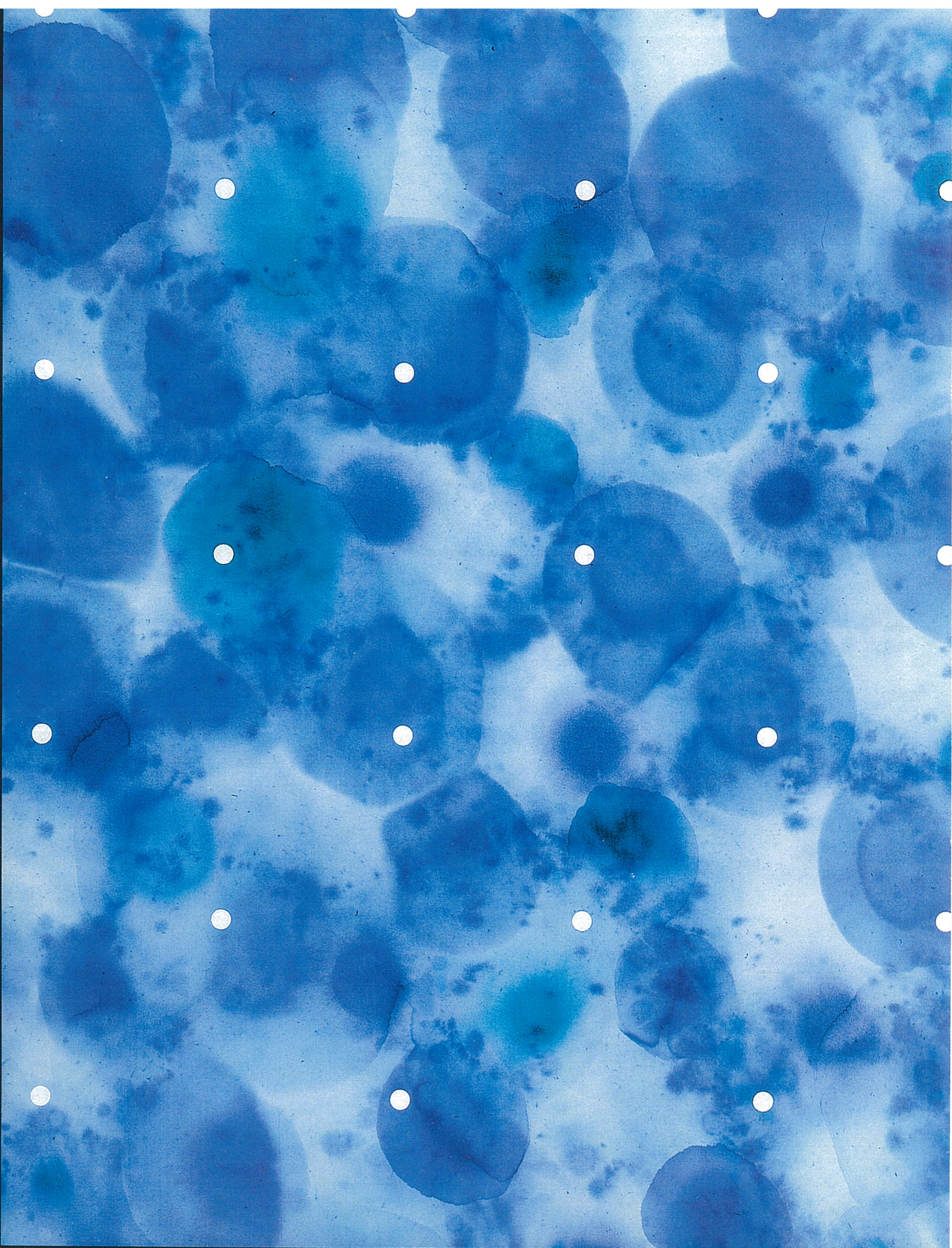


Artweek



■ Stan Welsh ■ Sara Roberts ■ Sherrie Wolfe ■ Jack Wax ■ Peter Zokosky

JULY/AUGUST 1998

\$4.00



Artweek

4 Off Main

by Sheila Lynch

5 Mixed Media

by Draza Fratto O'Brien

13 Features

Fractured Fairy Tales

by Terri Cohn

13

Monuments

by Ben Mitchell

14

A conversation with Lawrence Weschler, author

by Meredith Tromble

15

Confessions of a Phenomenologist

by Debra Koppman

17

Dada Fulfilled: Interactive Criticism

by Glenn Kurtz

18

A conversation with Mel Henderson, conceptual artist

by Patricia B. Sanders

18

20 Art Schools

A listing of college and university fine art programs located in the Eastern and Southern states

