Center. Similar to the corporate commissions analyzed in the last chapter, these civic sculptures were meant to add an expressive element to the urban environment and serve as focal points for city life. They were also intended as an alternative to commercial advertising, which had overtaken public space in the mid- twentieth-century American city. Yet observers did not necessarily understand these sculptures as art; as I will argue, they read them according to the visual language of public relations.

In this chapter, I situate the commission for Alexander Calder's *La Grande Vitesse* (1969) in Grand Rapids (Figure 3.2) in relation to the city's urban development. Although not envisioned at the start of Grand Rapids' urban renewal project, the sculpture commissioned through the NCA became the culmination of this process, which was more ambitious in its scope than even the Chicago Civic Center. Whereas Daley focused his downtown renewal efforts on a three-acre site, in Grand Rapids urban renewal remade forty acres of the city's downtown. The large plaza adjacent to new glass and steel city and county office buildings became an ideal site for a civic symbol that

could encapsulate the changes taking hold in Grand Rapids. At the same time that it proposed a renewed relationship between sculpture and the city, however, the Sculpture Project also challenged a past tradition of civic monuments. As the debates over the specific meaning of the Chicago Picasso attest, it communicated with none of the didactic certainty of Beaux-Arts sculpture. Calder's 43' tall, bright red, steel stabile was unlike any public monument erected in Grand Rapids and in much of the United States. *La Grande Vitesse* did not celebrate a local hero or promote some notion of civic virtue. Instead, with its enormous scale and radical abstraction, it showed Grand Rapids and the rest of the world just how progressive a small American city could be.

During the 1960s, many artists were testing the limits of sculpture as a medium for making art, from minimalist objects at the beginning of the decade to site-specific earthworks at its end. For the artists, critics, and art historians writing about this new work, the monument became a key critical term in relating contemporary art to a longer tradition of sculpture.[210] Take Rosalind Krauss's important essay, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field."[211] In this 1979 text, Krauss attempts to account for the variety of objects that were called "sculpture" during the late 1960s and 1970s, a category that had been stretched so thin, it was in danger of collapsing. She writes, "And so we stare at the pit in the earth and think we both do and don't know what sculpture is." Krauss, however, knows exactly what sculpture is: a historically bounded category with its own rules and internal logic. And this logic, Krauss argues, "is inseparable from the logic of the monument." By definition, a sculpture is a commemorative representation. It sits in a particular place and speaks about the meaning or use of that place. Sculpture is figurative

[210]For an overview of these critical perspectives, see Julian Rose, "Objects in the Cluttered Field: Claes Oldenburg's Proposed Monuments," *October* 140 (Spring 2012): 113-138.
[211]Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985). First published *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.

and vertical, with a pedestal that mediates "between actual site and representational sign." Krauss argues that this model began to break down during the late nineteenth century, with the failure of two of Rodin's commissions: his *Gates of Hell* (1880-1917) and *Balzac* (1892-97). No version of either sculpture exists at its originally intended site, although multiple versions of both can be found in museums around the world. With Rodin and ultimately modernism, sculpture crosses into the negative condition of the monument. To paraphrase Krauss: instead of figurative, it is abstract; rather than the pedestal mediating between site and sign, the sculpture is pure base, functionally placeless, and largely self-referential. According to Krauss, this nomadic, homeless sort of sculpture had become by the early 1960s what was on or in front of the building that was not the building, or what was in the landscape that was not the landscape.[212] She goes on make the case that, between 1968 and 1970, artists began to investigate other forms at the outer limits of "not-landscape" and "not-architecture," which expanded the binary opposition of landscape and architecture in modernist sculpture and ushered in postmodernism.

In planning the Sculpture Project, the NCA would challenge the logic of the monument in two important ways. First, the NCA explicitly forbade the use of the grant for commemorative sculpture of any sort. Rather than a sculptural monument that spoke about the past, the NCA simply wanted to introduce monumental sculpture by the best contemporary artists into the urban environment. As René d'Harnoncourt, who was largely responsible for initiating the Sculpture Project, complained: "in the United States works of art displayed in public spaces are almost all reminiscent of 1875… if we can

[212]As an example, Krauss discusses works by Robert Morris from the early 1960s. Though I find Krauss' definition of sculpture and her "logic of the monument" useful, she includes works by neither Calder nor Picasso in her article. Her "expanded field" instead describes large-scale outdoor earthworks and even some gallery installations. See my conclusion for a discussion of earthworks and public art.

establish the fact that contemporary art is something that fits in with contemporary life… I think this in itself is a very important thing."[213] The public sculptures of the nineteenth century decried by d'Harnoncourt typically functioned as didactic decorations intended "to inspire, to edify, and to enhance civic beauty."[214] These civic monuments utilized allegory or the conventions of portrait statuary to convey moral values and, in the case of memorials, to give complex emotions "a public dimension by rooting them in space."[215] Monuments are powerful tools to instruct and inspire imitation, yet the monumental sculptures commissioned by the NCA would have no such didactic certainty. As one of the most visible programs administered by the NEA, the Sculpture Project would further the endowment's mission of strengthening America's cultural resources by increasing the visibility of contemporary art; commissions would honor the artist and no one else. Indeed, the NCA envisioned a new form of public sculpture, one rooted in studio practice rather than the tradition of civic monuments.

The second challenge to the logic of the monument had to do with the essential relationship between the monument and its site. This relationship was complicated for the Sculpture Project by urban renewal, which altered the idea that sculpture would draw on the history of a particular place for its meaning. The assumption of spatial continuity between past and present was quite literally wiped away by the bulldozer; superblocks rendered past urban forms unrecognizable by erasing entire streets and remaking the city

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[213]Proceedings, Fifth Meeting of the National Council on the Arts, May 13-15 1966, National Foundation on Arts and Humanities: "National Endowment for the Arts/National Council on the Arts," microfilm reel 1, Federal Records, LBJ. There was very little public sculpture in the United States prior to the Civil War. The standing soldier monuments that emerged during the 1860s are important early examples. See Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), especially chapter six, "Common Soldiers." For a useful overview of American sculpture up to the bicentennial, see *200 Years of American Sculpture* (New York: David R. Godine in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1976).

[214]Bogart, *Civic Ideal*, 22.

[215]Shanken, "Planning Memory," 141.

at a totally new scale. At the same time, such new construction created many potential sites for the monumental sculpture promoted by the NCA.

Urban renewal programs had expanded during the first half of the 1960s thanks to an influx of federal funds, as well as exceptions to the rule that reserved those funds for slum clearance and the construction of low-rent housing. Title I of the Wagner-Ellender-Taft Housing Act of 1949 had given local agencies the tools to purchase and clear slum properties, and then sell the cleared land to private developers.[216] Under Title I, the federal government would pay two-thirds of the net cost of purchasing and clearing "predominantly residential" slum tracts. Private developers would improve the land with new residences, at least in theory. Instead of high-risk rental apartments, most mayors and civic boosters preferred redevelopment schemes that sought to transform "blighted" areas into centers for shopping and entertainment that would appeal to white collar workers. Amendments to the federal urban renewal law in 1959 and 1961 gave cities greater leeway in using renewal funds for predominantly commercial projects. Many cities responded with plans for urban renewal that featured civic centers, shopping complexes, and soaring skyscrapers, all of which would boost tax revenues and symbolized the wealth, excitement, and opportunity of urban life.[217]

Urban renewal was more than a set of policies, however; it was a vision for an orderly, rational, and modern city that left past ways of living behind. Samuel Zipp argues: "'urban renewal' was shorthand for an entire ideal and practice of spatial

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[216]The Housing Act of 1937 had defined a "slum" as "any area where dwellings predominate which, by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement and design, lack of ventilation, light or sanitation facilities… are detrimental to safety, health, or morals." See Mark I. Gelfand, *A Nation of Cities: The Federal Government and Urban America, 1933-1965*, Urban Life in America series (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), 106.

[217]It took President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Urban Renewal Agency commissioners eight years to authorize $1.6 billion in Title I grants; their counterpart under President John F. Kennedy approved around the same amount in just two years. Gelfand, *Nation of Cities*, 337. For more on Title I, see Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance*, especially chapter three, "Progress or Decay."

transformation that employed characteristic aesthetic forms—modern architecture and superblock urban planning—to sweep away the nineteenth-century street grid."[218] "Slum clearance scoured away the old cityscape and its traditional, sedimented urban patterns," writes Zipp. "Then, the clean, progressive rationality of the towers and plazas rose over the ruins."[219] This spatial reordering of the city demanded a new form of civic sculpture that matched the abstraction of tower and plaza as well as the superblock's scale.

In what follows, I trace the parallel trajectories of urban renewal in downtown Grand Rapids, and the industrial production of Calder's fountains and stabiles made for World's Fairs and international expositions. These trajectories intersect in *La Grande Vitesse*, the first commission awarded for the NCA's Sculpture Project. In the first half of the chapter, I look at the initiation of the Sculpture Project and think about the place of *La Grande Vitesse* in Grand Rapids' campaign for urban renewal. In the second half of the chapter, I analyze the processes by which Calder came to realize his monumental stabiles, and consider how their industrial mode of production became central to critical readings of this body of work. I also pay close attention to *La Grande Voile* (1965) and *The Gwenfritz* (1969), two commissions that preceded *La Grande Vitesse* that help me to illustrate the connections between Calder's stabiles and more traditional forms of monumental construction. As the case of Calder's *La Grande Vitesse* in Grand Rapids suggests, the corporate modernist tower and plaza became through urban renewal a civic space that blurred the distinction between the business of government and public life. Monumental sculpture on the plaza was folded into this new image of the city, which not only modeled itself on corporate architecture but also adopted the practices of corporate

[218]Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), 8.
[219]Ibid. 9.

public relations. Sculpture would become a place marker for new civic plazas and circulate as an image that came to stand for the city itself.

THE SCULPTURE PROJECT AND THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

As early as the 1930s bills had been introduced to establish a national arts agency.[220] After attempts to incorporate Works Progress Administration (WPA) art efforts into a Bureau of Fine Arts failed, a full decade elapsed before arts advocates Jacob Javits and Charles Howell renewed the fight to win federal support for the arts with the annual introduction of arts legislation. Even with the emergence of the Cold War, when culture proved to be a potent weapon, opponents of arts legislation successfully argued that the arts were an aspect of American life that should be protected from encroachment by the federal government. The turning point came in 1955, with President Dwight D. Eisenhower's State of the Union address. Eisenhower voiced the strongest presidential support for the arts since the New Deal by recommending the establishment of a Federal Advisory Commission on the Arts, as well as awards of merit for significant contributions to culture. During his presidency, a National Cultural Center (later renamed the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts) was authorized, along with a new home for the National Collection of Fine Arts (now the Smithsonian American Art Museum) and the National Portrait Gallery. The legislation proposed to enact Eisenhower's bold vision for a Federal Advisory Commission on the Arts died in committee, but the bill established the essential governing principles for the federal arts program instituted a decade later.[221]

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[220]The best source on the federal government and the arts prior to the establishment of the NEA remains Gary O. Larson, *The Reluctant Patron: The United States Government and the Arts, 1943-1965* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).

[221]The principles are "(a) that the growth and flourishing of the arts depend upon freedom, imagination, and individual initiative; (b) that the encouragement of creative activity in the performance and practice of the arts, and of a widespread participation in an appreciation of the arts, promotes the general welfare and is

President Kennedy made the arts a symbol of his administration, inviting leading figures in the arts to his inauguration and later hosting them as both guests and performers at the White House.[222] He took the unprecedented step of naming a Special Consultant on the Arts and charged the Twentieth Century Fund's August Heckscher with conducting a cultural inventory of the United States. Among the findings published in Heckscher's report were recommendations that the president convene a Federal Advisory Council on the Arts and create a National Arts Foundation, imperatives that were fulfilled following Kennedy's assassination as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society program.[223]

Kennedy also made a significant contribution to the General Services Administration's (GSA) Art-in-Architecture program. During his first year in office, Kennedy assembled an Ad Hoc Committee on Government Office Space to address the widespread perception that federal buildings did not reflect the best that contemporary architecture had to offer. Among the committee's findings was the concept that "the Federal Government, no less than other public and private organizations concerned with the construction of new buildings, should take advantage of the increasingly fruitful collaboration between architecture and the fine arts."[224] GSA administrator Bernard L. Boutin, a member of the committee, took this idea to heart and approved a policy of spending up to one-half of one percent of new federal buildings' construction costs on

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in (the) national interest; (c) that the encouragement of the arts, while primarily a matter for private and local initiative, is an appropriate matter of concern to the United States Government." Cited in Larson, *Reluctant Patron*, 99.

[222]For Kennedy and the arts, see John Wetenhall, "Camelot's Legacy to Public Art: Aesthetic Ideology on the New Frontier," *Art Journal* 48, Critical Issues in Public Art (Winter 1989): 303-308.

[223]See "The arts and the National Government; report to the President, submitted by August Heckscher, Special Consultant on the Arts" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963). Heckscher later served as New York City Parks Commissioner, discussed in my chapter four.

[224]Cited in Donald W. Thalacker, *The Place of Art in the World of Architecture* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1980), xii.

art. Together with the Sculpture Project, the GSA became a major patron of public sculpture during the last three decades of the twentieth century.[225]

The NCA was the first federal agency established by law to encourage and promote the nation's artistic and cultural progress.[226] It was initially created as an advisory body to the president and Congress with the passage of the National Arts and Cultural Development Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-579). When Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act (Public Law 89-209) the following year, the NCA was transferred to the NEA. As an advisory body to the NEA, the NCA set the new agency's policies and eventually established the Art in Public Places program.

At the signing of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, Johnson declared, "Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves, and to others, the inner vision which guides us as a nation."[227] The new legislation made explicit the value of the arts and humanities to American society, putting them on equal footing with science and technology. In a manner similar to corporate actions discussed in the previous chapter, the law's declaration of findings and purposes framed the arts as a humanizing force that would counterbalance the United States' military-industrial power in the eyes of the world:

> The world leadership which has come to the United States cannot rest solely upon superior power, wealth, and technology, but must be solidly founded upon

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[225]The policy lapsed in 1966, when controversy over a mural by Robert Motherwell in the John F. Kennedy Federal Building in Boston led to the program's suspension. It was revived in 1972 with the commission for Calder's *Flamingo*, a monumental stabile installed in the plaza of Mies van der Rohe's Chicago Federal Center in October 1974.

[226]For the NCA's initial goals and a legislative history, see "The First Annual Report of the National Council on the Arts, 1964-1965," http://www.nea.gov/about/11Annual/index.php (accessed 5 July 2012).

[227]National Endowment for the Arts and National Council on the Arts, "Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1968," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 5. http://www.nea.gov/about/11Annual/index.php (accessed 5 July 2012).

> worldwide respect and admiration for the Nation's high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit.[228]

The arts and humanities were also said to bolster democracy by promoting freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry. The NEA promoted these values by strengthening America's cultural resources, largely through a program of grants-in-aid awarded to individuals, not-for-profit organizations, and state art agencies.[229]

At the time of its establishment, the NCA was composed of the chairman of the NEA, who also served as chairman of the council, and twenty-six private citizens appointed by the president for their expertise in the creative fields supported by the endowment: architecture, planning, design, dance, literature, music, theater, visual arts, and public media. The 1965 legislation authorized $5 million to be dispersed annually for grant programs and pilot projects between 1966 and 1968; $2.75 million annually for assistance to state arts councils; and a $2.25 million gift fund to match unrestricted donations.[230] While these funds were but a small part of the federal budget, they represented official recognition of the arts by the federal government, realizing a dream that had been pursued on Capitol Hill over the preceding three decades. The funds would go a long way towards fulfilling NEA Chairman Stevens' goal: "The arts must become part of our daily lives."[231]

Visual Arts was just one program within the endowment's portfolio, but it received special attention from NCA council member d'Harnoncourt, who was then director of the MoMA. At the fifth meeting of the NCA in May 1966, d'Harnoncourt

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[228]Public Law 89-209, 89th Cong., 1st sess., 4 January 1965.

[229]For the NEA, see Donna M. Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse: United States Arts Policy and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004); Mark Bauerlein with Ellen Grantham, eds., *National Endowment for the Arts: A History, 1965-2008* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts, 2009); and Michael Brenson, *Visionaries and Outcasts: The NEA, Congress, and the Place of the Visual Artist in America* (New York: New Press, 2001).

[230]National Endowment for the Arts, "Annual Report, 1968," 16.

[231]Ibid. 4.

presented his "Three Year Program for the Visual Arts." The program consisted of three parts: "1) direct assistance to the creative artist and craftsman; 2) dissemination of knowledge, appreciation and opportunities to enjoy the visual arts; and 3) recognition of distinguished artistic achievement."[232] This last, loosely defined category was designated "to honor distinguished achievements in the visual arts." D'Harnoncourt explained:

> In line with President and Mrs. Johnson's Great Society program of beautification of the United States, the National Council proposes to initiate a program of acquisition of contemporary American paintings and sculpture of the highest artistic merit for placement in public premises throughout the nation.[233]

The federal government would purchase works of art with no commemorative function. Instead of memorializing an important person or event, one goal of the program was to recognize living American artists by bringing sculpture out of museums and private collections and into the public domain.

The program's second goal had to do with enhancing the urban environment. Lady Bird Johnson had formally launched the administration's campaign for "Beautification" in February 1965 to address a widespread sense that American cities were in trouble. Their ailments had already been described in books like *Sick Cities* (1963) by Gordon Mitchell and *God's Own Junkyard* (1964) by Peter Blake. Mayors had battled the problems described by these writers—a lack of planning for downtown districts and civic centers, the monotony of urban sprawl, the spread of roadside billboards and junkyards, persistent environmental pollution—for decades, with no solution yet in sight. An umbrella title for a wide variety of legislation and public campaigns, proponents of "Beautification" responded with programs for landscaping and

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[232]Cited in Wetenhall, "Modern Public Sculpture," 351.

[233]Cited in Mary Eleanor McCombie, "Art and Policy: The National Endowment for the Arts' Art in Public Places Program, 1967-1980" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Texas at Austin, 1992), 68. For the Art in Public Places program, see also John Beardsley, *Art in Public Places: A Survey of Community-Sponsored Projects Supported by the National Endowment for the Arts* (Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1981).

urban renewal, rural and urban environmentalism, national parks conservation, anti-pollution measures, water and air reclamation, control of outdoor advertising, and preservation of historic sites. The concerns of "Beautification" advocates meshed well with those of the Sculpture Project; commissions for contemporary sculpture nearly became an official part of Johnson's "Beautification" campaign.[234] Lady Bird focused her efforts on Washington, D.C., forming the Committee for a More Beautiful Capital and hoping to make the city an example for the rest of the country.[235] Like the trees and flowers planted by Lady Bird, the NCA intended for sculpture to beautify the urban environment and to counter the visual clutter of the mid-twentieth-century city with examples of outstanding contemporary art.

The NCA immediately recognized the public relations implications of the Sculpture Project, but rather than considering what this would mean for participating cities, Chairman Stevens viewed public sculpture as promoting the NCA itself: "This would almost be sort of a living advertisement on the National Council on the Arts."[236] To get the biggest PR boost, d'Harnoncourt suggested that the first three grants geographically span the country, and that only works of the highest caliber be chosen. The actual implementation of the project would evolve through a process of trial-and-error, but it is significant that d'Harnoncourt initially imagined a nomination jury that would select a number of works of art, which would then be offered to representatives

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[234]See my discussion below of Calder's *The Gwenfritz* (1969).

[235]The Committee sponsored the planting of hundreds of thousands of flowers, shrubs, and trees around Washington, both in the monumental core and lower-income areas. Lady Bird also took an interest in the National Mall, helping to convince Joseph H. Hirshhorn to donate his collection to the Smithsonian, and pressed for continuance of redevelopment along Pennsylvania Avenue. Furthermore, Lady Bird sponsored the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, which called for control of outdoor advertising and encouraged scenic enhancement and roadside development. For more on Lady Bird, see Lewis L. Gould, *Lady Bird Johnson: Our Environmental First Lady* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1999).

[236]Proceedings, Fifth Meeting of the National Council on the Arts, May 13-15 1966, National Foundation on Arts and Humanities: "National Endowment for the Arts/National Council on the Arts," microfilm reel 1, Federal Records, LBJ.

from interested municipalities. For d'Harnoncourt, the work of art took precedence over its site, a point of view that did not acknowledge the importance of the site to the sculpture's meaning.

In May 1967, the NCA initiated its Sculpture Project and announced a matching grant of forty-five thousand dollars for Grand Rapids.[237] Several factors made the city a good choice for the NCA. During the 1960s, Grand Rapids built a new civic center in the central business district, aiming to achieve the dream of a lively and profitable downtown and to renew the image of the city in the minds of local and national audiences. Grand Rapids accomplished this through a federally funded urban renewal program that literally remade a forty-acre swath of the nineteenth-century urban fabric and, more symbolically, sought to refashion the city's image from a center for the manufacture of furniture into a hub for regional corporate headquarters and a new white-collar economy. Although unanticipated by the NCA, this new civic image would play as much of a role in the Sculpture Project as the sculpture itself.

ALEXANDER CALDER'S *LA GRANDE VITESSE* FOR GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

That Grand Rapids was even considered for the Sculpture Project resulted from little more than propitious timing. On April 7, 1967, Henry Geldzahler, associate curator of American painting and sculpture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and coordinator

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[237]The NCA also awarded a matching grant to Houston, Texas but the commission was not realized. See my chapter four for more on the grant, which ultimately brought Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* (1963-67) to Houston. The proceedings indicate that the NCA also considered awarding matching grants to Milwaukee and New York City, but few details about these proposals survive. Councilmembers thought that a sculpture in New York would give the project a level of distinction attractive to other cities. James Johnson Sweeney envisioned a monumental Calder for the Battery as a "greeting element to visitors coming by sea or even by air, if it is big enough." See Proceedings, Eighth Meeting of the National Council on the Arts, May 12-14 1967, National Foundation on Arts and Humanities: "National Endowment for the Arts/National Council on the Arts," microfilm reel 1, Federal Records, LBJ. In November 1967, the NCA awarded its third matching grant to Seattle and eventually commissioned Isamu Noguchi's *Black Sun* (1969) for Volunteer Park.

of the NEA's Visual Arts program, lectured at the Grand Rapids Art Museum. While touring the city with his hostess, Nancy Mulnix, Geldzahler suggested that Grand Rapids apply for a grant to fund a sculpture for Vandenberg Center, where a new city hall was rising as part of an urban renewal project. Mulnix acted immediately, contacting Gerald R. Ford, then Congressman for the Fifth District, for his support.[238] Ford forwarded Mulnix's letter to NEA Chairman Stevens. Stevens, in turn, phoned Mulnix and requested plans for the city hall plaza. Grand Rapids City Planner John Paul Jones prepared the materials, which he sent to the NCA on May 8. On May 17, Ford and Stevens phoned Mulnix to confirm that funds had been allotted for Grand Rapids. The whole process took little more than a month.

This story has been recounted a number of times.[239] In retelling it here, my goal is to think carefully about the details of the commission, as well as the development of its site, which has received scant attention in the literature on *La Grande Vitesse*. Indeed, Vandenberg Center was an ideal site for the NCA's Sculpture Project. It was the centerpiece of the city's urban renewal project, which had become synonymous with Grand Rapids' civic identity. The large plaza in front of the new city hall provided a clean slate for a civic symbol that would encapsulate the changes taking hold in the city; however, Grand Rapids' past as "Furniture City" played a part, too. If its leading role in the furniture industry had once positioned Grand Rapids as arbiter of taste for the entire

[238]In her letter, Mulnix framed the benefits of sculpture in terms of tourism and used the Chicago Picasso as an example. Instead of "some gimmick to attract tourists (the hottest idea is a medieval castle)," she wrote, "why not an outstanding contemporary sculpture? I keep thinking of Chicago's Civic Center with its Picasso." Cited in McCombie, "Art and Policy," 85.

[239]See Beardsley, *Art in Public Places*; Wetenhall, "Modern Public Sculpture"; and McCombie, "Art and Policy" for detailed treatments of the subject. Jennifer Geigel Mikulay's is the most recent. See "The Public's Art: Participatory Gestures and Contemporary Practice" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007). The primary archive for *La Grande Vitesse* is the Nancy Mulnix Papers, GRPL.

country, then the Sculpture Project would restore and extend this function, from furniture to the new field of public art.

Fortunes gleaned from the manufacture of furniture built Grand Rapids. When Louis Campau founded Grand Rapids on land surrounding his trading post in 1831, most fine furniture was produced in the Northeast.[240] The expansion of Midwestern railroads during the 1850s amplified demand for home furnishings, and Michigan's abundant forests made Grand Rapids an attractive location for furniture manufacturers, whose number had rendered the city "a one-stop furniture showroom" by 1885.[241] Manufacturers established a bi-annual Furniture Market in 1878 that was responsible for much of the growth of Grand Rapids into the twentieth century. In 1889, Delos A. Blodgett, a local financier, developed an office building that was soon filled with furniture lines. Considered the pioneer furniture exhibition building, Blodgett inspired others to erect large display buildings clustered within the city center. The Furniture Market also fueled the construction of hotels, theaters, bars, and restaurants to serve first the hundreds and then thousands of visitors who attended the event, which reached a peak attendance of around six thousand people in 1928. The Furniture Market even drove city planning. Eager to position Grand Rapids as one of the nation's great cities, city commissioners invited the celebrated urban planner, Harland Bartholomew, to Grand Rapids. The resulting 1924 Bartholomew Plan, never realized, called for wide boulevards that terminated with monumental sculptures, park spaces along the Grand River, and the "beautification" of Grand Rapids' factories with coordinated classical façades.[242]

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[240]For a history of Grand Rapids, see Z. Z. Lydens, ed., *The Story of Grand Rapids* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1966).
[241]Christian G. Carron, *Grand Rapids Furniture: The Story of America's Furniture City* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Public Museum of Grand Rapids, 1998), 41.
[242]Carron, *Grand Rapids Furniture*, 74.

By the early 1960s, however, the nickname "Furniture City" had come to seem like a misnomer. Only two workers out of ten labored in the furniture industry. A majority of these were employed by Herman Miller, Steelcase, and Baker, all firms that had shifted the focus of their operations from factory-made wooden furniture for the domestic market—an industry whose center shifted to the American South beginning in the 1930s—to the production of furniture ordered via large contracts by corporations, schools, and government organizations. This change and the diversification of local industries led to a paradoxical situation: in "The Furniture Capital of the Nation," furniture was a minor contributor to local prosperity. Grand Rapids was in need of a new civic image. The city would find it through downtown urban renewal.

We can track the rise and decline of downtown Grand Rapids via the fortunes of a single department store. After an 1869 fire burned Grand Rapids' industrial center in the city's northern half, businesses and new buildings housing the city and county government replaced the gutted factories. In 1872, Wurzburg's Department Store was established at Crescent Street and Canal. This store anchored a mercantile strip along Canal Street, whose name was changed to Monroe in 1873.

Grand Rapids' civic buildings clustered just east of Monroe and their designs came to represent the eclecticism of postbellum civic architecture. The city had done without any permanent government structures between 1844, when the Kent County Courthouse burned at Public Square, and the construction of city hall on Crescent Street in 1888 (Figure 3.3). Elijah E. Myers, a prolific architect of public buildings, including Michigan and Texas' State Capitol buildings, designed Grand Rapids' City Hall.[243] In

[243]The Michigan State Capitol was built in 1879. The Texas State Capitol was completed in 1888. For more on Myers, see Ronald D. Rarick, "A Michigan Architect in Indiana: Elijah E. Myers and the Business of Public Architecture in the Gilded Age," *Michigan Historical Review* 26 (Fall 2000): 148-59 and Paul Goeldner, "The Designing Architect: Elijah E. Myers," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 92 (October 1988): 271-288.

contrast to the monumental grandeur of these Renaissance revival complexes, for Grand Rapids Myers used the language of Gothic revival architecture to express stability and conservatism.[244] By the time Grand Rapids City Hall was slated for demolition, a clock tower, the building's most prominent feature, had asserted the unifying power of city government by tolling the hour for nearly three quarters of a century. It would not last a fourth. As one writer quipped, "Forty acres of 'blight,' (including City Hall) would give way to the wrecking ball and the bulldozer, and a civic center would open like a flower on plazas leading down to the river."[245]

Observers pointed to Wurzburg's relocation in 1951 as the decisive turning point in the decline of the area known as Lower Monroe. In search of a remedy for shuttered businesses and a declining tax base, officials pinned their hopes on the construction of a new civic center. The civic center typology had originated with the City Beautiful movement around the turn of the twentieth century. The movement was an outgrowth of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, where monumental architecture, large-scale sculpture, and axial planning had "provided… a disciplined version of what the American city could look like" and influenced scores of civic officials who wanted to express the period's professionalization of city government.[246] They built centralized complexes of purpose-dedicated structures in a uniform architectural style for administrative offices, libraries, markets, cultural and convention centers. Though the civic center typology had come under attack as early as the 1950s, it persisted because it lent itself well to the large-scale clearing and replanning promoted by urban renewal.[247] Grand Rapids had

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[244]Myers' Neo-Gothic city hall was soon joined by a Richardsonian Romanesque county building (Sidney Osgood, 1892). That year a permanent police headquarters building was also erected nearby.
[245]Russell Lynes, "'The Treatment' in Grand Rapids," *Harper's Magazine* 224 (January 1962): 22.
[246]William L. Lebovich, *America's City Halls* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1984), 24.
[247]See, for example, Richard A. Miller, "Are Civic Centers Obsolete?" *Architectural Forum* 110 (January 1959): 94-99 and Gordon Edwards, "The Civic Center Syndrome," *Landscape Architecture* 53 (July 1963):

established a planning commission during the teens, but employed no trained urban planner until 1944. Grand Rapids' city planners spent the next decade drawing up at least two civic center schemes, but they made little headway on actual construction.[248]

Conflicting reports about the best site for redevelopment, coupled with a lack of interest in financing the project on the part of Grand Rapids' citizens, stymied the planners' efforts during the 1950s. A 1952 proposal by Planning Director Scott C. Bagby focused on two pressing issues: increased office space for local government and parking.[249] The city's administration had outgrown city hall years before, forcing many departments to move into rented office spaces scattered across Grand Rapids. To resolve this problem and to allow for future expansion, Bagby proposed the replacement of Grand Rapids' aging administrative buildings. The civic center complex would include a federal building, municipal parking garage, city hall, court building, jail, and county building, all situated on several city-owned blocks east of the Monroe shopping district (Figure 3.4). Open spaces around the buildings and along the Grand River would be used for parking. That year, Monroe Avenue retailers joined Bagby in calling for the demolition of the Pantlind Exhibition Building—a relic of Grand Rapids' days as Furniture City—which was removed in 1953 to make way for a surface parking lot, one of many that came to dot the downtown landscape.[250] This was the only action taken on Babgy's plan, however, and he resigned in frustration three years later.

288-291. While Miller advocates for civic buildings as neighborhood focal points distributed across the city, Edwards argues that civic buildings should be integrated with other downtown buildings in a walkable, compact core.

[248]The urban renewal process is chronicled in the Grand Rapids Planning Department's Newspaper Clippings file, Series 7-34, Box 6, GRCA. See also the brochure produced to promote Vandenberg Center.

[249]Parking was an issue facing cities large and small during the 1950s. See Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance*, 97-99.

[250]"Civic Center Move Gains," *Grand Rapids Press*, 26 June 1952. For the architecture of the furniture industry in Grand Rapids, see the Grand Rapids Historical Commission's photo essay http://www.historygrandrapids.org/explore.php?essay=23&cat=3 (accessed 11 May 2012).

The Chamber of Commerce responded to Bagby's resignation by commissioning another study of downtown Grand Rapids. They called on the Urban Land Institute (ULI), a non-profit planning organization associated with a powerful lobbying group, the National Association of Real Estate Boards. The 1955 ULI plan shifted the civic center site west of Monroe, along the Grand River, and used the 1932 Civic Auditorium as an anchor.[251] Instead of rebuilding on the sites of existing civic structures, the ULI plan envisioned a more tightly focused complex clustered on just two city blocks, which would be cleared to make way for new construction. When a new Planning Director, Keith M. Honey, drew up a civic center plan in 1956, he also chose the Grand River site (Figure 3.5).[252] Still, despite hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars spent, the plan died at the polls, when Grand Rapids citizens rejected the $30 million needed to finance the civic center.[253]

Two federal programs finally sparked the construction of Grand Rapids' Civic Center: the interstate highway system and urban renewal. The city planning commission had first considered a highway plan in 1946 and began negotiating with state and federal representatives to determine route locations and design during the early 1950s. When the federal government adopted legislation providing for the interstate highway network in 1956, Grand Rapids' north-south freeway was extended to link to this new system. An east-west route was adopted in 1960, right around the time Grand Rapids officials decided to make sweeping changes to the downtown.[254] In quick succession, the city

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[251]Urban Land Institute, *Downtown Grand Rapids* (1955). The Civic Auditorium was built on the site of Louis Campau's trading post and functioned in a manner similar to a convention center.

[252]"Hail Report on Civic Center, Seek Reply on County Role," *Grand Rapids Press*, 13 September 1956.

[253]See Charles Press, *When one-third of a city moves to the suburbs: a report on the Grand Rapids metropolitan area* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University, 1959).

[254]The north-south freeway opened in 1962; the east-west freeway opened two years later. Early planning meant that the downtown urban renewal project could be designed around the freeway interchanges. See Lydens, *Story of Grand Rapids*, 178-79.

earned a Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency urban renewal planning grant, the people of Grand Rapids voted to tax themselves to finance urban renewal, and in 1961 the first building in the plan area was leveled. The problems identified as early as 1945 had only gotten worse in the ensuing decades, a situation reflected in the size of the renewal area, which now encompassed both of the sites contemplated during the 1950s.[255]

The final obstacle to civic center construction was a June 1963 vote on another tax levy to fund four new municipal buildings: a city-county justice building, police building, city hall, and county building. In the days leading up to the ballot, boosters flooded local newspapers with articles and advertisements that encouraged Grand Rapids citizens to vote yes on financing the civic center. These news items used photographs to make the case that Grand Rapids badly needed new municipal buildings, which boosters argued were key to future development in the region. Most striking is a spread in the *Grand Rapids Press* that shows the nineteenth-century buildings the new structures would replace, with captions that spell out the need for their demolition in no uncertain terms. The "picturesque old courthouse" is labeled "ANTIQUATED"; the police headquarters, "a cause for local pride when it opened," is now "DECREPIT"; and city hall, "OUTDATED."[256] Another news item proclaims: "Time has run out on our present buildings! Built 75 years ago… our County Court House, the City Hall and Police Headquarters are run-down, inefficient and expensive to maintain. They are located in a

[255]John Paul Jones and Phillip R. Young, "Downtown Grand Rapids Decides to Compete," *American City* 76 (December 1961): 94-5.
[256]"Your Yes Vote June 18th Means 'Bargain Civic Center'," *Grand Rapids Press*, 11 June 1963.

renewal area and must be torn down."[257] In his study of urban renewal, Zipp explains the sense of urgency that underscores these statements:

> Proponents of urban renewal assumed that its built environment—its cleared, open superblocks and austere towers—was a self-evident symbol of a new kind of time and space. These built forms stood for the very idea that it was necessary and possible to do away with the old city, for the faith that tradition had to be displaced, for the belief that city building had to reveal time rolling ever forward, leaving outmoded ways of life behind.[258]

Grand Rapids' old civic buildings violated the modern planning principles of standardization and flexibility upon which the new civic center would be built. They also projected an image of the city that matched the captions accompanying their photographs: antiquated, decrepit, and outdated. Modern office buildings would rise in their place to house the operations of civic government and symbolize a new way of life.

The Grand Rapids Civic Center master plan, drawn up by the Detroit architecture firm Giffels & Rossetti, exemplifies the marriage of the civic center concept with modern architectural and planning principles. Their design reimagined Lower Monroe's dense blocks of brick buildings as three superblocks created by eliminating two streets (Figure 3.6). Giffels & Rossetti transformed Monroe into a wide boulevard bisected by a landscaped median strip. The plan's central block would include a federal building, city and county building, a motel with a restaurant, and two office buildings. Interspersed between these structures were surface parking lots, green spaces, and plazas. The automobile, which had eliminated intense pedestrian use of city streets, ironically led to vast new open spaces. The entire complex sat atop a subterranean parking garage.[259]

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[257]"Vote 'Yes' June 18 for Lowest Cost Financing for New City-County Center," *Grand Rapids Press*, 11 June 1963.

[258]Zipp, *Manhattan Projects*, 9.

[259]The generous space around the buildings was also a form of land banking for future construction. "Proposed City-County Facility; Phase II of Master Plan for G. R. Civic Center," prepared by Giffels & Rossetti, 27 May 1963. Grand Rapids Planning Department, Reports and Studies, Series 7-37, Box 4, Folder 14, GRCA. See also "Glimpse of Future," *Grand Rapids Press*, 30 May 1963.

SOM won the contract to design the city and county buildings in partnership with a local firm. As built, Grand Rapids' new civic buildings are diminutive versions of SOM's corporate office towers (Figure 3.7). The structures have a skin of brown tinted glass with windows and floors articulated in dark Canadian granite. Like all of the firm's designs for corporations, these civic buildings resulted from SOM's study of the city administration's space needs, work flow, and office organization, a process of particular importance to Grand Rapids, since many departments that had been crowded out of older buildings and scattered throughout the city could now be united under one roof.[260] If Myers' design for Grand Rapids City Hall had looked to past architectural traditions to convey a sense of permanence and monumentality, SOM's design proclaimed Grand Rapids' city government to be as rational, functional, and efficient as any business.[261]

SOM crucially reoriented the building, changing Giffels & Rossetti's proposed cantilevered entrance off Monroe into a glass-walled lobby that faced a large plaza on Ottawa Avenue. The plaza took the place of the old city hall's clock tower as the new building's main feature. As with SOM's Chase Manhattan Bank headquarters in lower Manhattan, the plaza was intended to serve as the focal point of a renewal project, but in Grand Rapids the office tower and plaza typology so popular with corporations was returned to the realm of civic government. The gift of light and air crucial to corporate urbanism in densely populated cities like New York was less important in Grand Rapids, where the plaza supplied a more ceremonial space. It was a showpiece of municipal power in a city that aimed to remake itself, and a symbol for the renewed city, where

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[260]"'Bargain Civic Center'." According to the article, new facilities were planned to provide for anticipated expansion through 1980.

[261]For a sampling of new city halls during the 1960s, see "What's Been Happening to City Hall?" *Architectural Forum* 120 (April 1964): 98-105.

modern buildings and open space were in the process of succeeding past urban forms and ways of life.

Grand Rapids boosters used the renewal program and Vandenberg Center to rebrand the city. The chamber of commerce went so far as to advertise in *The Wall Street Journal* with the headline, "Hey, Grand Rapids, your progress is showing" superimposed on an aerial photograph of Vandenberg Center, then under construction, in a bid to attract new businesses.[262] The civic center's name had been chosen in a 1963 competition organized by the chamber. After considering over eight hundred entries, including Furniture City Center and Grand River Plaza, the committee chose to name the renewal project for the late Michigan Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg, deemed "the most widely-known statesman to come out of Michigan."[263] A native of Grand Rapids, Vandenberg had helped draft the Charter of the United Nations in 1945 and forged bipartisan support for American foreign policy during the Cold War. With the name, boosters moved away from the focus on a single industry and instead shaped a city image that tied Grand Rapids to events on the national and international stage.

No monument to Vandenberg was planned for the plaza, however. Here the architects intended to build a fountain, which would offset the building and serve as the focus of the plaza. The plans for a fountain were scrapped with the announcement of the Sculpture Project grant. Grand Rapids had been awarded the NCA grant on May 17. At the end of the month, a delegation from Grand Rapids met with the NEA's Stevens at the

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[262]*Wall Street Journal*, 29 June 1967. Reinforcing Grand Rapids' transformation from Furniture City to a hub for white collar workers, the text immediately below the photograph proclaims: "Vandenberg Center is the pace-setter for dynamic area development! We pull together in Grand Rapids, where cooperation is writing a bright chapter of progress. Citizens have accepted the challenge for modern schools, a new airport and up-to-date city and county facilities. **Grand Rapids, the city that craftsmen made famous, is ready for the future with a total environment attractive to business.** It's a great place to live, work and play. Your business deserves the best!"

[263]"Honor Vandenberg," *Grand Rapids Press*, 1 October 1963. Tongue-in-cheek submissions to the contest included Utopia, Tax-Base Bonanza, and Radiant Radius, all plays on urban planners' dreams.

