RECEPTIVE SPACE

by

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture on June 6th, 1988
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Visual Studies

ABSTRACT

Celebrating human sensorium in such a way as to activate our capacity
for seeing and feeling the world and ourselves anew is at the heart of my
environmental work. A receptive space is an inviting space that
encourages people to explore its physicality with their own bodies. In an
effort to use materials which can convey an empathy with, rather than
contrast to, our bodies, I incorporated various industrial materials and
methods into the fabrication process, namely polyurethane foams,
polyethylene films and various rubbers. These materials suggest by their
particular chemical composition, which can be varied according to my
design needs, the tactual qualities (soft, pliable, warm) I desire to
physically incorporate into my work. By means of introducing receptive
spaces via sculptural forms into particular places, I am attempting to
reawaken in people a sense of harmony between mind, body and
environment.

Thesis Supervisor: Otto Piene
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I thank Bob Tarbell and David Ketcham of Sealed Air Corporation for their generous support of my sculpture projects utilizing polyurethane foams. It would not have been possible for me to create the projects I came here to do without this essential encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and brother for their moral support and friendship. I couldn't have done this without you. Ned and I graduate together once again.

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(Photographs of installations by Atsushi Ogata and C.M. Judge)
The Waking

I wake to sleep and take my waking slow.
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;
I wake to sleep and take my waking slow.

Great Nature has another thing to do
To you and me; so take the lively air,
And, Lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.
What falls away is always. And is near.
I wake to sleep and take my waking slow.
I learn by going where I have to go.

- Theodore Roethke  1955
PROLOGUE
In our daily lives we are affected by our environment. The layered continuum and interplay of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual realms define our experiences. Seeing connections between and within these layered "events" is at the heart of the creative process.

**Harbingers of Creative Process**

If one is willing to concede to this multi-dimensional interpretation of our world, as I am, it follows that Marylin Whiteside's description of the creative individual's response to life is illuminating.

Mysticism and creativity have this in common; they require a person to live truthfully at every level of being, (Truth, writes Auden, "is knowing that we lie.") It is truthfulness that releases us from our bondage to the dark, veiled forces within our consciousness. It is truthfulness that gives us back our sense of kinship with other creatures and with all that is common to creatureliness. When a skid row derelict kills his closest friend in a moment of
desperation, we need to know that we have the same potential for destruction, despair, disloyalty. To deny this bond is a form of judgment rooted in self-conceit.¹

Connection and empathy with and for the world and its inhabitants vitalizes the human spirit - it is a driving force behind works of art which celebrate life.

The divorce of nature and culture has been at the root of our fragmented notion of existence. Until relatively recent times, nature and culture were intimately connected. Philip Carlos Paratore describes this fragmentation as being "about as debilitating to ecology as the separation of mind and body to philosophy." In an effort to bridge these painful gaps Marilyn Whiteside tells us

The task of the creative individual is to unite, to find harmony in the midst of the discord and love where enmity prevails. Like the mystics, the creator perceives a world of myriad parts that ultimately meld into One. Genuinely creative work
is, at core, a form of worship, an excursion into the unconscious - 'the house of god' - in an effort to manifest the source of life through ideas and products, as holy people reveal it through the quality of their lives. Einstein once observed that 'the serious research scholar in our generally materialistic age is the only deeply religious human being'. And Pablo Picasso was describing the saint as well as the painter when he said: 'it is not what the artist does that counts, but what he is'.

Celebrating oragnicism may well seem to be an archaic pursuit with the dematerialization of the object by the scientist, who for example, can affect the physical world by scratching out numbers and equations on a blackboard or by artists, like Irwin, Turrell and Wortz, who in their "Invisible Project" talked about art which never materialized except in the words used to describe it. And although futurist prophecies by such men as Marshall McLuhan, Alvin Tofler, Buckminster Fuller and Herman Kahn make reference to a time when our biological matter, as it is lived by each of us today, may well be considered inessential (due to technologies such as artificial
intelligence/cybernetics which may provide "superior" alternatives to biological existence); the fact is that the organic/psychobiological world we experience today must be reckoned with - we have choices to make now which will immediately affect the quality of life in the near future. It makes sense, then, to have art which celebrates our current "essential biology" (and perhaps in the future - celebrations of our inessential biology) and its relationship to the world it inhabits - the manmade and natural environments.