24 Reviews

Northern California

'Feed' at SF Camerawork

by Mark Van Proyen

24

Stan Welsh at Cabrillo Gallery

by Clarissa J. Ceglie

24

Timothea Campbell at Claudia

Chapline Gallery

by Harry Roche

25

Ed Osborn at the Fairfield Center

Gallery

by Sandy Thompson

25

Don Martin at the Museum of Art and

History

by Casey FitzSimons

26

Ann Hogle at the de Saisset Museum

by Frank Cebulski

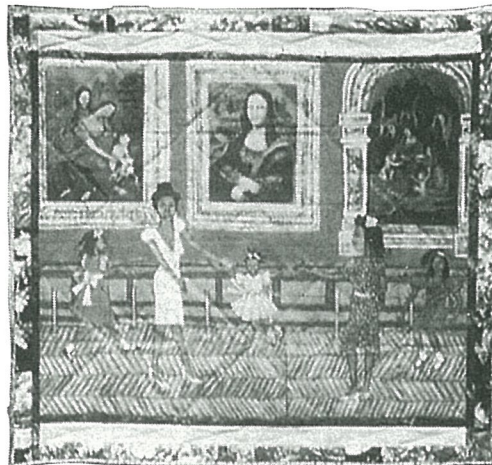
27

'The Secrets of Nature' at the Paradise

Wood Sculpturegrove

by Alicia Miller

27



Faith Ringgold, *The French Collection, Part 1: #1 Dancing at the Louvre*, 1991, acrylic on canvas with pieced fabric border.

page 13

Southern California

Sara Roberts at the Art Center College of Design

by Holly Willis

28

'Model of Decay' at the Center for

Land Use Interpretation

by Lane Barden

29

'COLA: 1997-98' at the LA Municipal Art Gallery

by Jeanne S. M. Willette

29

Peter Zokosky at Louis Stern Fine Arts

by Christopher Miles

30

David Schafer at the Dollhouse Gallery

by Mary-Kay Lombino

31

Doug Meyer at Remba Gallery

by Victoria Martin

32

Oregon

Sherrie Wolf at Margo Jacobsen Gallery

by Lois Allan

32

Richard Marquis at the Bullseye

Connection and the Seattle Art Museum

by Kate Bonansinga

33

Washington

Jack Wax at Elliott Brown Gallery

by Ron Glowen

34

Departments

News

2

Previews

6

Calendar

7

Competitions

36

Classifieds

39

Cover: Doug Meyer, detail of *Lost World*, 1997, acrylic on canvas, 100" x 75", at Remba Gallery, West Hollywood. page 32

Welcome to the world of fine impressions.

Quality Machinery For Printing

ETCHING
DRYPOINT
INTAGLIO
EMBOSSMENT
WOODCUT
LINOCUT

Call today for more information:
1-800-521-6016



ETTAN PRESS COMPANY
A Division of The Ettan Corporation



Alchemy in Light

making art glass

The internationally award winning film

by Kenneth Grimes

29 minutes
color
stereo

"Will thrill the artist in all of us ... Highly recommended ..." *Library Journal*

"Mesmerizing ... truly sensual experience ... a fascinating ode to a timeless art." *Booklist*

"Gorgeous cinematography, pulsing sound track ... a wonderful viewing experience ... Highly recommended." *Video Librarian*