Chicago offices of SOM to discuss the formation of a commissioning panel, which would include three experts in the field of art and architecture, as well as three local representatives. On June 14, a formal announcement of the grant's approval was made public and the panel members were announced: Gordon Smith of the Albright-Knox Gallery of Art; landscape architect Hideo Sasaki; Walter McBride of the Grand Rapids Art Museum; Hartmann of SOM; the painter Adolph Gottlieb; and Robert I. Blaich, Vice President of Design at Herman Miller. In July, the mayor named a Sculpture Committee co-chaired by Mulnix and Peter M. Wege, the top executive at Steelcase, to coordinate the commission and raise the matching funds. The panel met in Grand Rapids on August 24 and, after considering the work of George Rickey and Tony Smith, quickly settled on Calder.[264]

The panel agreed that a safe bet was desirable for the Sculpture Project's first commission. Calder's *Teodelapio* (1962), which he created for the 1962 Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, had been on the mind of James Johnson Sweeney in the NCA panel's preliminary discussions of the Sculpture Project (Figure 3.8). Since then, Calder had created monumental sculptures for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Sydney, Australia, and Expo '67 in Montreal.[265] Because the NCA commission was meant to be an award for artistic achievement, Calder certainly qualified; his reputation as the foremost sculptor in the United States had been secure since the 1950s. A monumental Calder in Grand Rapids would crystallize the goals of the renamed Art in Public Places program: to bring first-rate work by top artists to areas outside of the country's great urban centers.[266]

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[264]The best description of the artist selection process is McCombie, "Art and Policy."

[265]See Marc Glimcher, *Calder: From Model to Monument* (New York: PaceWildenstein, 2006).

[266]The codification of the Sculpture Project as the "Works of Art in Public Places" program took place at the NCA's sixteenth meeting in October 1969.

Hartmann flew to Paris the next day, then on to Saché, France, to present the commission to Calder. The architect's September 5 cable reads, in part: "CALDER ENTHUSIASTIC TENATIVE FORTY FEET HIGH ELIMINATED POOL LOCATION PLEASE COMMENT."[267] Calder would not visit Grand Rapids until the sculpture's dedication. He made the preliminary maquette by reviewing site plans in consultation with Hartmann. Then he worked with his fabricator, Biémont Ironworks outside of Tours, France, to realize a 1:3 scale model. Representatives of Grand Rapids visited Biémont on May 11, 1968, and officially accepted Calder's design for *La Grande Vitesse*, which translates as "Grand Rapids" in Calderized French.

Calder had streamlined the process of designing, fabricating, and installing monumental stabiles like *La Grande Vitesse* over the previous decade, to the point that such industrially produced sculptures became a veritable industry in their own right. Opportunities for commissions had inspired Calder to seek out collaborators who could help him increase the size of the stabiles and improve their engineering. In turning to industrial fabricators for assistance, Calder set an important example for a younger generation of artists who would come to produce large-scale sculpture during the 1960s, and for industrial fabricators interested in entering the art market, as I will discuss in the fourth chapter. Calder's manufacture of a dependable product in a timely manner both increased demand for the monumental stabiles and led to codification of their production, a process that warrants detailed analysis.

[267]William E. Hartmann to SOM, Chicago, 5 September 1967. Main File – Grand Rapids, SOM Chicago.

ARTIST AND FABRICATOR: CALDER IN WATERBURY AND TOURS

From the second half of the 1950s, sculpture of increasingly monumental dimensions, executed with the assistance of industrial fabricators, dominated Calder's artistic production. As he declared in 1960,

> It's true that I've more or less retired from the smaller mobiles. I regard them as sort of fiddling. The engineering on the big objects is important; they're mostly designed for a particular spot, and they have to fit properly and either support themselves properly or hang from the ceiling properly. Lots of times companies or government agencies have a big vacuum in their projects that they feel ought to be filled—that's where I come in.[268]

Calder first experimented with ideas for large-scale and environmental sculpture during the 1930s, and in 1940 he realized his first sculpture enlarged by technicians from a maquette, a stabile he called *Black Beast* (1940) (Figure 2.27).[269] Beginning in the mid-1940s, he made a habit of visiting the Waterbury Ironworks—located near his home in Roxbury, Connecticut—when he needed assistance cutting large pieces of metal for his sculptures.[270] Calder did not rely primarily on fabricators for the production of his sculpture, however, until the second half of the 1950s, when he was overwhelmed with three important commissions that he realized within a single year: the 45' wide mobile, *.125* (1957), for SOM's International Arrivals Building at Idlewild Airport in New York;

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[268]Geoffrey T. Hellman, "Calder Revisited," *New Yorker*, 22 October 1960, 169.

[269]This period of experimentation was driven by Calder's access to two new spaces for his work. Calder and his wife, Louisa, purchased a farmhouse in Roxbury, Connecticut in 1933, where they would live for more than four decades. After years spent renting urban storefront studios, Calder took advantage of the expansive seventeen-acre property by making his initial foray into outdoor sculpture. He began a lifetime designing stage sets for theater and dance in 1935 with mobile sets for two productions by Martha Graham. For more on Calder and dance, see Joan M. Marter, *Alexander Calder* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), especially chapter four, "Calder as Choreographer, 1936-1942," and Arnauld Pierre, "Staging Movement," in Marla Prather, *Alexander Calder: 1898-1976* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1998). Given that Noguchi and Moore also designed sets for the stage, a comparative study of this subject as it relates to public commissions is needed. For Calder's first outdoor sculptures, see Prather, *Alexander Calder*, 64-65.

[270]Eric M. Zafram, *Calder in Connecticut* (New York: Wadsworth Atheneum Museum in association with Rizzoli International Publications, 2000), 125.

La Spirale (1958), a standing mobile commissioned for the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris; and a motorized sculpture called *Whirling Ear* (1958) for a fountain outside the United States Pavilion at Expo '58.[271] Calder submitted three models for the mobile at Idlewild, and in February 1957 he received an informal go-ahead to begin work on one of these designs (Figure 2.28). As had become his custom, Calder took the maquette to Waterbury Ironworks along with full-size paper templates of the sculpture's parts, which the ironworkers translated into metal plates. One of the workers, Liberato "Chippy" Ieronimo, worked closely with Calder on the monumental mobile and soon became an important collaborator. When Calder's maquette for a standing mobile at UNESCO World Headquarters in Paris won approval on March 15, Calder decided that he and Ieronimo would fabricate the mobile top at Carmen Segretario's shop, where Chippy worked on nights and weekends (Figure 2.36).[272] Calder engaged a third shop, Gowans-Knight in Watertown, to execute *Whirling Ear*, which they completed in January 1958 (Figure 3.9). Driving between these three shops, Calder says he "got a sense of being a big businessman."[273] Even so, he still participated in the fabrication process: "I took the place of the helper and worked under their direction, keeping my eye open to achieve the desired result."[274]

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[271]Glimcher, *The 50s* is the best source on these commissions. They were preceded by two commissioned sculptures that Calder fabricated in Europe: *Rosenhof* (1953), a standing mobile (now lost) approximately 25' in height that he designed for a public garden in Hamburg, and *Hextoped* (1955), a stabile commissioned by Bunshaft for the American Consulate in Frankfurt. Calder realized the latter with the aid of a bridge building firm. See *The 50s*.

[272]Calder fabricated the stabile bottom in France with the assistance of architect Jean Prouvé. See *The 50s*.

[273]Alexander Calder, *Calder: An Autobiography with Pictures* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966), 255.

[274]Ibid. Calder himself had fabricated *Whale* (1937), his first sculpture enlarged from a maquette, just over twenty years earlier. A rare indication of the exuberance experienced by Calder and the ironworkers who worked with him on these early projects can be found in a short interview with George Staempfli about the production of *La Spirale*: "Calder: 'We got a big crane and worked from the roof of the shop one night, to test the upper section. Segre wouldn't believe until the last moment that it would really rise up like that. But it did, and there it was.' Louisa: 'They jumped up and down like children. They drank two bottles of champagne to celebrate'." Cited in Jean Lipman, *Calder's Universe* (New York: Viking Press in cooperation with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1976), 266.

Calder's first opportunity to make a truly monumental stabile came in 1962 with the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy.[275] That year, Giovanni Carandente organized a groundbreaking exhibition of outdoor sculpture for the festival. *Sculture nella citta* featured nearly one hundred modern sculptures by about fifty artists that were installed temporarily throughout Spoleto, but Carandente's true innovation was to provide ten artists with the chance to create work specifically for the exhibition.[276] The state-controlled shipbuilding company Italsider made available materials, technical assistance, and equipment in its factories across Italy, turning Spoleto into a showcase for industrially fabricated sculpture.[277] The arrangement allowed Calder to realize his largest sculpture yet, a stabile 59' high and 49' wide that dominated a crossroads near the Spoleto railway station, with a central arch high enough for a car to drive underneath.[278] He called the sculpture *Teodelapio*, after a seventh-century Duke of Spoleto, whose sharply pointed crown reminded Calder of the stabile. With this title, Calder evocatively tied *Teodelapio* to its site, a gesture that would become common practice with the

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[275]The Festival of the Two Worlds is an annual international showcase for the performing arts initiated by Gian Carlo Menotti in 1958. For more on the Festival of Two Worlds and the visual artists, see Barbaralee Diamonstein, "Menotti's Worlds," *Art News* 73 (May 1974): 88-89.

[276]The exact number of art works and artists varies slightly across published sources. See Claudia Cassidy, "Spoleto's Setting and Sculpture More Eloquent Than Its Performance," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 24 July 1962; "A Town Full of Sculpture," *Time*, 24 August 1962, 50; Martha Leeb Hadzi, "Report from Rome: Sculpture at Spoleto," *Art in America* 4 (1962): 116-118; Marianne Adelmann, "Sculpture in the Streets," *Studio* 164 (November 1962): 164-169; and Giovanni Carandente, *Una città piena di sculture, Spoleto 1962* (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992). Notable outdoor sculpture exhibitions had been held in Arnhem, The Netherlands (1949), Middelheim Park, Antwerp (1950), and Battersea Park, London (1950). The immediate precedent for *Sculpture in the City* was Carandente's exhibition, *Twentieth Century Italian Sculptors*, installed five years earlier in the public gardens of Messina, Sicily.

[277]Carandente asked the artists to produce two sculptures each. The invitation famously inspired David Smith to create twenty-seven sculptures in a single month. Other featured artists include the Italians Nino Franchina, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Pietro Consagra, Ettore Colla, Carlo Lorenzetti, and Eugenio Carmi. The four "foreigners" were Calder, Smith, Lynn Chadwick and Beverly Pepper. See Giovanni Carendente, "Calder and Italy," in Alexander S. C. Rower, ed., *Calder Sculptor of Air* (Milan: Motta, 2009), 28-35.

[278]See Giovanni Carandente, *Alexander Calder: Teodelapio* (Milan: Charta, 1996) and Giovanni Carandente, *Calder* (Milan: Electa, 1983), 214-227.

commissioned stabiles that soon followed.[279] *Teodelapio*'s gigantic dimensions and prominent location made the stabile a prime example of the possibilities for large-scale sculpture in the urban environment, drawing the attention of many parties interested in commissioning large-scale sculpture, including the NCA.

While Calder had worked closely with his fabricators in Waterbury, he did not travel to Italy for the fabrication of *Teodelapio*. Instead he sent detailed sketches and a scale model from Roxbury for enlargement. The decision nearly proved disastrous. After the sculpture was erected, Calder received an alarming telegram from Sweeney that read, "Come quick, danger."[280] The large metal plates that made up *Teodelapio* were in dire need of structural reinforcement. Calder rushed to Spoleto and added flanges to stiffen the plates.[281] The mistake would not be repeated, but rather than intensify his personal involvement in the fabrication of his stabiles, Calder instead set out in search of a fabricator that combined the skill sets of ironworkers and engineers.

In 1953 Calder had traded three mobiles for a house in Saché, near Tours, where he and his wife would pass at least half their time for the next thirty years. He sought to replicate the close working relationship he had established with Segre's Ironworks by finding a shop near his home in Saché, but given the fact that he first inquired at Royer, the biggest ironworks in Tours, it seems he also wanted a factory where he could work on a truly monumental scale. The firm was not interested in collaborating with the artist, but the visit proved to be crucial, since Royer referred Calder to the Etablissements Biémont, where he eventually made 137 sculptures.[282] Calder later explained, "Biémont were

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[279]Calder subsequently presented *Teodelapio* as a gift to the city. See Marter, *Alexander Calder*, 239.
[280]Carandente, *Teodelapio*, 43.
[281]Calder's absence during fabrication also resulted in *Teodelapio* being the only stabile whose parts are welded together rather than bolted.
[282]Glimcher, *The 50s*, 19.

located in some very old, decrepit buildings, but they had the proper men and equipment and they undertook to enlarge my models. All I had to do was have enough nerve to tell them how big I wanted them."[283] Following his initial visit, Calder delivered eight models to Biémont in the fall of 1962 and then left for the United States. As Calder told Robert Osborn in an interview, "When I got back to France they had them all done. All eight pieces. They were standing there! The biggest one was six and a half meters high [just over 21']. They pleased me. I could begin to see the possibilities."[284] For Calder, the sudden appearance of these sculptures must have seemed nothing short of a miracle. Gone was the need for paper templates; the men at Biémont worked directly from Calder's small aluminum models. Calder returned to the freezing factory buildings in January 1963 to fine-tune the sculptures and to add structural reinforcements. Within a month, he had set up six of them in the big studio at Saché, which had an outdoor patio to accommodate the largest stabiles.

With the first sculptures executed at Biémont, Calder established a formal vocabulary that would attract a large number of commissions, and he codified a working method for the realization of his stabiles on a monumental scale. Critics immediately recognized the centrality of industrial production to the stabiles' significance. Pierre Schneider describes the group of stabiles exhibited at Galerie Maeght in November 1963 explicitly in terms of their factory production:

> It is not so much their connections to the insect realm that makes these stabiles so disquieting, as their scope, at once crushing and fragile. The air about them, one feels, acts like a chemical fertilizer that makes radishes grow the size of pumpkins… [Calder] takes his small model to the factory and says: 'This, thirty times larger.' The result? Paper dolls cut out of the hull of a battleship.[285]

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[283]Calder, *Autobiography*, 264.
[284]Robert Osborn, "Calder's International Monuments," *Art in America* 57 (March-April 1969): 33.
[285]Pierre Schneider, "Art News from Paris: Calder's Stabiles," *Art News* 62 (February 1964): 52.

While Schneider cast the stabiles as "monstrous" and "unreal," other critics viewed them in a more positive light. Calder sent two sculptures from the first Biémont group, *Guillotine for Eight* and *Bucephalus* (both 1963), to the Guggenheim for inclusion in his 1964 retrospective (Figure 3.10). A writer from *Newsweek* simply viewed them as appropriate signs for an industrial society: "With their bolts, fins, ribs and flanges, these abstract dinosaurs symbolized steel-age civilization with the friendly, playful optimism that has always been Calder's."[286] Despite their divergent conclusions, for both critics the stabiles were meaningfully informed by their industrial production. Indeed, as Marla Prather observes: "Calder liked the visible structural elements, which form a linear tracery within the flat expanses of steel and strengthen the overall sense of industrial manufacture in the monumental works."[287] Their mode of production would be key to readings of the monumental stabiles commissioned from Calder over the course of the following decade.

CALDER'S INTERNATIONAL MONUMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Of the monumental stabiles that Calder realized between 1962, when he began work at Biémont, and the dedication of *La Grande Vitesse* in 1969, two are especially relevant to this study: *La Grande Voile*, commissioned by MIT in 1965 for a new Earth Science Building, and *The Gwenfritz*, commissioned by the Smithsonian Institution in 1967 for the National Museum of History and Technology (NMHT) on the National Mall.[288] These sculptures are the earliest examples of Calder's monumental stabiles to be

[286]"The Mobile Eye," *Newsweek*, 16 November 1964, 98.
[287]Prather, *Alexander Calder*, 281.
[288]Other significant monumental stabiles of the period include *Crossed Blades* (1967, Australia Square Tower, Sydney); *Man* (1967, Expo '67, Montreal); *El Sol Rojo* (1968, Summer Olympics '68, Mexico City); and *Les Trois Pics* (1968, Winter Olympics '68, Grenoble). Due to their creation for a specific site, these sculptures can be distinguished from works like *Le Guichet* (1963), part of the first group of Biémont stabiles, which Bunshaft selected for Lincoln Center.

sited in the United States, and their execution immediately preceded the commission for Grand Rapids. Aside from being closely related to *La Grande Vitesse*, these sculptures also help to illustrate the relationship between Calder's stabiles and traditional forms of monumental construction. In addition, they are groundbreaking commissions in their own right, bringing large-scale abstract sculpture to important public places, above all the highly charged symbolic space of the National Mall.

The commission for MIT was the second outdoor sculpture acquired for the university's art collection, initiated in 1960 to link the humanities with MIT's outstanding programs in the sciences and engineering.[289] The sculpture was to stand adjacent to I.M. Pei's Green Building, a blocky concrete tower then under construction, whose vertical thrust and severe geometry contrasted sharply with the neoclassical vocabulary of the surrounding buildings (Figure 3.11). The Art Committee initially discussed raising fifteen thousand dollars for the commission; at Pei's suggestion, the number jumped to fifty thousand, the figure needed to attract an artist with an established reputation and to acquire a sculpture of sufficient size, at least 15' tall. Committee members were then assigned the task of generating a list of suitable artists.[290] The preliminary vote favored

[289]MIT had initiated the collection with a grant from the Longview Foundation to purchase fifteen thousand dollars' worth of paintings for display around the campus. Soon after, a five thousand dollar gift from architect and MIT alumnus Samuel Marx (a close friend and architect to Leigh and Mary Block) was earmarked for a sculpture commission. The MIT Art Committee voted to accept Dimitri Hadzi's *Elmo II* (1963) in 1962, officially kicking off the university's important program of public art. See the List Visual Art Center's website for more on the growing collection, http://listart.mit.edu/public_art/ (accessed 26 June 2012).

[290]Active committee members include: Mrs. Jerome Rubin, New York, chairman; Dr. James S. Ackerman, professor of fine arts at Harvard; William A.M. Burden, Mrs. Alfred L. Loomis and Pei of New York; Bartlett Hayes, director of the Addison Gallery at Andover, Mass.; Walter Netsch of SOM (Chicago); John Reid of Reid, Rockwell, Banwell & Tarics, architects, San Francisco; Mrs. Eugene McDermott of Dallas; Jeptha Wade, Boston; and Miss Jean Bullitt, Professor Gyorgy Kepes, Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., Mrs. Julius A. Stratton, Mrs. Hans-Lukas Teuber, Professor Carroll L. Wilson and Mrs. Gertrude B. Winquist, all of the MIT community. See Press Release, 7 February 1966. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Art Committee Records, 1960-1973, AC0066, Box 1 Folder 15, MIT. My account of the commission is based on the Art Committee Records, which include detailed meeting minutes.

Jean Arp, but the artist declined to travel to Cambridge for a site visit.[291] Ultimately, the committee invited three artists to MIT during the autumn of 1964: Lippold, David Smith, and Calder. On the basis of these site visits, one artist would be chosen to make a maquette for the committee's consideration.

The proposals for a sculpture at MIT's Green Building offer an illuminating survey of the field of public art during the mid-1960s, a period when few artists had yet had an opportunity to execute a sculpture for an outdoor site on the scale required by architects like Pei.[292] Lippold is a case in point. At this time, he was part of a small group of artists with established reputations for devising and executing large-scale architectural sculptures. Since the completion of *Radiant "I"* at the Inland Steel Building, the artist had been awarded several prestigious commissions, including the monumental installations *Orpheus and Apollo* (1962) for the Philharmonic Hall (Max Abramovitz, 1962, now Avery Fisher Hall) at Lincoln Center and *Flight* (1963) for the Pan Am Building (Emery Roth & Sons, Pietro Belluschi and Walter Gropius, 1960-63, now MetLife Building) in New York City. The problem for Lippold was how to translate his installation-based work into monumental outdoor sculpture. His proposal for MIT, a fountain combining water, light, and geometric gold forms, would have achieved this goal, but the Art Committee decided that, although intriguing, the proposal was not well suited to the site.[293] Smith's situation was the exact opposite. He made much of his work

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[291]Arp received two important commissions for architecture during the 1950s: a relief for the Harvard University Graduate Center and a mural for the UNESCO building in Paris. Towards the end of his career, Arp also produced large bronze biomorphic sculptures. See *Jean Arp: Sculpture, His Last Ten Years*. Trans. Karen Philippson (New York: Abrams, 1968).

[292]For the proposals, see Minutes of the Art Committee, 6 December 1964. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Art Committee Records, 1960-1973, AC0066, Box 1 Folder 9, MIT.

[293]The fountain's complex engineering may have also been a factor. Lippold proposed several fountains of "fire and water" during the late 1950s and 1960s, none of which were realized. Documentation for these proposals, which include fountains for Expo '58 (Edward Durrell Stone, 1957), an Akron, Ohio plaza (Robert Dowling with Edward Durrell Stone, 1958), Sterling Forest (Robert Dowling, 1959), and City

for outdoor sites and had exhibited his sculptures in the fields around his home and studio at Bolton Landing, New York, since at least the late 1940s. Smith typically shied away from architectural commissions, however, which he felt would compromise his artistic vision.[294] Smith discussed designing a curvilinear sculpture for MIT, which would contrast with the rectilinearity of Pei's building, but disappointed the committee by stating that it would take him about a year to produce a maquette.

Given the challenges faced by Lippold and Smith, one can appreciate why the committee voted unanimously for Calder. There were three main reasons for his selection listed in the meeting minutes. First, and most importantly, Calder was the choice of Pei and MIT alumnus Walter Netsch of SOM. The committee's deference to architects shows how closely they connected the sculpture with Pei's building. Second, there was no public sculpture by Calder in the Boston area. The commission would make a place for a work by the most prominent sculptor in the United States and bring the attention of the art world to the campus. Third, while Lippold and Smith proposed highly experimental designs that departed from their realized works, the committee easily envisioned Calder's proposed sculpture because it conformed to an established pattern: "All of us seemed to be able to visualize the strong flat black sheet metal shapes and open arches of a Calder sculpture against the stone coloring and the geometric shapes of the Pei building."[295] Calder estimated that a stabile "on the order of his piece in Spoleto" could be installed within one year. He proposed a sculpture much larger than Pei's estimated 15', one tall

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Federal Savings and Loan Bank Union, New Jersey (Edward Durrell Stone, 1962), can be found in the Richard Lippold Papers, AAA.

[294]See, for example, David Smith, "Sculpture and Architecture," *Arts* 31 (May 1957): 20.

[295]Minutes of the Art Committee, 6 December 1964. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Art Committee Records, 1960-1973, AC0066, Box 1 Folder 9, MIT.

enough for students to walk under and through. He initially thought it might house a mobile, similar to *The City* (1960) (Figure 3.12).[296]

Calder met with Pei to discuss the commission in January 1965. Immediately he set to work, with an eye towards making good on his promise to have the stabile installed at MIT within a year:

> I made one model. Feeling it was too dumpy, I made another model, more attenuated, and sent that one to Pei in New York. While they (M.I.T.) were sitting on the model, I was already being bombarded with instructions to get to work. I finally got it back. And Mr. Brault, the Biémont foreman, built a similar maquette, twice the size of mine, but with all the final elements represented to the last bolt, and also the reinforcing ribs. This was necessary, because the final object was to be forty feet high and had to be dismantled in sections so it could be packed in boxes which could travel on the French railroad. Before it was shipped to Le Havre and Boston, I had to see it erected to know whether it worked. The erection was achieved in two days with the aid of a fifty-foot crane. Every part fell into place perfectly, bolt for bolt, as on the working model.[297]

With all the speed and efficiency of a factory assembly line, Biémont used the methods established over the previous few years to build a stabile so large it had to be wind tunnel tested. The fabricator's precise calculations and perhaps also the foreman's understanding of Calder's aesthetic enabled Biémont to translate the artist's maquette into a working model that represented the final stabile to the last bolt. While Calder's addition of structural reinforcements to the smaller stabiles had been crucial, Biémont could now take over even that step, leaving the artist with little more to do than approve the finished product. Calder's obvious reverence for the fabricator's skill shows that he did not view his distance from the actual work of making his sculpture problematic, an issue that would become decisive for critics as well as the next generation of artists to work with fabricators in the manufacture of their sculptures.

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[296]Ibid.
[297]Calder, *Autobiography*, 273.

Whereas the significance of the sculptures examined in the previous chapter was tied to their patrons' industries, the press tended to describe *La Grande Voile* in terms of the work's own statistics, from the number of crates in which it was packed to the number of bolts used to assemble it, as if it were a machine rather than a work of art (Figure 3.13). The sculpture's overt engineering, however, was well suited to the university, and so was Calder's background in mechanical engineering, as a writer for MIT's *Tech Talk* pointed out.[298] Picking up on these themes, *Progressive Architecture* called the stabile "The Jolly Black Giant," while *Time* dubbed it a "Boiler-Plate Beauty."[299] By calling the sculpture "The Jolly Black Giant," the editors of *Progressive Architecture* played on the stabile's great height, while also tying the sculpture to advertising and the corporate trademark. Calder titled the stabile *La Grande Voile* or "The Big Sail," perhaps in reference to the ship that brought the sculpture from France to the United States, a journey that would be made by many more stabiles in the coming years. The title also links the sculpture with its site, which is within view of the boats that sail on the Charles River. Further, it alludes to the "great sails" of windmills that had dotted the landscape of New England since the seventeenth century, serving as important area landmarks.[300] Indeed, because of its height of 40', MIT's public relations office could boast of *La Grande Voile*: "The sculpture will add a distinctive landmark to the MIT campus, even as seen from the Boston side of the Charles River."[301]

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[298]"In Our Front Yard," *Tech Talk*, 10 February 1966. Registrar's Files, Calder 1966.002 Publicity. MIT List. Eugene McDermott, one of Calder's classmates at the Stevens Institute of Technology, sponsored the sculpture and the design of the plaza, which was named McDermott Court in honor of him and his wife.
[299]"The Jolly Black Giant," *Progressive Architecture* 47 (June 1966): 53 and "Boiler-Plate Beauty," *Time*, 13 May 1966, 86.
[300]The title of a roughly contemporary stabile, *Crossed Blades* (1967), also may refer to windmills. Special thanks to Jason LaFountain for suggesting the connection with windmills.
[301]Press Release, 7 February 1966. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Art Committee Records, 1960-1973, AC0066, Box 1 Folder 15, MIT.

As a landmark, *La Grande Voile* draws attention to McDermott Court and the MIT campus. On one hand, it helps observers identify a particular place within Lynch's terms and makes that place more memorable, contributing to its "imageability." The sculpture's visibility orients pedestrians and even drivers, alerting them to a specific location along the Charles River. Furthermore, *La Grande Voile* animates the plaza adjacent to Pei's blocky concrete building. Its form appears quite simple from any static viewpoint, yet its complexity is revealed as the spectator walks around and underneath it. The sculpture does not convey a didactic message, or commemorate a specific person or event. Instead, it becomes meaningful through the viewer's experience of it in relation to its site. On the other hand, *La Grande Voile* heightens MIT's image within the terms of public relations, drawing attention to the MIT campus with a sculpture by one of the most famous artists in the U.S. In this way, the sculpture also functions as a logo or trademark for Calder himself.

If *La Grande Voile* is more closely related to the landmark and trademark than the monument, then Calder's *The Gwenfritz* illustrates the relationship between the artist's stabiles and another traditional form of monumental construction: the public fountain (Figure 3.14). During the spring of 1966, Washington, D.C. hostess and arts patron Gwendolyn Cafritz wrote to Lady Bird Johnson, indicating her interest in contributing to the first lady's beautification program by bringing American sculpture to the streets of the nation's capital.[302] A proposed sculpture garden underwritten by Cafritz for the National Mall would be delayed until the early 1990s, but an enthusiastic Secretary of the Smithsonian, S. Dillon Ripley, hit upon the idea of commissioning a monumental

[302]Gwendolyn Cafritz became president of the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation following the death of her husband, Morris, a successful real estate developer and businessman. See Burt Solomon, *The Washington Century: Three Families and the Shaping of the Nation's Capital* (New York: William Morrow, 2004).

sculpture for a site just west of the new NMHT (now the National Museum of American History). Calder's *Whirling Ear* had impressed Cafritz on a visit to Brussels for Expo '58. In August, the artist accepted her invitation to visit Washington and explore the idea of designing a large stabile set in a fountain for the museum.

A sculpture had already been commissioned for the museum under the auspices of the GSA's nascent Art-in-Architecture program, which allocated a percentage of the building's construction costs to purchase works of art.[303] Upon its installation on the museum's South Terrace during the spring of 1967, José de Rivera's *Infinity*, a revolving loop of stainless steel set on a tall granite base, became the first contemporary abstract sculpture sited on the National Mall (Figure 3.15). Yet, the commission was "less an outright embrace of abstract art by the U.S. government than it was an expression of trust that this particular sculptor had found a way to convey through his art specific aspects of the conjoined disciplines housed inside the museum."[304] Architect Walker Cain had pitched the commission to the Smithsonian Institution's regents as a twenty-first century orrery, the apparatus originally envisioned as occupying the museum's South Terrace.[305]

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[303]The museum is a good example of the problems that Kennedy convened his Ad Hoc Committee on Government Architecture to address. McKim, Mead & White, a firm best known for designing Beaux-Arts civic buildings during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, had won the contract in 1956 for the new museum, which was intended as the first modern building on the National Mall. Their design was classical in its massing and symmetry, and modern in its lack of ornament, a compromise that satisfied few critics. For example, see Frederick Gutheim, "Letter from Washington," *The Nation*, 3 February 1964, 126-27.

[304]David Shayt, "Measuring *Infinity*: José de Rivera's Smithsonian Sculpture on the National Mall," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 51 (April 2008).

[305]Orreries show the relative positions and motions of bodies in the solar system. They are typically driven by clockwork. The orrery was originally suggested by Secretary of the Smithsonian Leonard Carmichael, who envisioned an orrery flanked by single figures of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to represent "history" and "technology." Two of the sculptors suggested for the commission, John Rhoden and Oronzio Malderelli, made more abstracted work. The rest of the group, including Sidney Waugh, Donald De Lue, Henry Kreis, Milton Hebald, and Herbert Kammerer worked in a decidedly traditional mode. See Leonard Carmichael to Mr. L. L. Hunter, 31 March 1960, and Procedure to commission sculptors suggested by Mr. James Kellum Smith, McKim, Mead & White, 4 February 1960. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, RG 66, Project Files, 1941-1994, Entry A1 17A Box 101, NA.

Meanwhile, De Rivera had been reluctant to go so far as to give the sculpture a title, since he preferred in general to identify his abstract sculptures simply by number. Soon enough, such compromises would no longer be necessary.

As the journalist Paul Richard observed one month before the sculpture's installation, at 16' long, 13' wide, and 8' high, *Infinity* was "the largest piece of contemporary abstract sculpture ever commissioned by the Federal Government," a distinction soon to be eclipsed by the fruits of the Sculpture Project. He continues:

> It is also the first abstract sculpture (excepting, of course, the Washington Monument) to be installed by the Government amid the greenery and marble of the Capital's formal parks. It will not be the last. For more than a century, the Government has been dotting Washington's parks with landscape sculpture. The city is sprinkled with snorting horses and assorted pieces of artillery and dozens of monuments to heroic gentlemen who stand among the trees well armed, stern-visaged and draped in green bronze wrinkles. De Rivera's Mall Sculpture marks the beginning of a radical departure from this tradition. For it is not at all representational. And in the next few years it will be joined by dozens of other sculptures, equally abstract.[306]

These sculptures would include Rickey's *Three Red Lines* (1966), installed in front of the Museum of Natural History as a harbinger of the newly founded Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; the works to be included in the National Sculpture Garden, which would be erected directly across from the Hirshhorn, between the National Gallery of Art and the Museum of Natural History; and Calder's stabile, planned for a fountain west of the NMHT.[307] As Richard observes, one tradition of sculptural monuments was retreating into the past. The siting of abstract sculptures on the National Mall marked the start of a

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[306]Paul Richard, "Abstract Steel Sculpture to Grace Mall," *Washington Post Times Herald*, 20 February 1967. See also "Mall to Get 'Motion Symbol'," *Washington Star*, 19 March 1965, and "Infinity in Eight Minutes," *Time*, 7 April 1967, 88.

[307]*Three Red Lines* was damaged by strong winds soon after its installation during the spring of 1967. Eventually, it joined De Rivera's *Infinity* on the NMHT terrace, where it remained until the opening of the Hirshhorn in 1974.

new tradition, wherein art would become an important part of the built environment for reasons other than commemoration or memorialization.

Ripley and Cain had presented Calder's proposal, along with Rickey's *Three Red Lines*, to the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) in January 1967 for approval (Figure 3.16). Unlike De Rivera's *Infinity*, there was no need for an elaborate explanation of the sculptures' symbolism. *Three Red Lines* was to be installed temporarily; due to its industrial manufacture, Calder's sculpture fell in line with the theme of technology celebrated by the museum. He proposed a large black stabile with five sharply pointed, interpenetrating planes set in a fountain with five water jets rising in trajectories as much as 60' high. The large rectangular pool would be positioned on a stepped terrace, with the National Mall above and the entrance to the glass-walled museum cafeteria below. The proposal easily passed the CFA, whose only concern had to do with the grade change between cafeteria, terrace, and Mall.[308] Engineering the fountain proved to be a problem, however, and in November 1968, Calder requested that the fountain be eliminated and the sculpture set in a pool bordered by grass.[309]

David Scott, director of the National Collection of Fine Arts, predicted that Calder's stabile would be to the twentieth century what the Washington Monument was to the nineteenth.[310] Of all of Calder's monumental stabiles, *The Gwenfritz* is perhaps the one most closely related to the engineered monuments of the previous century due to its physical proximity to the Washington Monument. Along with the Statue of Liberty and

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[308]Proceedings, Commission of Fine Arts, 26 January 1967, 129-138. Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, RG 66, General Records, Transcripts of Meetings, 1946-1991 A1-Entry 2A, Box 13, NA.

[309]Martin Atlas, President of Cafritz Construction Company, relayed the request along with the disappointment of Mrs. Cafritz and Calder that construction had not yet started. Robert Engle, Memorandum for the Record, 6 November 1968. Accession 06-225: Office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation, Building Files, circa 1850-2006, Box 37 of 59, SIA. In 1984 *The Gwenfritz* was relocated to the corner of Constitution Avenue and 14th Street to make way for a bandstand. It was removed for conservation in 2013 and returned to its original location the following year.

[310]Donnie Radcliffe, "No 'Sameness' About This," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), 14 May 1968.

the Eiffel Tower, these nineteenth-century monuments became symbols "for both a visible change and an unseen new power in society. Technology… would be both a form and force; it would be of obvious and immediate benefit and also hold unclear and long-term potential."[311] Like these engineered monuments, Calder's stabiles symbolized the important place of technology in society through the overt traces of industrial production. Yet the abstraction of Calder's stabiles made them ultimately unfathomable. As the *Evening Star* crowed, "[I]n its own soaring, totally unidentifiable way, [*The Gwenfritz*] is spectacular."[312] The Smithsonian press office could say little more about its significance than to declare the stabile's visibility and importance, which coincide in the term "landmark": "It will be a permanent landmark in the Mall area of the Nation's Capital."[313]

Calder had adapted an earlier maquette, *Object in Five Planes* (1964), to the site at NMHT. The sculpture's outward thrust made it a good choice for the fountain, but Calder may have chosen it for other reasons. He had donated a smaller version of the sculpture, which he fabricated in 1965, to the United States Mission at the United Nations in February 1966 and dubbed it *Peace* (Figure 3.17). After his proposal for the Smithsonian won CFA approval, Calder wrote a letter to Cafritz stating: "with the war in Viet Nam I cannot come to Washington unless I work only with the Smithsonian Institution and not with the Johnsons."[314] In fact, Calder so desired the sculpture to be

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[311]David P. Billington, "The Engineering of Symbols: The Statue of Liberty and Other Nineteenth-Century Towers and Monuments," in Wilton S. Dillon and Neil G. Kotler, eds., *The Statue of Liberty Revisited: Making a Universal Symbol* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 120.
[312]Radcliffe, "No 'Sameness'."
[313]Press release, "CALDER SCULPTURE TO RISE IN PATIO OF MUSEUM OF HISTORY & TECHNOLOGY," 8 May 1968. Record Unit 334, National Museum of American History, Office of the Director, Subject Files, Box 71, SIA.
[314]S. Dillon Ripley to David W. Scott, 5 January 1967. Calder, Alexander *Gwenfritz* 1969.116. Curatorial Files, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

identified with its patron, rather than the federal government, that he named the stabile *The Gwenfritz* for Gwendolyn Cafritz.[315]

Two weeks after traveling to Washington, D.C. for the dedication of *The Gwenfritz*, Calder made his first visit to Grand Rapids for the dedication of *La Grande Vitesse*. Following the approval of Calder's maquette in May 1968, the stabile's structural soundness was evaluated through wind-tunnel tests of a 1:3 scale model and appraisal of drawings submitted to SOM engineer Fazlur Khan by Biémont. Based on these tests, SOM designed the sculpture's foundation while Calder and Biémont added ribs to reinforce the steel plates. Then the stabile's five major elements were fabricated and the sculpture erected at full scale in Tours, where Calder and Hartmann approved it in mid-February. The sculpture was then disassembled and its twenty-seven primary units packed into ten crates along with the 1,561 specially designed square bolts that would be needed to erect the sculpture in Grand Rapids.[316] The crates traveled first by train and then ship to the United States, where they were loaded onto trucks that arrived in Grand Rapids early in May. The exact location of *La Grande Vitesse* on the plaza had been decided years earlier. It would stand roughly in front of SOM's city hall tower, between the building and a set of stairs that lead down to the street. Five ironworkers supervised by an engineer from Biémont reassembled the stabile, which was dedicated on June 15, 1969.[317]

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[315]For Calder's politics, see Alex J. Taylor, "Unstable Motives: Propaganda, Politics, and the Late Work of Alexander Calder," *American Art* 26 (March 2012): 24-47.

[316]See Calder Stabile Fact Sheet, 17 April 1969, Main File – Grand Rapids, SOM Chicago.

[317]Correspondence regarding the contract between Calder and Grand Rapids shows that the city originally stipulated Calder's presence during the sculpture's erection, a request Klaus Perls deemed unnecessary due to the precision of Calder and Biémont's engineering drawings. Perls to Steven L. Dykema, Grand Rapids City Attorney, 17 February 1968. Series 9-10, Attorney Dept. General Legal Files, La Grande Vitesse – Calder sculpture, 06/06/67 – 01/31/69, Box 1, Folder 3, GRCA. For the dedication, see John Kifner, "Grand Rapids Accepts Calder Stabile," *New York Times*, 16 June 1969.