Uncertainties about the future of man-kind has affected an untold number of artists throughout the years. As early as 1945, sculpture by Theodore Roszak reflected this concern. Roszak rejected hard-edged Precisionism, a machine aesthetic that characterized his work until that time, which is expressed in the following statement:

The constructivist's position, historically, with its influence upon architecture and engineering design had been and is an important one, continuing to
have its effect upon artists and designers alike. At the same time that these "constructive" purposes and intentions exist, the world is fundamentally and seriously disquieted and it is difficult to remain unmoved and complacent in its midst.³

After 1945 Roszak rejected the polished chromium surfaces of his machine-tooled constructions for steel assemblages whose welded and brazed surfaces were pitted and coarse. He tells us of his inspiration at this time:

The forms that I find necessary to assert are meant to be blunt reminders of primordial strife and struggle, reminiscent of those brute forces that not only produces life, but in turn threatened to destroy it. I feel that if necessary one must be ready to summon one's total being with an all-consuming rage against those forces that are blind to the primacy of life-giving values. Perhaps by this sheer dedication, one may yet merge with grace.⁴
By painful experience we have learnt that rational thinking does not suffice to solve the problems of our social life. Penetrating research and keen scientific work have often had tragic implications for mankind, producing, on the one hand, inventions which liberated man from exhausting physical labor, making life easier and richer; but on the other hand, introducing a grave restlessness into his life, making him a slave to his technological environment, and - most catastrophic of all - creating the means of his own mass destruction.5

Albert Einstein
1948
From disturbance

Into harmony
If 'The movement of passage from disturbance into harmony is that of the most intense life' (John Dewey, *Art as Experience*) then the artist is the most privileged of beings - and the most tormented.

It is the integration of the internal self with the external self which produces a finished art work that is uniquely mine. The process of integration is complex, exhilarating, and disturbing. It is physical as well as psychological. When the turmoil of emotion or 'disturbance' is resolved into 'harmony of realized form...that is realized form like no other, then we may have art.6

Harriet Casdin-Silver

A few years ago, I was faced with the slow, painful death my husband experienced after a three year struggle with leukemia. Potentially impending death has a way of reordering one's priorities. Enduring a struggle for physical, emotional, and
spiritual survival sensitizes one. Physical decay is as real as physical growth. These are polarities within the same process. And although one may choose to experience this realm as an intellectual process (understanding the generation of living things); it is also always a specific manifestation of a particular aspect of the process which avails itself to one of us at a particular time in our lives. Our physical being depends on the process each and every moment we breathe, see, feel, touch or hear. The significance of physical necessity is most readily seen in examples where human life itself, or the quality of that life, is at stake. However to my eyes, the same kind of necessity exists in the articulation of physical form. Shortly after Ruth Vollmer’s husband’s tragic death, she violated the integrity of pure geometry by labouring hard to enliven each sculpture with evidences of her hand (patinas, filings, torching, and impressions from natural objects like seashells). Her objective to make known human presence by layering these abstract forms with textures, evidencing a strong physical and intellectual involvement with the
structure of the sculptures.