Roaring Rabbit Pictures
P.O. Box 1243
Santa Monica, CA 90406-1243
(310) 854-8838

For more information find Alchemy on the web at www.RoaringRabbitPictures.com

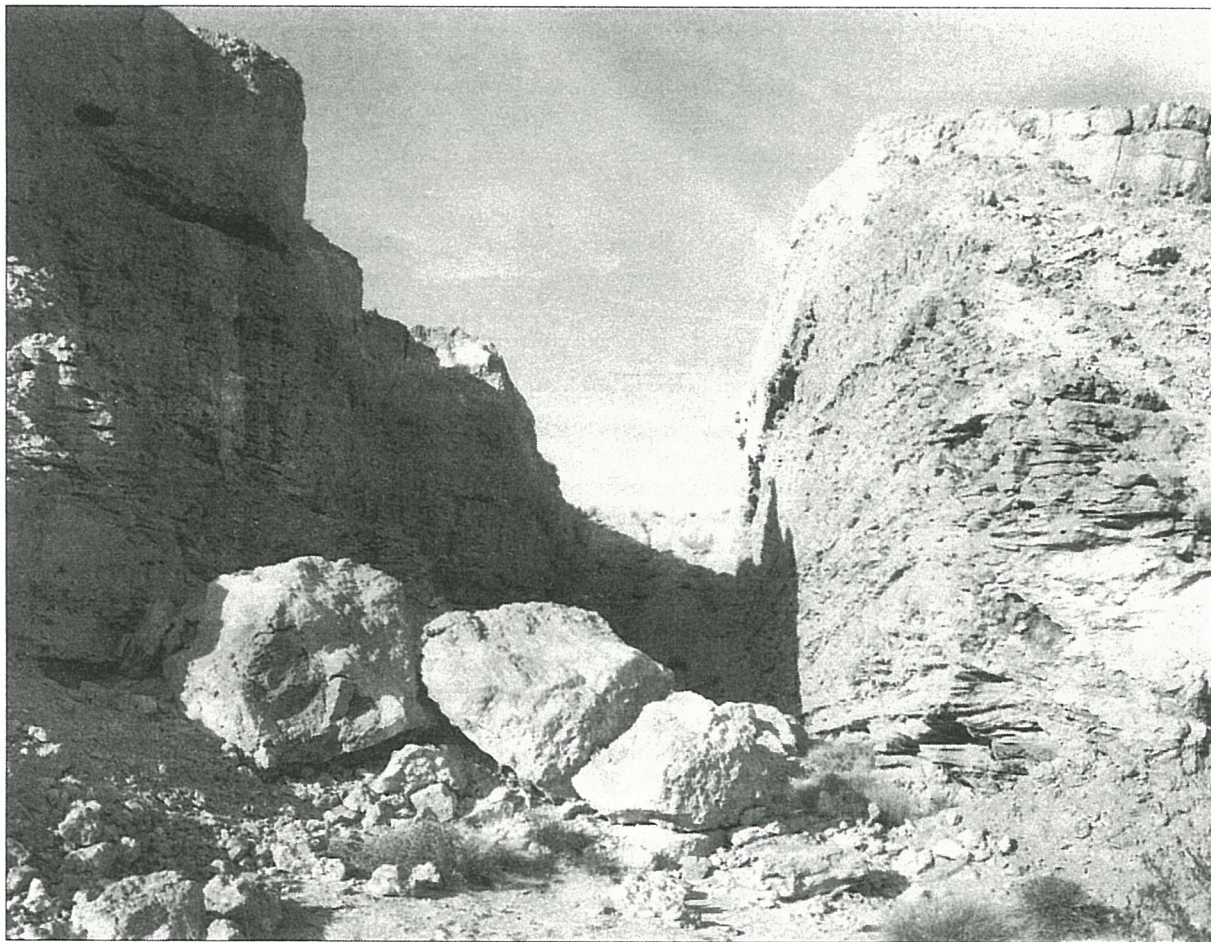
To order a VHS video cassette send \$22.95 payable to: Roaring Rabbit Pictures. Shipping and handling included. CA residents add 8.25% sales tax (\$1.65 per tape)

fogged green hills surrounding us in all directions, but part of my life nonetheless, marking out some of the territory of my childhood. But I never really saw those three monuments: what occupies our attention is seen and absorbed so thoroughly into the locale of our day-to-day consciousness it simply disappears, is submerged, only to resurface later, sometimes when least expected. Looking back today I can just barely sense a memory-tinge of fascination with the simple beauty of the mound shaped so like a miniature Appalachian foothill, the exotic mystery of the boundary stele, the fine detail of the stone man's hand where it grasped the bronze musket.

The mound, the stele, and the carved stone man are each, in this present and in the enduring present of memory, static, immutable, and vibrant with a kind of physical and visual emptiness. They have the presence of absence.