Excitement over the stabile's arrival had been building for months through exhibitions at the Grand Rapids Art Museum and elsewhere around the city, lectures by the likes of Sweeney, and a film about Calder that aired on a local television station. Yet as James Hoekema of *The Interpreter* pointed out, "[B]oth opponents and advocates of the sculpture tended to avoid all arguments of an 'aesthetic nature'," making the "purpose and even the nature of sculpture" irrelevant to what people in Grand Rapids thought about Calder's sculpture.[318] Hoekema writes,

> When one says that the cost is too high, another speaks in terms of a 'bargain' for Grand Rapids. Both sides agree on the importance of meaning, whether expression or symbolism: one says the sculpture doesn't mean anything or that what it does mean is disgusting; the other side says that it does mean something, and that what it does mean is praiseworthy. Similarly, neither side excludes the criterion of decoration—but one says the sculpture detracts from, another that it enhances, the décor of Vandenberg Center. And even the opponents admit the Calder's publicity value, while at the same time many of the project's more patriotic champions insist that the sculpture proclaims the glory of country, county or city.[319]

Based on these arguments, Hoekema offers a surprising solution "to the whole problem of the Calder Event": "forget that the big red object out there is a 'sculpture.' Once we realize that it is not 'sculpture,' we will no longer be plagued by such questions as what it is 'supposed to be' or do."[320]

If, as Hoekema suggests, it was best to forget that *La Grande Vitesse* is a sculpture, then a big part of the NCA's goal in mounting the Sculpture Project had failed; *La Grande Vitesse* was not legible as art, neither to the opponents who found it "offensive, anti-American, immoral and obscene," nor even to the proponents who based

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[318]James Hoekema, "A Calder is a Calder is a Calder – So let it go at that," *Interpreter* (Grand Rapids, MI), 11 June 1969.
[319]Ibid.
[320]Ibid.

their arguments on everything but aesthetics.[321] In the end, *La Grande Vitesse* drew less from the values of museum professionals like d'Harnoncourt and Sweeney, and more from urban renewal, which fundamentally shaped how the sculpture operated. Whereas the monument draws its meaning from the historical ground of the past, *La Grande Vitesse* became a marker in a new spatial ordering of the city wrought by urban renewal. Gone was the nineteenth-century street grid, along with Grand Rapids' old mercantile strip and, more important, its civic buildings. The superblocks that rose in their place were built at an entirely new scale, which allowed for the construction of large freestanding modern office buildings interspersed among green space, parking lots, and plazas. *La Grande Vitesse* matched both the superblock's scale and the abstraction of tower and plaza. On the ground, it identified city hall to pedestrians and became a place marker for the renewed civic center. This reordering encompassed not only the plaza, however, which served as a cleared slate for a new civic symbol, but also the image of the city as represented through public relations. *La Grande Vitesse* came to epitomize the aspirations of Grand Rapids' civic officials, businessmen, and citizens for a renewed downtown, one that would both retain companies and draw new businesses to the area, thus ensuring the city's prosperity. The scale of Grand Rapids' renewal project, funded in part by a tax on its citizens, demonstrated the city's commitment to this vision, as did its glass and steel city hall.[322] Through the language of architecture, the new city hall

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[321]Ibid.

[322]As the brochure for Vandenberg Center concludes: "Regeneration in the United States is big business today. More than 400 cities are rebuilding into new shapes. In all too many cases, urban renewal has been unable to deliver the glowing promises made in its name. The reasons for the quick success of Grand Rapids' Vandenberg Center were best expressed in an editorial appearing in the June 10, 1965 issue of the Grand Rapids Press… 'We don't know anything that speaks more convincingly of the stability of Grand Rapids, the reliability of its services and of its progressiveness than this desire among so many businesses to invest their money and future in this city. Urban renewal probably has done more to bring this confidence, and the confidence of Grand Rapids citizens generally, to light than any other single development in the last 50 years or more,'." Vandenberg Center brochure, n.p. GRCA.

signaled Grand Rapids' forward-looking attitude, while the plaza exemplified municipal government's power to defeat blight. *La Grande Vitesse* crowned these achievements, symbolizing through its daring abstraction, large scale, and modern materials the transformation of the former "Furniture City" into a hub for the new information economy. The sculpture even came to stand for the city itself as a kind of logo or trademark.

In Grand Rapids, *La Grande Vitesse* was consolidated as a two-dimensional image that circulated throughout the city and beyond. The name Calder gave the stabile, *La Grande Vitesse*, made the sculpture synonymous with Grand Rapids. As with the Chicago Picasso, this operation was reinforced by the sculpture's location in the civic center. Yet Grand Rapids went even further. Sometime after the dedication of *La Grande Vitesse* in June 1969, Grand Rapids cemented its identification with Vandenberg Center by adopting a graphic image that represented the new city hall and sculpture as its official logo (Figure 3.18). The symbol was eventually simplified to feature just the sculpture and appeared on everything from taxicabs to the city's garbage trucks. As an abstract logo, *La Grande Vitesse* updated the city's official symbol. The seal of Grand Rapids, adopted in 1850, employs classical allusion to convey a message about the city. It features an eagle protected by a shield that is situated below the scales of justice, along with the city's motto, "*motu viget*," or "strength in activity."[323] The city's new logo would be read in an entirely different way. Grand Rapids' identification with *La Grande Vitesse* reflected civic pride in the sculpture, which had distinguished the city on the national stage. Yet

[323]When Mark di Suvero was commissioned to create a sculpture for Grand Rapids through the GSA's Art-in-Architecture program in 1974, he used the city's motto as the sculpture's title. *Motu Viget* was erected outside the Gerald R. Ford Federal Building in 1977 in Vandenberg Center. The city seal appears on Grand Rapids' official municipal flag, adopted in 1915. The design consists of three vertical panels: a white panel, bearing the seal, which symbolizes the Grand River, flanked by two blue panels that symbolize the east and west banks of the river.

the sculpture's abstraction lent itself to adaptation as a logo, which made it legible to a wide public. Therefore the sculpture became familiar not as art, as the NCA expected, but through the visual language of public relations. Just as the clock tower had tolled the hour, now an image of *La Grande Vitesse* circulated throughout the city and similarly declared the unifying power of civic government.[324]

Yet there is more to *La Grande Vitesse* than its use as a civic logo. In fact, the sculpture itself resists this consolidation into a static image. Its dynamic forms instead elude easy description. If we face away from the building and look towards the sculpture, the central steel form resolves itself into an arch that supports an asymmetrical, undulating mass. A long oval shape at the left leans into the arch and is extruded into a squatter, rounder shape to the right. Or, we might see the right side of the sculpture as its back end. Then the three steel forms bolted perpendicular to the central form become legs, and the oval shape a head that projects forward, as if this alien construction were traversing the plaza. But if we move a few feet counter-clockwise, we see another shape jutting out from what had appeared just a moment before to be the sculpture's "head." This shape doubles the first oval but stands even taller. Now the "head" becomes one of two arms, and if we continue to walk around the sculpture and face the office building, the second oval appears to pull away from the central form, disrupting the directionality and implied movement observed before. From this perspective, the fins that add support to the steel take on greater graphic intensity as lines on the sculpture's surface,

[324]The city initially required written authorization to reproduce *La Grande Vitesse*. Following a controversy over Calder's right to reproduce the sculpture in a lithograph to benefit Grand Valley State College, the city relinquished copyright. For the correspondence, see Series 9-10, Attorney Dept. General Legal Files, La Grande Vitesse – Calder sculpture, 06/06/67 – 01/31/69, Box 1, Folder 3 and La Grande Vitesse – Calder sculpture, 05/20/69 – 02/19/91, Box 1, Folder 4, GRCA. In 1982, the city adopted its current official logo designed by sculptor Joseph Kinnebrew. It incorporates the sun in yellow, the Calder stabile in red, and the Grand River in blue.

particularly at the connection between the second oval and the central steel shape. We see *La Grande Vitesse* extended before us, but as we walk back towards the building, the sculpture again appears to contract. The individual elements appear bunched together, the tallest of the three "legs" from our first vantage point jutting up as the tallest part of the sculpture, as if the pieces were drawn tightly together and up towards the sky. We could circumambulate the sculpture again, walk in between and underneath the individual elements, but these efforts will not yield a firm conceptual grasp of the overall form of *La Grande Vitesse*.

The sculpture draws the viewer around and around in a dance that activates the object through the viewer's changing perception of its forms. This demand for ever-changing viewpoints destabilizes the sculpture's relationship with SOM's building; *La Grand Vitesse* instead belongs to the plaza. The sculpture is not staged so much as the plaza becomes its stage, an expansive space where viewers are encouraged to move around *La Grande Vitesse*, making the sculpture appear to perform in relation to their movement. Rather than convey a predetermined message through classical allusion like the city seal, or honor a specific person through the naming conventions that had governed the designation of Vandenberg Center, the sculpture is more open to interpretation. In a manner similar to *La Grande Voile* at MIT, *La Grande Vitesse* animates the plaza and functions as a landmark within Lynch's terms. As a trademark, the sculpture's abstract form is linked with Grand Rapids' civic identity and symbolizes the city's progressiveness. As a landmark, the sculpture becomes meaningful primarily through the viewer's experience of it in relation to its site, as she walks around and underneath the sculpture.[325]

[325]This is in fact how the sculpture is described in the program for its dedication. Box 3 Folder 1, Calder Dedication program, Nancy Mulnix Papers, GRPL. According to correspondence between Mulnix and Perls, *La Grande Vitesse* also became a popular site for protests and vigils to end the war in Vietnam. Local

The success of *La Grande Vitesse* bolstered the Art in Public Places program, even if the lucky confluence of factors that engendered the sculpture's popularity in Grand Rapids would not be easy to duplicate elsewhere.[326] Foremost among these was the favorable reception of urban renewal in Grand Rapids. Around the same time that *La Grande Vitesse* was commissioned, attitudes toward renewal in the United States were changing. The federal urban renewal program had made its first major impact between 1958 and 1963, when Grand Rapids citizens voted to fund urban renewal there. During this period, planners across the United States unveiled some of their grandest schemes for renewal, but these years also saw the first major outcry against plans for physical renewal of American cities. The late 1960s and early 1970s marked a turning point in thinking about urban renewal and urban planning in the U.S. that had been building throughout the decade. Critics called for a new vision for urban renewal that focused less on brick-and-mortar projects and more on human rejuvenation, including improved health care, better education, and social justice. They also demanded that local governments bolster neighborhoods rather than destroy them.[327] Even before the dedication of *La Grande Vitesse*, however, Calder had set a powerful example for the new tradition of public art rooted in studio practice promoted by the NCA. In seeking out a fabricator with which to

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newspapers had reported on the Calders' politics as a part of their coverage of *La Grande Vitesse*. Mulnix writes, "The stabile has become a peace symbol for this whole area – partly because it's a natural place to gather, partly because of what Sandy and Louisa have said about Vietnam – but more than anything because of what it is – in and of itself!" Nancy Mulnix to Klaus Perls, Tuesday (October?) 1969. Folder, Correspondence: Mulnix, Mrs. Le Vant (Nancy) (2 of 3) 1969. Perls Galleries Records, 1937-1995, AAA.

[326]As NEA Visual Arts program director Brian O'Doherty observed, "The success of the Calder is due to the fact that different groups within the city found that it fulfilled *their* necessities: the art community was, of course, enthusiastic; the city's cultural leaders saw the Calder as a focus for various other kinds of cultural events—open-air concerts, etc.; and the public was proud of the national attention the city received. Others saw the art work as a socially useful device for improving 'the quality of life'." O'Doherty, "Public Art and the Government: A Progress Report," *Art in America* 62 (May-June 1974): 45.

[327]See Teaford, *Rough Road to Renaissance*, especially chapter five, "Rebellion and Reaction." Hartmann lobbied to save Grand Rapids' old City Hall from the wrecking ball, to no avail. See James B. Nachtegall to William Hartmann, 12 September 1969. Main File – Grand Rapids, SOM Chicago.

partner and making works speculatively, without a commission, Calder created large-scale sculptures without making aesthetic compromises. Increasing demand on the part of private and institutional patrons, coupled with newly available federal funds, inspired artists to follow in Calder's footsteps and to seek out fabricators to help them realize large-scale sculptures, as I explore in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Designing the Image of the City

In the summer of 1968, Barbara Rose surveyed the first fruits of the nascent monumental sculpture boom for *Art in America*. What she found revealed the new trend to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, Rose saw what she considered to be good examples of large-scale sculpture, including Eero Saarinen's *Gateway Arch* (1963-65) in St. Louis, Missouri; Alexander Calder's *Teodelapio* (1962) in Spoleto, Italy; and José de Rivera's *Infinity* (1967) at the National Museum of History and Technology in Washington, D.C.[328] What made these works excellent, according to her, was how they "seem to justify their scale," whereas the works that she targeted in her article, "Blowup—The Problem of Scale in Sculpture," did not. A "blowup" is a sculpture that the artist conceived on one scale and then executed in another. For Rose, the blowup was the single biggest problem evident in large-scale sculpture but not an insurmountable one. "Works that are just enlargements strike one as merely inflated," Rose wrote. "Prominent examples of such blowups are the aggrandized versions of Picasso's modest works being executed for American sites."[329] These sculptures may have been charming at tabletop scale but appeared ridiculous when blown up for placement outdoors.

Rose came to her conclusion about Picasso's work after seeing an exhibition of his sculpture at the MoMA.[330] She realized that her appreciation for the monumentality of Picasso's sculptures had been based not on the works themselves, but on photographs. By looking at photographs, "the comparison with the human body never came up," because reference points for scale were not always included. Indeed, Rose believed that the

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[328]The commissions from Calder and de Rivera are discussed in my third chapter.

[329]Barbara Rose, "Blowup—The Problem of Scale in Sculpture," *Art in America* 56 (July-August 1968): 82.

[330]*The Sculpture of Picasso* (October 11, 1967 – January 1, 1968), curated by Sir Roland Penrose, included maquettes for large-scale sculpture as well as smaller works.

experience of seeing photographs of sculptures was a key contributor to "the change in scale we are currently witnessing." "The photograph," she wrote, "permits a blowup to any scale, even the most gargantuan. Through the agency of the photograph, the viewer can mentally transform the intimate living-room art of early modern sculpture into… outdoor monuments."[331] It was therefore easy for patrons to imagine a small-scale sculpture as being a great deal larger than it was in actuality, regardless of how a change in scale might have affected the work's overall impact.

Rose saw a genuine desire on the part of artists to work at a large scale; however, the needs of patrons played a part as well. She observed,

> Certainly one of the factors that has contributed to making large scale endemic in new sculpture is the demand on the part of American institutions as diverse as banks, churches, museums, schools, airports and municipalities for impressive, monumental objects to decorate their premises and enhance their images. But it would surely be naïve to see these many new outlets for sculptural decoration as expressive solely of a hunger for beauty on the part of American civilization in general. In fact, it seems clear that many of the weaknesses of current large-scale work reflect the lack of knowledge and conviction of its patrons, who confuse esthetics with public relations.[332]

Though patrons provided artists with new opportunities to execute their proposed large-scale sculptures, Rose blamed these same patrons for the poor quality of many commissions: "the leading purchasers of monumental sculpture… cannot make any significant discrimination of value because they are unable to separate the impact of scale from that of quality." Sheer size "gives even inferior work an imposing presence," impressing "the less-knowing patrons of the new sculpture."[333] What is more, patrons are "willing to substitute the status of the master's name for the creation of a masterpiece."[334]

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[331]Ibid. 83.
[332]Ibid. 83-86.
[333]Ibid. 86.
[334]Ibid. 87.

The result was colossal Picassos dropped into city parks and plazas. To further illustrate her point, Rose asked the reader to consider "the nightmarish vision of a fifty-foot Degas bronze dancer."[335]

The demand for sculpture on the part of institutional patrons was driven more by a desire to make a good impression than it was to secure sculpture of the highest quality. Nevertheless, this did not mean that patrons could not have excellent sculpture that helped them to shape a favorable public image. If the problem, according to Rose, was "that of a work conceived on one scale and executed on another," then the solution was simply to eliminate the maquette, a small-scale sketch in three dimensions, and allow the sculptor to work "directly on the scale of his conception."[336] Rather than create a model and send it to an industrial fabricator for enlargement, as Picasso had done, Rose thought that artists needed to adjust their designs for large-scale sculpture during fabrication in order to achieve the best results.

Rose devoted the second half of her article to a new enterprise that allowed artists to participate directly in the enlargement of their work: Lippincott Inc., the first fabricator dedicated exclusively to the production of sculpture in the United States. According to Rose, this new fabricator was different from the others in two important ways:

> First, the interior of the factory and the property around it were both large enough to allow pieces to be set up and evaluated at various stages by their creators; second, artists were encouraged to work on the spot, directly assisting the welders and joiners and making alterations as they worked.[337]

Lippincott Inc.'s operation de-emphasized the maquette as a small-scale version of the finished artwork. Instead, artists made changes to the work while it was being executed. Rose asserted that "this possibility, of creating on the spot in terms of a large site, of

[335]Ibid. 83.
[336]Ibid. 87.
[337]Ibid.

working out details as problems arise and making decisions during the actual execution of the piece, accounts, I think, for the high quality of a number of the works executed so far by Lippincott, Inc."[338] She went on to praise the company's support of young artists and older sculptors who had fallen out of fashion, as well as the possibilities for technical experimentation and engineering advice provided by the fabricator. At the end of her article, however, she returned to the importance of the sculptor's involvement at every stage of the work's execution, emphasizing this aspect of Lippincott Inc. as the fabricator's most unique property: "It is this direct contact with the work, then, that differentiates the pieces executed by Lippincott from work ordered on the telephone—or blown up from scale models." It was precisely the use of new fabrication techniques that often excluded artists from having this direct contact with the work; by maintaining control during the work's execution, the artist could achieve the expressiveness of the monument, as well as its scale: "That scale is not identifiable as content is clear to the artist who continues, despite the use of new techniques of fabrication, to exercise full control of his medium."[339]

This chapter focuses on three sculptures produced by Lippincott Inc., either as a series or in multiple editions, during its first five years of operation: Tony Rosenthal's cubes (1967-68), Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* (1963-67), and Claes Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse* (1969-71). Each of these artists worked closely with Lippincott Inc. on the realization of his work, adjusting his original designs to accommodate the transition from model to monument. The fabricator thereby gave artists unprecedented control over the production of their sculptures, as Rose pointed out. Yet Lippincott Inc.'s operation raised new questions, in particular about the relationship between a sculpture and its site.

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[338]Ibid.
[339]Ibid. 91.

Unlike the other sculptures discussed in this dissertation, none of the works engaged in this chapter as case studies was made for a specific location. Instead, each of these sculptures was produced speculatively, without a commission. The implications of this arrangement were threefold. First, it transformed the market for large-scale sculpture. Rather than negotiate with an artist on a commission, patrons could purchase sculptures readymade, with works for sale displayed at Lippincott Inc. Second, it gave artists the freedom to realize monumental sculptures with few constraints; most of these constraints were technical rather than aesthetic. Lippincott Inc.'s factory became an expanded studio, with workers serving as artist assistants, and monumental sculptures became works of studio art. Third, it introduced a new set of questions for critics: What were the criteria for evaluating this new type of public art? How was it to be sited, and how would it be read? According to the rules of studio art, or according to other principles, yet to be established?

In what follows, I look at the circumstances surrounding the fabrication of each case study sculpture and then consider how the different exemplars were sited. Eventually, they made their way to urban sites, museum sculpture gardens, university campuses, and government complexes—all prime locations for the new large-scale sculpture. In many ways, the arrangement with Lippincott Inc. can be viewed as the culmination of the NCA's goals. The firm enabled artists like Rosenthal, Newman, and Oldenburg to make public sculpture rooted in their studio practice. Yet a number of questions remained. First, how would these sculptures make meaning in the urban environment? Would spectators read them as art? Second, who would define the relationship between sculpture and site? While the arrangement with Lippincott Inc. gave artists more control over the production of their work, it provided them with little say over the siting of their sculptures.

LIPPINCOTT INC.

Donald Lippincott, an industrial real estate developer, and Roxanne Everett, who worked in fundraising and public relations, launched Lippincott Inc. in the spring of 1966.[340] These unlikely business partners met through Donald's father, J. Gordon Lippincott, a founding partner in the industrial design firm Lippincott & Margulies.[341] Among Lippincott & Margulies' most recognized designs is the iconic "Steelmark" logo for U.S. Steel. Through this family connection, U.S. Steel supplied Lippincott Inc. with some of its weathering-steel plate, Cor-Ten, which became the firm's material of choice in its early years of operation. When they met, Lippincott and Everett learned that they shared both an interest in art and a lack of formal training in the subject. The idea for a sculpture fabrication firm evolved gradually: "With more and more sculptors producing works that required industrial materials and equipment, they speculated there might be a need for a new facility offering technological answers to esthetic problems."[342] Up to that time, Donald's major exposure to art was through his younger brother Steven, a sculpture student at Cooper Union. Steven's desire to work at a large scale, coupled with the circumstance of having one of Donald's renovated industrial structures, located in North Haven, Connecticut, available for use as a workshop, led to the production of Lippincott

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[340]The best sources on the fabricator are the exhibition catalogue, Hugh Marlais Davies, *Artist & Fabricator* (Amherst, Mass.: Fine Arts Center Gallery, Univ. of Massachusetts, 1975) and the recent collection of photographs from Lippincott Inc.'s archive, Jonathan D. Lippincott, *Large Scale: Fabricating Sculpture in the 1960s and 1970s* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010). For more on the fabricator from the perspective of the 1960s and 1970s, see "Welded Giants," *Architectural Forum* 126 (April 1967): 53-56; Grace Glueck, "Art Notes: New Crop," *New York Times*, 16 July 1967; Rose, "Blowup"; Gregory Battcock, "Monuments to Technology," *Art and Artists* 5 (May 1970): 52-55; and Roy Bongartz, "Where the Monumental Sculptors Go," *Art News* 75 (February 1976): 34-37.

[341]For Lippincott & Margulies, see Roger Beardwood, "Doctors of the Corporate Ego," *Fortune*, 1 May 1969, 108-10, and "Corporations: The Turnaround Boys," *Time*, 16 July 1965, 84.

[342]Charles C. Smith, "The Sculpture Factory," *Boston Globe*, 27 August 1978.

Inc.'s first sculpture. A young artist, William Underhill, soon followed Steven to North Haven, supplying the fledgling fabricator with sample sculptures to show other artists.[343]

Beginning in the early 1960s, more and more artists turned to industrial fabricators for assistance in realizing sculptures in materials such as steel and aluminum, which required specialized instruments and equipment. Fabricators also permitted artists to create works at a scale much larger than most could realize in their studios.[344] In contrast with its competitors, Treitel-Gratz and Milgo Industrial, firms that fabricated sculptures for artists but specialized, respectively, in the production of furniture prototypes and custom metal architectural elements, Lippincott Inc. promoted itself as exclusively devoted to working with artists.[345] Rose described some of the difficulties sculptors faced working with commercial fabricators in 1967:

> Since a sizeable number wish to be free to change and amend their work, one of the special problems of artists working in an industrial situation is that they need to oversee and supervise the execution of their work. Another problem is that artists are making unique objects in a mass-production situation. Because each project presents its own problems, artists need a degree of cooperation from workmen that is sometimes difficult to obtain.[346]

Lippincott Inc. addressed these issues by encouraging artists to participate in every step of the fabrication process. According to Donald, "The key of our success was that the

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[343]Eddie Giza and Frank Viglione, who had worked for Donald as concrete finishers on industrial renovation jobs, fabricated the sculptures. Giza eventually managed the factory. Lippincott Inc. tended not to hire artists as workers because they were more likely to leave the company to pursue their own projects.

[344]Other artists turned to fabricators during the mid-1960s for aesthetic reasons. When Donald Judd, who subsequently worked with Lippincott Inc., engaged Bernstein Brothers and Treitel-Gratz in 1964-65, it was to achieve the illusion that his sculptures were not handmade but instead the result of sophisticated industrial processes. See Joshua Shannon, *The Disappearance of Objects: New York Art and the Rise of the Postmodern City* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2009), especially chapter 4, "A Loft Without Labor," on Donald Judd. For a history of welded sculpture, see Judy Collischan, *Welded Sculpture of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Hudson Hills Press; Purchase, New York: in association with the Neuberger Museum of Art, 2000).

[345]For more on Lippincott Inc. relative to other 1960s fabricators, see Michelle Kuo, "Test Sites: Fabrication," in Alexander Dumbadze and Suzanne Hudson, eds., *Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

[346]Barbara Rose, "Shall We Have a Renaissance?" *Art in America* 55 (March-April 1967): 35.

artist was able to work here with workers who are sympathetic to whatever he is doing. If there is some impossibility, we don't quit, we work around it."[347] Lippincott Inc. supplied the huge machines and expensive tools needed to execute work in steel, aluminum, and other new materials, as well as fabricators with the skills to execute sculptors' plans. The firm also provided help with engineering and structural issues that arose during fabrication: "Sometimes something is so well-defined… in the drawing and model stage that you… perform that task exactly, which is the same as an architect making a drawing and you building from it. Most of the time there is… more interaction, and thought, and change."[348]

Roxanne and Donald visited the New York galleries and the studios of a select group of artists during the fall of 1966 to assemble a "pilot group" of sculptors with whom to work. According to Donald, the partners' timing was propitious: "If we'd tried it much before we began there wasn't sufficient interest and market there to support the whole thing. And, of course, if we hadn't done it when we did someone else very well might have."[349] Roxanne and Donald also discovered a genuine need amongst artists for a sculpture fabrication firm: "They all had some idea they had been thinking about maybe for a long time but for one reason or another had not built it."[350] This pilot group, which included Marisol, Clement Meadmore, Robert Morris, Robert Murray, James Rosati, and Tony Rosenthal, was selected, according to Everett, because their art "was distinctly different enough from each others' to provide a happy cross-section from a working, exhibition, and development viewpoint."[351] This surprising emphasis on stylistic

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[347]Donald Lippincott quoted in Bongartz, "Monumental Sculptors," 35.
[348]Donald Lippincott, interviewed by Hugh Marlais Davies, in *Artist & Fabricator*, 39.
[349]Donald Lippincott quoted in Smith, "Sculpture Factory."
[350]Donald Lippincott quoted in Bongartz, "Monumental Sculptors," 35.
[351]Roxanne Everett, "Selection of Sculpture," undated in-house memo to Donald Lippincott, quoted in Patterson Sims, introduction to *Large Scale*, 15.

difference stemmed in part from the fact that Lippincott Inc. was in the business not only of fabricating sculptures, but of selling them as well. During its early years, the firm partnered with artists to produce sculptures on speculation, then marketed these sculptures through advertisements and exhibitions, and shared in the profit if a work sold. Lippincott Inc.'s ten-acre sculpture field served as a showcase for finished works available for purchase, thereby removing the maquette from the commissioning process. Patrons were invited to visit the factory and select a completed work, with all costs known, rather than envisioning the enlargement of a tabletop model.

In effect, Lippincott Inc. was like a commercial gallery, yet the large-scale sculptures it produced and promoted functioned differently from most studio art. The sculptures' size made their display in a home or even in most museums untenable. Instead, the most logical place to show them was outdoors. Temporary exhibitions were an important way of promoting large-scale sculpture, and Lippincott Inc. lent works to all of the major monumental sculpture exhibitions of the late 1960s and early 1970s, including *Sculpture in Environment* in New York City (1967); *Scale as Content* at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (1967-68); *Sculpture Downtown* in Detroit (1969); *Monumental Art* in Cincinnati (1970); *Seven Outside* at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (1970); *Monumental Sculpture* on City Hall Plaza in Boston (1971); and *Monumenta* in Newport, Rhode Island (1974). Following the example of Giovanni Carandente's 1961 exhibition *Sculture nella citta*, in which sculptures were installed temporarily throughout the city of Spoleto, Italy, these exhibitions introduced contemporary large-scale sculpture directly into the urban environment, demonstrating how such works could enhance the city.[352] These shows also gave critics an opportunity

[352]See my chapter 3 for more on the exhibition.

to weigh in on developments in the new public art. For Lippincott Inc., none of these exhibitions was more important than *Sculpture in Environment*, which brought the firm into the public eye.[353]

SCULPTURE IN ENVIRONMENT

When *Sculpture in Environment* opened on October 1, 1967, it featured five sculptures fabricated at Lippincott Inc.: Rosenthal's *Alamo* (1967), Newman's *Broken Obelisk*, Marisol's *Three Figures* (1967), and Murray's *Athabasca* (1965-67) and *Ridgefield* (1967).[354] A total of twenty-nine works by twenty-four artists were installed in New York City for the show. They appeared inside and outside of buildings, in parks, on a traffic island, and in a shop window. Artists chose the sites for their sculptures, and the organizers did their best to secure preferred locations. Many artists selected sites that had been developed over the last fifteen years: Title I urban renewal projects like Lincoln Square, the site of sculptures by Tony Smith and David Smith; Harlem Title I, where Alexander Calder's *Little Fountain* (1966) and *Triangle with Ears* (1966) were installed at Lenox Terrace Apartments; and NYU-Belleview Title I, site of Kips Bay Plaza and a sculpture by Antoni Milkowski. Artists also chose new office towers including the Seagram Building, Lever House, and Union Carbide on Park Avenue, as well as the Time and Life and CBS Buildings on Sixth Avenue. In addition to free-standing sculptures, the exhibition included two works that were rather more immaterial: Forrest Myers' *Searchin'* (1966), a periodic projection of colored light beams into the sky from Tompkins Square Park in the East Village; and Oldenburg's *Placid Civic Monument*

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[353]The importance of the urban environment in the establishment of Lippincott Inc. was expressed by the firm's earliest name, "Lippincott Environmental Arts Inc." The name had been changed to Lippincott Inc. by the time Rose published her article on the blowup.

[354]Except for *Broken Obelisk*, all of these sculptures were fabricated according to the partnership agreement and are listed in the catalogue as "Loaned by Lippincott Environmental Arts, Inc." See *Sculpture in Environment* (New York: Cultural Affairs Foundation, 1967), n.p.

(1967), a performance of sorts in which two grave diggers excavated a six-foot-long rectangular hole in Central Park, behind the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and then refilled it. Maps were distributed for those interested in tracking down each artwork, although most viewers stumbled across the sculptures while going about their everyday business, running errands or walking to work. Small white placards identified the artworks.

Sam Green, the curator who had planned a similar exhibition in Philadelphia earlier that year, organized *Sculpture in Environment*.[355] Doris C. Freedman coordinated the exhibit as part of the New York City Cultural Showcase Festival,[356] and an advisory committee made up of curators and collectors provided additional support.[357] The show was part of a larger shift in municipal policy to open city parks to artists. As Freedman explained in advance press for *Sculpture in Environment*: "We're in the midst of a sculptural explosion. The four walls of a gallery can no longer contain the huge, magnificent works artists are now producing. The city has a responsibility to the great creative talents living and working here." The show was also an advertisement aimed at patrons, architects, and planners for large-scale sculpture. Freedman continues: "We're

[355]See *Art for the City* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1967). In 1959 Philadelphia had adopted the nation's first percent-for-art policy, which mandated that a percentage of the construction cost of new buildings had to be used to purchase works of art for public display. See Penny Balkin Bach, *Public Art in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1992).

[356]Freedman is best known as a founder of New York City's Public Art Fund. See Susan K. Freedman et al., *Plop: Recent Projects of the Public Art Fund* (London: Merrell Publishers; New York: in association with Public Art Fund, 2004).

[357]The Advisory Committee included Doris Freedman, Special Assistant for Cultural Affairs; Lloyd Goodrich, Director of the Whitney Museum; Ruth Gurin, Curator of the New York University Art Collection; Mrs. Albert List, Collector; Kynaston McShine, Curator of Painting and Sculpture at the Jewish Museum; Paul Rudolph, Architect; and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, Collector. Though the New York City Administration of Recreation and Cultural Affairs sponsored *Sculpture in Environment*, no city or state funds were expended on the exhibition. Instead, private sponsors paid for the show.

not out to provide a show or exhibition as much as we are to demonstrate how contemporary sculpture can lend itself to the enhancement of our city."[358]

Proposals during the early 1960s for a city-wide outdoor sculpture exhibition in New York had fallen on deaf ears; Parks Commissioner Newbold Morris was as conservative as his predecessor, "master builder" Robert Moses, a staunch opponent of abstract art. These two men had controlled public space in New York City from 1934 until New Year's Day in 1966, when Lindsay took office as Mayor and appointed Thomas P.F. Hoving the new Commissioner of Parks. To join the administration, Hoving left a prestigious post as curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval art collection at The Cloisters. Hoving and his successor, August Heckscher, opened the parks to artists by sponsoring participatory art events, open-air art festivals, and temporary sculpture installations. The first of these shows consisted of a group of sculptures by Tony Smith that were temporarily installed in Bryant Park during the winter of 1967.[359]

In his foreword to the exhibition catalogue for *Sculpture in Environment*, Heckscher explains the organizers' goal to put art and urban life in a new relationship:

> Too many people think of art, and of sculpture especially, as tolerable or even enjoyable when domesticated and caged within a museum. But to let these great pieces loose in the city, to set them under the light of day where they intrude upon our daily walks and errands – that causes a different reaction![360]

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[358]Freedman quoted in Grace Glueck, "Sculpfest," *New York Times*, 25 June 1967.

[359]For Moses' attitude towards abstract sculpture, see B.H. Friedman, "Who's Afraid of Modern Art?" *Art in America* 52, no. 2 (1964): 136-38. For the New York City Parks Department under Lindsay, see Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1992), 489-98. For Tony Smith in Bryant Park, see Hilton Kramer, "A Sculpture Show in Bryant Park," *New York Times*, 2 February 1967 and "Sculpture: Presences in the Park," *Time* 10 February 1967, 74.

[360]August Heckscher, foreword to *Sculpture in Environment* (New York: Cultural Affairs Foundation, 1967), n.p.

Heckscher's statement suggests that the museum is a veritable zoo filled with artworks desperately trying to escape. Though Heckscher asserts that sculpture let "loose in the city" does something different from an artwork "domesticated" and "caged" inside the museum, he does not distinguish between sculptures created specifically for either location.

The function of artworks in public and the relationship between the artwork and its site were key issues for critics writing about *Sculpture in Environment*. Lucy Lippard criticizes attitudes like Heckscher's for lacking "a conviction about the nature of a public art" in her review of *Sculpture in Environment*: "One cannot just take a sculpture out of the studio, dump it in the gutter, and call it public art. A good deal of the work so treated looked like nothing so much as evicted furniture."[361] Lippard argues that partiality to an artist's "general production" cannot be the only criterion for judging his work suitable for public display. A number of other factors must be taken into consideration:

> Art placed in a civic site must be decorative, commanding, easy to take in at a glance, but difficult, stimulating, various enough in receiving light and atmospheric change to provoke continued pleasure, engagement and surprise. The bulk and 'monumentality' that make it initially visible to a hurried or insensitive urban audience must be retained long enough to engage the viewer's thoughts. To become a landmark rather than an indistinguishable element of the urban collage, a sculpture, like a building, must retain its autonomy, involve its environment enough to augment but not be absorbed by it.[362]

Public art needs to be visually striking in order to attract attention, and appealing enough to hold viewers' interest.

New York Times art critic Hilton Kramer makes a similar distinction between studio work and sculpture installed in an outdoor, public site in his review. Kramer argues that studio work displayed in a gallery participates in a dialogue confined to the

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[361]Lucy Lippard, "Beauty and the Bureaucracy," *Hudson Review* 20 (Winter 1967-68): 650.
[362]Ibid. 651-2.

rarefied realm of art: "[Gallery works] are part of an on-going dialogue between the artist and his work, between his own work and that of his contemporaries, between the possibilities of art and the pressures of experience at a particular historical moment."[363] Even if gallery work is not entirely successful or fully resolved, it may present possibilities and challenges that are sufficiently interesting. Works of art designed for public sites and executed on a monumental scale also participate in this dialogue, while taking on another burden: gallery work need only speak "the language of the studio," whereas public sculpture does this while at the same time speaking "the language of the street." Outsized dimensions pushed sculpture out of the studio and into the street, but installation in a public site does not automatically transform good studio art into good public sculpture:

> We have all seen, in many cities the world over, public monuments which can scarcely claim even minimal interest as pure sculpture but which yet function with an undeniable grace, elegance, and environmental benevolence. There may be an aesthetic injustice in the fact, but a fact it is.

According to Kramer, an understanding of the language of the street may be even more important than aesthetic considerations for a sculpture to succeed in the urban environment.

Kramer pits studio versus street, describing two kinds of places, as well as two different languages. If artists enter into a dialogue in the studio, they become soapbox orators on the street: "these sculptors … are all too simply speaking the language of the studio on a public platform, and their voices either do not carry or only add to the general noise." The studio and gallery are sites of speculation and experimentation, whereas the urban environment presents physical problems that must be taken into account: "problems of space and human traffic, problems of scale and visual discretion." Kramer

[363]Hilton Kramer, "The Studio Vs. the Street," *New York Times*, 15 October 1967.

argues that these factors "ought to have been among the first concerns of artists aspiring to enhance our beleaguered environment."

Lippard and Kramer criticize the works included in *Sculpture in Environment* for their tenuous relation to the sites their artists chose to place them. Both critics characterize these sites as part of an urban collage; sculptures must compete with other elements in this environment, such as buildings, billboards, and signs, and at the same time complement or even decorate the site and the larger city space of which they are a part. Kramer and Lippard present the city as a set of formal problems that need to be accounted for by the artist in his or her design, but they do not address how the urban environment might also inform an artwork's meaning.

In his essay for the *Sculpture in Environment* exhibition catalogue, Irving Sandler champions this idea, and encourages artists to use certain aspects of the urban environment to generate new content for their work. Sandler's essay is important because he recognized that "public art" was a new category with a different set of rules from studio art, which he defines as "the chain of styles that stretches from Impressionism and Rodin on."[364] He begins his essay with a familiar line of reasoning: "The sheer size of many recent works of art has raised the question of where to exhibit them. Few museums, galleries and collectors' living rooms are spacious enough. The logical places that suggest themselves are architectural." The monumental size of artists' works made outdoor display desirable, but as Sandler points out, the collaboration between artist and architect "has rarely had its potential realized." The alternative is to install "monumental art in existing city settings." He allows that sculptors may want to place studio works in urban locations, but encourages artists to make works for specific sites. The latter is

[364]Irving Sandler, "Public Art #1," in *Sculpture in Environment*. The quotes from this paragraph and the one that follows are drawn from Sandler's essay.

desirable, according to Sandler, because "artists can deal with the surrounding space as a component" of their work, thereby generating "a new content." This new content not only engages the formal aspects of the site, but also "the cultural, social, political and economic conditions of the environment."

Sandler envisions a reciprocal relationship between artists and the city and argues that the growth of public art is facilitated by the coincidence of "artists' desire for the kind of spaces that the urban environment can provide" and "the city's need for art." Though it is clear that an increase in the scale of artists' work made urban sites particularly attractive, why did the city need art? Sandler cites recent developments in urban renewal as the source of this need:

> The public (including artists) increasingly cares about the need to renew our cities and is becoming aware of the role that art can play in this. City planners agree that one way to give a neighborhood an identity is through the introduction of a landmark, and some are beginning to recognize that artists can be employed to create such monuments.

Though contemporary public sculpture may lack the traditional monument's dedication or commemoration, the new monument acquires meaning through its status as a landmark.

Sandler's choice of the landmark as a guiding principle for public sculpture is quite calculated. His appeal to urban renewal crosses disciplines, and positions the language of the studio in relation to the vernacular of city planning, a topic of particular importance at the time and distinctly relevant to *Sculpture in Environment*—seven artists in the exhibition chose sites for their work that had been redeveloped within the last fifteen years. Sandler's proposal that sculpture could give a neighborhood an identity as a landmark also resonates strongly with Kevin Lynch's argument about the landmark in *The Image of the City*, published just seven years earlier. As one of the five elements that

make up his city image, Lynch claims that the landmark contributes to an "imageable landscape," which promotes a sense of place. Like Lynch, Sandler focuses on the landmark's positive impact on its surroundings, distinguishing part of the urban environment. For Sandler, sculpture can contribute to urban renewal by helping observers to identify a particular place and make that place more memorable.

Lippard also cites urban renewal as important to the new large-scale sculpture but focuses more on physical changes to the city than Sandler. She begins by proposing sculpture as an antidote to architecture's shortcomings: "As a whole, New York may be a sculptural achievement, but its parts are less impressive. There are few recent buildings that command engagement or respect. Good sculpture could compensate for some of architecture's lacunae." Part of what makes this possible is sculpture's mobility, which allows it to retain its visibility:

> Architecture, or anything else placed in situ for a long time, is likely to be taken for granted and eventually becomes part of the cementwork. The academic sculpture around town has become invisible because its stasis (statue, stature, status quo) is against it. Most people no longer see their environment once it has become familiar.

Permanence causes public sculpture to fade into the background of everyday life, and to become unimportant and unnecessary. It not only promotes invisibility, however, but it has also become obsolete due to the rapid pace of urban renewal. As the city changes, so might a sculpture's site, making that site unfitting:

> Most of New York's neighborhoods are temporary. We could capitalize on the city's impermanent quality instead of sitting back and deploring it. With buildings cavalierly thrown up and mown down, permanent sculpture is often irrelevant. Good sculpture does not automatically become obsolete, but if its setting is changed, it may become unsuitable.[365]

[365]Lippard, "Bureaucracy," 656.

Additional permanent sculpture did not seem like a viable option in New York circa 1967. The city was changing too much and too fast. Sculptures needed to be well matched to their sites, and the meaning of this relationship functioned according to the logic of the landmark—for as long as it lasted, urban sculpture would engage the spectator's spatial memory and serve as a guidepost in the city. Lippard ultimately suggests a sculpture bank for New York, giving the inhabitants of every twenty-block radius a chance to live with several sculptures over a period of years.