Sculptor, Christine Woelfle writes in a letter to a friend of an awareness of her physicality in a poetic description of her trip to Baxter State Park:

...the temperature shifts at Baxter. Exhilarating plunges into cold sparkled blue black heights momentarily friendly. A sudden blindness reconciled only by unfathomably distant illusory points of assumed fire. Gone God-like, keeping my eyes soft, my body tense and rigid. Because I know that midday I'll be wrapped in perfect golden attention. Parts of me turn inside out and I receive a blessing that surfaces as drops of sweetness. Everything becomes fluid and it sits on my skin like a jab of light that has been rolled out and stretched and has forgotten my head. The warmth of my hands shapes rock shards into perfect curves so that the inside of my palm becomes the mold for the world. My thoughts. My feelings. But as I lie down in the footpath tucking one of my stones under the back of my neck, lodging another in the small of my back and a freshly made one lying askew on my navel. I close my eyes. It is dark. The warmth dissipates
into those points of light that scratch through to pronounce their everlasting existence and distance.7

The "warmth of my hand" molded not stones for me, but canvas in a series of sculptures I created titled "Relief Paintings." They are an expression of concern for the physicality of the canvas and paint. Also an attempt to rediscover physical harmony in the face of "dis-ease" or lack of body harmony and its various manifestations and consequences.

Needing to paint, yet wanting to go beyond the idea of painting in the sense of a flat, stretched canvas to which one applies paint, I began to develop a method which was appropriate to my vision. The process involved molding canvas using polyvinyl acetate before applying paint. This process of molding the canvas was a physically engaging one. My hands caressed almost every fiber of the cloth and it was the clench of my fist around the cloth squeezing and pulling out the excess glue, which actually creased the canvas leaving it with a wrinkled

Christine Woelfle. Primary Circuit. Pine, rice paper. 26"H 18"W 18"D 1982
appearance. The rather large, 40 square feet dimension of the canvas seemed to have a similar weight or mass to my own body. An incision would be made in the cloth, in an effort to "animate" this particular piece of cloth. Not unlike the experience that Lee Bontecou describes in her efforts to turn to more open work as she felt it to be somewhat more optimistic in nature. She explains:

I was angry. I used to work with the United Nations program on the short-wave radio in my studio...During World War II we'd been too young. But at that later time, all the feelings I'd had back then came to me again. Rockefeller was trying to push bomb shelters on us. Africa was in trouble and we were so negative. China was trying to make her thing and we were so negative. Then I remembered the killings, the Holocaust. The political scene. And out of that came two kinds of feeling.

In the first place, I'd get so depressed that I'd have to stop and turn to more open work, work that I felt was more optimistic - where, for example, there
might be just one single opening, and space beyond it was like opening up into the heavens, going up into space, feeling space. The other kind of work was like equipment. With teeth. Not many people realized that. But the funny thing is that those canvases ended up in German museums or Israeli ones. Just where they belonged, without my saying a thing. 8

Understanding the ramifications of creating certain kinds of space within a sculptural form was a relatively new to me. Some four years ago these relief pieces were my first experiments with the qualitative aspect of openings and closings in space and form.

I hung the canvas from ceilings and walls to allow for the natural flow of the wet material's gravitational response. Each part of the cloth within minutes would find its way into a harmonious balance with the whole. After the canvas had dried in the appropriate form, I would paint it. Painting with the idea of bringing to life the different planes, lines and wrinkles that the molding process had allowed me to physically
incorporate into the form.

Lee Bontecou at work.

Kalapalo Indians House
Aïfa, central Brazil.
1967.
hospital stench
and
warm spring air,
green with life
cressing my cheek
as it blows by
the canvas is in the
hospital room
stuck to a wall
the way bodies
are stuck to the beds
both malfunctioning
not really the
physicality
they promised to be
they are
feather-like
not full

RELIEF PAINTING, OTA
30"H 24"W 12"D
1985
RELIEF PAINTING, OTN
36"H 18"W 12"D
1985
RELIEF PAINTING, OTV
30"H  24"W  4"D
1985
RELIEF PAINTING, OTS
36"H 36"W 5"D
1985
RELIEF PAINTING, OTW
40"H 20"W 6"D
1985
From Hand

Into body
Receptive Space Sketch #2
Receptive Space Sketch #4
Receptive Space Sketch #5
Eve Hesse. *Inside I.*
1967