Years later I was walking one day north and east through Central Park on the way to the Metropolitan Museum. I left the park near 79th Street and walked on up Fifth Avenue. Approaching the museum from the south I saw, for the first time in my life I guess, a piece of sculpture. How can we wrap words around those numinous moments in our lives when all the veils and assumptions, preconceptions, weights, and sacks of history and personality drop away and we finally, fully, see, see with our whole bodies, with all our senses raw and open and pulsing? On the plaza-like sidewalk at the south edge of the museum stands Noguchi's *Unidentified Object*, a monolithic block of black basalt, 11 feet high and 7 feet wide at its base. At the moment I came out of the park, turned uptown, and walked toward *Unidentified Object*, I discovered—there's no other way to say this—an entire museum contained in a single, massive stone. A stone which dwarfs the Metropolitan's Greek Revival enormity, that rises higher into the space surrounding it than the Fifth Avenue mansions and exclusive apartments that face it. Though only roughly, minimally worked—really just pitted and gouged by hammer and chisel—Noguchi's work spoke about verities more durable than any of the urban extravagance around it. I walked around and around it. I crossed the street to look back at it. I stared. I tried to draw it, to absorb it through my eyes, my skin. I remember wondering why all the passers-by weren't drawn to the stone the same way that I was, stopped, stunned like I was. In that moment part of me wanted to weep, another part to just lay my head back and howl with the unexpected joy of discovery. (For a thoughtful explication of *Unidentified Object*, see Roger Lipsey's "Mysteries of the Spirit," in the January 1997 *Artweek*.)

Sculpture is a celebration of the common stuff from which everything is made, the elemental—earth, stone, wood, metal. It is also a place for dialogue between



and earthworks, all comprise, each in their own way, a promise of continuity for us. Whether laden with history's grandeur and misery, weighed down by the savage temporality of political dispute, tricked-up with false pride, or infused by artists with the complex pleasures of seeing, monumental sculpture signifies for us all a kind of longing and desire, an expectancy we call by its simple, resonant name, hope.

Ben Mitchell is the director of the Sheehan Gallery at Whitman College, Walla Walla.

space and the imagination, a meeting ground. Drawn out of nature, sculpture is nature reformed by the hands and in the imagination, and then offered back, changed, a place where time and space conjoin. Contained by the emptiness which surrounds it, yet flaring outward into that emptiness, sculpture is a kind of hope, a silent flight of something into nothing, of mass into emptiness.

Those monuments of my childhood had formed a kind of triangulated empty place in me, a place into which I did not or could not see. They were invisible, somehow, with an invisibility bred of familiarity, ignorance, profanity, and violation: the gutting and vandalism of that mound and of mounds and petroglyphs all up and down the river, the arrogant marking out of colonial empire, a public celebration of the murder and plunder of the valley's original inhabitants. *Unidentified Object*, in the briefest instant of a glance, a single breath, filled that emptiness. That single stone carefully chosen at the quarry, marked and shaped by chisels and hammers, and hoisted up on a base, somehow offered me the challenge of seeing—both within that precise moment, and back into the shapes and monuments of my childhood. Perhaps that is art's gift to us: out of its hushed, still presence it enables us to see not only the object before us, but also to glimpse something more of ourselves, something of our history, and something, perhaps, of our future.

"Their forms," John Berger says of sculptures, "obey the same laws of assembly as the fruit or leaves on a tree. They are assembled in such a way that they promise continuity, not the continuity of a logical series, but of growth." They are from nature and in dialogue with nature, the elemental transformed through craft and the imagination. Art is a mirror not merely of ourselves but also of our relationship with the elemental world and with all that we have inherited from that world. And all these monuments—the prehistoric structures, the political markers and boundaries, the heroic figures in our town squares and parks, and today's contemporary bronzes, carved stones, fabricated images,