Sculpture in Environment encouraged Lippincott Inc. and also guided the firm's subsequent sculptural production. Its mobile, monumental sculptures accommodated temporary display in exhibitions, as well as the changing urban environment of bulldozer renewal described by Sandler and Lippard. Kramer and Lippard's reviews underscore the importance of the design adjustments praised by Rose in her article on the "blowup"; sculptures needed to maintain their own sense of scale as independent elements in an urban collage. Lippincott Inc. allowed sculptors a high degree of control over the fabrication of their sculptures, and by producing sculptures speculatively, gave artists the freedom to realize their vision for large-scale sculpture without the constraints of a commission. Nevertheless, artists could not control what happened to their work after a sculpture left Lippincott Inc.'s factory. In what follows, I use *Sculpture in Environment* to introduce each of my case studies, and then trace each sculpture's "life" following the show.

TONY ROSENTHAL'S CUBES

Rosenthal's *Alamo* is distinguished not for its mobility, but by the fact that it ultimately stayed put (Figure 4.1). It was the only sculpture to remain in place following the close of *Sculpture in Environment*. The 15' tall, painted steel cube quickly became the

centerpiece of Astor Place, a gritty traffic island just east of Broadway, on the edge of the East Village. Its popularity prompted a group of students from the Cooper Union to initiate a petition to keep *Alamo*, and an anonymous donor paid for the sculpture and gave it to the city.[366] Six months after its installation, Kramer observed how the sculpture had succeeded "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."[367] A magnet for passersby, the sculpture also became a landmark for the nascent East Village, which had emerged as a neighborhood distinct from Greenwich Village earlier in the decade.[368]

Alamo was not Rosenthal's first public sculpture, but it marked a departure in the artist's work. He had begun working with architects on commissions for large-scale sculpture during the late 1930s, when he created *A Nubian Slave* for the Elgin Watch Company building at the 1939 New York World's Fair.[369] In the years following World War II, Rosenthal lived in Los Angeles, where he was close to Cranbrook classmates Charles and Ray Eames, as well as John Entenza, the editor of *Arts & Architecture*

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[366]Press release, "ALAMO WILL BE REMEMBERED ON ASTOR PLACE; Anonymous Donor Gives City Parks Department Rosenthal Sculpture," 28 November 1967, http://www.nycgovparks.org/news/reports/archive (accessed 21 June 2014).

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

[368]The destruction of the Third Avenue elevated tracks in 1956 opened the East Village to redevelopment. As the population of Greenwich Village became more affluent, many of the area's "most bohemian, least-well-heeled residents" moved east of Broadway, to an area formerly associated with the Lower East Side. See Robert A. M. Stern, Thomas Mellins, and David Fishman, *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), 254-58.

[369]Bernard (Tony) Rosenthal (1914-2009) earned a B.A. at the University of Michigan in 1936 and then returned to his hometown of Chicago, where he studied with Alexander Archipenko and taught evening classes in drawing and sculpture. Rosenthal also designed light fixtures and plaster decorations for the architect William Pereira, who gave the artist the World's Fair commission. Rosenthal went to the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1939 to study with Carl Milles for one year and then returned to Chicago, where he remained until 1942, when he was drafted into the U.S. Army. While stationed in Europe, Rosenthal visited the studios of Henry Moore, Constantin Brancusi, and other artists. The best sources on Rosenthal are Edward Albee and Sam Hunter, *Tony Rosenthal* (New York: Rizzoli, 2000) and the artist's website, http://www.tonyrosenthal.com/.

magazine. Through Eames and Entenza, Rosenthal met many prominent Los Angeles architects, who commissioned sculptures from Rosenthal for their buildings.[370] As he later explained in an interview, Rosenthal appreciated the "new demands" that architectural commissions put on his work. At the same time, he was wary of over-romanticizing the notion of collaboration: "Other times when I'd work closely with architects it hasn't worked out as well. Because I've listened too much to the architect and they've listened too much to me." Indeed, by the second half of the 1960s, Rosenthal was no longer interested in collaborating closely with architects; instead, he wanted to create large-scale sculpture independently, without a commission: "Sculpture and architecture really boils [sic] down to… how good each of them are; but also how interested each one is in the other's craft or profession… I really think that the most successful is when a piece is done and just placed somewhere."[371]

Donald Lippincott first contacted Rosenthal after noticing one of the artist's sculptures, *Ahab* (1966), in the 1966 Whitney Annual (Figure 4.2). The sculpture was made up of geometric bronze shapes set at precarious angles, and rose to a height of almost 11'. Lippincott asked Rosenthal if he would be interested in enlarging the

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[370]Rosenthal continued to work on architectural commissions with Pereira through the end of the 1950s. He also received many commissions from Welton Becket, SOM's main rival on the West Coast. One of these commissions, for the Los Angeles Police Facilities Building (1952-55), sparked a controversy that affected public sculpture in Los Angeles for over a decade. The problem was a change in Rosenthal's design for a wall sculpture that depicted a policeman protecting a family. The stylized figuration of his initial design became increasingly abstract in subsequent models; facial features were ultimately eliminated. The sculpture's installation in 1955 elicited outraged protest from conservative groups, who went so far as to picket the sculpture for its abstraction. *The Family Group* survived, but the controversy discouraged commissions for abstract public sculpture in Los Angeles until the late 1960s. Rosenthal designed his subsequent architectural commissions of the decade, all decidedly abstract, for a synagogue, an office building complex, and a corporate headquarters. For *The Family Group*, see Henry J. Seldis, "The Rosenthal Affair," *Arts Digest* 29 (15 February 1955): 15 and Jonathan Marshall, "Something is Rotten in L.A." *Arts Digest* 29 (1 April 1955): 5. See also Sarah Schrank, *Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 90-94.

[371]Oral history of Tony Rosenthal, interviewed by Sevim Fesci, 10 May-29 June 1968, typescript, 27, AAA.

sculpture to nearly three times that height. Lippincott's timing could not have been better, for when Lippincott contacted Rosenthal, the artist was at an impasse in the studio. Whereas many artists had worked with fabricators to realize their sculptures in metal since the early 1960s, Rosenthal still worked directly, cutting solid brass with a band saw and then configuring the pieces into freestanding sculptures. While some critics valued Rosenthal's commitment to craft, the limitations it imposed on his work had become clear to the artist.

In 1965, Rosenthal began work on a series of small cubes made up of one-inch blocks of balsa wood. After experimenting in wood, Rosenthal moved on to bronze and steadily increased the size of the cube, from 5" to about 5'. Rosenthal wanted to make the sculpture even larger but he ran into trouble: "When I got into the larger size it wasn't possible to get… solid metal that size. I welded them, the larger ones. But there were technical difficulties in getting the piece to look like it was completely solid… I wanted the solid feeling all the way through."[372] Rosenthal felt *Ahab* was as large as he wanted it. He proposed that Lippincott instead enlarge the cube that had preoccupied him for the previous two years.

Lippincott Inc. solved the technical problems that accompanied Rosenthal's move to a larger scale and adjusted the artist's plans so the monumental cube would meet requirements for transport and outdoor installation. For example, artist and fabricator established the sculpture's size by considering trucking regulations, which limited the cube's dimensions to 8' by 8' by 8'. Furthermore, the cube was made of Lippincott Inc.'s material of choice, Cor-Ten, rather than the bronze in which Rosenthal had been working.[373] Nevertheless, the sculpture retained the appearance of having been assembled

[372]Ibid. 20.

[373]Rosenthal continued to work on the smaller bronze cubes, showing them at Knoedler Gallery in 1968.

from smaller blocks, similar to the works Rosenthal had executed in his studio. Perhaps the biggest sacrifice Rosenthal had to make was relinquishing his practice of working directly, with the benefit being greater efficiency. According to Rosenthal, "It took three men several months to make the piece" at Lippincott Inc. By comparison, Rosenthal had spent four months in his studio making a work one-third the size, the 5' version of the cube in bronze.[374]

The monumental cube, which Rosenthal called *Alamo*, was already completed when Green invited Rosenthal to show the sculpture in Astor Place for *Sculpture in Environment*.[375] At first, Rosenthal was dissatisfied with the East Village site and felt Lincoln Center or somewhere on Park Avenue would be more appropriate. Indeed, one critic called Astor Place "one of the most unlikely environments for sculpture. It is the junction of several streets filled with trucks and cars, flanked by an odd assortment of old and new buildings." The character of the site, however, arguably contributed to the sculpture's success because of the way the sculpture seemed to transform it: "Almost overnight this sculpture gave a new life, a fresh focus to this ordinarily bleak congery of traffic and buildings. The hippies, the students at Cooper [Union], the neighborhood children, found greatest delight in having this work in their midst."[376]

The main reason for the sculpture's popularity was also an accident. The cube sits on a vertical post attached to a steel plate that is bolted into the ground. Rosenthal assumed he would position the cube and there it would remain, a static object, but as soon

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[374]Len Horowitz, "Art," *East Village Other*, 1-15 January 1968. Bernard M. (Tony) Rosenthal papers, 1954-1980, microfilm reel N69-79, AAA.

[375]The artist's wife, who found the sculpture's imposing size and strength symbolic of the San Antonio mission, assigned the title. Carli Smith, "It's a happy homecoming for the Alamo," *The Daily Plant* (City of New York Parks & Recreation), 22 November 2005, http://www.nycgovparks.org/news/daily-plant?id=19732 (accessed 21 June 2014).

[376]Gibson Danes, "Bernard Rosenthal," *Art International* 12 (20 March 1968): 47.

as the crowd assembled for the enormous sculpture's installation saw that the cube could be turned with relative ease, they made it a kinetic artwork by setting the sculpture in motion. It turned out the cube would spin if pushed with enough force. This minor aspect of its design became a major part of *Alamo*'s significance, lending the cube a participatory quality that has become essential to its meaning. Rosenthal himself marveled at the success of *Alamo*: "To be perfectly honest, the best parts of this piece were those that were not planned. They just happened through audience response."[377]

Alamo was not made specifically for the site at Astor Place, but it soon became an integral part of the urban landscape. The sculpture caught the attention of observers through its "bulk and monumentality," two of Lippard's requirements for good public art, as well as its playful defiance of gravity, with *Alamo* appearing to balance on a point. The sculpture further engaged observers because it could be turned, activated by anyone who happened to pass by. *Alamo* also became a sort of community billboard for the East Village, attracting chalked graffiti and posters. By speaking the "language of the street," it was a perfect expression of Lippard and Kramer's definition of successful public sculpture. Instead of becoming the part that stood for the whole of a renewal project, the symbol or logo for a renewed image of the city, *Alamo* made legible an indistinct part of New York. In Sandler's terms, it gave the East Village an "identity" as a landmark.[378]

In fact, the cube was so popular that Rosenthal made several more in partnership with Lippincott Inc. Rosenthal had been awarded a commission for a sculpture from the University of Michigan in 1965. Debates over the use of the surrounding plaza where it was to be sited and delays in construction of the adjacent buildings had allowed enough

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[377]Rosenthal quoted in Horowitz, "Art."

[378]An index of *Alamo*'s importance to Astor Place is the reaction by residents when it was removed for conservation in 2005. See Colin Moynihan, "The Cube, Restored, Is Back and Turning at Astor Place," *New York Times*, 19 November 2005.

time for Rosenthal's original proposal to be scrapped.[379] Instead, Lippincott Inc. fabricated a second monumental cube in November 1967 for Ann Arbor (Figure 4.3).[380] Building on the success of *Alamo*, Rosenthal engineered the second cube to turn on a pipe driven directly into the plaza. Perhaps for this reason he called the sculpture *Endover*, implying that it appeared to turn end-over-end. Rosenthal also varied the design on the cube's six sides, which distinguishes the cube in Michigan from the one in New York. The art critic for the *Ann Arbor News* compared the cube's arrival in December 1968 with the moon landing, both events akin to "observing the supposedly impossible turn into the unquestionably real," and called *Endover* a "far-out modern sculpture." Even in this early review, however, the sculpture's success seemed assured, based in large part on its participatory quality, "that today is felt to be no small matter."[381]

Rosenthal and Lippincott Inc. also fabricated *Cube in Seven Parts*, which functioned as an exhibition copy during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Figure 4.4). To promote Rosenthal's sculpture and Lippincott Inc., artist and fabricator lent the jointly owned work to numerous temporary exhibitions over the coming years, among them *Sculpture Downtown* in Detroit (1969); *Monumental Art* at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati and *Seven Outside* at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (both 1970); and

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[379]The proposed sculpture was similar to *Megapole* (1965), a sphere made of welded bronze pieces set atop a slender base. For a photo, see Jack Reisman, "Seniors Present 'U' With Valuable Modern Statue," *Michigan Daily* (Ann Arbor), 3 April 1965. Bernard M. (Tony) Rosenthal papers, 1954-1980, microfilm reel N69-79, AAA.

[380]Rosenthal may have originally intended to send *Alamo* to Michigan following the close of *Sculpture in Environment*. See Joanne Nesbit, "Cube story picked up in new book," *University Record* (Univ. of Michigan), 6 November 2000, http://www.ur.umich.edu/0001/Nov06_00/6.htm (accessed 21 June 2014). He was also negotiating to exhibit the cube at the National Collection of Fine Arts (now the Smithsonian American Art Museum) as part of the director's push to site abstract sculpture on the National Mall but the loan never materialized. David W. Scott to Bernard Rosenthal, 7 September 1967, Bernard M. (Tony) Rosenthal papers, 1954-1980, microfilm reel N69-67, AAA. For abstract art on the National Mall, see my chapter 3.

[381]Jean Paul Slusser, "Class Of '65 Does Good Turn," *Ann Arbor (Mich.) News*, 12 January 1969. Bernard M. (Tony) Rosenthal papers, 1954-1980, microfilm reel N69-79, AAA.

Monumental Sculpture at Boston's City Hall Plaza (1971). Like *Sculpture in Environment*, these exhibitions were intended to demonstrate how large-scale sculpture could contribute to urban redevelopment. Several of the shows also allowed museums to engage with the new monumental sculpture by placing large-scale sculpture outside their museum building or by sponsoring its installation elsewhere in the city.

Cube in Seven Parts is a curious object, circulating in exhibitions much like any work of studio art, yet also referring observers to its siblings, *Alamo* and *Endover*, whose success lay in the extent to which they had taken hold in their sites, giving rise to the need for an exhibition copy that could stand in for them elsewhere. None of these sculptures expresses a predetermined message. Instead, each cube becomes meaningful through the viewer's experience of it in relation to its site. So even if Rosenthal's cubes were numbered editions, still they would be very different sculptures, unique through the associations and memories accumulated around them.

Lawrence Alloway considers how outdoor sculptures become meaningful to viewers in his review of the exhibition *Monumental Art* and raises an issue addressed by neither Lippard nor Kramer: iconography. This show was installed inside the Contemporary Arts Center's new building and outside in Fountain Square in downtown Cincinnati. Alloway takes advantage of this opportunity to contrast the two spaces in his review: "In the gallery there is a succession of single objects with an opportunity to sense their autonomy and complexity according to an esthetics of concentrated attention." Gallery and museum foster a space where observers can focus on the work of art without any distractions. In Fountain Square, however, the experience of art depends on circumstances that shift constantly. "Sculpture [must] be seen as part of a network of

divergent communications," Alloway argues, including advertisements, signage, and other visual clutter.[382]

While Kramer characterizes the artists who want to make public sculpture as soapbox orators whose "language of the studio" falls on deaf ears, Alloway focuses less on the artist's intentions than on the responses of observers:

> There is a feedback from the environment to the work of art, not in the sense that the works are physically changed but in the sense that the interpreter's responses are substantially affected. As kids curl up in Clement Meadmore's *Split-Ring* or rotate Bernard Rosenthal's *Cube in Seven Parts*, the sculptures change for the spectator; the objects are set in a network of contingent events.[383]

Unlike works of art displayed in the gallery, a space presumed to be neutral and indeterminate, the experience of outdoor sculpture is subject to an unpredictable set of conditions. Rather than detracting from the experience of art, Alloway sees this as a positive circumstance that activates sculpture for the observer in a meaningful way.

Alloway calls these works "post-iconographical sculpture" and contrasts them with a tradition that made use of a "set of public symbols with a shared, undisputed meaning." "The new monumental art reaches its public by a different route than earlier public art," he writes. "Such works acquire a social meaning from acquisition and public display. Instead of a work beginning with a pre-arranged meaning, it takes on its public role experimentally, after installation."[384] In this way a public art rooted in the studio becomes meaningful, as passersby experience it in relation to its site. Yet Alloway's formulation begs the question: what happens when a contemporary artist draws on traditional iconography in making his work? This was the case with Newman's *Broken Obelisk*.

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[382]Lawrence Alloway, "Monumental Art at Cincinnati," *Arts Magazine* 45 (November 1970): 33.
[383]Ibid.
[384]Ibid. 32.

BARNETT NEWMAN'S *BROKEN OBELISK*

In late September 1967, *Broken Obelisk* was installed for *Sculpture in Environment* on the plaza in front of the Seagram Building in New York—the type of Park Avenue site desired by Rosenthal and the polar opposite of Astor Place (Figure 4.5). Soon after its completion in 1958, William H. Jordy declared, "No American plaza is so uncompromisingly permeated with the spirit of the Renaissance." This was due in part to the plaza's austere formality and emptiness. Jordy writes, "There are no planting boxes, no displays, not even benches… Human figures moving in long diagonals across the pristine, pink granite Seagram slab evoke Giacometti figures. The rows of jets to either side measure the axial progression."[385] In her review of the exhibition, Lippard praises *Broken Obelisk* as "the only example of a first-rate work in a first-rate site." She focuses on the formal qualities of Newman's sculpture to understand the relationship between *Broken Obelisk* and Seagram Plaza:

> It was notable not only because it was noticeable (a necessary prerequisite of public art) and because it was a major work—not only because of its bright orange-rust surface, its twenty-five-foot height or its haughty isolation from traffic and buildings—but because these combined to provide an inescapable impact or 'presence,' an indefinable quality of much recent non-relational work.[386]

The sculpture's bright color, monumental height, and relative isolation on the plaza cohered to make *Broken Obelisk* a singular element of the urban environment. The work punctuated the plaza, interrupting the great expanse of empty space and reorienting the spectator's relationship with the building by providing a reference point closer to human

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[385]William H. Jordy, "Seagram Assessed," *Architectural Review* 124 (December 1958): 376. Seagram architect Mies van der Rohe originally envisioned sculpture for the plaza and even worked with Moore on a proposal, but in the end neither architect nor sculptor was satisfied and the idea was scrapped. The sculptures would not have interrupted the plaza but instead were envisioned for slabs set in front of the fountains on either side of the plaza, at water level.

[386]Lippard, "Bureaucracy," 652.

scale. If Rosenthal's cube was the exhibition's most popular sculpture, then Newman's work garnered the greatest critical acclaim. Its presentation on Park Avenue inspired the eventual acquisition of *Broken Obelisk* by powerful patrons, who used the sculpture's suggestive iconography to their own ends.

Newman is best known as an Abstract Expressionist painter, but he also focused on sculpture towards the end of his career.[387] Nan Rosenthal has argued that several factors encouraged Newman's turn to sculpture, including the successful casting of *Here I* (1950/62) (Figure 4.6); Newman's friendships with sculptors, including Murray, Alexander Liberman, David Smith, and Tony Smith; the sudden importance of American sculpture during the mid-1960s; and "the availability of the means to make it."[388] Newman first traveled to North Haven with Murray to see one of Murray's sculptures then in progress at Lippincott Inc. Newman liked what he saw and soon after approached Donald Lippincott to take on the fabrication of *Broken Obelisk*.[389]

Newman began planning *Broken Obelisk* in the early 1960s, around the time the cast bronze version of *Here I*, his first sculpture, was completed in an edition of two at

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[387]Barnett Newman (1905-1970) studied drawing at the Art Students League in New York and philosophy at the City College of New York, graduating in 1927. He taught art appreciation in public high schools during the Great Depression and shared a studio with Adolph Gottlieb. In the early 1940s Newman stopped painting and was most active as a writer, producing catalogue essays for many exhibitions and eventually becoming an unofficial spokesperson for Abstract Expressionism. In 1946 he organized the debut exhibition at Betty Parsons Gallery, where he had the first solo exhibition of his paintings in 1950. A vertical line or zip set against a chromatic field, large-scale canvases, suggestive titles, and a concern with structuring the act of perception characterize Newman's mature painting style. Critics largely dismissed his work for much of the 1950s, until his 1958 retrospective exhibition at Bennington College in Vermont. For a comprehensive chronology and exhibition history, see Ann Temkin, ed., *Barnett Newman* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art in association with Yale Univ. Press, 2002). For a thorough examination of Newman's sculptures, see Armin Zweite, *Barnett Newman: Paintings, Sculptures, Works on Paper*, trans. John Brogden, ed. Jane Bobko (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 1999).

[388]Nan Rosenthal, "The Sculpture of Barnett Newman," in Melissa Ho, ed., *Reconsidering Barnett Newman* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2005), 118.

[389]Newman met Murray in 1959 at Emma Lake, Saskatchewan, Canada, where Newman led a summer workshop for Canadian artists. Murray subsequently moved to New York and the artists became close friends. Murray also assisted Newman in the casting of *Here I*. For Murray, see Denise Leclerc, *Robert Murray: The Factory as Studio* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1999).

Modern Art Foundry in Astoria, Queens.[390] Newman's design for *Broken Obelisk* originated with a very simple concept: a point-to-point sculpture made up of a pyramid and an inverted obelisk. From the beginning, Newman envisioned a monumental scale for the sculpture; an undated drawing at the Menil Collection includes the estimated size of each element, and puts the sculpture's overall height at 25' or 26' (Figure 4.6). The pyramid appears squat in this drawing, and the obelisk, standing twice the height of the pyramid, is very thin, almost like a pencil. Newman drew a jagged end on the obelisk, and described its condition in the work's title at the top left corner of the page as "broken." Though easy to imagine on paper, Newman's 1963 design proved impossible to realize in three dimensions at a large scale; the sculpture was not erected until 1967. In the intervening years, Newman made two other sculptures fabricated at Treitel-Gratz. *Here II*, Newman's first steel sculpture, was fabricated in 1965 in an edition of two in Cor-Ten. Newman completed *Here III* the following year, making three exemplars of the Cor-Ten and stainless steel sculpture.[391]

Lippincott Inc. succeeded where other firms had failed and fabricated *Broken Obelisk* in an edition of two during the spring of 1967. Its fabrication in Cor-Ten allowed Newman to avoid any consideration of applied color, since the sculpture's surface is oxidized, and it also permitted *Broken Obelisk* to be pieced together so that the interior is

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[390]My account of *Broken Obelisk*'s fabrication is based on Lawrence Alloway, "One Sculpture," *Arts Magazine* 45 (May 1971): 22-24 and Barnett Newman, Letter to the Editor, *Artforum* 6 (March 1968): 4.

[391]In order to situate *Broken Obelisk* within Newman's oeuvre, following is a brief account of his activities during the years between the sculpture's design and execution. In 1962 *Newman-De Kooning* opened at Allan Stone Gallery in New York to critical acclaim, marking a definitive turn in the reception of Newman's work. In 1965, Newman's work was featured in two exhibitions that recognized his contributions to Abstract Expressionism: *The Decisive Years: 1943-1953* at the University of Pennsylvania's Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia and *New York School, The First Generation: Paintings of the 1940s and 1950s* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Newman also participated in the Eighth São Paulo Bienal that year, showing seven paintings and two sculptures (*Here I* and *Here II*). He made his first paintings using the primary colors red, yellow, and blue in 1966. This year also marked the culmination of six years of work on *The Stations of the Cross*, a series of paintings exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum in a solo exhibition.

hollow.[392] The pyramid and obelisk were not welded. Instead, a bar of specially hardened steel and corresponding reinforcements and guides inside the pyramid and obelisk join the two elements. This makes possible the sculpture's disassembly into two parts for transport and reassembly elsewhere, even though *Broken Obelisk* weighs some six thousand pounds.

The factory easily accommodated *Broken Obelisk*'s rise to an overall height of 26'. Perhaps even more important, Lippincott Inc. also allowed Newman to adjust *Broken Obelisk*'s internal proportions. Newman did not simply send a model to Lippincott Inc. for enlargement. Instead, he made adjustments to each of the sculpture's elements on a trial-and-error basis. Newman had constructed cardboard maquettes of the work in his studio, testing the height and overall shape of the pyramid. At Lippincott Inc., the pyramid was fabricated first, and then full-size plywood and cardboard mock-ups of the obelisk were made and adjusted by workers under Newman's direction. These adjustments were formulated according to the sculptor's desires rather than the demands of a particular site. Indeed, *Broken Obelisk*'s perfect internal proportions and carefully considered sense of scale ensured the sculpture could be sited anywhere.[393]

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[392]Newman was an early proponent of Cor-Ten, which he used in *Here II* and *Here III*. Artists embraced Cor-Ten in the 1960s because of its high resistance to corrosion and unique patina—a rich rust color that shades from bright orange to purple-black. The gradual change in coloration is actually produced by a chemical reaction between moisture and copper, along with other elements, in the steel. This thin film of rust, a protective oxide surface, does not continue to scale off once the oxidation stabilizes, usually after two years, but creates a delicate surface.

[393]Besides adjustments to the size of the obelisk in relation to the pyramid, Newman paid close attention to the effects achieved by details added at the top and bottom of the piece. The edges of the base have a rougher appearance than the sculpture's overall finish because they were flame-cut with a torch. This technique created a play of light and shadow that, along with a two-inch gap between the outermost edges of the base and the ground, adds to the impression that the sculpture hovers slightly. Newman also took great care in designing the broken end of the obelisk. He drew lines in chalk directly on the steel plate, which was then cut to create the broken contour at the top of the sculpture. This break, which gives the sculpture its name, adds to the overall impression of a dynamic form rather than two static geometric volumes and corresponds with the rough texture of the sculpture's base. In addition, the edges of the pyramid were ground sharp after welding, while the corners of the obelisk were left alone, giving them a softer appearance.

Whereas Rosenthal's cubes constitute a series, *Broken Obelisk* was envisioned from the start as an edition. Newman had very specific reasons for making two exemplars (a third was fabricated in 1969) and strongly objected to the idea that either was a copy. According to Newman,

> Both sculptures in the edition are originals. They were both made at the same time and at the same place. I drew the necessary cutting lines on both at the same time. We covered the broken top at one and the same time. We did everything else on both pieces at the same time. I would be at a loss to tell which piece of sculpture was finished first. They are identical twins.

Newman's reason for making an edition of two is directly tied to the fabrication process: "I make a point of making an edition of two because I do not believe in the unique piece in sculpture when sculpture is cast or fabricated. The unique piece in sculpture can exist only when one is carving in stone."[394] In fact, there is no original version of *Broken Obelisk*. The three exemplars were not numbered. The sculpture was not made with a template, even as a guide for cutting the obelisk's broken end. Therefore, despite Newman's assertion that fabricated sculpture cannot be unique, each exemplar is indeed one of a kind. The minute differences between each exemplar, however, do not change their status as numbers in an edition. Like an engraved print, *Broken Obelisk* is a multiple original.

The cube's only direct link to the monument's commemorative character is the suggestive title of the former: *Alamo*. With *Broken Obelisk*, Newman took on the monument even more directly. In this regard, it is useful to recall Rosalind Krauss' definition of some (conventional) sculpture as conforming to the "logic of the monument." According to this logic, a sculpture is a commemorative representation. It sits in a particular place and speaks about the meaning or use of that place. It is figurative

[394]Newman, Letter to the Editor, 4.

and vertical, with a pedestal that mediates "between actual site and representational sign."[395] *Broken Obelisk* conforms to none of these criteria. In fact, if we look at *Broken Obelisk* in terms of Krauss' definition, it is, categorically, an anti-monument: it is abstract, has no pedestal, and no place, since the sculpture was not made for any particular site. If it refers to anything, it is the tradition of sculptural monuments, but even that remains ambiguous; the obelisk's inversion can be read as anti-heroic; Newman turns this classic monumental form upside-down. The combination of pyramid and obelisk, one balanced on the other, makes the sculpture a marvel of engineering in the tradition of the monuments referenced by Newman. As the central focus of the sculpture, however, this meeting point also turns *Broken Obelisk* in on itself, a perfect embodiment of modern sculpture's self-referential condition. *Broken Obelisk* even refuses to sit directly on its site; a two-inch gap between the outermost edges of the base and the ground gives the sculpture the appearance that it hovers slightly, as if it will never quite touch down.

Imagine Newman's surprise, then, when Houston patrons John and Dominique de Menil made one exemplar of *Broken Obelisk* into a memorial by dedicating it to the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr., the slain civil rights leader. Lippincott Inc. had given Newman absolute control over the fabrication of *Broken Obelisk* and allowed him to create a sculpture with a carefully considered sense of scale so that it could be sited anywhere. Yet this arrangement arguably gave the artist less control over the siting of the sculpture than commissions like those discussed in the previous chapters. Collaboration between an artist and an architect or patron typically necessitates compromise on both ends of the partnership, from conception to installation of the finished work. The market for monumental sculpture introduced by Lippincott Inc., on the other hand, did not

[395]Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," 279.

guarantee that artists would have any say in how their work was displayed or even permanently sited. As we will see, patrons often consulted artists regarding the design of the site for their work. Nevertheless, the patron had the final word and not the artist, as dramatized by the story of *Broken Obelisk* in Houston.

The City of Houston had been offered a matching grant for the NCA's Sculpture Project in 1967, at the same time as Grand Rapids.[396] Within six months of the NCA's June 1969 deadline, however, the city had neither raised the funds nor selected a site for a sculpture. The Houston Municipal Art Commission (HMAC), which had been charged with administering the grant, turned to the de Menils for help.[397] At first the couple did not offer matching funds but instead wanted to bring Oldenburg to Houston, so he could sketch ideas that could be used for fundraising.[398] Then in March, the de Menils

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[396]It is not clear how Houston came to be considered for the Sculpture Project. Sweeney, then director of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and a member of the NCA, may have recommended that the city apply. In 1966 Sweeney negotiated the installation of a large-scale sculpture by Eduardo Chillida at the MFAH. Because it was installed outside the museum building, Sweeney considered the sculpture a form of public art. See James Johnson Sweeney, *Eduardo Chillida* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966).

[397]Following the September 1961 announcement that Houston would become the home of the Manned Spacecraft Center (now the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center), arts boosters warned that the city would need to balance its achievements in the space race with excellence in the fine arts. To achieve this goal, in 1964 Houston formed its first public body concerned with aesthetics. The HMAC was established as an advisory body to Houston City Council, with fifteen members appointed by the mayor. In anticipation of Lady Bird Johnson's Beautification program, discussed in chapter 3, the wide ranging activities undertaken during the HMAC's first eighteen months included the initiation of annual Environmental Improvement Awards; beautification of a downtown area beneath an elevated freeway; and plans to bring hike and bikeways to Buffalo Bayou, to make an evaluation of the city's architectural heritage, and to establish outdoor advertising controls. The commission also hoped to secure outdoor sculptures for Hobby Airport and the plaza at Jones Hall, Houston's new performing arts center, where Richard Lippold's *Gemini II* (1966) decorates the lobby.

[398]Without further evidence, I am making this assumption based on the fact that their offer did not extend so far as to underwrite the forty-five thousand dollars needed for the commission. Minutes of the Houston Municipal Art Commission, 20 January 1969. Houston Municipal Art Commission Records, RG A33, Box 3 Folder 10: *Geometric Mouse* Research/Historical, HMRC. Oldenburg had visited Houston during the spring of 1968 and gave an informal talk to University of St. Thomas students. See Josef Helfenstein and Lauren Schipsi, eds., *Art and Activism: Projects of John and Dominique de Menil* (Houston: Menil Collection; New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2010), 285. In a letter to the de Menils from Santa Monica dated 26 March 1969, Oldenburg wrote: "I got a chance to feel the place of Houston a bit on Wed am. and will be coming up with some proposals before long, even if the place Houston doesn't want them." Claes Oldenburg – Artwork and correspondence, Dominique de Menil Research Files, MCA.

announced that they would give the city the matching funds for the NCA grant on three conditions: "1. That Barnett Newman be the sculptor and that his work 'Broken Obelisk' be the sculpture. 2. That a nationally recognized landscape architect such as Kevin Roach [sic] or Louis Kahn design the site. 3. That Market Square be the site for the sculpture."[399]

By the late 1960s, the de Menils had been prominent Houston art patrons for twenty-five years. Their unstinting support came with very high and exacting standards, which often resulted in friction between them and the organizations they sponsored. The Sculpture Project would be no exception.[400] The de Menils had fled Europe during World War II and followed the headquarters of Schlumberger, the oil services company founded by Dominique's father and uncle, from France to Houston. There the couple settled permanently in 1944 and began to amass an important art collection.[401] They used their influence to secure loans and even organized exhibitions for the fledgling Contemporary Arts Association (later the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston).[402] In 1956 they commissioned Philip Johnson's master plan for the University of St. Thomas and later underwrote the university's art department, led by their friend Jermayne MacAgy. Following MacAgy's untimely death in 1964, they decided not to proceed with a proposed university art museum. It was then that the de Menils initiated plans for an ecumenical chapel on property they owned in Houston's Montrose neighborhood.

[399]Katherine Wray to Jean [sic] de Menil, 23 May 1969. Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.

[400]John and Dominique de Menil's myriad activities as art collectors, social activists, builders, and educators are chronicled in *Art and Activism*. See also Pamela G. Smart, *Sacred Modern: Faith, Activism, and Aesthetics in the Menil Collection* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2010).

[401]John de Menil joined the International Council of the MoMA in 1954 and in 1962 became a trustee of the museum. In the absence of a formal application, it is possible that Houston was selected for the Sculpture Project directly through the de Menils' relationship with MoMA director D'Harnoncourt, who originated the program.

[402]Their exhibitions at CAA include "Vincent van Gogh" and "Calder-Miró: Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture" (1951), and "Max Ernst" (1952).

Dominique de Menil visited Mark Rothko in New York in the spring of 1964 and asked him to create a cycle of paintings for the chapel; that fall, the de Menils formally engaged Johnson as architect. When the de Menils offered *Broken Obelisk* to the City of Houston, construction of the Rothko Chapel was well underway.[403]

The de Menils had admired *Broken Obelisk* when it was installed on Seagram Plaza for *Sculpture in Environment* and initially considered purchasing the sculpture for the University of St. Thomas but balked at the price.[404] The Sculpture Project would allow them to bring *Broken Obelisk* to Houston while paying just half the sculpture's cost. By making their gift contingent on the purchase of a specific sculpture, the couple deviated from the guidelines set by the NCA for the Sculpture Project, which dictated that a committee of experts would select the artist for each commission. The initial debate over the de Menils' offer did not focus on the sculpture, however, but on the proposed site.

The HMAC concentrated on securing a site in Houston's civic center for the Sculpture Project, where the commissioned work would crown recent construction associated with a new master plan for the area.[405] In choosing Market Square as the site

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[403]When the de Menils sided with Rothko in criticizing certain aspects of Johnson's plans for the chapel, completion of the building was turned over to supervising architect Howard Barnstone and his partner, Eugene Aubry. The most comprehensive source on the Rothko Chapel remains Susan J. Barnes, *The Rothko Chapel: An Act of Faith*, 2nd ed. (Houston: Rothko Chapel, 1996). For the paintings, see Sheldon Nodelman, *The Rothko Chapel Paintings: Origins, Structure, Meaning* (Houston: Menil Collection; Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1997) and David Anfam and Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, *Mark Rothko: The Chapel Commission* (Houston: Menil Collection, 1996).

[404]John de Menil to T.B. [Thomas B.] Hess, 19 November 1967: "Thank you even more for coming out strongly for *Broken Obelisk*. It's beautiful. I thought of buying it for the University of St. Thomas mall. Unfortunately, I couldn't face Barnett's price with my two eyes open." Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.

[405]A proposal from the HMAC to locate Houston's sculpture in Root Square, a rundown property on the fringe of downtown, had raised serious questions for NCA members during its tenth meeting in November 1967. While landscape architect Lawrence Halprin argued eloquently for sculpture as a "generative force" in community redevelopment, Sweeney, the council member most familiar with Houston, viewed the Root Square proposal as merely buttressing real estate speculation and feared the sculpture would be stranded in a sea of empty lots and derelict buildings for decades to come. Sweeney won out, and the proposed site was

for *Broken Obelisk*, the de Menils reoriented the debates regarding sculpture's role in urban renewal, from superblock plazas to historic preservation. Like Astor Place in New York City, Houston's Market Square stood at the center of the city's countercultural enclave, what one writer called a playground for the "peace-and-love generation."[406] It was also the historical center of Houston's government and commerce. Market Square was one of two public squares laid out by John Kirby Allen and Augustus Chapman Allen, the New York real estate developers who founded Houston in 1836.[407] The first permanent city hall was built at Market Square in 1873; this building and two others were subsequently destroyed by fire. The fourth and last city hall to occupy the site was completed in 1904, a monumental Romanesque structure with rusticated stonework and two towers. When the Art Deco office building that currently houses Houston's civic government opened in 1939 in a new civic center, preparations were made to convert the old city hall into a bus terminal. After this building burned in 1960, Market Square became a tree-lined parking lot surrounded by some of Houston's oldest commercial structures.[408] By the end of the decade, an eclectic array of bars, restaurants, nightclubs,

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changed to a block in the civic center. Proceedings, Tenth Meeting of the National Council on the Arts, 3-4 November 1967, National Foundation on Arts and Humanities, microfilm reel 2, Federal Records, LBJ.

[406]Charles Segers, "Taking a Walk on the Wild Side of a Place from the Past," *Magazine of the Houston Post*, 20 May 1984. Since the local newspapers were not originally indexed, the vertical files at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center are an invaluable resource for local history. Vertical Files, Folder H – Market Square, HMRC.

[407]Originally known as Congress Square in the hope that it would become the home of the Republic of Texas' capitol building, by 1841 the block had been renamed, and buildings housing a market and public offices were constructed. The Allen brothers reserved a second public square, located two blocks away, for a county courthouse. The current Harris County Courthouse (Lang & Witchell, 1910) is the fifth to stand in Courthouse Square. My account is largely drawn from David G. McComb, *Houston: A History*, rev. ed. (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981). There are good entries on the City of Houston website, http://www.houstontx.gov/abouthouston/ for city hall and many of the city's parks. For a more general overview of Houston urbanism during the 1960s and 1970s, see "Office Building Boom is Going Nationwide," *Architectural Forum* 118 (May 1963): 114-119; "Cities: Promise and Problems," *Architectural Forum* 133 (July-August 1970): 34; "Supercity," *Architectural Forum* 136 (April 1972): 25-39; Peter C. Papademetriou, "Architecture in Houston—A Heritage and a Challenge" and Joseph W. Santamaria, "Urban Dynamics of Nonzoning," *AIA Journal* 57 (April 1972): 19-27.

[408]Ellen Middlebrook, "Restoration Is Issue On Old City Hall Tract," *Houston Post*, 15 May 1961.

clothing stores, head shops, poster stores, and other small businesses had gradually moved into the historic buildings, making Market Square the centerpiece of a burgeoning entertainment district. Tourists flocked to Market Square and to nearby Allen's Landing, not for its place in Houston's history, but to gawk at the hippies who hung out there.[409]

Given its rich history, the de Menils may have had several reasons for suggesting Market Square as the site for *Broken Obelisk*. Preservation of the Market Square district could have been a factor in their decision, since enhancement of the square would contribute to further investment in the area. As Rosenthal's *Alamo* had proven at Astor Place, large-scale sculpture could contribute to the renewal of a neighborhood without the bulldozer's intervention; in the case of Market Square, perhaps *Broken Obelisk* could also keep the bulldozer at bay. The sculpture would introduce a landmark into the neighborhood and return Market Square to its former status as a focal point for the city. This is not to say, however, that the couple sought to gentrify the Market Square district. Instead, they may have viewed *Broken Obelisk* as a complement to the neighborhood's character. The de Menils wanted *Broken Obelisk* to be seen by the greatest number of people; in Market Square, it would be the centerpiece of a district active both day and night. Furthermore, by suggesting Market Square as a site, the de Menils indicated that they preferred a young, progressive audience for the work. They may have even seen a connection between the spirit of Market Square and the content of *Broken Obelisk*, an anti-monument to match the anti-establishment sentiment that pervaded the area.