Eve Hesse. *Inside II.*
1967
When I was a kid,
I used to make drawings on paper and I would think
they weren't thick enough or big enough or round
enough. The paintings were too flat for me. I
couldn't feel them. I wanted to make little heavy
objects, whose weight I could feel; an object that I
could hold in my hand. When I got bigger, the
paintings got bigger. They had weight. They
satisfied a need for some kind of bulkiness, a thing
that was like another body. 9

Julian Schnabel

The Relief Paintings were private and intimate in scale,
involving the hand and the heart. Many viewers of these pieces
wanted to touch them, to experience them more fully; perhaps
in an attempt to become equally as engaged physically with
the work as I had been. The need to provide the viewer
with a tactual as well as visual experience was clear to me
mandating a search for technology which would allow for the
creation of "a thing like another body." Again, an issue of
physical necessity.
After detecting the potential within the realm of touch for aesthetic expression, I began focussing on discovering materials which seemed by their own nature analogous in texture to the variety of tactual stimulants I wanted to integrate into my sculptures. My initial conception was to create a bone, muscle, skin relationship between a variety of materials. I imagined an initial skeletal structure that was hard and smooth, covered by a strong but semi-flexible or spongy material with a thin, possibly transparent material stretched over the exterior of these two base materials. I was hoping to be able to create large "soft space."

The trend toward incorporating new materials and industrial methods in creating artwork which prevailed in the sixties, is still a vital force in art making today. Finding myself in an environment of increasing technological sophistication - the question is no longer what can I accomplish with traditional materials, but rather of defining a particular formal ideal and searching for materials which fill that need.
Since the 1930's, polymers have been used to simulate many varied "natural" materials. I began my research there. Eventually, with the guidance of Professor Michael Rubner, a polymer scientist at MIT, I was able to find appropriate materials. Within the cost efficient realm was a soft-skinned, semi-flexible, medium-density polyurethane foam which is relatively lightweight and durable. Although the material is actually used world-wide as a low-cost packaging material, after seeing the foam in action during a sales demonstration I knew that this material had possible aesthetic applications. Sealed Air Corporation is the leader in low density urethane technology, providing a low cost "instant -foam-in-place" dispensing system. This system allows with the pull of a trigger, a consistent flow of the proper ratio of the two chemical components to be poured. Two temperature controlled hoses regulate the temperature of the chemical as it is being dispensed to allow for maximum rise. When dispensed, two 55-gallon drums of Instapak (A and B chemical) will expand up to 200 times their liquid volume. This system allowed me to
create a free-flowing, yet controlled structure within the sculptural form. Using polyurethane film as a base upon which to contain the initial flow of chemical, I was able to create hollow forms. The foam set in approximately thirty seconds allowing one to build on cured foam just minutes after they had been made. In a beehive configuration, I slowly built up the sides of the forms, creating what I refer to as "receptive" cups.

It should be noted that it was through the generous support from Sealed Air Corporation that I was afforded the opportunity to experiment with these industrial materials — it was a key event in the development of this project to have met with enthusiasm from Bob Tarbell and David Ketcham, executives at Sealed Air who believed in the potential for artistic expression which incorporated their product. The following projects would have been impossible without their support.
Small Scale Polyurethane Sculptures 1987-88
I have executed two environmental installations in which polyurethane foam has been used in the creation of the sculptural component. TRANSOVUM is an indoor, multi-media event involving sculpture, video, audio and light; while OVISAC FOVEA is a large-scale work installed in public park areas (floating on water, laying on grass, rolling down hills, suspended in trees).

A more detailed description follows:

TRANSOVUM

From his early orientations to the spatial dimensions of the world the child relies virtually entirely upon its sense of touch, and by this most primitive of all sensory agencies, learns to find its way about in the world of the environment its mother provides for it. The child's first space is tactile... relating to the mother's body. Initially, the infant is passively tactile, experiencing tactile sensations which are gradually converted into
perceptions...that is, sensations endowed with meanings. Eventually the child engages in active touch which is stereognostic; enabling one to understand the form and nature of objects. With these meanings the child then actively begins to scan the world for itself.1

TRANSOVUM is a collaborative effort that Atsushi Ogata and I created as a celebration of the mysteries of human generation. It is a journey piece, in which participants are taken on a voyage of genetic development - a process common to us all. It celebrates the wholeness of creation!