A conversation with Lawrence Weschler, author

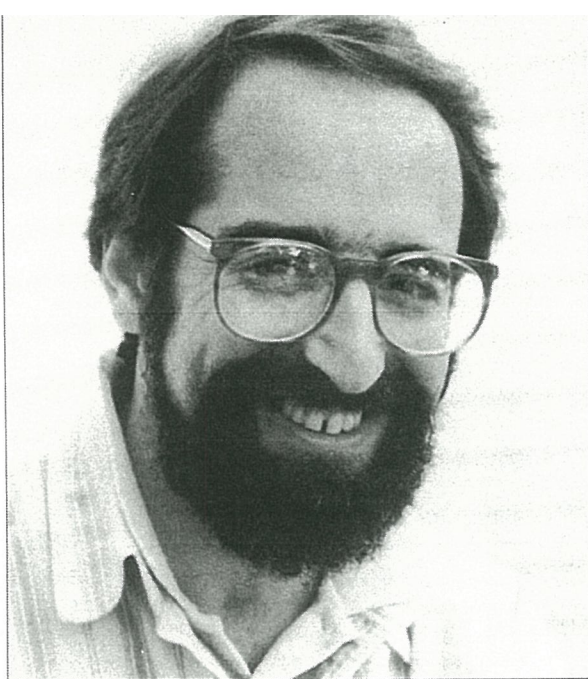
By Meredith Tromble

The "bookstore"—really a bookshelf—of the Museum of Jurassic Technology, a remarkable, continuing performance/installation in Los Angeles, displays Lawrence Weschler's book about the museum, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonders*, in French and Italian. Perhaps the

English version would be too revealing—David Wilson, the museum's creator and proprietor, never breaks character—but since *Mr. Wilson* was an international success (it was shortlisted for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award and also has been translated into German, Polish and Korean) it may help ensure the museum's survival as Wilson fundraises to buy the museum's building and save it from destruction.

Weschler's first book, *Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees*, a profile of artist Robert Irwin, earned him a staff writer spot at the *New Yorker*. *Seeing is Forgetting* was followed by two books on Polish politics, then Weschler returned to artist subjects for *David Hockney's Cameraworks* and *Shapinsky's Karma, Boggs's Bills*. His next project, *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers* took him to Brazil and Uruguay; his most recent book, *Calamities of Exile*, has just been released by The University of Chicago Press.

Artweek In a passionate moment in your new book, *Calamities in Exile*, the painter Breyten Breytenbach, who was sentenced to the "gooseshit" brown world of a South African prison for nine years, describes the intensity with which he felt the bits of color that occasionally entered his prison. When a toffee wrapper floated over the wall, he experienced the sight as an explosion of color. The quality



Lawrence Weschler, author.

and intensity of his experience were so heightened that, when he was released, he thought normal people were zombies because they didn't notice the world's colors.

Lawrence Weschler He broke into paradise. Robert Irwin says the biggest miracle of all the miracles is perceiving yourself perceiving. The first paragraph I ever published, in *Seeing is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees*, tells the story of Irwin accepting an honorary degree at the San Francisco Art Institute. It was a beautiful blue day, he goes up to the podium to address the graduating class and he says, "I wasn't going to accept this degree, except that it occurred to me that unless I did I wasn't going to be able to say that ... All I want to say is that the wonder is still there." Then he walks away.

AW *One of the pleasures of reading your work is that, although it offers many fresh insights into art, it doesn't follow the conventions of art criticism. In a recently published essay, Michael Brenson, art critic for the New York Times, says that the forms of writing about art have become so standardized you know exactly what's going to happen when you start reading them. That's never true of your work.*

LW I'm a rank amateur with no credentials. I'm totally out of my depth, whether I'm covering Yugoslavia or Robert Irwin. But I'm curious, open to being amazed, dazzled and baffled by what I'm writing about. I don't approach it with a baggage of expert knowledge.

AW *You cover a wide variety of topics that are not, at least on the surface, related. Is there any common, underlying theme?*

LW When I was in Poland, writing about Solidarity, they used to talk about Solidarity as an expression of the subjectivity of the Polish people, by which they meant the capacity of the Polish nation to act as the subject of history rather than the object. This entity which had been content to be the object of other people's sentences was becoming the subject, the initiator of the action. It's a grammatical transformation—the object of sentences becomes the subject. And that is what political uprisings are. Martial law and torture are attempts to take people who have been acting like subjects and turn them back into objects. Resistance is the attempt to refuse that. That eruption of passion can happen with countries or to individuals.