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[409]For Market Square during the 1960s, see Marge Crumbaker, "Old Market Square – by day" and George Christian, "Old Market Square – by night," *Tempo* (Houston), 9 June 1968, 7-14, 16, 18, 20-21. Vertical Files, Folder H – Market Square, HMRC. For the hippies at Allen's Landing, see David Beckwith, "Hippies at Allen's Landing An Asset, Says Park Chief," *Houston Chronicle*, 24 July 1967. Vertical Files, Folder H – Hippies, HMRC. See also Greg Jones, "The landing: 1971," *Houston Post*, 14 January 1971, and Catherine Essinger, "Hippie Landing," *Cite* 82 (Summer 2010): 28. Vertical Files, H – Parks – Allens Landing, HMRC. Aubry recalls attending concerts in Market Square area clubs with John de Menil. Telephone conversation with the author, 25 January 2012.

Despite the benefits *Broken Obelisk* undoubtedly would have brought to Market Square, neither the HMAC nor Houston Mayor Louie Welch looked favorably on the proposal. Instead, they encouraged the de Menils to consider a site in Houston's civic center. First established in the 1920s as a centralized complex of buildings dedicated to municipal government, the civic center originally included a public library (1926), music hall and coliseum (1937), and city hall (1939). A 1962 master plan to update the civic center had yielded a new home for the city's symphony orchestra and opera (1966), a convention center (1967), and a new theater (1968). The plan also added two plazas, each one the size of a city block, which were generated by relocating surface parking lots underground (Figure 4.7). In weighing the decision with the HMAC, Welch agreed that a site in the civic center was preferable to Market Square in terms of the city's plans for future development. Welch even offered funds for transportation and installation of the sculpture from city coffers, should a civic center site be selected.[410]

At its regular meeting on March 19, the HMAC approved *Broken Obelisk* as "an acceptable piece of art" and proposed a triangular park adjacent to the new Albert Thomas Convention and Exhibit Hall as the site for the sculpture.[411] Here businessmen and civic officials would observe *Broken Obelisk* on a daily basis as they moved through the civic center; although located only a few blocks away, such an audience was very much removed from the hippies of Market Square. Visitors to the convention center and exhibit hall would also see the sculpture, although the enormous scale of the sprawling complex, with several points of entry and egress, made no guarantee that sculpture and architecture would be closely allied. It was more likely that observers would see *Broken*

[410]Minutes of the Houston Municipal Art Commission, 3 April 1969. Houston Municipal Art Commission Records, RG A33, Box 32 Folder 17: HMAC Minutes, 1966-1969, HMRC.
[411]Katherine Wray to Jean [sic] de Menil, 23 May 1969. Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.

Obelisk from passing cars, since roadways bounded the park on all three sides. The de Menils rejected the convention center site, which was essentially a traffic island. Then, after several downtown tours with Houston's Director of Parks, the couple agreed that *Broken Obelisk* could be situated in front of what was arguably the most important symbolic site in the city: Houston City Hall.

With the new site came a new condition from the de Menils: that *Broken Obelisk* be inscribed, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." The quotation was a substitute for the dedication of Newman's sculpture in memory of King. As John de Menil told his friend and interim NEA director Douglas MacAgy:

> We had wanted the monument dedicated to the memory of Martin Luther King and, revoltingly, this created static. The Mayor told us that recently he had been voted down by the City Council on the resolution commemorating the anniversary of the assassination. We reluctantly substituted the quote from the Bible.[412]

Staunch supporters of civil rights in both their public and private lives, it seems the de Menils could not resist the opportunity afforded by the new site for *Broken Obelisk* to draw attention to an important issue.[413] As part of the Jim Crow South, Houston had integrated its city buildings as late as 1962, a decision driven largely by the competition for the Manned Spacecraft Center. Although the city never experienced the riots that devastated large parts of Washington, D.C., Detroit, Los Angeles, and other cities during the late 1960s, the desegregation of schools was so slow that the federal government had

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[412]John de Menil to Douglas MacAgy, 27 May 1969. Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.

[413] The de Menils' activism includes the Image of the Black in Western Art, a project devoted to investigating the presence and contributions of Africans and African Americans in Western art. The project is now administered by Harvard University. See Alvia J. Wardlaw, "John and Dominique de Menil and the Houston Civil Rights Movement" in *Art and Activism*.

to step in after a decade of stalling on the part of Houston's school board.[414] The de Menils' desire to commemorate King put reformers' efforts in the spotlight.[415]

Though not remarked upon at the time, a *Broken Obelisk* dedicated to King and standing in front of city hall would have been a powerful corrective, given the history of public monuments in Houston. In 1905 Houstonians had dedicated their first public monument, an 8' tall marble statue of Confederate Lieutenant Richard W. "Dick" Dowling (1838-1867), which stood on a twenty-foot granite base in front of the 1904 city hall at Market Square (Figure 4.8). Sculptor Frank Teich depicted Dowling holding binoculars in one hand and a sword in the other, the former a symbol of the Lieutenant's watch over Confederate Fort Griffin, the latter of the battle that ensued when a Union fleet attempted to invade Texas via the Sabine River during the Civil War. Since a Union invasion at the Sabine Pass would have resulted in the city's occupation and potential destruction, many people in Houston—especially Irish-Catholics, who largely paid for their countryman's monument—revered Dowling as the savior of their city.[416] At city hall in 1969, a *Broken Obelisk* dedicated to King would have symbolically replaced a monument to a Civil War soldier with a memorial to a leader in the civil rights movement.

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[414] William Henry Kellar, *Make Haste Slowly: Moderates, Conservatives, and School Desegregation in Houston*, Centennial series of the Association of Former Students, Texas A&M Univ. no. 80 (College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1999).

[415] Acceptance of the dedication to King by Houston City Council was unlikely. Furthermore, the NCA had explicitly forbidden memorials of any sort for the Sculpture Project. Given these obstacles, I wonder if, at this point, the de Menils made a conscious decision to sacrifice the commission to their political statement. After all, their negotiations with the HMAC and city council over their desired Market Square site were at a standstill.

[416] For the battle, see Edward T. Cotham, Jr., *Sabine Pass: The Confederacy's Thermopylae* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2004). A Rice University history class created an excellent website that details the Dowling statue's place within local histories of the Civil War, http://exhibits.library.rice.edu/exhibits/show/dick-dowling. The sculpture is currently located in Houston's Hermann Park.

When the gift was presented to Houston City Council on May 28, 1969, the councilmen seemed baffled by both the inscription, which they suspected was directed at them, and *Broken Obelisk* itself. The Dowling monument had had a recognizable place in the city's history. What it meant to locate an abstract sculpture in front of city hall was less certain. "Whatever it means, the sculpture could be located in a better place than in front of City Hall," councilman Lee McLemore told the *Houston Chronicle*. "People who come down here don't understand these arty objects. We would be better off with a nice drinking fountain out there."[417] A drinking fountain in front of city hall would have an obvious purpose. To Houston City Council, Newman's sculpture would not. Another councilman grumbled: "Is somebody gonna be down there to explain it to the people?"[418] In this case, the proposed inscription did not help to clarify the sculptor's intended meaning but instead led to greater confusion. When one councilman suggested that *Broken Obelisk* be located at Market Square rather than city hall, another redirected the de Menils' criticism of the council towards the denizens of the hippie enclave and quipped: "That inscription sure would fit down there on the square."[419] In the end, the councilmen accepted *Broken Obelisk* with the caveat that another location would have to be found for the sculpture.

John de Menil kept Newman apprised of these developments and sent him copies of the local newspaper articles that covered *Broken Obelisk*. The artist was not consulted on the dedication and responded with restraint to the news. Most disturbing to Newman were the terms of the debate within city council about siting *Broken Obelisk* at city hall. He wrote to de Menil:

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[417]"Sculpture Acceptable To City – but Quote?" *Houston Post*, 29 May 1969.
[418]Ibid.
[419]"Council Accepts Gift Sculpture," *Houston Chronicle*, 28 May 1969.

> I am beginning to wonder whether what is involved is not so much an attack against the Biblical quotes or the Martin Luther King dedication, (I must say there that I would have to admit, were I asked, that I did not have Martin Luther King specifically in mind when I made the piece), but that the attack is perhaps a cover for their hostility towards the sculpture itself. That they feel that a drinking fountain would be more suitable is not without significance… If we are not going to get the right place and the proper community support, I think it would be wrong to give them the piece. I think it would be wrong for my sculpture to become the political football in a politician's holiday.[420]

Newman did not want to see his sculpture at the center of a controversy, its merits debated by politicians rather than curators, critics, and the public. His suggestion, that the de Menils reconsider their offer, was a gesture towards retaining some level of control, particularly in terms of the sculpture's site. Yet it was the dedication that effectively ended the debate over *Broken Obelisk*. As MacAgy reminded the de Menils, NCA funds could not be used to erect a memorial of any kind.[421] The HMAC tried to convince the de Menils to leave out the dedication and requested, "that this sculpture be presented to the people of the City… as an example of pure abstract monumental art of the twentieth century."[422] The de Menils would not budge.

The final skirmish took place on August 20; John de Menil went before Houston City Council and challenged its members to tell him why *Broken Obelisk* should not be dedicated to King. The council avoided a vote by authorizing Welch to find out whether the NCA would allow the grant to be used instead for the creation of a sculpture honoring the Apollo 11 astronauts. The previous Saturday, Houston had greeted the first men to walk on the moon with a ticker-tape parade and a free concert in the Astrodome. In a speech, Welch had announced that he would take a city-owned parking lot in the civic

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[420]Barnett Newman to John de Menil, 8 June 1969. Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.
[421]Douglas MacAgy to John de Menil, 28 July 1969. Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.
[422]Katherine Wray to Mr. and Mrs. Jean [sic] de Menil, 10 June 1969. Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.

center, landscape it, and rename it Tranquillity Park [sic] after the Sea of Tranquility, where the astronauts had landed on the moon. A statue depicting the historic moonwalk would be erected. At the August 20 city council meeting, Welch explained that he had already attempted to contact Felix de Weldon, creator of the famed *Marine Corps War Memorial* (1954) in Washington, D.C.[423] John de Menil accused the council of racism in the *New York Times* and the de Menils purchased *Broken Obelisk* themselves.[424] It was installed in a pool adjacent to the Rothko Chapel in 1970 and dedicated to the memory of King (Figure 4.9). There was no chance the NCA would fund a sculptural monument to Apollo 11 and certainly not one by an Academic sculptor. Houston lost the matching grant.[425]

After the announcement of *Broken Obelisk*'s acceptance, Newman wrote a letter of thanks to the de Menils:

> May I now express my appreciation and my admiration for your great courage… When you honored your gift by dedicating it to the memory of Martin Luther King, you also honored my work by rescuing it from the Philistines, who would have destroyed it as a work of art and made it a political 'thing.' I hope that my sculpture goes beyond only memorial implications. It is concerned with life and I hope that I have transformed its tragic content into a glimpse of the sublime.[426]

The dedication spared Newman's sculpture further debate by an unsympathetic city council. The dedication instead exposed the council's politics. Assigning *Broken Obelisk* a specific meaning limited the sculpture's interpretation and made it ineligible for the Sculpture Project; at the same time, it sharpened the criticality of the inverted obelisk,

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[423]See "Council Turns to Moon In King Sculpture Issue," *Houston Chronicle*, 21 August 1969 and "City seeks services of famous sculptor," *Houston Post*, 21 August 1969.
[424]Fred Ferretti, "Houston Getting a Sculpture After All," *New York Times*, 26 August 1969.
[425]The Apollo 11 monument envisioned by Welch was not realized. When Tranquillity Park opened in 1979, marking the tenth anniversary of the lunar landing, a fountain, distinctive landscape architecture, and a replica of Neil Armstrong's footprint signaled the park's commemorative character.
[426]Barnett Newman to John and Dominique de Menil, 26 August 1969. Rothko Chapel Collection Box 1 Folder 9: Broken Obelisk correspondence, 1967-1987, MCA.

which had made its dedication as a memorial seem appropriate to the de Menils in the first place.[427]

Newman seemed to have little control over the events unfolding in Houston during the summer of 1969, but he took charge of another controversy then brewing in Washington, D.C. *Broken Obelisk* had stood outside the Corcoran Gallery of Art since October 1967, when it was installed there for the exhibition *Scale as Content*. The show had positioned large-scale sculpture in relation to the museum by showing *Broken Obelisk* outside the building and commissioning two other outsized works, both of which were exhibited in the Corcoran's galleries: Tony Smith's *Smoke* (1967) and Ronald Bladen's *The X* (1967).[428] Adjacent to the National Mall, the site afforded spectators an opportunity to see *Broken Obelisk* within view of the Washington Monument. Many in Washington understood *Broken Obelisk* as a commentary on American government during a period when protests on the National Mall were a frequent occurrence, but the controversy at the Corcoran did not have to do with the sculpture's iconography.[429] At this time Newman's friend, James Harithas, was director of the Corcoran. When his relationship with the Corcoran's board of trustees soured, Harithas resigned. Following his resignation, Newman asked that *Broken Obelisk* be returned to him. In July 1969, the

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[427]Paul Richard, "Woe Follows The Obelisk," *Washington Post*, 25 August 1969. Newman's suggestion that *Broken Obelisk* is "concerned with life" and "a glimpse of the sublime" is as close as he came to articulating the sculpture's significance, which has been interpreted by critics and scholars both in terms of Newman's larger output as well as its historical context. For an overview of *Broken Obelisk*'s critical reception, see Stephen Polcari, "Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk*," *Art Journal* 53 (Winter 1994): 48-55.

[428]For the exhibition, see *Scale as Content* (Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1967). See also Andrew Hudson, "Scale as Content," *Artforum* 6 (December 1967): 46-47 and Lucy Lippard, "Escalation in Washington," *Art International* 12 (January 20, 1968): 42-46. I address the exhibition in "Monuments, Landmarks and Blowups: Critical Issues in Sculpture During the Late 1960s," (MA Thesis, Univ. of Texas at Austin, 2005).

[429]John Kelly, "Nixon Fingerprints Missing from Provocative Sculpture's Relocation," *Washington Post*, 7 March 2010.

sculpture was removed under the supervision of Newman and Donald Lippincott, and returned to storage at Lippincott Inc.

The sculpture's dramatic installation was repeated several times over the coming years for temporary exhibitions.[430] By 1971, the three exemplars of *Broken Obelisk* had found permanent homes: at the Rothko Chapel in Houston; at the University of Washington in Seattle; and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The lack of a hierarchy among the three exemplars makes "the sculpture" very difficult to describe. Created without a commission, there is no original *Broken Obelisk* to which the other two refer. Instead, the three exemplars refer to one another in a continuous feedback loop.

Officials in Houston wanted *Broken Obelisk* to mark the latest component of the city's renewed civic center, the Albert Thomas Convention and Exhibit Hall; as discussed below, Houston would soon get its civic center sculpture with Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse*. Yet renewal was not the only engine driving the new monumental sculpture produced at Lippincott Inc., as demonstrated by the sitings of *Broken Obelisk* in Seattle and New York. At MoMA, *Broken Obelisk* became a fixture of the museum's sculpture garden, where it joined works created during the first half of the twentieth century by artists such as Auguste Rodin, Aristide Maillol, Henri Matisse, and Gaston Lachaise, in addition to more recent sculptures by Moore, Calder, Rickey, and David Smith. Sculpture gardens like the one at MoMA proliferated during the mid-twentieth century, enabling museums to collect and display the new monumental sculpture alongside earlier works. In Seattle, *Broken Obelisk* was the first sculpture acquired through the Virginia Wright Fund, a one-million-dollar endowment established to secure major works of art for the Northwest. The sculpture was installed in 1971 in the Central Quadrangle at the

[430] *Broken Obelisk* appeared in *Sculpture Downtown* in Detroit (1969); *New York Painting and Sculpture, 1940-1970* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1969 – 1970); and *Barnett Newman Memorial Exhibition* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1970).

University of Washington (Figure 4.10). There it became a campus landmark, similar to Rosenthal's *Endover* at the University of Michigan.[431] Neither *Broken Obelisk* nor *Endover* was envisioned as part of a larger program, but other universities established art collections during the 1950s and 1960s that turned their campuses into sculpture gardens while making sculpture part of the everyday lives of students and faculty. Whether at a museum or university campus, the sculpture garden model emphasizes large-scale sculpture's status as an art object rather than its capacity to establish significant ties with its site as a landmark.

CLAES OLDENBURG'S *GEOMETRIC MOUSE*

With its wry commentary on the making of public sculpture during the late 1960s, *Geometric Mouse* marks an end point in the trajectory that this dissertation describes. Oldenburg used a personal symbol for the sculpture, aping both the branding practices of corporations like Walt Disney Enterprises and the trademark sculptures of artists like Calder, whose instantly recognizable style was as desirable to communities like Grand Rapids as the sculpture's anticipated benefits to the urban environment. By creating the work in five different sizes, Oldenburg demonstrated his trademark's flexibility and also tested the concept of the blowup through a design that seemed to have no inherent scale. Finally, in making a single work in a range of materials—from steel to cardboard— and varied edition sizes—from a unique large-scale version to a small-scale multiple produced in an unlimited edition—Oldenburg probed what it means for a sculpture to be

[431]For *Broken Obelisk* in Seattle, see Harold Rosenberg, *Barnett Newman:* Broken Obelisk *and Other Sculptures*, Index of art in the Pacific Northwest no. 2 (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1971), with a dedication by Virginia Wright. Wright recounts how she first saw *Broken Obelisk* in New York City at Seagram Plaza. A friend of Newman's, she discussed acquiring the sculpture for Seattle before the artist's death in 1970. Newman's widow, Annalee, approved the site at UW's Central Quadrangle. Wright writes, "All his life Barney retained the virtues that are associated with youth—vitality, idealism, and enthusiasm. It is more than a little appropriate that his surrogate, this great example of monumental art, should stand where so many young people will pass—the young people he adored and championed."

public, combining the democratic spirit of the multiple with the supposed openness and accessibility of public art.

Just as *Broken Obelisk* was installed on Seagram Plaza, and Rosenthal's *Alamo* took its initial spin at Astor Place, Oldenburg was planning his first outdoor work of art for *Sculpture in Environment*, a performance that took place on the day the exhibition opened. In his early public sculptures, Oldenburg criticized the tradition of civic monuments, asking what it meant to realize a public work of art during the late 1960s.[432] Rather than erect a version of one of the fantastic monument proposals for which he had become known, the artist chose instead to make a more conceptual work. For *Placid Civic Monument* or *Hole*, as it is sometimes called, Oldenburg hired two gravediggers to excavate an area of ground six feet long and three feet wide to a depth of six feet. He sited *Hole* in Central Park, in relation to both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Cleopatra's Needle, one of a pair of obelisks originally erected in the Egyptian city of Heliopolis. After a lunch break, the workers shoveled the dirt back into the hole and then raked its surface (Figure 4.11).[433]

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[432]Claes Oldenburg (b. 1929) studied English literature at Yale College and later studied art at the Art Institute of Chicago. He moved to New York City in 1956 and began exhibiting at the Judson Gallery in 1959, where he installed his first environment, *The Street*, and mounted his first performance, *Snapshots from the City*, in 1960. Oldenburg next mounted *The Store* (1961-62), another environment installed in a storefront on the Lower East Side, while continuing to orchestrate performances that relate to contemporary Happenings. He showed his first large-scale soft sculptures in a solo exhibition at the Green Gallery in 1962. Oldenburg was included in "New Realists" at the Sidney Janis Gallery, which he joined the following year. For Oldenburg in the 1960s, see Achim Hochdörfer with Barbara Schröder, eds., *Claes Oldenburg: The Sixties* (New York: DelMonico Books/Prestel; Wein: Mumok, 2012); Ellen H. Johnson, *Claes Oldenburg* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971); Barbara Haskell, *Claes Oldenburg: Object into Monument* (Pasadena, Calif.: Pasadena Art Museum, 1971); and Barbara Rose, *Claes Oldenburg* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970). For a more comprehensive overview of the artist's career, see *Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1995). For critical essays, see Nadja Rottner, ed., *Claes Oldenburg* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012).

[433]For *Hole*, see Suzaan Boettger, "A Found Weekend, 1967: Public Sculpture and Anti-Monuments," *Art in America* 89 (January 2001): 80-85, 125.

Oldenburg had been making drawings of proposed monuments, some labeled "feasible" and others "impossible," since 1965. In these drawings, Oldenburg inserted everyday objects into the urban environment so they often appeared colossal.[434] He described the process of proposing monuments as "composing with a city," and often envisioned monuments for specific locations.[435] Indeed, of the three sculptors considered in this chapter, Oldenburg comes closest to marrying the concerns of art and the monument. Barbara Haskell writes, "[The impossible monument drawings] function as a concentrated symbol, defining places by condensing their meaning into objects which may refer to the physical nature of the places… the emotions and history of the places, the inhabitant's social habits and styles."[436] For *Sculpture in Environment*, Oldenburg considered burying a group of his impossible monument drawings in a capsule, reasoning that they could be unearthed at some later date when they had become feasible, but decided instead to bury nothing.[437]

To write about any of Oldenburg's sculptures is to dive into a mass of layered symbols and meanings; *Hole* is no exception. In his notebooks, Oldenburg called *Hole* an "underground sculpture," an "environmental sculpture," and an "event."[438] The work plays on the title of the exhibition *Sculpture in Environment* by being literally in or of the environment—that is, dirt—and a film of the event won Oldenburg a place in the Dwan Gallery's *Earthworks* exhibition the following year. Oldenburg wanted the process of working with city officials to be part of the artwork, calling it "an aesthetic event turning

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[434]See *Claes Oldenburg, Proposals for Monuments and Buildings, 1965-69* (Chicago: Big Table Publishing Co., 1969).
[435]Oldenburg, "Ball Cock (for Thames)," in Haskell, *Object into Monument*, 34.
[436]"Claes Oldenburg," in Haskell, *Object into Monument*, 10.
[437]Oldenburg, "Hole" in Haskell, *Object into Monument*, 62.
[438]Ibid. 60.

the mechanism of the city into aesthetics."[439] In this sense, *Hole* seems an exercise in futility; he wrote, "The sculpture is placid—it lies down and looks up at the clouds, or it stands and looks at the grass, or it hides its brains like an ostrich."[440] It is also infinitely replicable, an idea that did not catch on but one that Oldenburg appreciated. He considered a "movement of 'grave' digging as protest," and added, "[a] grave is a perfect (anti) war monument, like saying no more."[441] Oldenburg had asked horticultural diggers to perform the work but they turned him down. As the artist himself acknowledged, the gravediggers made associations with burial unavoidable. It is unlikely anyone could have read about the work, which is how most people experienced it, even in 1967, without thinking about the war in Vietnam.

Soon after this reflection on the impossibility of making a modern monument, Oldenburg embarked on his first monumental sculptures with Lippincott Inc. The partnership, which would come to shape the careers of both artist and fabricator, began with Oldenburg's first fabricated steel sculpture, *Lipstick with Stroke Attached (for M.M.)* (1967-71), realized at Lippincott Inc. and exhibited in December 1967 at Sidney Janis Gallery in a show dedicated to Marilyn Monroe.[442] Over the next several years, Oldenburg experimented with a variety of processes for fabricating sculpture at Lippincott Inc. He also developed an idiosyncratic "system of iconography" that informed the early sculptures he realized in partnership with Lippincott and Everett. In contrast with the "large-scale projects" Oldenburg developed for specific sites in

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[439]Ibid. 61.
[440]Ibid.
[441]Ibid. 62.
[442]In 1977, the critic Nancy Foote observed, "The decision to collaborate with Lippincott may prove to be a more crucial turning point in Oldenburg's art than has yet been acknowledged," a statement certainly borne out by the artist's subsequent work. See Foote, "Oldenburg's Monuments to the Sixties," *Artforum* 15 (January 1977): 55.

collaboration with his second wife, the curator Coosje van Bruggen, his "sited works," which include *Geometric Mouse*, function less like traditional monuments and more like objects that might be displayed in a gallery or museum. The partnership with Lippincott Inc. facilitated the realization of these sculptures and paved the way for the large-scale projects for which Oldenburg is known.[443]

Oldenburg had long relied on the labor of others to realize his work; his first wife, Patty Mucha, sewed most of the artist's soft sculptures.[444] His initiation into professional fabrication occurred in 1963-64, when he moved to Los Angeles and made *Bedroom Ensemble* (1963-69), a large-scale tableau.[445] Oldenburg's interest in using industrial methods was expressed in large-scale works as well as small-scale sculptures; in California, he also made his first multiples, the *California Ray Guns* (1963-64), which were produced with the same vacuum-forming technique used to make plastic toys.

During the second half of the 1960s, Oldenburg expressed his growing fascination with industrial technology and fabrication through the production of multiples. Multiples are small sculptures produced in relatively large editions that became popular among artists during the mid-1960s.[446] Indeed, Oldenburg's first commercial editions, the

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[443]These categories are somewhat imprecise; however, they help me to periodize Oldenburg's large-scale sculptures and to highlight the unique aspects of his early collaboration with Lippincott Inc. For example, *Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks* (1969), is often considered to be Oldenburg's first large-scale project, even though it pre-dates his collaboration with van Bruggen. For the two categories and related works, see David Platzker, "Selected Exhibition History, with Large-Scale Projects and Sited Works," in *Anthology*, 553-559. The best source on Oldenburg's early work with Lippincott Inc. is *Oldenburg: Six Themes* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1975). For the large-scale projects, see *Claes Oldenburg: Large-Scale Projects, 1977-1980* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980) and *Claes Oldenburg, Coosje van Bruggen: Large-Scale Projects* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1994).

[444]See Patty Mucha, "Soft Sculpture Sunshine," in Sid Sachs and Kalliopi Minioudaki, eds., *Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists, 1958-1968* (Philadelphia: Univ. of the Arts; New York: Abbeville Press, 2010), 144-159.

[445]Ann Goldstein, "Claes Oldenburg," in Goldstein, *A Minimal Future? Art as Object, 1958-1958* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), 312-317.

[446]Stimulated by George Maciunas' Fluxus editions, the popularity of multiples spread with the establishment of firms that produced them, such as Multiples Inc. Thomas Lawson cites the experience of operating *The Store* as foundational for Oldenburg's multiples, see Lawson, "Candies and Other Comforts:

painted cast resin *Baked Potato* (1966) and the Plexiglas relief *Tea Bag* (1966), appeared in portfolios along with works by other artists.[447] Yet for Oldenburg, multiples were primarily an outlet for experimentation with unfamiliar materials and processes. The best example of this is *Profile Airflow* (1969), a project that Oldenburg has characterized as paralleling "the American inventor's adventure," (Figure 4.12).[448] The Chrysler Airflow was the first streamlined car and a subject of Oldenburg's work during the mid-1960s. For the multiple, his second edition with Gemini G.E.L. of Los Angeles, Oldenburg envisioned a relief suspended over an image.[449] To meet the artist's specifications for a transparent relief "of a consistency like flesh," Ken Tyler of Gemini sought collaborators in California industry, eventually working with a manufacturer of polyurethane.[450] During this "technological period," Oldenburg says:

> I thought of myself more or less as being a person without any basic skills, only a thinker, so that all of the skills lay outside of me in a factory somewhere, and all I had to do was to figure out ways of galvanizing these people into doing something. I had to give them some sort of object that they could identify with and be interested in then all sorts of interesting processes would begin.[451]

An Erotics of Care," in *Claes Oldenburg: Multiples in Retrospect, 1964-1990* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1991).

[447]Oldenburg created *Baked Potato* for *7 Objects in a Box* (1966, edition of 75), which also included multiples by Allan D'Arcangelo, Jim Dine, Roy Lichtenstein, George Segal, Andy Warhol, and Tom Wesselmann. Tanglewood Press published the portfolio. Oldenburg created *Tea Bag* for *4 on Plexiglas* (1966, edition of 125), which also included multiples by Phillip Guston, Newman, and Larry Rivers. The portfolio was published by Multiples Inc. *Baked Potato* and *Tea Bag* were both fabricated by Knickerbocker Machine & Foundry Inc., New York.

[448]Claes Oldenburg, interviewed by John Loring, "Oldenburg On Multiples," *Arts Magazine* 48 (May 1974): 44.

[449]Oldenburg's first project with Gemini was *Notes*, a portfolio of lithographs that was published in 1968. For Gemini, see Ruth Fine, *Gemini G.E.L.: Art and Collaboration* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; New York: Abbeville Press, 1984).

[450]When the first group of reliefs began to discolor, they were returned and remade in a manner Oldenburg compares to an automobile recall. A successful lawsuit was brought against the supplier of chemical ingredients. According to Oldenburg, "it was an acting out or re-enactment of non-art activity that fascinated me, to make-believe that I was really creating a new car or something like that." See "Oldenburg on Multiples," 44.

[451]Ibid. 43. Oldenburg also views the multiple as a way of "coming to grips with urban surroundings," which he characterizes as being defined by new technologies: "The fact that you are surrounded by

Oldenburg has described his multiples as "the sculptor's solution to making a print," democratizing ownership of his work.[452] Yet scale is involved here, too, as Oldenburg has pointed out. His interest lies in the "structure of multiplication and quantity, in quantity as scale."[453] By collaborating with fabricators to produce multiples, Oldenburg enlarged the scale of his work, creating objects that make up for their small size with the possibility of increased distribution and circulation.

The year 1969, when Oldenburg completed the *Profile Airflow*, marked a significant "period of technological expansion" for the artist that coincided with the production of his earliest monumental sculptures, including *Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks* and *Geometric Mouse*.[454] The challenges of large scale and complex engineering faced by Rosenthal and Newman were compounded in the case of Oldenburg, who had envisioned works that could not simply be assembled from cut steel welded to create simple geometric forms. In an interview, Oldenburg explained: "I have to decide whether I really want to convert my fantasy to real projects, and on what terms this can be done. One problem is that the shape of my objects makes it harder to build

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machinery all the time, and that in everything you do there's something technological being done to you and how you can personalize that or relate to it… That's what goes on all through the creation of the multiples is overcoming the machine or getting used to the machine or living with the machine; adapting it, making it less hostile or distant." Ibid. 45.

[452]Oldenburg, "Baked Potato, Tea Bag," in *Multiples in Retrospect*, 34.

[453]Claes Oldenburg, interviewed by Judith Goldman, "Sort of a Commercial for Objects," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 2 (January-February 1976): 118.

[454]Marla Prather, "Claes Oldenburg: A Biographical Overview," in *Anthology*, 6. *Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks* was erected in Beinecke Plaza at Yale University in May 1969. Commissioned by a group of students and faculty, the sculpture of a lipstick mounted vertically on a tank chassis was presented to Yale as a gift and installed between a World War I memorial and the president's office, without university approval. Oldenburg envisioned the Yale *Lipstick* as a podium, with a tip that would inflate to announce new speakers. Following its installation, *Lipstick* was vandalized almost immediately, and then permitted to deteriorate. The sculpture remained in the plaza for ten months, until Oldenburg had it removed. He had *Lipstick* remade for permanent installation at Yale's Morse College in 1974. For more on *Lipstick* at Yale, see Tom Williams, "Lipstick Ascending: Claes Oldenburg in New Haven in 1969," *Grey Room* 31 (Spring 2008): 116-144. See also Katherine Smith, "The Public Positions of Claes Oldenburg's Objects in the 1960s," *Public Art Dialogue* 1 (March 2011): 25-52.

them than if they had abstract forms like cubes or cones."[455] In search of a solution to this problem, Oldenburg established a studio in North Haven, Connecticut, close to the fabricator Lippincott Inc. He also traveled frequently to Los Angeles to participate in the Art and Technology program, established in 1967 by Maurice Tuchman at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The program matched artists with companies that agreed to provide whatever workspace, equipment, materials, and technical assistance the artist might need to complete an agreed-upon project. It grew out of a belief that artists would benefit from access to new technologies, and that artist residencies had great potential to increase corporate patronage of the arts. Initially skeptical, Oldenburg took a pragmatic approach to the program.[456] He explained, "[F]irst of all I had to ask myself what is it in my work that requires technological assistance on the scale that this program will give me."[457] Tuchman matched Oldenburg with Disney, the home of Mickey Mouse—long an object of fascination for the artist—as well as the sophisticated animatronics that had made Disneyland a global attraction. It was hoped that the corporation's theme park division could somehow help Oldenburg make one of his fantastic monuments a reality.

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[455]He continues, "Tony Smith, the sculptor, for example, works in simple geometric forms; the great advantage he's got is that he can enlarge the basically simple form of the cube in much the same way a building's form can be expanded and enlarged." He also worried about subject matter, saying, "I was afraid that what is lyrical and believable in an imaginary form might be banal and unnecessary in fact. A 50 foot puppy dog or a 650 foot teddy bear might be merely a painful eyesore, very unpoetic." See Claes Oldenburg, interviewed by Paul Carroll, "The Poetry of Scale: Interview with Claes Oldenburg," in *Proposals for Monuments and Buildings, 1965-69*, 26-27.

[456]Oldenburg told the *New York Times*, "As far as I'm concerned, the Yellow Pages provide enough technology for me." Oldenburg quoted in Maurice Tuchman, "Claes Oldenburg," in Tuchman, *Art & Technology: A Report on the Art & Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967-1971* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1971), 242. See also Holly Crawford, "Temporary Bedfellows: Claes Oldenburg, Maurice Tuchman and Disney," in Holly Crawford, ed., *Artistic Bedfellows: Histories, Theories and Conversations in Collaborative Art Practices* (Lanham, Maryland: Univ. Press of America, 2008), 187-98, and Christopher R. De Fay, "Art, Enterprise, and Collaboration: Richard Serra, Robert Irwin, James Turrell, and Claes Oldenburg at the Art and Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967-1971" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan, 2005).

[457]Ibid. 242.

Oldenburg visited Disney's workshops in November 1968, and during the first half of 1969 traveled frequently to southern California, where he developed two proposals, both of which involved animatronics. Oldenburg envisioned *Giant Ice Bag* (1969-70) as an outdoor sculpture that rested on the ground, with a pink vinyl skin topped by a cap that would slowly turn, telescope up and down, and tilt, similar to "a searchlight at a Hollywood opening."[458] In addition, he proposed a *Theater of Objects*, also known as *Oldenburg's Ride*, which would feature a group of mechanical sculptures enclosed in a large amphitheater, similar to the rides at Disneyland. For the proposal, Oldenburg drew on a group of kinetic objects he had contemplated several years earlier, including "a giant toothpaste tube, which rises and falls, and is raised by the paste"; "a pie case, in which pies would gradually disappear as if they were being eaten, and then be reassembled"; and "a 'chocolate earthquake' made of giant chocolate bars, which would shift precariously, crack open, and settle back."[459] When Disney dropped out of the program due to the high cost of realizing any of Oldenburg's proposals, Tyler stepped in and helped bring the 18' *Giant Ice Bag* to fruition (Figure 4.13).[460] It was included in the New Arts exhibition, which the Art and Technology Program organized for the United States Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan.[461] If Oldenburg's experience at Disney confirmed his suspicions about collaborating with corporations, then it also may have helped to

[458]Ibid. 250.

[459]Ibid. 244.

[460]Eventually Gemini produced *Giant Ice Bag* at three scales. The 18' bag became Scale A, which is unique. In 1971 Gemini released Scale B (edition 25), with a 4' diameter bag, and Scale C (edition 4), with a 12' diameter bag.

[461]Given the difficulty of realizing the project, *Giant Ice Bag* could also be read as symbolizing the "giant headache" brought on by art and technology collaborations. For more on the problems associated with the Art and Technology program, see Anne Collins Goodyear, "From Technophilia to Technophobia: The Impact of the Vietnam War on the Reception of "Art and Technology," *Leonardo* 41:2 (2008): 169-73.

cement his partnerships with Gemini G.E.L. and Lippincott Inc., the two firms that eventually produced the five scales of his *Geometric Mouse*.

The Geometric Mouse is made up of a square and two circles, with a more organic appendage that Oldenburg identified as "the nose." Lippincott Inc. fabricated the first *Geometric Mouse – Scale A* for inclusion in Oldenburg's retrospective exhibition at the MoMA, which opened in September 1969 (Figure 4.14). The sculpture's simple design addressed the problems of form and materials Oldenburg had confronted with *Giant Ice Bag* and *Lipstick*, enabling *Geometric Mouse* to be fabricated in steel and sited permanently outdoors. Yet the mouse subject had occupied the artist for quite some time. He first used it in studies for a poster for his 1963 solo exhibition at Dwan Gallery in Los Angeles, drawing explicitly on Disney's cartoon character, Mickey Mouse. Next he combined the head of a mouse with the profile of a movie camera in masks worn by performers in *Moveyhouse* in 1965. The following year, the mask became the basis of Oldenburg's plan for "a museum building in the shape of a 'Geometric Mouse'."[462] It also appeared on the letterhead Oldenburg printed for correspondence related to his 1966 solo exhibition at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and then served as a logo for the MoMA retrospective. Banners hung outside the museum announcing the exhibition; they were the soft counterparts to the hard *Geometric Mouse* sculpture exhibited in the MoMA sculpture garden.

The Mouse proliferated through announcements for the traveling exhibition and circulated with the movement of both printed graphic images and works of art. Its geometric simplicity made the Mouse legible as a logo and easy to fabricate in steel. Eventually, Oldenburg formulated the Mouse as an exercise in scale, creating the

[462]Maartje Oldenburg, "Chronology," in *The Sixties*, 292.

sculpture in five different sizes defined by the diameter of the ear, from 6" up to 9'. Between 1969 and 1971, the first three versions of *Geometric Mouse – Scale A* were fabricated, each acting as an advertisement for the next.[463] In 1971, Oldenburg introduced the possibility of individual ownership of the Mouse with the production of Scale D, an unlimited edition in cardboard, and Scale C, a tabletop model in aluminum with an edition of 125, both realized at Gemini (Figure 4.15). Lippincott produced Scale B, an aluminum and brass version in an edition of eighteen, and Scale X, the largest Mouse, which is unique.[464] Oldenburg claims, "The group may be considered one piece in which many people own shares," similar to corporate stock, but the meaning of the Mouse changes at each scale, and through the adventures of each individual member of the Mouse family.[465]

Like *Hole*, *Geometric Mouse* comments on the history of sculptural monuments and more recent sculpture. Works on display in the Lippincott Inc. sculpture field were crucial for Oldenburg, who has described the influence of works in progress at Lippincott on his own sculpture, including *Geometric Mouse*:

> [T]he Marilyn Monroe Lipstick 'thinks' of the tilted planes of Bob Murray, which were much in evidence, and some other Ellsworth Kelly planes, though I put 'eyes' in the walls—windows, when it came to the Geometric Mouse. The Geometric Mouse pays its respects to Calder and to Smith, as well. The Yale Lipstick is, among other things, a variation on Newman's Broken Obelisk—all three obelisks were then on the premises. It is also a fact that the name Lippincott made me favor the lipstick subject.[466]

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[463]All six had entered public collections by 1975: 1/6 Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY; 2/6 Meadows Museum, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX; 3/6 Private collection, then in 1975 purchased by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; 4/6 Moderna Museet, Stockholm; 5/6 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; 6/6 Museum of Modern Art, New York.

[464]The edition size for each "scale" decreases as the sculpture gets larger.

[465]Oldenburg, "Geometric Mouse," in Haskell, *Object into Monument*, 110.

[466]Oldenburg, "Lipstick," in Haskell, *Object into Monument*, 95.

In 1968, Lippincott Inc. reproduced the head of an Easter Island moai in a full-size edition for the International Fund for Monuments. One of these moai was exhibited on the plaza of the Seagram Building, just as *Broken Obelisk* had been. The 6' diameter ear of *Geometric Mouse – Scale A* is based on this sculpture, two casts of which sat for a time outside of the Lippincott Inc. shed. *Geometric Mouse* also refers to another famous sculpture of a head, Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse*, which is just one letter away from being a mouse. The monumental *Geometric Mouse*'s bright color and geometric steel plate suggest more recent monumental sculpture as well, including Calder's *La Grande Vitesse*, the first successful commission of the NCA's Sculpture Project, installed in Grand Rapids in June 1969.[467]

Geometric Mouse is arguably the most self-reflexive of Oldenburg's early public art projects for the ways that it reveals the stakes of making public sculpture circa 1970. As a blown-up version of Oldenburg's personal logo, *Geometric Mouse* plays on the signature style of modern masters like Calder, whose abstract monumental sculptures appeared all over the world during the 1960s and 1970s. Calder's success in winning commissions like the one in Grand Rapids was rooted in part in his production not only of a reliable product, but also a recognizable one. Every stabile by Calder lends prestige to its owner through association with the artist's fame; each Calder stabile is also an advertisement for the artist. Both processes rely on the ability of observers to recognize Calder's work, making each sculpture a "Calder" as much as it is a work of art. With *Geometric Mouse*, Oldenburg uses his personal symbol to ape this process, showing how certain artists have become brands.

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[467]Originally the Houston Mouse was painted bright orange. At Oldenburg's request, it was painted OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) red during conservation in 1984.

Geometric Mouse also reflects on what it means for a sculpture to be public, both in terms of its siting as well as its circulation as an image. Oldenburg participated in a 1969 lawsuit that challenged the City of Chicago's copyright of the untitled sculpture commissioned from Pablo Picasso and erected two years earlier in the Chicago Civic Center. For the lawsuit, he made *Soft Version of the Maquette for a Monument Donated to Chicago by Pablo Picasso* (1969), a copy of the maquette for the sculpture (Figure 4.16). Picasso's maquette was key for the prosecution's argument, which focused on a copyright notice that had been affixed to the rear base of the sculpture in the civic center just days before the dedication. With this notice, the Public Building Commission of Chicago asserted its right to require a license for commercial use of the sculpture's image, with a schedule of fees. It also aimed to protect the sculpture by ensuring the quality and tastefulness of reproductions. A copyright notice had never been affixed to the maquette, however; in 1970, a federal judge ruled that since the sculpture was a copy of the maquette and the maquette had never been copyrighted, the city had no right to copyright protection.[468] Oldenburg's *Soft Picasso* affirmed that the civic center sculpture had been given freely to the people of Chicago and was in the public domain. Indeed, the multiplication of its image through postcards and cufflinks, trinkets and tchotchkes, and even artworks by other artists, is one way that a sculpture like the Chicago Picasso becomes public. By making multiplicity part of his work, Oldenburg himself supplied the souvenirs for *Geometric Mouse* with the small-scale, unlimited edition produced at Gemini.

Finally, *Geometric Mouse* lays bare the limits of the iconographic inventory available to artists in an increasingly corporate consumer society. By drawing on Mickey

[468]For the lawsuit, see Stratton, "Chicago Picasso".

Mouse, the logo of Disney as well as a popular cartoon character, Oldenburg drives home questions soon taken up by contemporary critics of public sculpture. In 1972, the year after Lippincott Inc. fabricated Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse, Scale X – Red*, Alloway published "The Public Sculpture Problem." In this provocatively titled article, the critic surveys developments in the field of public sculpture during the previous few years. According to Alloway, "The nineteenth century closed the tradition of public sculpture and the twentieth has not established one." The reasons for this have to do with the lack of availability of a shared iconography. Artists working in the nineteenth century had a store of signs and symbols on which to draw. These signs were rooted in literary sources rather than artistic ones, making them legible to a broad public. For artists working in the twentieth century, this sort of shared iconography poses a problem. Alloway echoes Aline Saarinen when he writes,

> What we have now is a cluster of public arts that are not in the hands of sculptors or painters at all. Obviously television, the movies, advertising, packaging, ceremonies, peer-group games constitute a set of public arts, though characterized by continuous flow and replacement rather than by monumentality. Popular culture has created an inventory of signs and themes, but it is an unstoppable flow of variants rather than a succession of classic points. Hence it does not help a sculptor working for a public site.

He adds, "Mickey Mouse in concrete or fibreglass is no… solution to the problem of public sculpture… If an artist takes a sign from an existing store and displaces it by transformation we are entitled to ask what the gain is."[469] With *Geometric Mouse*, Oldenburg seems to ask: if the iconographic inventory used by artists up to the nineteenth century was exhausted, making even Welch's astronaut monument in Houston impossible, where could the artist turn for signs and symbols that would communicate with a broad public? A central question of Pop art, the answer for artists like Oldenburg,

[469]Lawrence Alloway, "The Public Sculpture Problem," *Studio International* 184 (October 1972): 123.

Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein was the popular culture of advertising, comic strips, film, and television. The Houston mouse would test what might happen when this strategy was taken out of the studio and applied to public sculpture.

Yet in making *Geometric Mouse*, Oldenburg did not just tap a pop cultural icon for a public monument. It is no accident that *Geometric Mouse* is the sculpture Oldenburg chose as his personal symbol, the one that he chose to reproduce at so many different sizes and in different media, and the one that he made into a public monument. In so doing, he simultaneously drew on and played with with the corporate branding practices of global conglomerates like Disney. What is more, Oldenburg anticipated the fate of the Grand Rapids Calder, which quite literally became the trademark for Grand Rapids. It remained to be seen, however, whether *Geometric Mouse* could do the same in Houston.

Finding an appropriate site in Houston had been a problem with *Broken Obelisk*, and this was the official excuse for the failure of the commission, not the sculpture's provocative iconography or the dedication to King. In contrast, the story of how Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse* came to Houston begins with the site. While plans continued for Tranquillity Park, including suggestions that the city pursue first Noguchi and then Picasso for a sculpture, the architects S.I. Morris and Eugene Aubry engaged in the long process of design and construction for a new library in Houston's civic center.[470] The 1926 library building had become inadequate for the collection of a growing metropolitan center. A new library would rise on the site of a parking lot adjacent to the old library building, which would become an archive and study center. Aubry put the parking in an underground garage and designed a six-story octagonal building faced in granite, with window walls intended to dissolve the boundary between interior and

[470]For Tranquillity Park, see Minutes of the Houston Municipal Art Commission, Houston Municipal Art Commission Records, RG A33, Box 32, HMRC.

exterior space and to encourage people to enter the building. Like the Rothko Chapel, which Aubry helped to complete, the library plan is based on the centralized building designs of the Renaissance. This allusion was intended to connote the monumentality achieved by these Renaissance buildings, which became centers of civic engagement. The architects hoped that the library's monumentality and modern design would form a bridge between the surviving old buildings of Houston's downtown—which at this point included the 1939 Houston City Hall—and a group of new office towers and hotels—the Hyatt Regency Houston, Allen Center, and Shell Plaza—all of which had been completed since 1970. The plaza was intended to extend the library's programming and outreach into the community, along the lines of an Italian Renaissance piazza. As the building neared completion in the fall of 1974, the architects turned their attention to a sculpture that would serve as a focal point for the library plaza and fulfill the dream of a monumental sculpture for Houston's civic center.[471]

A few new additions had been made to Houston's monumental landscape outside the civic center since 1969. The University of Houston had led the way with its percent for art program. Established in 1966, the program enabled the university to bring more than twenty important works to its campuses within the program's first decade, including two works by Lippincott artists: Menashe Kadishman's *Om* (1969) and Meadmore's *Split Level* (1971). The developers of Allen Center had invited none other than Clement Greenberg to select one of six proposed sculptures for the complex; Peter Reginato's *High Plains Drifter* (1974) was installed in February 1974. Jim Love's *Portable Trojan Bear* (1974), commissioned by the Houston Chamber of Commerce, stood at the corner

[471]For problems faced by the library during the late 1960s, see Dennis Bahler, "Library Crisis," *Houston Chronicle, Texas Magazine*, 4 August 1968. The best article on the new central library building is James Ross, "Pavilion on the Piazza," *Interiors* 135 (June 1976): 78-83.

of Montrose and Bissonnet, near the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. All of this activity signaled the city's openness to the new public art. It was time for City Hall to catch up.[472]

Aubry asked Fredericka Hunter, then his sister-in-law and a partner in Texas Gallery, to work with him on the proposal for a plaza sculpture, which would have to be approved, at a minimum, by the Houston Public Library Board, HMAC, and Houston City Council.[473] Hunter recommended that, if the sculpture were to be commissioned through an NEA matching grant, then the architects should focus on one of four artists: Oldenburg, Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Murray, or Clark Murray. If the sculpture was to be purchased privately, then suitable existing works by Oldenburg and Robert Murray were available at Lippincott: Murray's *Windhover* (1970) and Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse*. With the exception of Oldenburg, the recommended artists were then making totally abstract sculptures. For example, Murray's *Windhover* is an experiment in pure form; by cropping, folding, and bending steel plate in the factory, Murray achieved a series of tilting planes that seem to refer to nothing outside of themselves (Figure 4.17). The sculpture's only apparent content comes from Murray's suggestive title, the nickname of a bird able to hunt its prey by hovering in midair.

Hunter made her recommendations in December. The next deadline for NEA grant applications was January 1. If the NEA approved Houston's application, then more time would be needed to assemble committees to select the artist and to approve the proposed sculpture. The library was set to open within one year. In order to secure a sculpture that could be installed in time for the library's opening date, and perhaps to have more control over artist selection, the architects decided to seek private donations

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[472]For public art in Houston during the mid 1970s, see Ann Holmes, "Why the blossoming of epic sculpture in Houston?" *Houston Chronicle*, 20 April 1975.

[473]My account is drawn largely from interviews with Fredericka Hunter and an unsigned typed statement in the Menil Collection Archives. Box 13 Correspondence, DdM Oldenburg Artists Files, MCA.

for the purchase of an already existing work. Morris and Aubry set their sights on Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse* and got to work raising the eighty-five thousand dollars it would take to purchase the sculpture, transport it to Houston, and install it on the plaza.[474]

Geometric Mouse was not tailor-made for Houston, but the sculpture was a good fit for the library site. As a symbol of analysis and intellect, a head made an excellent symbol for the library. The fact that it was a mouse worked well, too; it played on library conduct, where one should be "quiet as a mouse," and on iconic library architecture—here one thinks of the lions—big cats—that mark the entrance to the New York Public Library. Oldenburg saw the sculpture as having a strong relationship with architecture and for this reason he liked the Houston site, where the tilted geometric head would contrast sharply with the regular geometry of the library building.[475] Although no one made this argument at the time, there was even the potential for a "Space City" reading of the sculpture. Along with Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, David Novros, and John Chamberlain, Oldenburg had given the sculptor Forrest Myers a drawing—Oldenburg's featured a Geometric Mouse—that was reportedly etched onto a tiny ceramic wafer, affixed to one of the Intrepid's legs, and blasted off into space on the Apollo 12 mission.

In April, Aubry presented *Geometric Mouse* to the first of three regulatory bodies that would have to approve the sculpture in order for it to be installed on the library plaza: the HMAC. *Broken Obelisk* had caused problems for some city councilmen because they found its meaning too ambiguous. *Geometric Mouse*, in contrast, was not

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[474]In the months that followed, a controversy erupted over who should facilitate the sale of *Geometric Mouse* – Fredericka Hunter of Texas Gallery or Janie C. Lee, another Houston art dealer who saw herself as Oldenburg's exclusive representative in Texas. In the end, Hunter worked with Lippincott on the Houston Mouse, while Lee pursued a sculpture by Mark di Suvero for downtown Houston. See Holmes, "Epic sculpture."

[475]Oldenburg was interviewed for several articles on the sculpture. See Mimi Crossley, "Public art's new face," *Houston Post*, 18 November 1975 and Crossley, "The Mouse-maker," *Houston Post*, 23 November 1975.

ambiguous enough for some HMAC members. Commissioners questioned the scale of the sculpture and its relationship to the old library building, but the biggest objection seemed to be to Oldenburg's title. The HMAC moved to accept the sculpture with a change of name, favoring something like "Geometric I."[476] The debate, however, was not over. Several commissioners asked that discussion of the Oldenburg sculpture be reopened at the following scheduled meeting. This time, the commissioners' discomfort with the mouse theme was clarified. One stated that he found the work "frivolous and trite" and preferred Calder's more abstract sculpture by comparison. Another worried about negative reactions from the citizenry and wondered if the sculpture could be borrowed for a trial period. Meredith Long cautioned the commission not to discourage gifts like *Geometric Mouse*, saying, "If we turn this down, we set impossible criteria; what COULD we accept?" The dissenters motioned to rescind the previous acceptance of the Oldenburg work. The motion failed 9 to 5.[477]

Houston City Council was due to take up *Geometric Mouse* on June 11 but voted to delay on a decision, a tactic familiar from its deliberations on *Broken Obelisk*. The library board had approved *Geometric Mouse* 5 to 3. The council claimed that it needed time to study the proposal in light of the split votes on the two recommending bodies. The following week, however, the sculpture passed with just one dissenting vote—that of Frank Mann, who called for a monument to a civic leader for the plaza instead of Oldenburg's "rodent." Mann had done his best to discredit the proposal, going so far as to have read into the city council minutes a statement that made all abstract art out to be a

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[476]Minutes of the Houston Municipal Art Commission, 16 April 1975. Houston Municipal Art Commission Records, RG A33, Box 32 Folder 11: HMAC Minutes, 1975 (1), HMRC.

[477]Minutes of the Houston Municipal Art Commission, 21 May 1975. Houston Municipal Art Commission Records, RG A33, Box 32 Folder 11: HMAC Minutes, 1975 (1), HMRC. For the Meredith Long quote, see "Mouse Given Art Panel Nod," *Houston Chronicle*, 22 May 1975.

hoax. Such conservatism may have been tolerated, but it would no longer carry the vote as it had six years earlier.[478]

Geometric Mouse, *Scale X – Red* arrived in Houston in November 1975 and was installed by Oldenburg and Donald Lippincott on the spot the artist had selected, on the plaza in front of the main library entrance, facing McKinney Street and city hall (Figure 4.18). During the first half of the 1970s, Oldenburg had sited his sculptures at museums, universities, and the homes of private collectors, but *Geometric Mouse* was the first public monument realized by Oldenburg and owned by a city. It did not inspire the kind of trinkets and tchotchkes made after the Grand Rapids Calder or Chicago's Picasso; besides, Oldenburg had in a sense already taken care of their manufacture with the small-scale mice, which now functioned as souvenirs for the monumental mouse. It did, however, become a symbol for the library, identifying the building for pedestrians on the street and appearing as a strong graphic image on the cover of the guide to the new building, just as the *Geometric Mouse* had circulated in print as Oldenburg's logo, and much as the Grand Rapids Calder became the trademark for that city (Figure 4.19). Indeed, we might say that the model for public sculpture was no longer the hero monument, but branding. With *Geometric Mouse*, Oldenburg probed the way that public sculpture had become legible for communities like Grand Rapids; not as sculpture, as the NCA had expected, but through the visual language of marketing and public relations.

[478]Mimi Crossley, "Council Delays Decision on 'Mouse'," *Houston Post*, 12 June 1975 and Ann Holmes, "The Dissent of Mann Over the Assent of a 'Mouse'," *Houston Chronicle*, 13 July 1975.

Chapter 5: Coda

As a coda to this dissertation I want to discuss Grand Rapids' second commission for a sculpture funded by the Art in Public Places program, Robert Morris's *Grand Rapids Project* (1974) (Figure 5.1). An earthwork that reclaimed an eroded hillside, it was this sculpture that Alloway held up as a way out of the problems of iconography that he first discussed in 1970 in his review of *Monumental Art*. *Grand Rapids Project* also represents a significant departure from Calder's *La Grande Vitesse* and the early large-scale sculptures fabricated by Lippincott Inc. By 1980, sculptures like these were the target of a backlash from artists and critics, who described them disparagingly as "plop art."

Morris first proposed the work as part of *Sculpture Off the Pedestal*, an outdoor exhibition held in Grand Rapids in 1973. The Women's Committee of the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) sponsored the show, which featured twelve sculptures sited around Vandenberg Center.[479] The Women's Committee had set out to promote large-scale sculpture by making it easier for artists to produce it. They assisted participating artists in securing sites, as well as partners in local industry, to fabricate more than half of the sculptures included in the exhibition in Grand Rapids. These partners included suppliers of raw materials and equipment, as well as trade unions to carry out the work. Through

[479]The exhibition included Stephen Antonakos, *The Room* (1973); Mark DiSuvero, *Are Years What? (for Marianne Moore)* (1967); Dale Eldred, Untitled (1973); Michael Hall, *Sundance* (1973); John Henry, *Landscape #4* (1973); William King, *Liberty* (1973); Lyman Kipp, *Zephyr* (1973); John Mason, *Firebrick Sculpture '73* (1973); Clement Meadmore, *Split Ring* (1970); Boyd Mefferd, *Projection Tower* (1973); Robert Murray, *Windhover* (1970); and Steven Urry, *Arch* (1973). Lippincott Inc. fabricated *Split Ring* and *Windhover*. The latter was considered for Houston's Central Library. Murray's sculpture was installed in 1976 at Hinsdale Junior High School, Hinsdale, Illinois. Meadmore's sculpture was acquired for an office building in Grand Rapids and is currently located in the Woodland Mall. For the exhibition, see *Sculpture Off the Pedestal* (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids Art Museum, 1973) and Brian O'Doherty, "The Grand Rapids Challenge," *Art in America* 62 (January-February 1974): 78-79.

the exhibition, the Grand Rapids community became not only a sponsor of sculpture, as it had been with *La Grande Vitesse*, but a producer of it as well.[480]

The exhibition's thirteenth sculpture, Morris's *Grand Rapids Project*, was not realized for the show. Represented in the catalogue with a drawing, the project was dedicated the following year, in October 1974. Rather than a site in Vandenberg Center, Morris proposed *Grand Rapids Project* for Belknap Park, a hill and popular lookout point that is visible from many sites around the city. Parts of the hill slope had been removed to provide in-fill for the highway constructed through Grand Rapids in the early 1960s. Morris's project stabilized the hill and connected the hilltop with a recreation area at its base through the construction of four ramps. The ramps intersect at a secondary viewing platform midway down the hill, inscribing a dramatic "X" shape in the landscape.[481]

While the Calder sculpture crowned the city's urban renewal project, Morris's earthwork reclaimed a site that had been marred by urban development. Dedicated just five years apart, these two works represent utterly different attitudes regarding the relationship between sculpture and the environment. *La Grande Vitesse* marks its site, identifying the building behind it as well as Vandenberg Center. The sculpture's scale and abstraction match the surrounding architecture and the renewal project that led to its erection. To pedestrians, or even motorists on Ottawa Avenue, *La Grande Vitesse* dominates the plaza and draws spectators in with its dynamic form. *Grand Rapids Project* is also quite large. It, too, is abstract and draws attention to its site in a very literal way: "X" marks the spot. Yet Morris's work demonstrates a different attitude towards monumentality. It is not an object imposed on the landscape but a shaping of the earth

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[480]Barbara Rose praises this aspect of the exhibition in her essay for the catalogue, which also includes a reprint of her article, "Shall We Have a Renaissance?"

[481]For *Grand Rapids Project*, see *Robert Morris: Grand Rapids Project* (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids Art Museum, 1975).

itself. Rather than crowning the aesthetics of bulldozer renewal, Morris used the bulldozer to enhance a recreational area and to restore an eroded hillside.

Though Morris had been part of Lippincott and Everett's pilot group of artists, by the 1970s his interest had shifted from fabricated steel sculpture to earthworks.[482] Morris made his first large-scale earthwork in 1971 for Sonsbeek, an outdoor sculpture exhibition in the Netherlands (Figure 5.2). *Observatory* consisted of two concentric earth walls with openings aligned to celestial events, the equinoxes and solstices. Krauss reproduced a photograph of the earthwork in "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" as an example of the shift into postmodernism that she described. For other critics writing about public art around the same time, earthworks provided an alternative to the object-based public sculpture prevalent during the 1960s, both in terms of sculptural form as such and how spectators read them.

Alloway uses *Grand Rapids Project* as one example of a way beyond the public sculpture problem in his 1980 essay, "Problems of Iconography and Style." In this essay, the critic revisits questions regarding public art's iconography discussed in my previous chapter. He observes that, in general, little had changed since the early 1970s. Artists still seemed to lack an interest in creating works that communicate with a wide public and meaningfully engaged with their sites. Instead, they made the same kinds of work they would for the gallery but at a larger scale. As an example of this tendency, Alloway cites Oldenburg's *Clothespin* (1976), a commission that allowed the artist to build on the example of the Yale *Lipstick* and create a work for a specific site in Philadelphia (Figure 5.3). Rather than imagining new ways to contribute to urban redevelopment, however, Alloway describes the 45' tall, Cor-Ten steel sculpture as representing "a conventional

[482]For Morris, see Maurice Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989) and Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Hard Hats and Art Strikes: Robert Morris in 1970," *Art Bulletin* 89 (June 2007): 333-59.

use of sculpture according to the principle of contrast: fat compared to thin, spiky to smooth, or as here, rusty to new… as so often in public situations, sculpture is what is different from architecture."[483] For Alloway, works like Oldenburg's rely too heavily on the artist's style for their meaning. Another example is Newman's *Broken Obelisk*, with its multiple exemplars. Alloway writes, "If meaning is so volatile, one wonders what is being commemorated in such public sculptures. The answer would seem to be: the artists. The subject is their styles, in larger examples than usual, displaced from the usual system of distribution."[484]

In "The Public Sculpture Problem," Alloway had looked to community participation in the selection of sculptures and sites as one way that publics could connect with public sculpture. Here, Alloway spatializes participation by privileging works that allow spectators to walk through them. He gives priority to sculptures that function less as objects and more as environments. Instead of towering over the viewer and mediating her relationship with the surrounding architecture, Alloway prefers works like *Grand Rapids Project*, which could be physically occupied by spectators:

> Participation may take the place of unusable iconography or style-oriented monumentality. This means… entering the sculpture's space, looking outward from within the work, completing it physically by one's presence. Environmental sculpture would be less assertive of the identity of artists, a matter of small concern to the general public… Such sculpture would relate more to leisure than to commemoration, and more to participation than to an inventory of the solid forms of late abstract art.[485]

In a way, Alloway seems to have given up on iconography entirely. The earthworks he promotes do not function as signs or symbols. These environments function more like

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[483]Lawrence Alloway, "Problems of Iconography and Style," in *Urban Encounters: Art Architecture Audience* (Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1980), 18.
[484]Ibid. 16.
[485]Ibid. 20.

architecture in terms of how they are experienced and occupied by spectators. Earthworks also introduced a different perspective on large-scale sculpture's relationship with its site. Rather than focusing on mobility to accommodate the unpredictability of changes to the urban environment, earthworks artists significantly altered sites through the construction of their sculptures.

Alloway's views on earthworks as public sculpture signal a significant departure from the attitudes of some critics writing in the late 1960s. With the demise of the urban renewal program, artists and critics were less concerned about the effects of large-scale clearance and rebuilding on permanent sculpture. By the 1980s, they came to promote the opposite approach with their praise for earthworks. Writing in *Artforum* the following year, Kate Linker echoes Alloway's praise for *Grand Rapids Project*:

> The Morris project implies another solution to the problem of a viable form. To the absence of a shared iconography, it suggests the shareable presence of space… it is distinct from the object-oriented, space-dominating urges of the '60s. Paralleling the shift from commemorative values and iconography, then, is a corresponding turn from 'structure' to place or site.[486]

For both of these writers, a sculptor's ability to identify and mark a site is less important than his work's integration with the site. The changing status of urban renewal is one explanation for this shift; however, Linker and Alloway point to another cause: the changing status of corporations in American society.

If Linker and Alloway's texts are any indication, by 1980 the tide had turned on the corporate model for public sculpture that I describe in this dissertation. In his essay, Alloway takes aim at the correspondence between abstract sculptures and corporate trademarks, perhaps a clue as to why he abandoned his earlier emphasis on iconography. "There are ideological as well as aesthetic reasons for resistance to public art," he writes.

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[486]Kate Linker, "Public Sculpture: The Pursuit of the Pleasurable and Profitable Paradise," *Artforum* 19 (March 1981): 70.

"This is engendered, for example, when abstract art forms become identified as corporate logos."[487] Linker also discusses sculpture's use as a corporate sign, but distinguishes between symbolic form and communal rhetoric, arguing "the public wants statues," not the "private world of abstraction."[488] In a wide-ranging history of public sculpture in the United States, Linker describes two dominant models for public sculpture: the Civil War monument, epitomized by "General Sherman on his horse," and as the "emblem of urban 'modern' art," a Cor-Ten steel abstraction. Linker writes:

> The corporate bauble, indifferently planned but assertively placed, became the signifier of business ideology. Perhaps only private money and esthetic banality, geared to the monotonous rhythm of the day-by-day, could make the public live so complacently with abstractions. Whatever the reason, its legacy rings clear: the Turd in the Plaza became ours.[489]

While the hero monument has a clear relationship to society, Linker's "corporate bauble" does not. According to Linker, it is an emblem of established values and little else, aside from corporate values.

In *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002), Miwon Kwon recapitulates these arguments and uses them to characterize abstract public sculpture of the 1960s and 1970s. She takes up the claim that abstract sculpture was unintelligible to a general audience, concluding that a perceived indifference to site and audience on the part of the art work (and artist) was "reciprocated by the public's indifference, even hostility, toward the foreignness of abstract art's visual language and

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[487]Alloway, "Problems of Iconography and Style," 18-19.

[488]Linker, "Public Sculpture," 68.

[489]Ibid. 65. Linker adopts this phrase from James Wines, a principal in the firm SITE (Sculpture in the Environment) who is credited with originating the term "plop art." The latter has been used to criticize large-scale abstract sculpture for a perceived lack of relation to site.

toward its aloof and haughty physical presence in public places."[490] Kwon echoes Linker when she writes:

> Many critics, artists, and sponsors agreed that, at best, public art was a pleasant visual contrast to the rationalized regularity of its surroundings, providing a nice decorative effect. At worst, it was an empty trophy commemorating the powers and riches of the dominant class—a corporate bauble or architectural jewelry.[491]

As a solution to "public art's public relations" and "its ineffectual influence on the urban environment," Kwon argues that site-specific principles for public art were adopted, specifically with a change to the NEA's guidelines in 1974.[492] By using 1980s criticism of abstract public sculpture as a primary source, Kwon does not evaluate these earlier works on their own terms. What is more, she does not ask why critics like Alloway and Linker are so critical of this art. Instead, she implies that all abstract public sculpture is simply bad art.

By historicizing the writings of Alloway and Linker, I argue that their responses to abstract public sculpture circa 1980 were conditioned, at least in part, by changes in prevailing attitudes about corporations. The humanizing impact of public relations to which art had contributed during the 1950s was undermined by scandals that contradicted positive images and instead revealed corporate greed. Stuart Ewen describes how attitudes shifted beginning in the mid-1960s. "Breaking the hush of the consensus of the fifties, corporate renditions of 'the good life' and of the United States as the 'land of opportunity' came under mounting scrutiny from within and outside American society." According to Ewen, members of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements, proponents of women's rights and environmentalism, all "interrogated the values of a

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[490]Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 65.
[491]Ibid.
[492]New guidelines stipulated that public art works needed to be "appropriate to the immediate site." Ibid. 65.

commodity culture and testified to the fact that many people were in exile in the 'land of opportunity'."[493] Corporate public relations executives scrambled to address more diverse publics, leaving the homogeneity of the 1950s behind.[494]

The Vietnam War impacted artists' outlooks on corporations as early as the late 1960s. Anne Goodyear has shown how corporate profits from the Vietnam War undermined the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Art and Technology program. Initiated in 1967, a high point for enthusiasm within the art world for collaborations between artists and industry, the program ended in 1971 with just 16 of 76 successful partnerships. Misunderstandings and mismatched expectations were to blame in part; however, Goodyear explains, "artists and critics came to identify the perils of new technology with the companies that developed and deployed it, making collaborations between art and industry untenable."[495] These perils encompassed environmental pollution as well as participation in the war, which prompted one critic to characterize the program's corporate partners as "a rogue's gallery of the violence industries."[496] Artists could no longer look past the attitudes and actions of patrons and exclude politics from art.

Another index of changing attitudes about corporations in the United States is the establishment, at the beginning of the 1970s, of three federal agencies to regulate corporate actions. The Environmental Protection Agency (1970) ensured that American prosperity did not come at the expense of clean air and water, setting requirements for corporations as well as the federal government. The Occupational Safety and Health Act

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[493]Ewen, *PR!*, 402.
[494]Ewen points out how diversification led to the rise of demographics in public relations and advertising.
[495]Goodyear, "Technophilia to Technophobia," 171.
[496]Max Kozloff, "The Multimillion Dollar Art Boondoggle," *Artforum* 10 (October 1971): 76. Cited in Goodyear, "Technophilia to Technophobia," 172.

of 1970 was enacted to protect the health and safety of workers, while the Consumer Product Safety Commission (1972) guaranteed that products met high standards. During the 1950s, new social security policies initiated by corporations, including pension funds and health plans, created a positive image that reassured skeptics of corporate benevolence. By 1970, corporate abuse of power made greater oversight a necessity.[497]

The negative attitude towards corporations, coupled with the demise of the urban renewal program, encouraged artists and patrons to imagine new forms of public sculpture, including the earthworks described by Linker and Alloway. As Kwon has shown, site-specificity became a primary concern, further eroding the legacy of many abstract public sculptures discussed in this dissertation as early as the mid-1970s. The sort of mobile monumental sculptures produced in multiple editions at Lippincott Inc. during the late 1960s were succeeded by sculptures so identified with site that to remove a work was to destroy it, as in the case of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (1981). Nevertheless, many of these same sculptures remain in their sites nearly fifty years later, including Rosenthal's *Alamo* and *Endover*, Newman's *Broken Obelisk* at the Rothko Chapel and the University of Washington, and Oldenburg's *Geometric Mouse, Scale X – Red*. In fact, the very same design factors intended to make these sculptures work well in the age of bulldozer urban renewal arguably are a big reason for their persistence in their sites. Take Rosenthal's *Alamo*, which was removed temporarily in fall 2014 from Astor Place while the plaza undergoes a major renovation. An earthwork would potentially be wiped out by extensive changes to its site. Though the architects certainly considered *Alamo* in their new design for Astor Place, the sculpture itself was designed to endure a changing environment. Indeed, when *Alamo* is returned to its home in the East Village, it

[497]See S. Douglas Beets, "Critical Events in the Ethics of U.S. Corporation History," *Journal of Business Ethics* 102 (August 2011): 193-219. According to Beets, regulation in turn led to lobbying to gain influence over elected officials and the Supreme Court cases that extended rights to corporations.

may very well come to represent the area's past as polished glass and steel condo buildings rise around it.

Figure 1.1: Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Stanford White, *Admiral Farragut Monument* (1881). Bronze and black granite, figure 9’; pedestal 9’ x 17’ 6” x 9’ 6”. Madison Square Park, New York, New York.

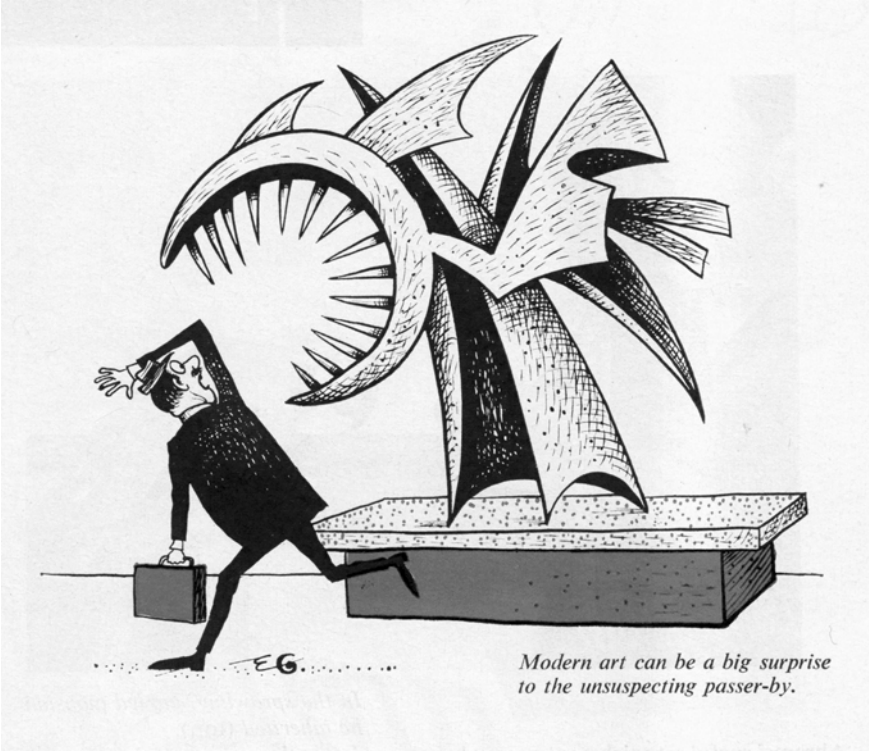


Figure 2.1: Cartoon accompanying "*Life* Guide: Art in Buildings," *Life*, 9 August 1963.

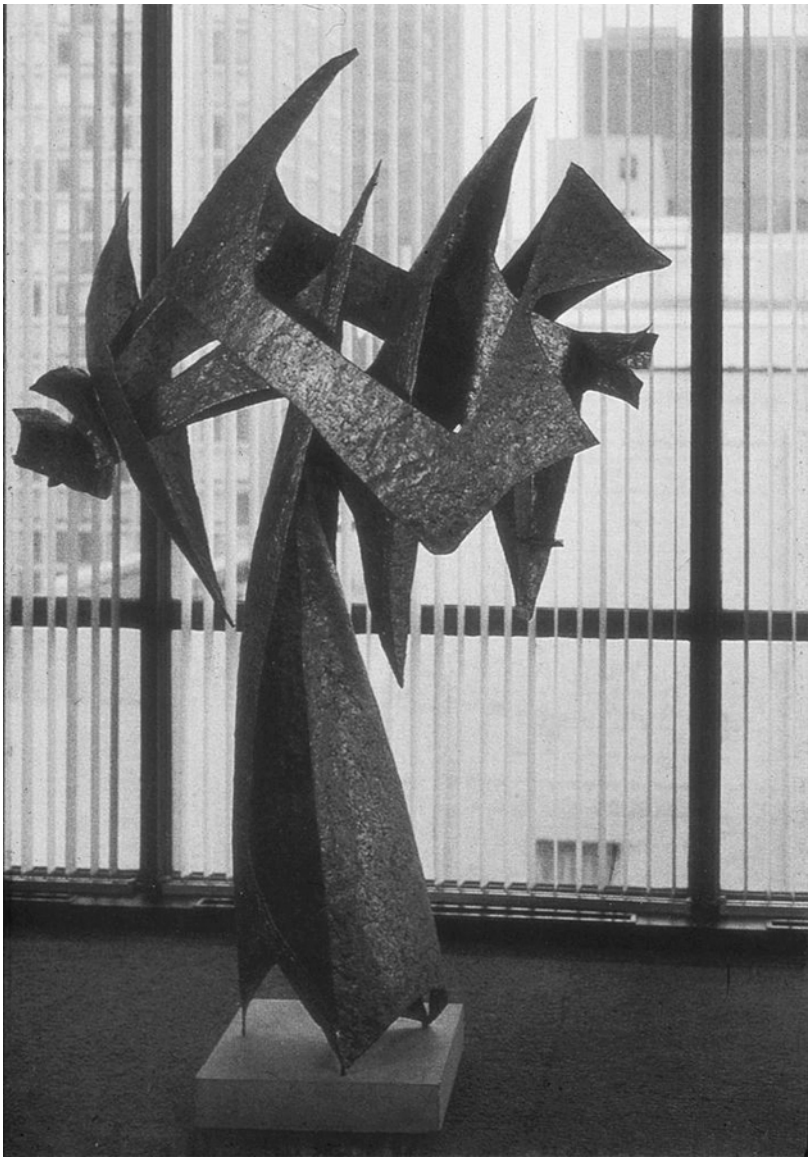


Figure 2.2: Seymour Lipton, *Hero* (1957). Nickel-silver on Monel metal, height 7.5'. Inland Steel Company Headquarters Building.

Figure 2.3: Terrace Plaza Hotel (1946-48), Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Partner-in-charge: William S. Brown; Coordination of Design: William Hartmann. Cincinnati, Ohio.

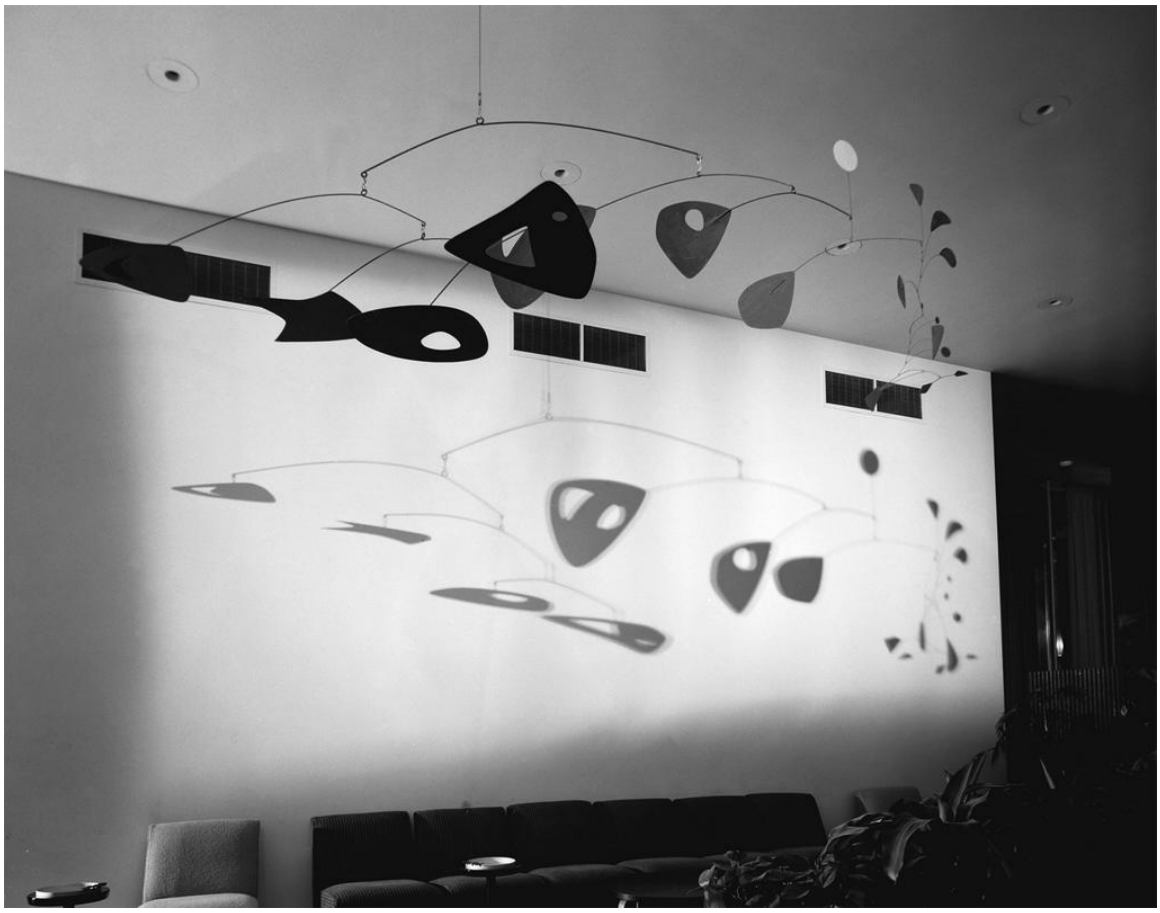


Figure 2.4: Alexander Calder, *Twenty Leaves and an Apple* (1946). Painted sheet metal and piano wire, width 12'. Lobby, Terrace Plaza Hotel.

Figure 2.5: Joan Miró, *Mural Painting for the Terrace Plaza Hotel, Cincinnati* (1947). Oil on canvas, 102 x 368 ¼". Gourmet Room restaurant, Terrace Plaza Hotel.

Figure 2.6: Lever House (1950-52), Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Partner-in-charge: William S. Brown; Design partner: Gordon Bunshaft. 390 Park Avenue, New York, New York.