Another way of putting it is that I'm interested in people or places who are just kind of moseying down the street one day when suddenly they catch fire. That's true of Robert Irwin, who was a fairly ordinary abstract expressionist painter until suddenly he caught fire, and David Hockney who started taking a few snapshots and became completely obsessed, and David Wilson, a guy on the outskirts of Hollywood who went from being an object to being a subject. When you see entire nations go through that transformation it can be enthralling. When you see individuals go through it, it sometimes can be pretty comic. Irwin dismantling his artistic practice until he's in a room by himself is a fairly hilarious situation, but it's also filled with passion and wonder.

Another theme is what I would describe as the workings of grace, which is to say that you work and you work and you work at something that then happens by itself. It would not have happened without all the prior work, but the work isn't the cause of it happening. There's all the work and then there's something beyond that, grace. Painters talk about it when they're describing painting a painting and revolutionaries talk about it—Solidarity worked and worked for years. Nobody was responding. Then the situation caught fire.

These themes leapfrog from my political writing to the cultural writing. I'm often told that my stuff seems all over the map. How could somebody write about tor-

ture in Brazil and minimalist painting? Within the art world, how can you both enjoy David Hockney's photo collages and Robert Irwin's empty rooms? But I feel like I'm always writing about the same things, passion and wonder.

AW *How would you describe your own passion?*

LW Where I get obsessed, where I catch fire, is in taking the chaotic welter of the world and imposing a form of narrative on it. At one level, the world is pure chaos. The extent to which it isn't is a continually reasserted achievement.

AW *You usually focus on subjects who are not very well known—David Hockney is the exception. So your fascination isn't with the "importance" of the artist.*

LW I'm not particularly interested in writing about celebrities, about people that you already know. You might pick one of my stories up and read it for a page or two to see if it gets interesting. I want to hook you on it through sheer narrative energy, so that about half way through you begin to realize it's about the most important thing in the world. But you approached it from a side angle. Like going to the Museum of Jurassic Technology, which seems to be totally larky and ridiculous—half way through the book you begin to realize this is really important. It's about how to be in the world, it's about the famishment of the sense of wonder and connecting with it again. If I were to say, "I'm now going to tell you about how your life lacks wonder," your eyes would roll back in your skull. Who cares? Or if I were to say, "I'm now going to tell you about what it's like to be tortured and about your complicity in other people being tortured," of course you'd say, "I don't need that."

AW *In your reporting, you find a number of surprising echoes between art and politics. For example, in Calamities of Exile, Breyten Breytenbach sees the beginnings of his country's tragic history in a painting by Vermeer.*

LW It's not surprising that everything human beings do is related. But there's a tendency to categorize, splitting things off from each other. Go back to *Mr. Wilson* and think about the world before the split-offs occurred, the world of wonder cabinets, before things were broken into science museum, technology museum, natural history museum, art museum. All these things were in one place, which is where they should be. Which is weirder, that you would have an amazing stone next to a painting or that you wouldn't? In this society you don't, so the people that are enthralled with geology wouldn't dream of being enthralled with painting. Or painters, conversely, can't see what the point is of being interested in DNA. One tries to recapture a world where passion and wonder were polymorphous.

Meredith Tromble is editor-in-chief of *Artweek*.

Fairy Tales

continued from page 13

layer of meaning Rollman uncovered later in her explorations. This process of discovery also exemplifies the artist's attraction to "the dark side of fluffier things," a tendency which she accentuates by sewing many of her sculptures from fabric, which also lends them vulnerability.

Like those used by Ringgold and Kokin, the stories Rollman chooses have a strong autobiographical component, in her case having to do with her childhood experience of Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a painful and temporarily paralyzing disease. The prodding and suffering involved at this formative time in her life, as well as her relationship to doctors and the necessity of having to do everything she was told, have reinforced the artist's attraction to these metaphoric animal stories of illness, loss, pain and recovery, and the mediums with which she works.

Yet, in considering the motivations for contemporary artists' attraction to children's stories and construction of adult narratives from purposefully naive perspectives, it is well to remember that appreciation of their intimate nature or the cultural critique they embody is not predicated on knowledge of the artist's lives. In fact, it is the ambiguity inherent in the eclectic manifestations of their tales that makes them so personally pleasurable and universally germane.

Terri Cohn is a contributing editor to *Artweek*.

Michelle Rollman, *In which a pig flies*, 1994, feathers, fabric, duck wings, hardware, 40" x 25" x 28".