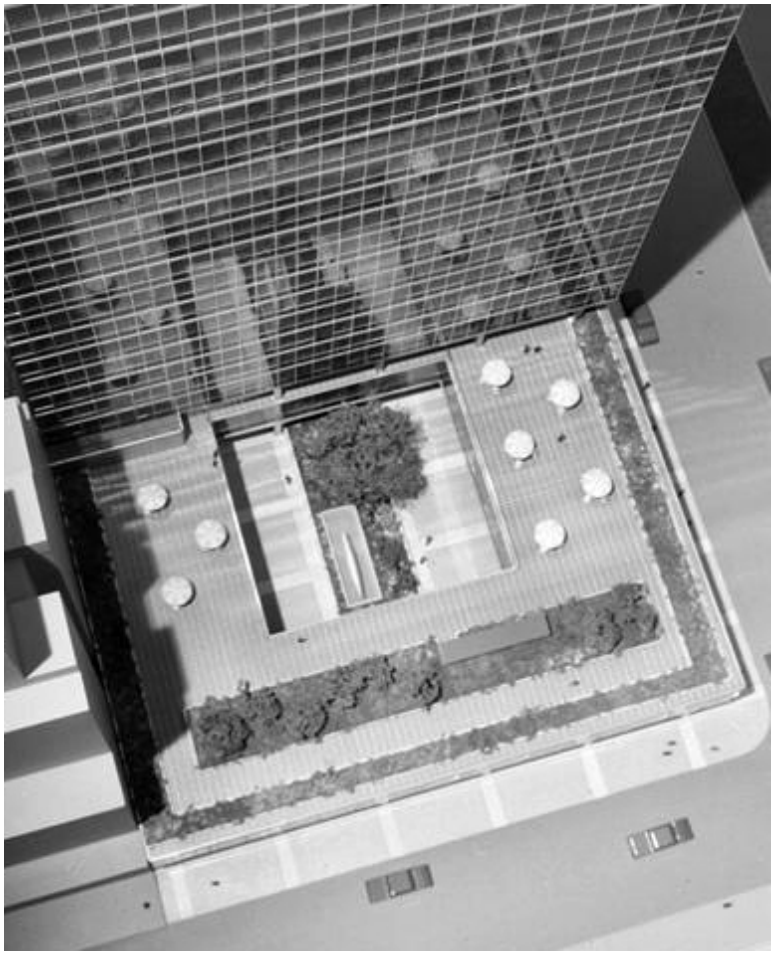


Figure 2.7: Lever House model, 1949. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects.

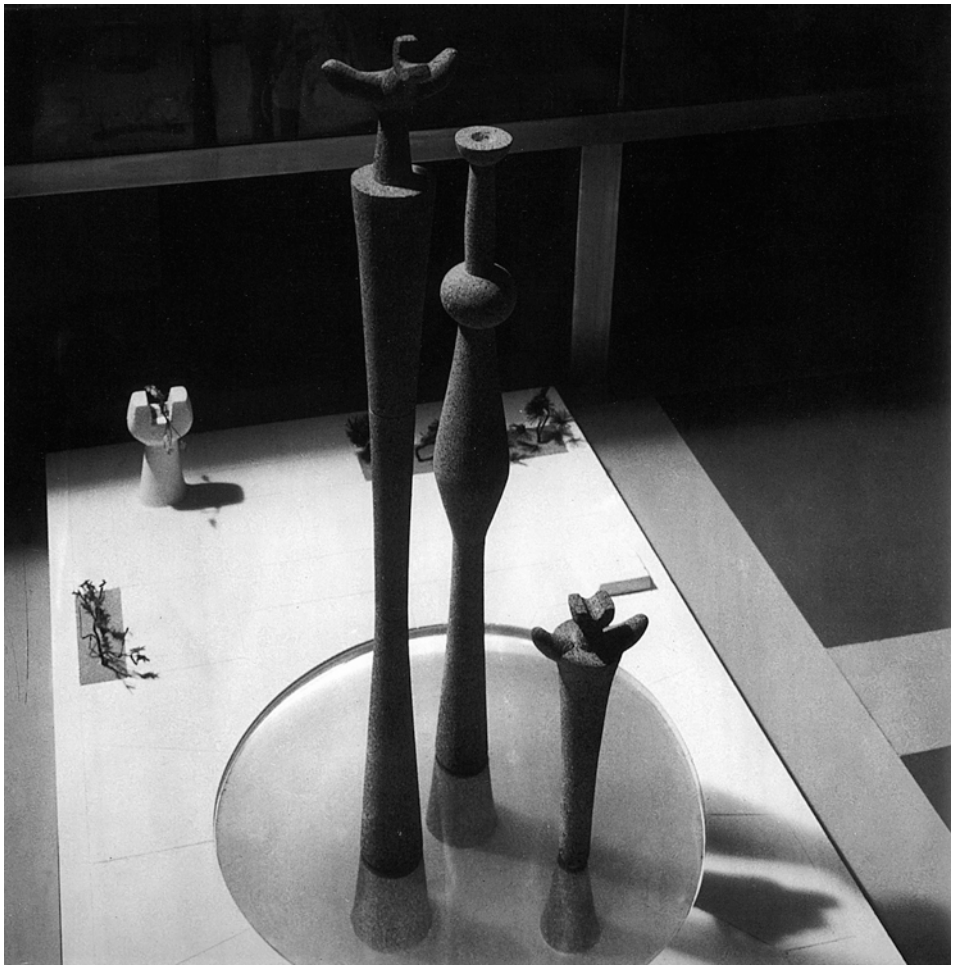


Figure 2.8: Isamu Noguchi, Model for Lever House garden and ground floor, 1952 (unrealized).

Figure 2.9: Manufacturers Trust Company Bank (1951-54), Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Partner-in-charge: William S. Brown; Design partner: Gordon Bunshaft. Fifth Avenue at 43rd Street, New York, New York.

Figure 2.10: Manufacturers Trust Company Bank, vault door. Designer: Henry Dreyfuss.

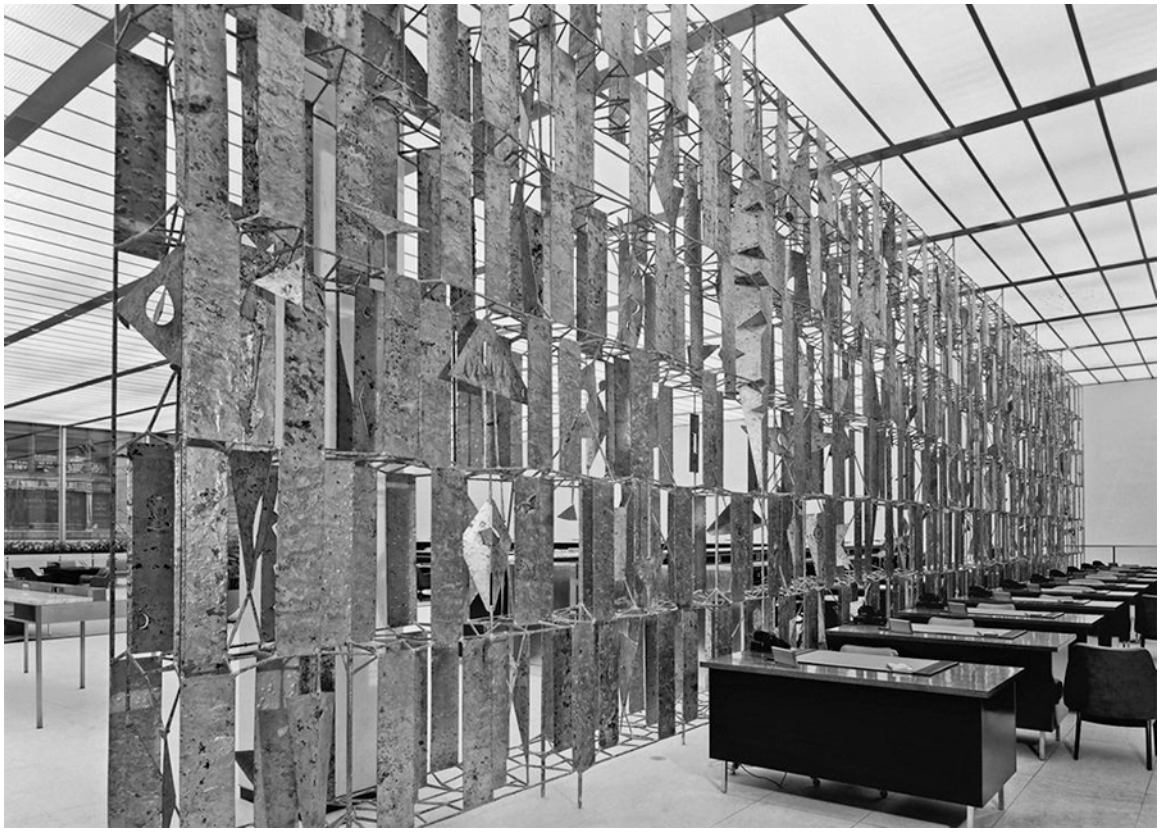


Figure 2.11: Harry Bertoia, Sculpture screen (1954). Gilt enameled steel, 16’ x 70’ x 2’. Mezzanine, Manufacturers Trust Company Bank.

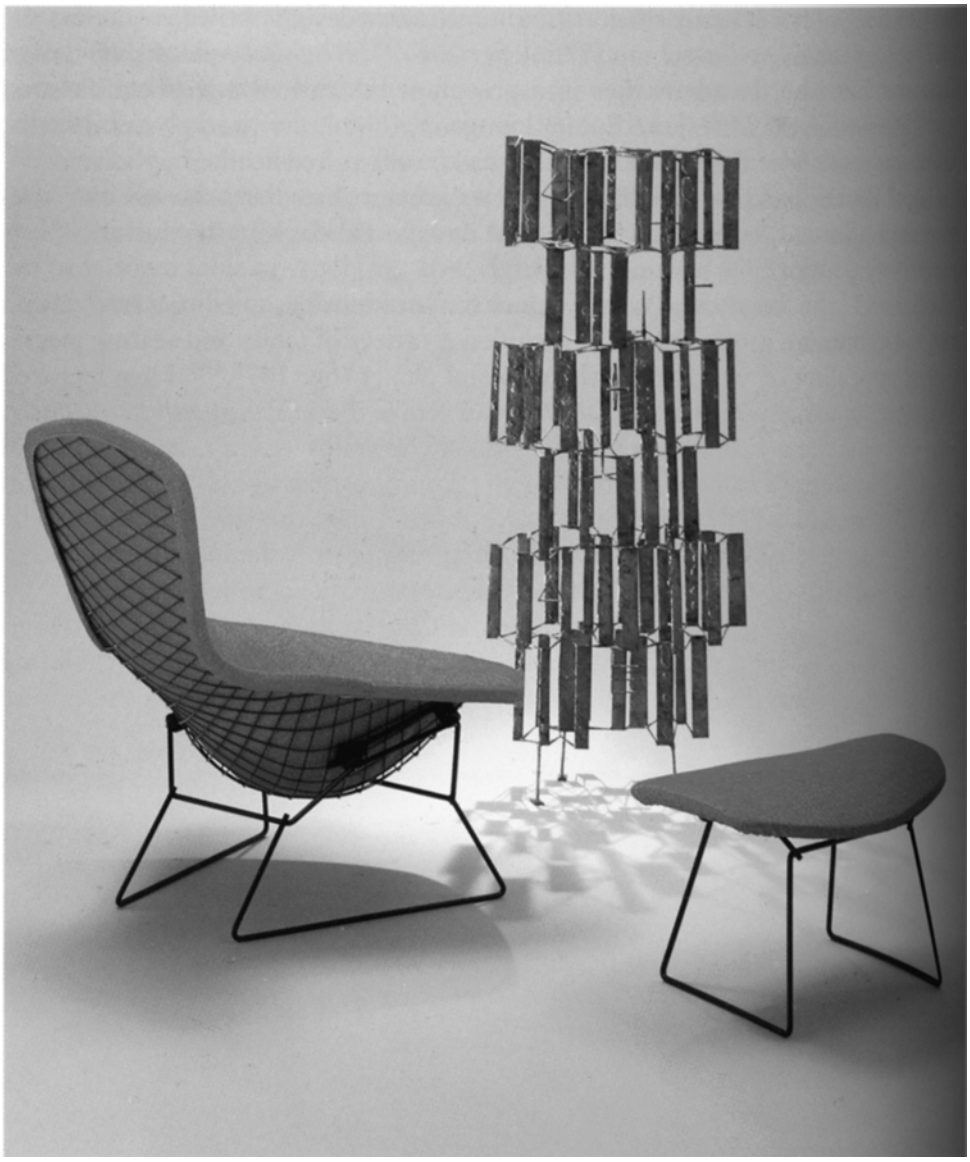


Figure 2.12: Harry Bertoia, Chair and Screen, circa 1952.

Figure 2.13: Harry Bertoia, Sculpture screen (1955). Bronze and gold, length 36'. Cafeteria building, General Motors Technical Center (1948-56), Eero Saarinen, architect. Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Figure 2.14: Cover, Brochure for Manufacturers Trust Company Bank with a graphic rendering of Bertoia's sculpture screen. Archives of American Art.

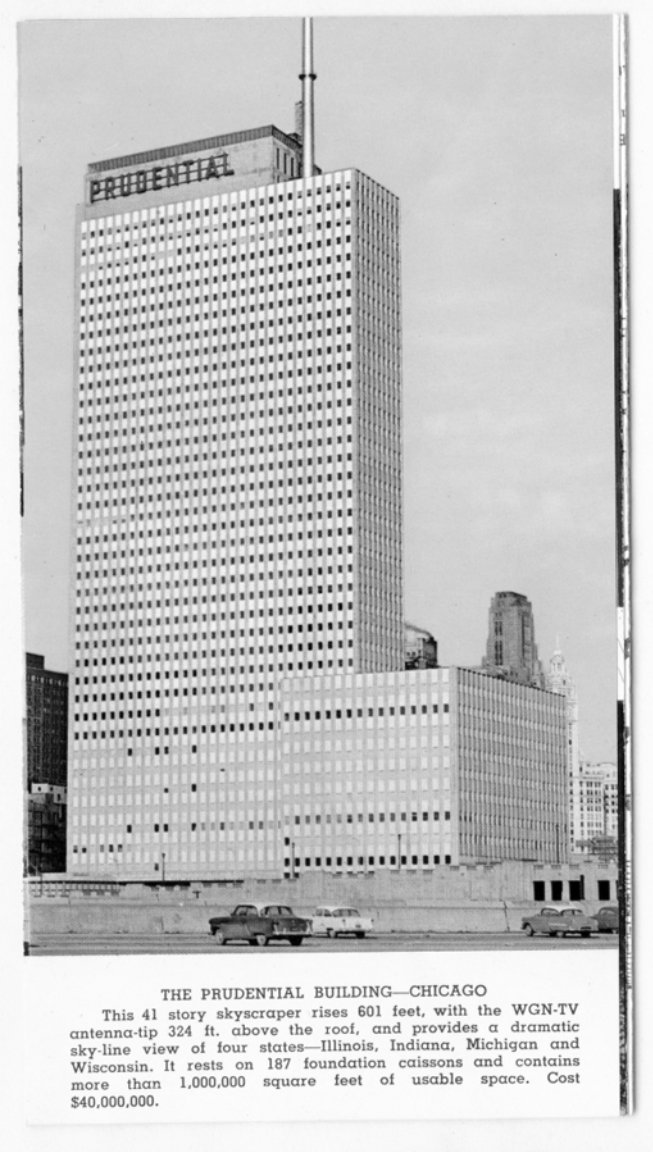


Figure 2.15: Postcard, Prudential Building (1952-55). Naess & Murphy, architects. 130 E. Randolph Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Figure 2.16: Alfonso Iannelli, The Rock of Gibraltar (1955). Prudential Building.

Figure 2.17: Inland Steel Company, Headquarters Building (1955-58), Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Partner-in-charge: William Hartmann; Project manager: Bruce Graham, based on model of Walter Netsch. S. Dearborn Street at W. Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Figure 2.18: Inland Steel Company Headquarters Building model. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Calumet Regional Archives, Indiana University Northwest.

Figure 2.19: Inland Steel Company Headquarters Building executive floor with Willem de Kooning's *Bolton Landing* (1957).

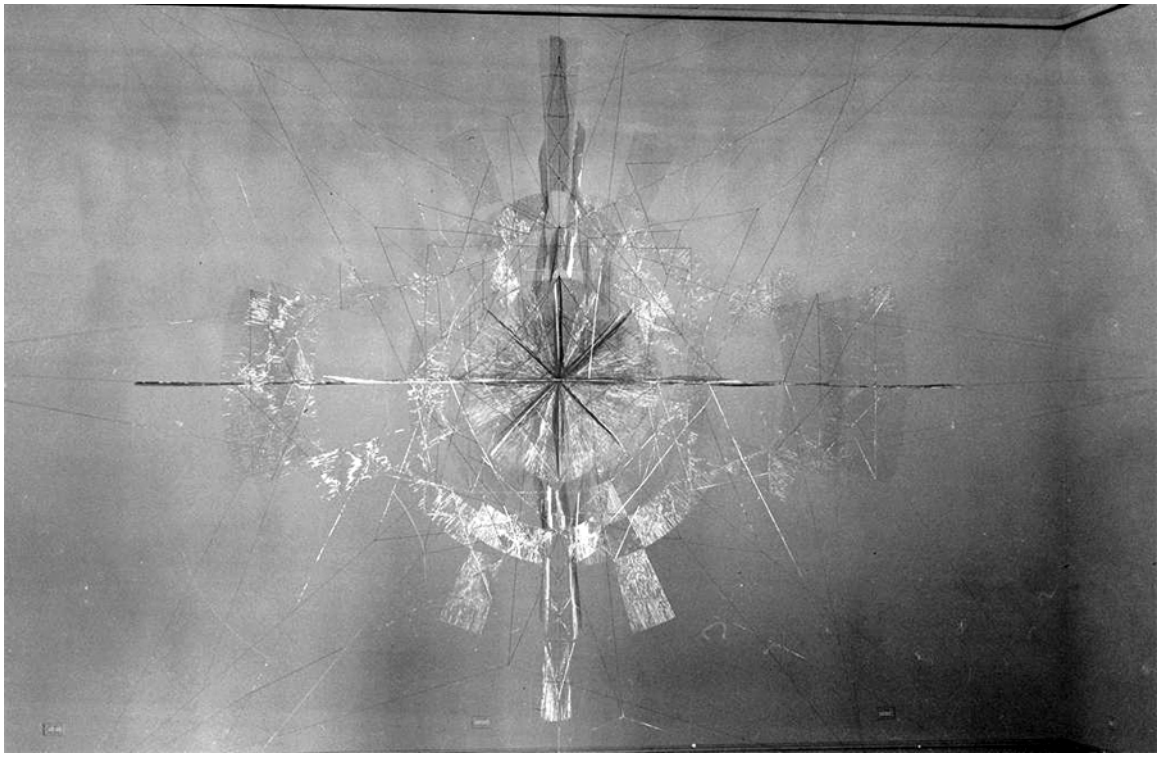


Figure 2.20: Richard Lippold, *Variation within a Sphere, No. 10: The Sun* (1953-1956). 22-carat gold-filled wire. 112 x 264 x 66". Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

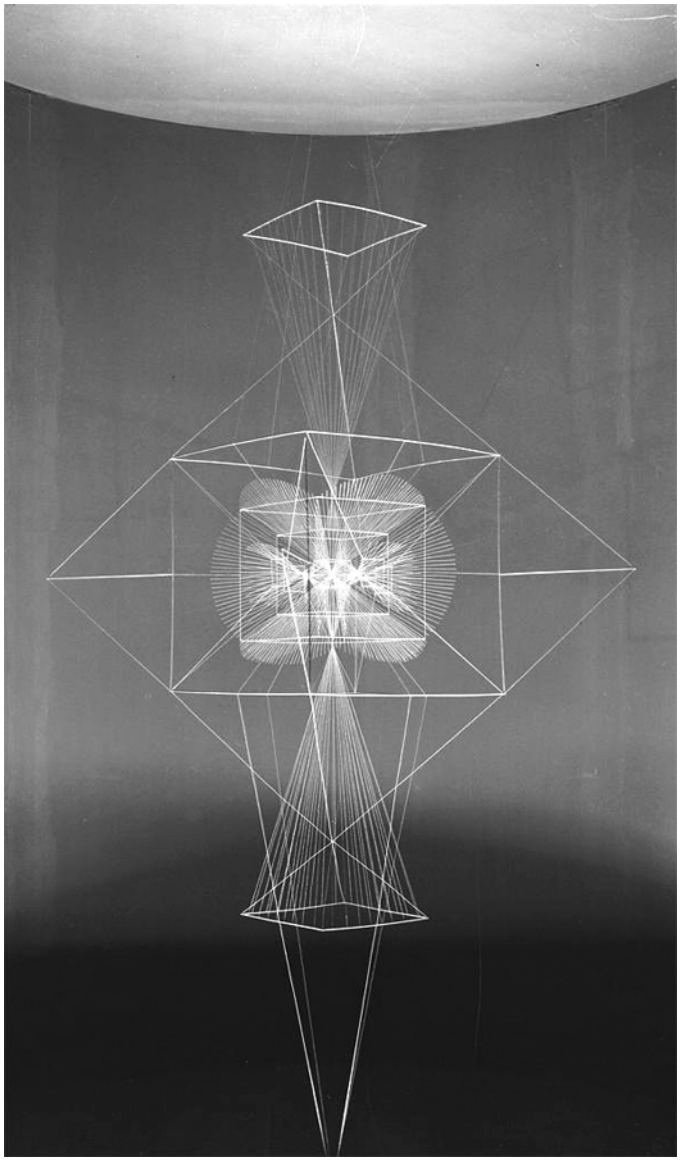


Figure 2.21: Richard Lippold, *Variation within a Sphere, No. 7: Full Moon* (1949-1950). Copper, brass and stainless steel, height 10'. Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.

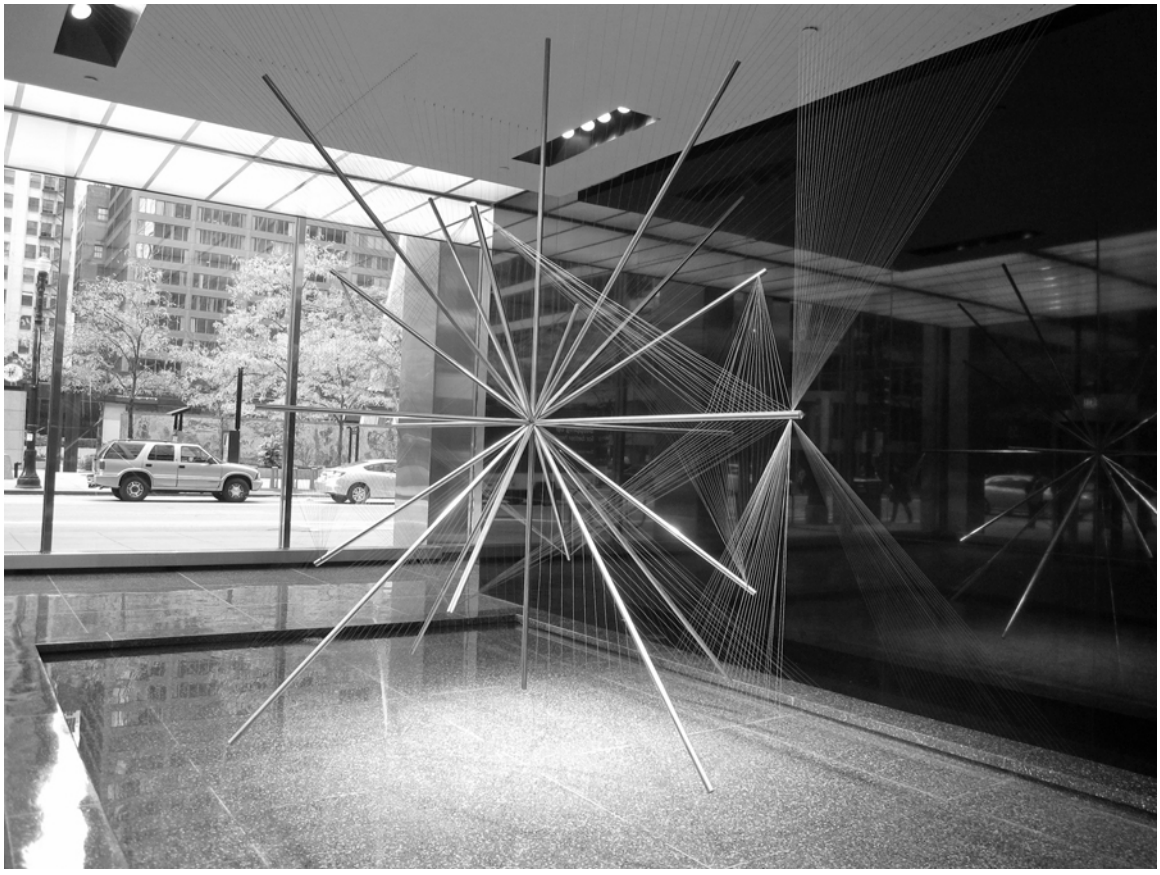


Figure 2.22: Richard Lippold, *Radiant "I"* (1958). Stainless steel with gold, steel, and red enamel wires, 18' x 13'. Lobby, Inland Steel Company Headquarters Building.

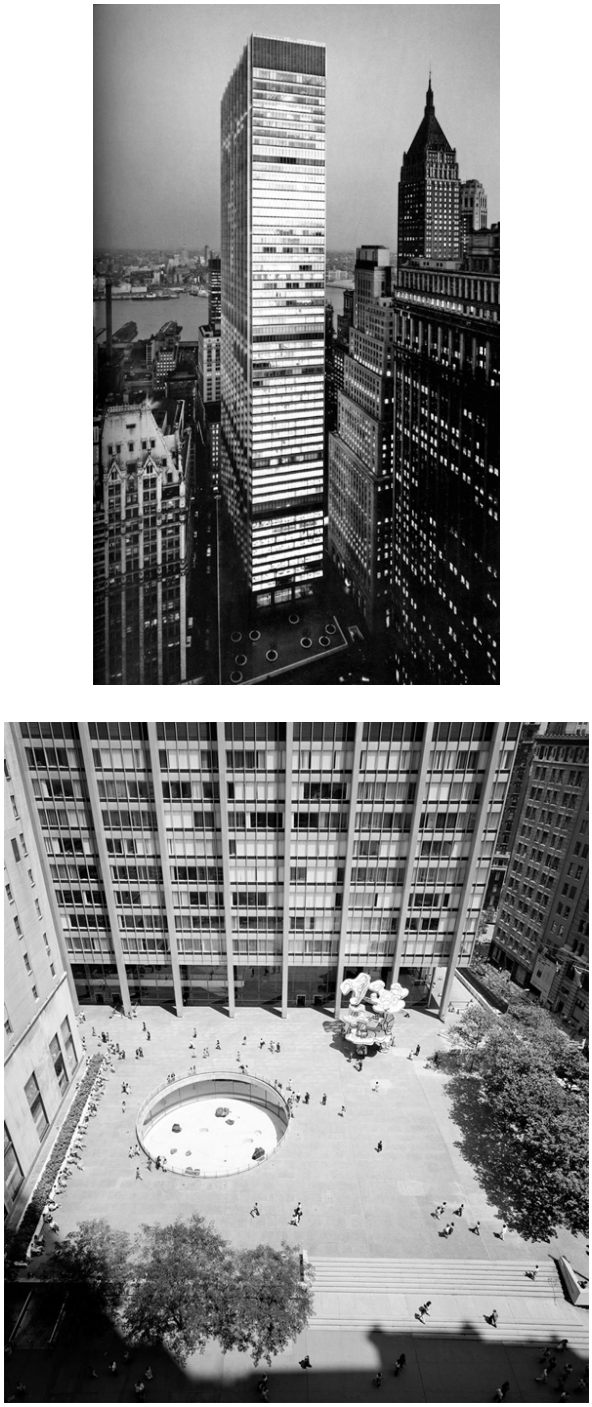


Figure 2.23: One Chase Manhattan Plaza (1955-61). Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Partner-in-charge: J. Walter Severinghaus; Design Partner: Gordon Bunshaft. New York, New York.

Figure 2.24: Sam Francis, *Chase Manhattan Mural* (1959). Oil on canvas, length 37'. Chase Manhattan Bank branch, 410 Park Avenue, New York, New York.

Figure 2.25: Alexander Calder, Mobile (1959). Painted sheet metal, diameter 20'. 410 Park Avenue.

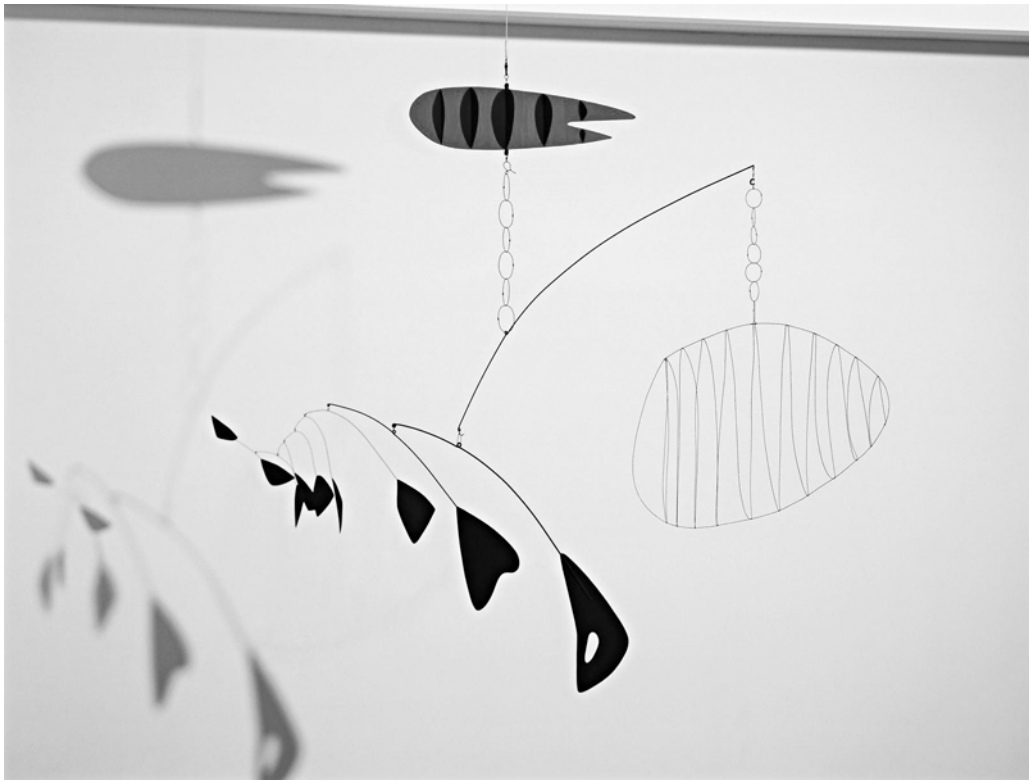


Figure 2.26: Alexander Calder, *Lobster Trap and Fish Tail* (1939). Painted steel, wire, and sheet aluminum, 8.5 x 9.5'. Stairwell, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York.

Figure 2.27: Alexander Calder, *Black Beast* (1940). Painted sheet metal, 103 x 163 x 78 ½". Installation view, Pierre Matisse Gallery.

Figure 2.28: Alexander Calder, *.125* (1957). Painted steel plate, width 45'. International Arrivals Building (1957), Idlewild Airport. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. New York, New York.

Figure 2.29: Cover, "Art at 410 Park Avenue." Archives of American Art.

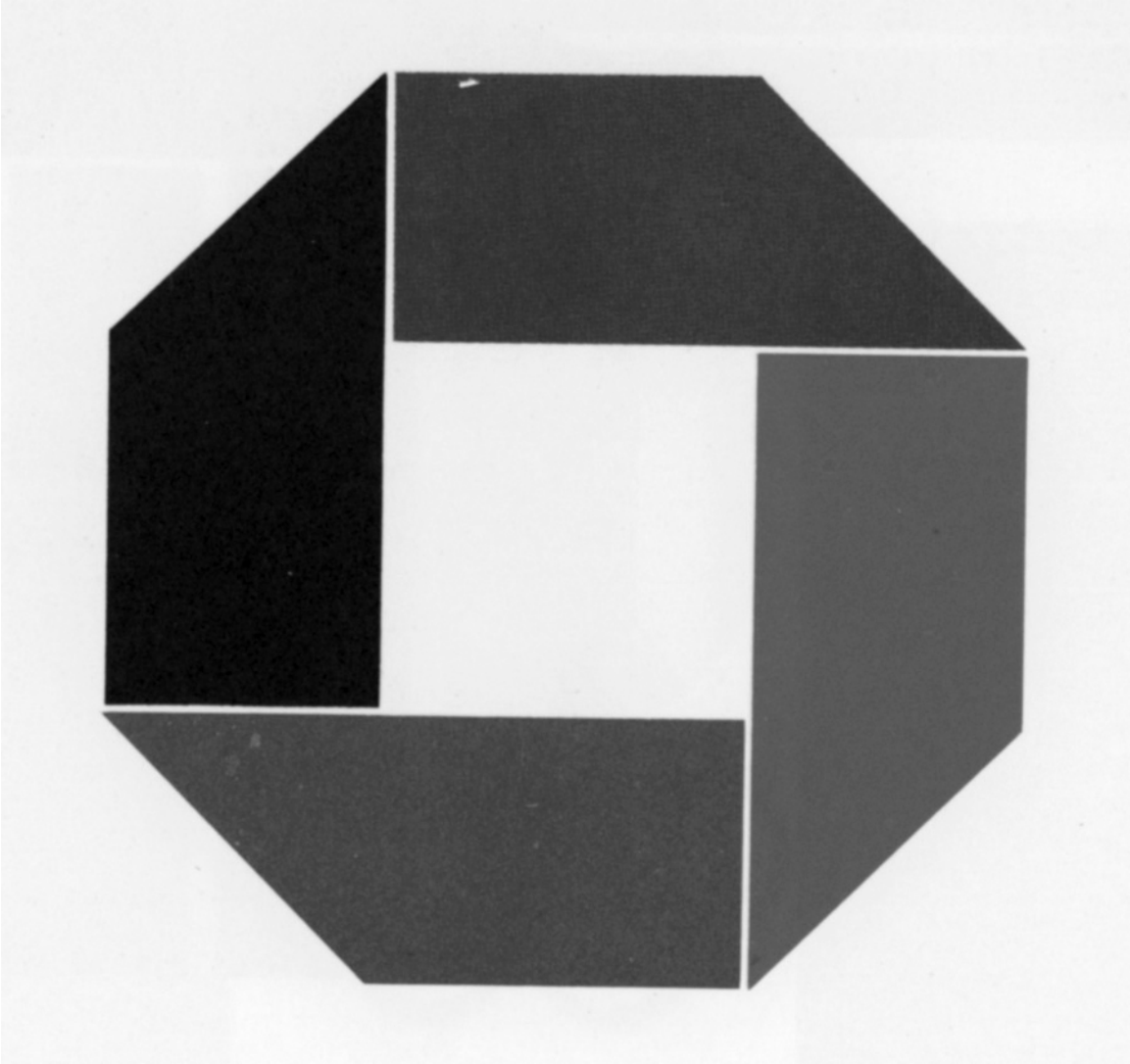


Figure 2.30: Chase Manhattan Bank logo, 1961. Designers: Chermayeff & Geismar. Archives of American Art.

Figure 2.31: Isamu Noguchi, *Sunken Garden* (1961-64). Basalt rocks and granite pavers, diameter 60'. One Chase Manhattan Plaza.

Figure 2.32: Jean Dubuffet, *Group of Four Trees* (1972). Painted epoxy resin, height 37.75'. One Chase Manhattan Plaza.

Figure 2.33: One Chase Manhattan Plaza model, circa 1956. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects.

Figure 2.34: One Chase Manhattan Plaza model, circa 1957. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects.

Figure 2.35: Alexander Calder, Model for *Three Legged Beastie* (1959). Bronze, height 5'. Photo Courtesy of Calder Foundation, New York. © 2015 Calder Foundation, New York.

Figure 2.36: Alexander Calder, *La Spirale* (1958). Painted steel, Height: 30'. UNESCO Headquarters (1958). Marcel Breuer, Bernard Zehrfuss, and Pier Luigi Nervi, architects. Paris, France.

Figure 2.37: Alberto Giacometti, *Three Men Walking* (1949). Bronze, 29 ¾" x 12 ½" x 13 1/8".

Figure 2.38: Alberto Giacometti, *Sculptures for One Chase Manhattan Plaza: Tall Women, Walking Man, Large Head* (1960). Bronze. Maeght Foundation, St. Paul-de Vence, France.

Figure 3.1: Pablo Picasso, Untitled (1967). Cor-ten steel, height 50'. Chicago Civic Center (1965). C.F. Murphy Associates. Chicago, Illinois.

Figure 3.2: Alexander Calder, *La Grande Vitesse* (1969). Painted sheet metal, height 43'. Grand Rapids City and County Buildings (1969). Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Vandenberg Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

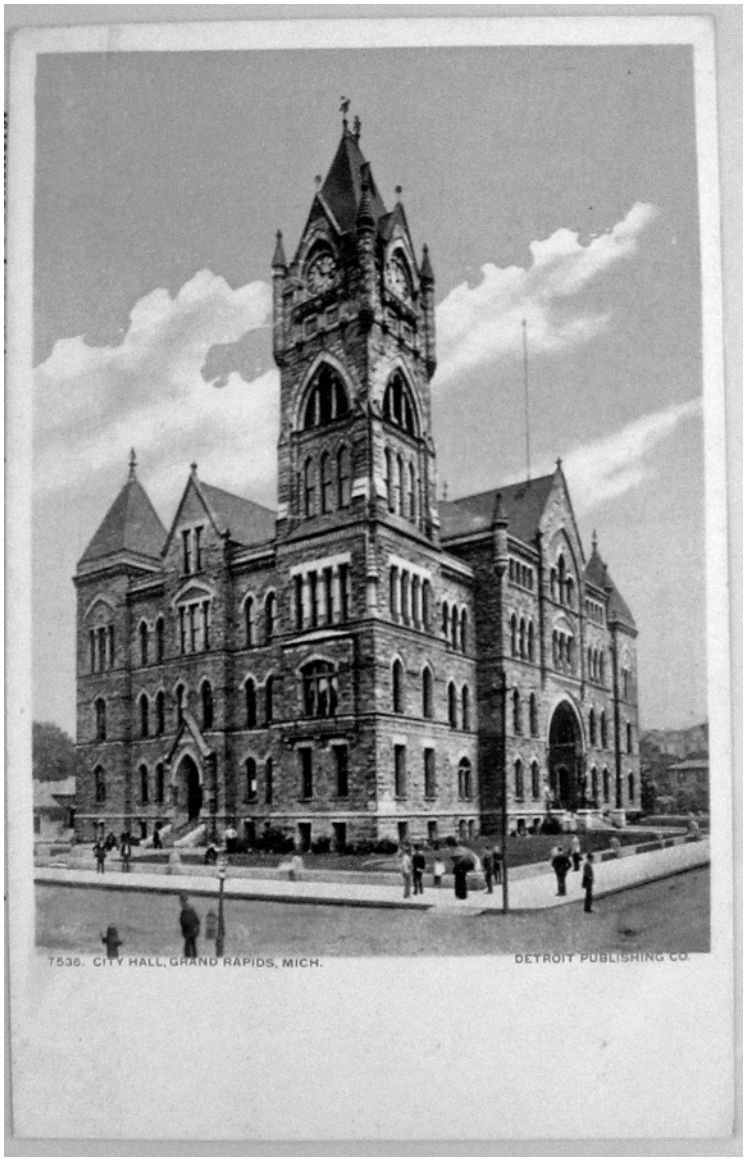
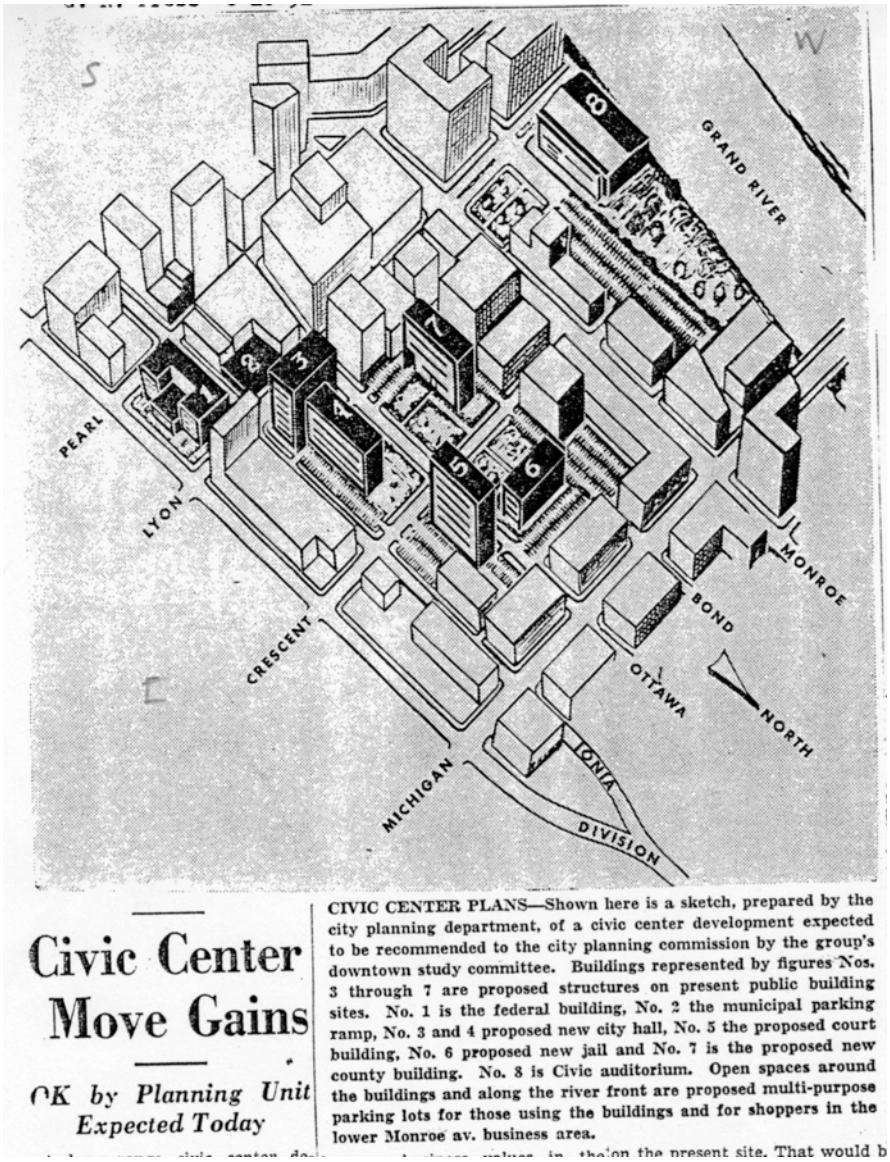


Figure 3.3: Postcard, Grand Rapids City Hall (1888). Elijah E. Myers, architect. Grand Rapids, Michigan (demolished).

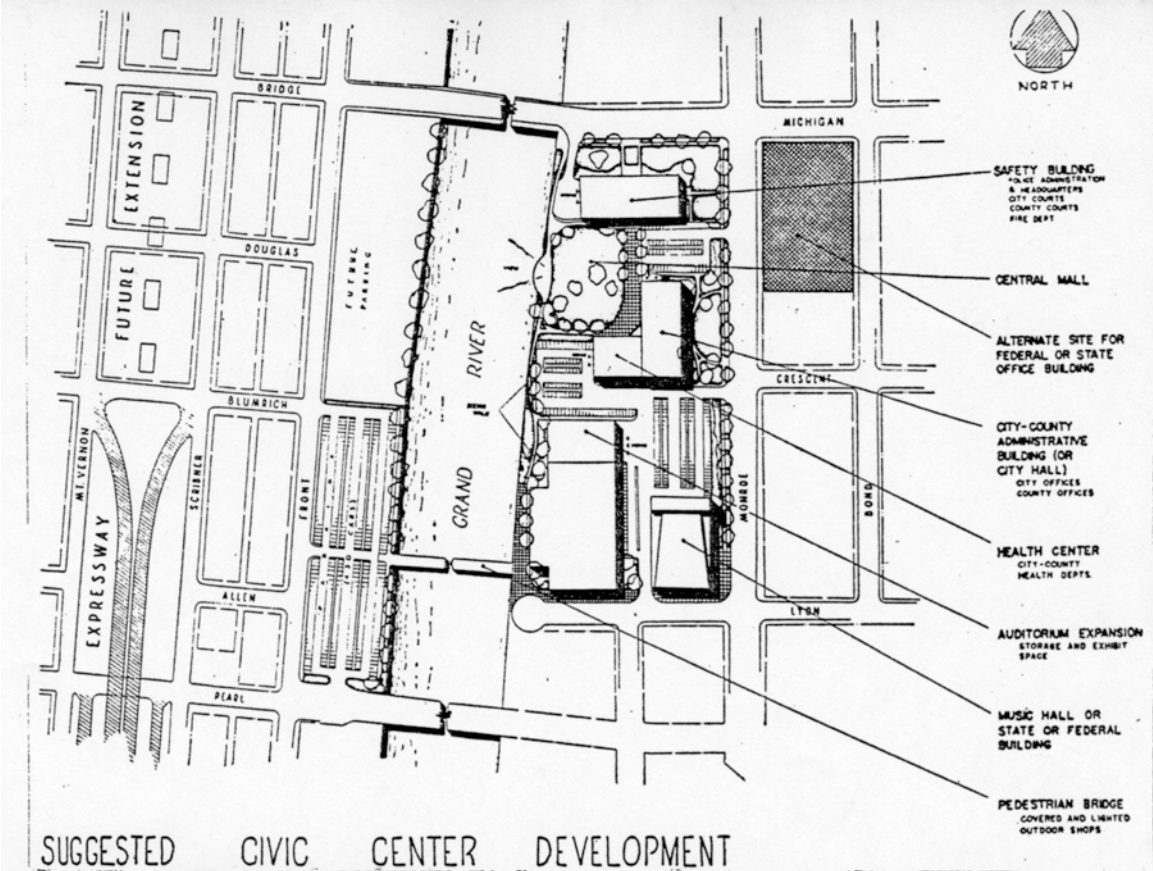


Civic Center Move Gains

OK by Planning Unit Expected Today

CIVIC CENTER PLANS—Shown here is a sketch, prepared by the city planning department, of a civic center development expected to be recommended to the city planning commission by the group's downtown study committee. Buildings represented by figures Nos. 3 through 7 are proposed structures on present public building sites. No. 1 is the federal building, No. 2 the municipal parking ramp, No. 3 and 4 proposed new city hall, No. 5 the proposed court building, No. 6 proposed new jail and No. 7 is the proposed new county building. No. 8 is Civic auditorium. Open spaces around the buildings and along the river front are proposed multi-purpose parking lots for those using the buildings and for shoppers in the lower Monroe av. business area.

Figure 3.4: Grand Rapids Civic Center plan, 1952.



SUGGESTED CIVIC CENTER DEVELOPMENT

PROPOSED FACE-LIFTING FOR DOWNTOWN—This diagram shows how the "core" of downtown would be shaped according to the civic center recommendations of Planning Director Keith M. Honey. Local government would be housed in the three buildings of the civic center north of Civic auditorium. A large parking lot along the west bank of Grand river would be adjacent to the US131 expressway, and a pedestrian bridge would give access to the civic center. Honey said this plan would allow logical growth of the downtown area so everything a citizen needs "is within walking distance of the central point."

Honey said his plans call for a concentration of government and business activity so that all the facilities a citizen needs to visit are within walking distance of the center.

He reported that buying the 9.4-acre river site now occupied by industry and retail stores in a "blight" area would cost an estimated $2,822,615—or more—and be costlier by $1,080,000 then developing the Ionia-Ottawa av.,

Honey said assessed valuations in the downtown "core" area have fallen $10,000,000 in the last 25 years.

Honey also said that although the riverfront location would cost $1,080,000 more, the city could recoup almost $500,000 of this by selling the three acres of city land north of the present city hall. This area, bounded by Lyon and Michigan sts., Ionia and Ottawa avs., could furnish room for

Figure 3.5: Grand Rapids Civic Center plan, 1956.

Figure 3.6: Grand Rapids Civic Center plan, 1963.

Figure 3.7: Grand Rapids City and County Buildings (1969). Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, architects. Vandenberg Center, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

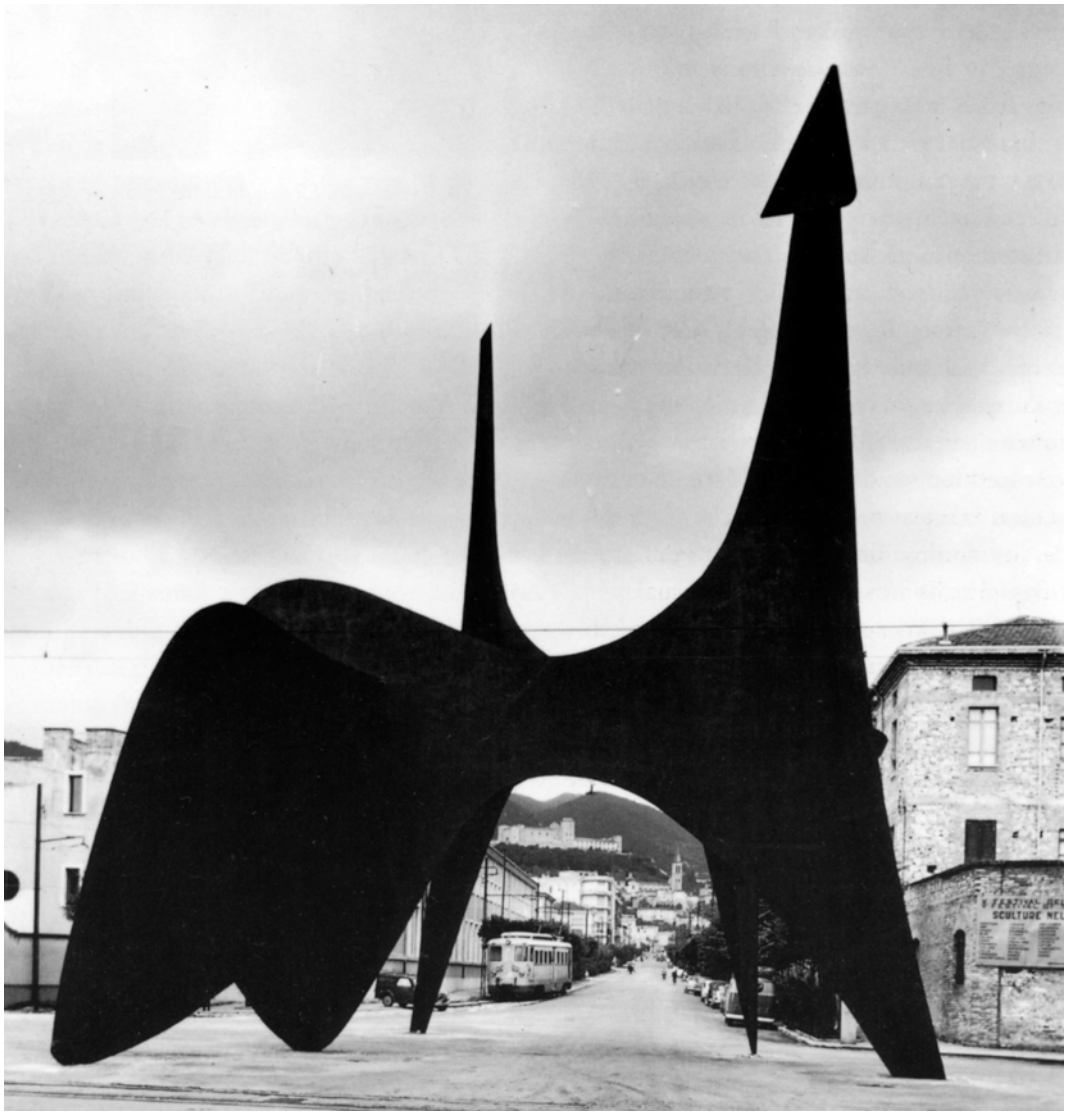


Figure 3.8: Alexander Calder, *Teodelapio* (1962). Painted sheet metal, height 59'. Spoleto, Italy.

Figure 3.9: Alexander Calder, *Whirling Ear* (1958). Painted sheet metal, 25' x 15'. United States Pavilion, Expo '58 (1958). Edward Durrell Stone, architect. Brussels, Belgium.

Figure 3.10: Installation view, *Alexander Calder: A Retrospective Exhibition*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 6 November 1964 – 31 January 1965, with *Bucephalus* (1963) at lower right.

Figure 3.11: Cecil and Ida Green Building (1962-64). I.M. Pei, architect. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

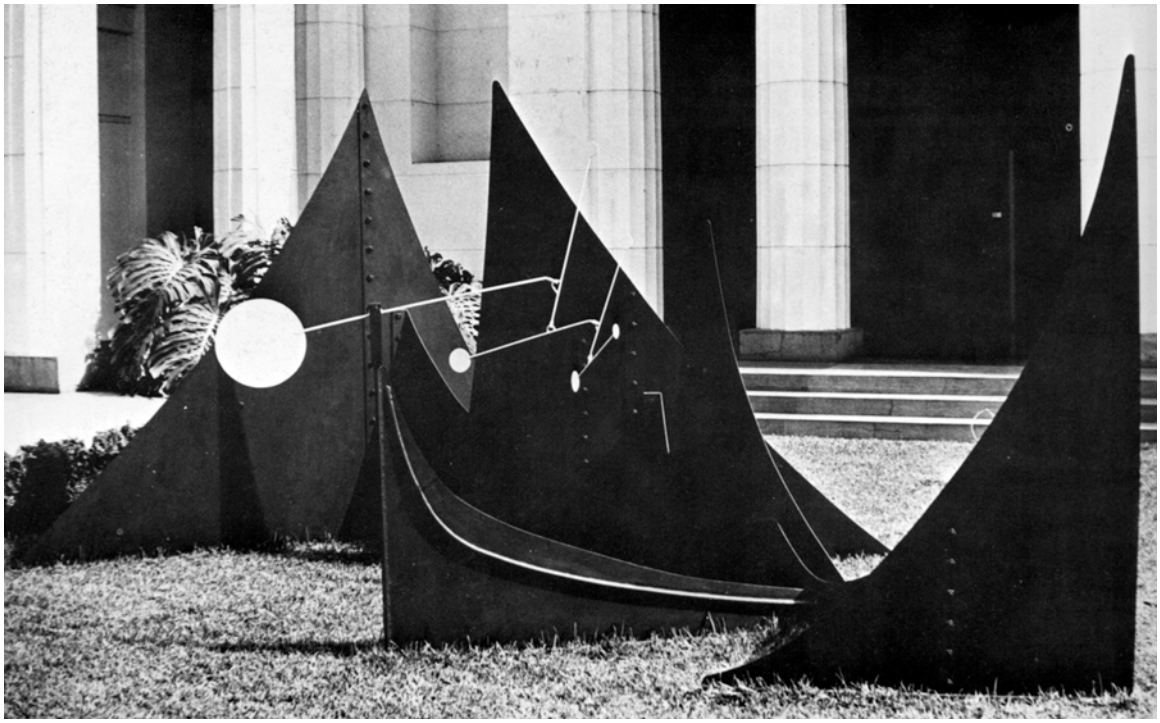


Figure 3.12: Alexander Calder, *The City* (1960). Painted sheet metal, 16’ 10 3/8”. Museo de Bellas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela.

Figure 3.13: Alexander Calder, *La Grande Voile* (1965). Painted sheet metal, height 40'. Cecil and Ida Green Building.

Figure 3.14: Alexander Calder, *The Gwenfritz* (1969). Painted sheet metal, Height: 34.5'. National Museum of History and Technology (1964). McKim, Mead & White, architects. Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.15: José de Rivera, *Infinity* (1967). Stainless steel, 13 x 8 x 16'. National Museum of History and Technology.

Figure 3.16: George Rickey, *Three Red Lines* (1966). Painted stainless steel, 37’ x 51 ¼”. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.17: Alexander Calder, *Object in Five Planes (Peace)* (1965). Painted steel. U.S. Mission to the United Nations, New York, New York.

Figure 3.18: Logo, City of Grand Rapids, Michigan circa 1969.

Figure 4.1: Tony Rosenthal, *Alamo* (1967). Painted Cor-Ten steel, height 15'. Astor Place, New York, New York.

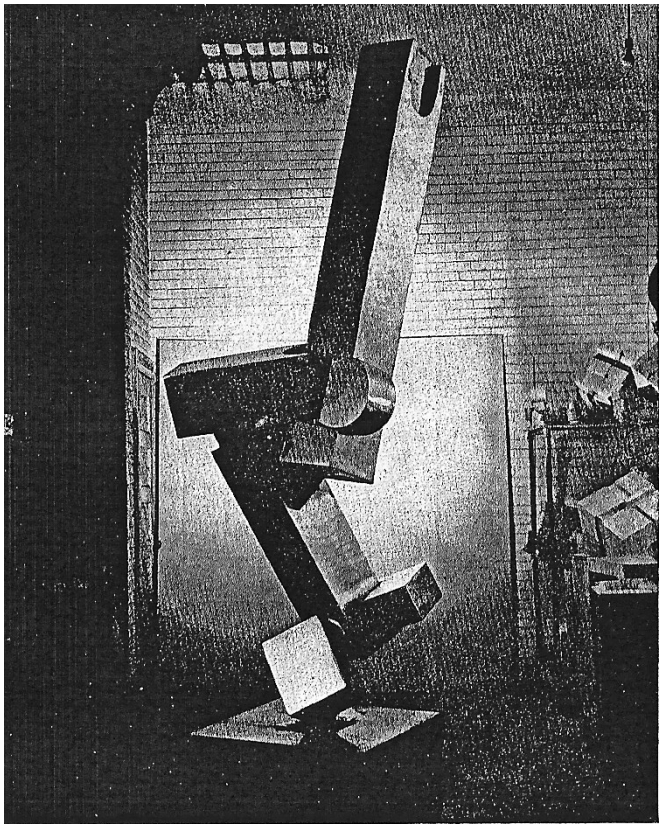


Figure 4.2: Tony Rosenthal, *Ahab* (1966). Bronze, height 10’ 10”.

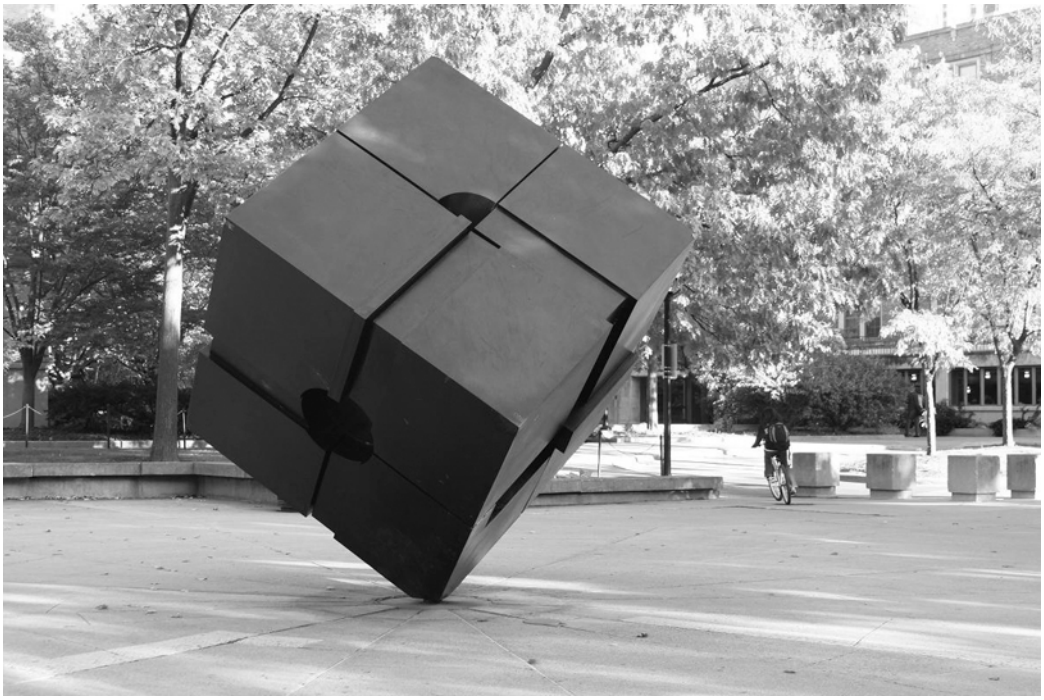


Figure 4.3: Tony Rosenthal, *Endover* (1968). Painted Cor-Ten steel, height 15'. Regents' Plaza, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Figure 4.4: Tony Rosenthal, *Cube in Seven Parts* (1968). Painted Cor-Ten steel, height 15'. Installation view, *Sculpture Downtown* (1969), Detroit, Michigan.

Figure 4.5: Barnett Newman, *Broken Obelisk* (1963-67). Cor-Ten steel, height 26'. Installation view in Seagram Plaza for *Sculpture in Environment*.

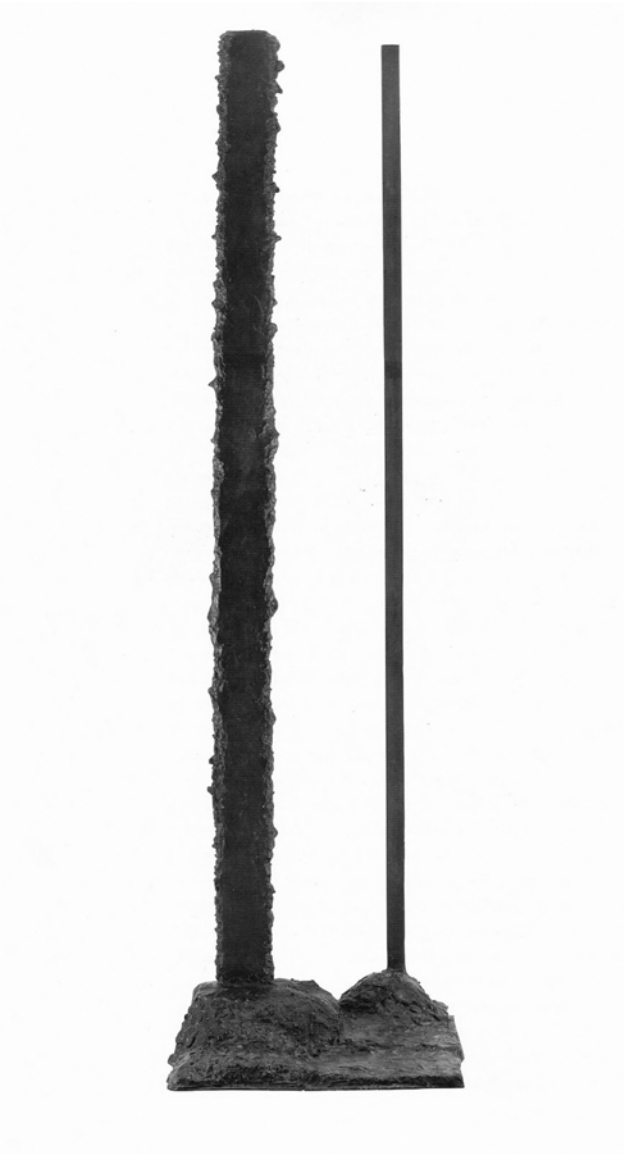


Figure 4.6: Barnett Newman, *Here I (To Marcia)* (1950/62). Bronze, 107 3/8 x 28 ¼ x 27 ¼". Moderna Museet, Stockholm.

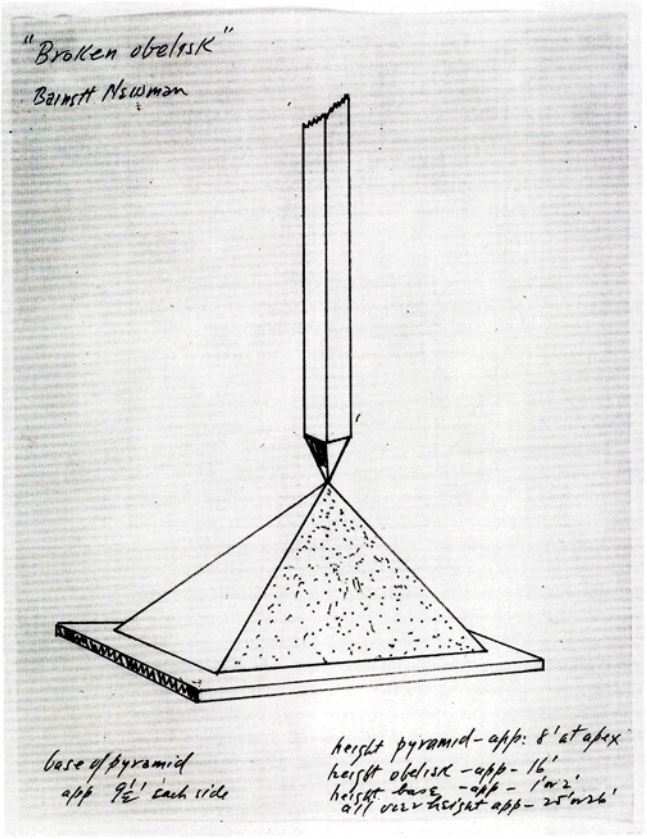


Figure 4.7: Barnett Newman, Undated drawing of *Broken Obelisk*. The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas.

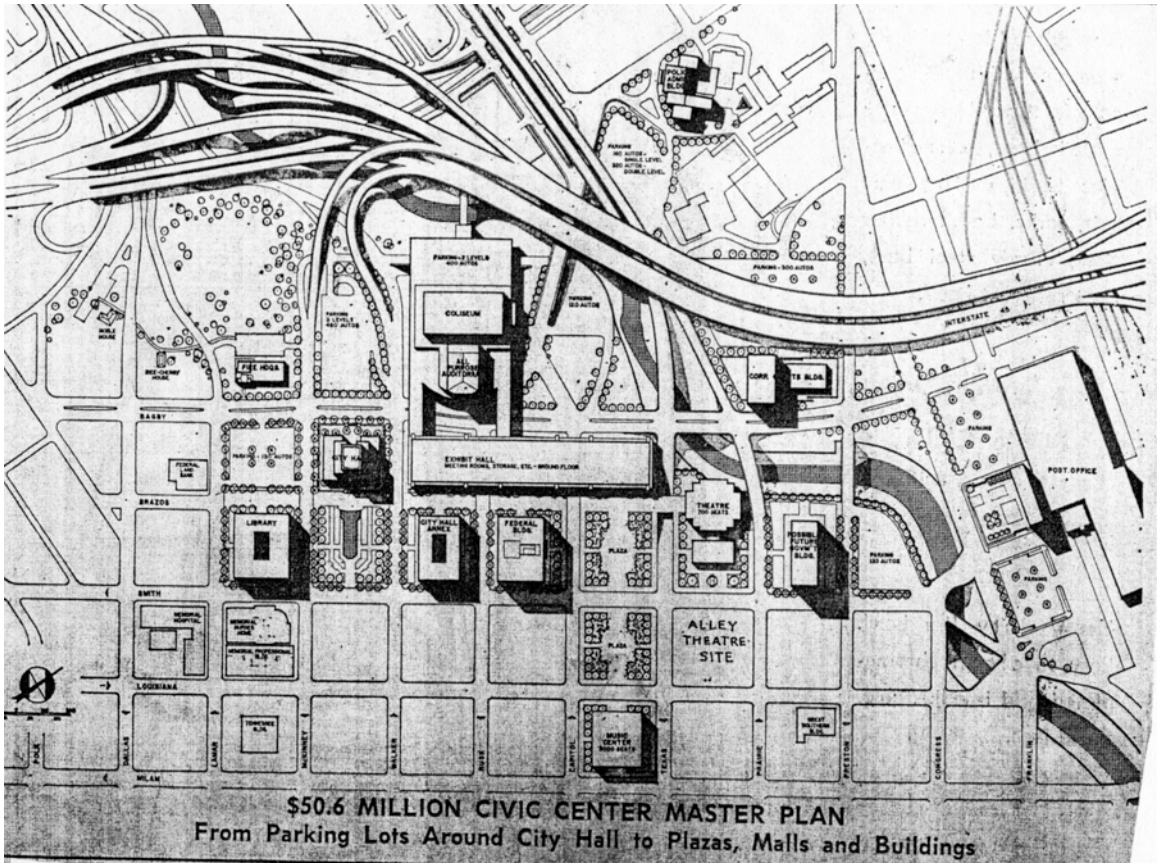


Figure 4.8: Houston Civic Center plan, 1962.

Figure 4.9: Frank Teich, *Richard W. "Dick" Dowling* (1905). Marble, height 30' (figure). Hermann Park, Houston, Texas.

Figure 4.10: Barnett Newman, *Broken Obelisk* (1963-67). Cor-Ten steel, height 24'. The Menil Collection, Houston, Texas.

Figure 4.11: Barnett Newman, *Broken Obelisk* (1963-67). Cor-Ten steel, height 24'. University of Washington, Seattle.

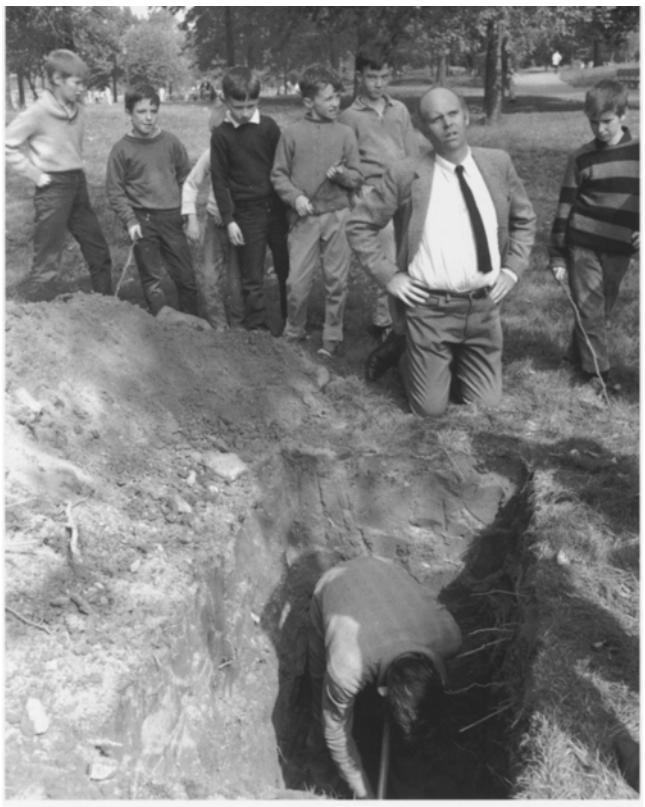


Figure 4.12: Claes Oldenburg, *Placid Civic Monument* (1967). Central Park, New York, New York.

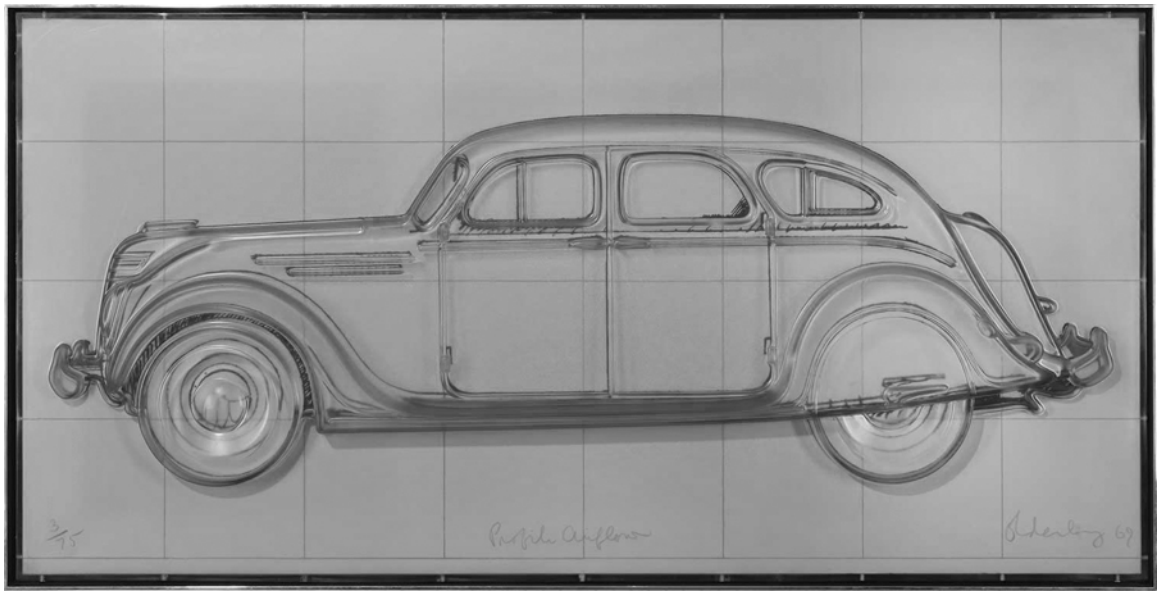


Figure 4.13: Claes Oldenburg, *Profile Airflow* (1969). Molded polyurethane relief over lithograph, 33 ¾ x 65 9/16 x 3 11/16". Edition of 75.

Figure 4.14: Claes Oldenburg, *Giant Ice Bag* (1969-70). Vinyl, steel, motors and blowers, fiberglass, paint, diameter 18'. Pompidou Center, Paris, France.

4.15: Lippincott Inc. advertisement with photographs of Claes Oldenburg, *Geometric Mouse – Scale A* (1969). Painted steel, ear diameter 6'. Edition 1 of 6.

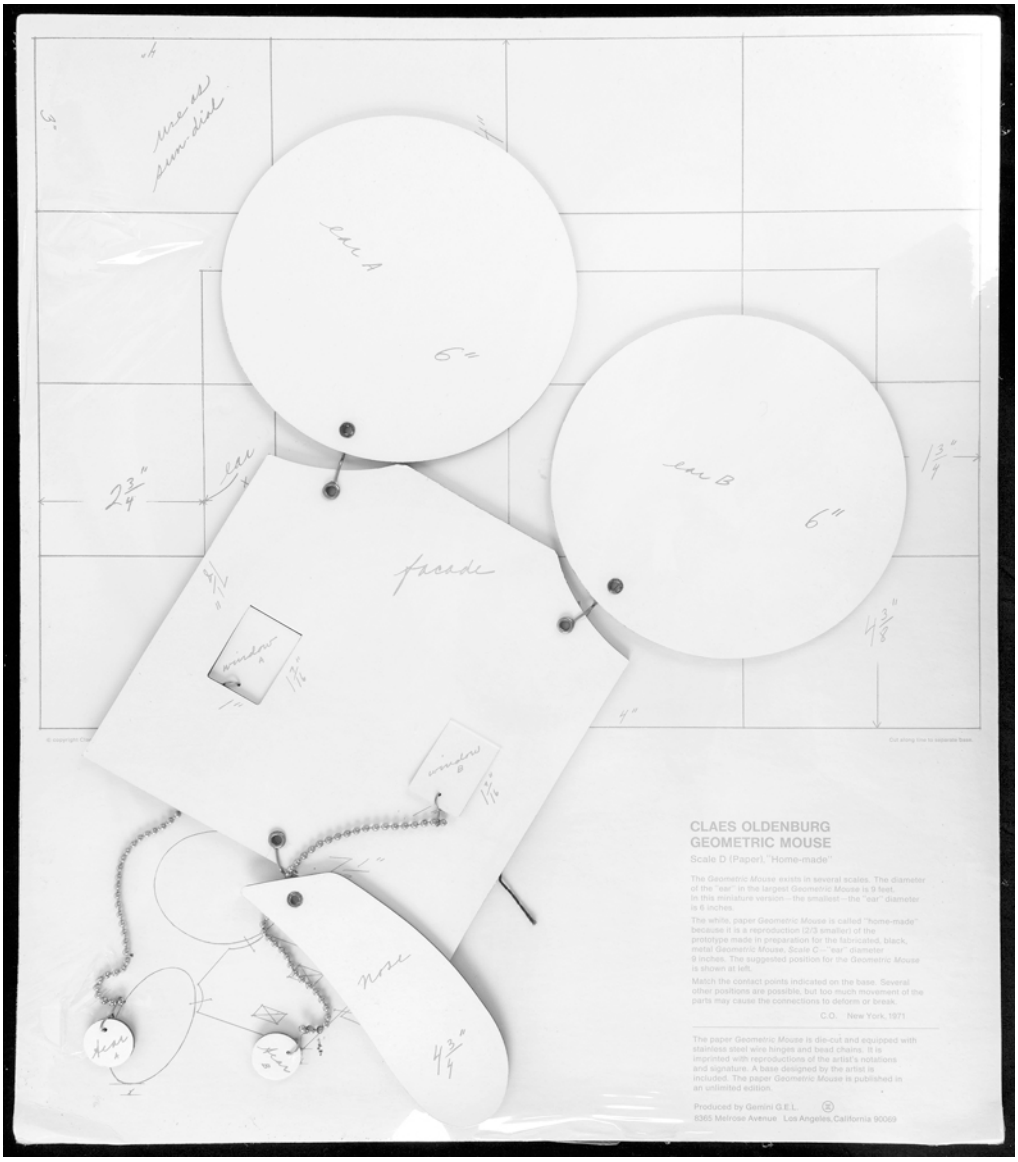


Figure 4.16: Claes Oldenburg, *Geometric Mouse – Scale D* (1971). Die cut laminated photo offset printed paper, stainless steel, 19 ½ x 16 ½". Unlimited edition.

Figure 4.17: Claes Oldenburg, *Soft Version of the Maquette for a Monument Donated to Chicago by Pablo Picasso* (1969). Canvas and rope, painted with acrylic, 38 x 28 ¾ x 21". Pompidou Center, Paris, France.

Figure 4.18: Robert Murray, *Windhover* (1970). Painted steel, 168 x 280 x 266". Installation view, Lippincott Inc. sculpture field.

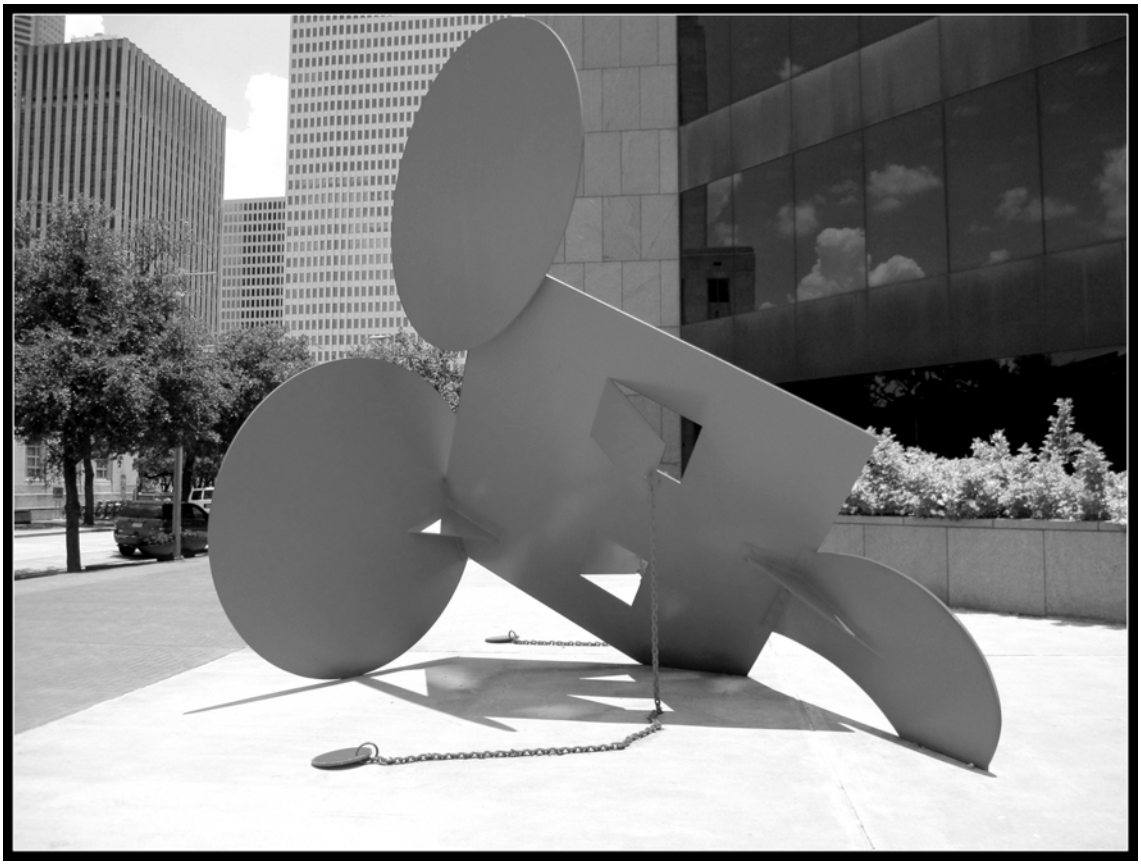


Figure 4.19: Claes Oldenburg, *Geometric Mouse, Scale X – Red* (1971). Painted steel, ear diameter 9'. Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas.

Figure 4.20: Cover, Houston Public Library brochure. Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

Figure 5.1: Robert Morris, *Grand Rapids Project* (1974). Length of ramps: 478'. Belknap Park, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Figure 5.2: Robert Morris, *Observatory* (1971). Approximate diameter 300'.

Figure 5.3: Claes Oldenburg, Clothespin (1976). Cor-Ten and stainless steels, 45’ x 12’ 3” x 4’ 6’. Centre Square Plaza, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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