Fabricated from polyurethane foam, polyethylene sheeting and acrylic paint, a five foot diameter hollow sphere with undulating shells extending from its sides is placed in the middle of the floor area in a dark room. Spot lights covered with red gelatins are reduced to the lowest intensity barely illuminating the sculpture upon which they are focussed. Just beyond the undulating sculpture a video projector is aligned with and aimed at a screen of semi-opaque white polyester
material which flows over and covers an aperture in the side of the sculpture. The opening is just large enough for one participant to squeeze his or her body into - the opening accesses the hollow interior of the sculpture.

Before entering the room each participant, is equipped with a head set and tape player. One at a time, each participant is escorted slowly through the dark space over to the large red sculpture and is encouraged to slide into the interior of the form.

Once inside, a video projection of fiberoptic imagery from cellular division through fetal development is shown... images such as an egg follicle traveling through fallopian tubes and sperm through the urethra, initial contact between the sperm and egg, cellular division processes, and eventual fetal development. The constant motion of these biological processes is captured in the motion of the video imagery. All the images are colorized red in order to accentuate the flow of
the movement from one moment to the next, rather than depending on color changes to indicate temporal shifts.

The audio component is a sound similar to the sound heard by cupping one's hands tightly over one's ears while listening to one's own cardio-respiration. This low-frequency murmuring hum was created on a synthesizer. A dolby-boost tape player is used to increase the bass vibrations of the low deeper undulations. In this sense the sound is a tactual as well as an auditory experience - one physically feels these vibrations. This synthesized sound was followed by pre-recorded fetal respiration. Initial fetal respiration is fast paced and sounds like a strong gasping beat.

Atsushi Ogata describes his personal experience with TRANSOVUM.

I get down on my knees and slowly crawl into it. My hands touch soft round shapes. I squeeze them as I enter into the piece through an opening. I am
relieved to touch soft bulbous forms of the interior surface as I feel my way into the space. I turn around and face the opening from which I entered. I begin to hear a low pitched sound from the headphones. The cloth covering the opening becomes lit magenta. I see round shapes moving around. The movement of the imagery draws me in as if I were travelling in some extra-terrestrial space. My hands reach out, exploring the bulbous forms on the surface of the interior walls enclosing me. I am tempted to put my feet up and lie on my back. I do not have my shoes on. I feel quite relaxed and free to roll over.

I begin to hear a beat. The images do not move as much. I see shapes resembling what my hands touch. I am lying on my back with my feet raised, resting against a bulbous fourm on the interior suface above me. I feel the bulbous forms everywhere. My hands, my back, my feet. I stay in the position I am comfortable in. The projected image light the interior space, and I get a glimpse of what it looks like.

The image becomes smaller and smaller. It disappears. Silence. I am reluctant to crawl back out into darkness.¹²
Mark Di Suvero, the sculptor, speaks of the impression that spatial sculpture can avail to those who experience it:

The resonance of forms in our daily life - from DNA to skyscrapers, suspension bridges to galactic spirals - affect every part of our life and when those resonances becomes objectified in sculpture they can electrify our life. Spatial sculpture requires a different set of poetics than monolithic sculpture: the steroscopic vision (the difference between keeping the left eye open and closing the right one and vice versa) gives depth of field and suggests the surrounding space that full, life-size, walk-through spatial sculpture achieves. The history of spatial sculpture (Rodin's Burghers of Calais and Giacometti's Palace of Four A.M.) is part of humanity's urge to explore the moon and planets (space exploration), and when motion and participation are added to spatial sculpture then we reach the electrifying experience that great music or great poetry can give.¹³

Mark Di Suvero
Mark Di Suvero. Huru.
Steel.
32'H 50'W 50'D
1984-85
Dedicated to new means in art and a desire to work on a scale large enough to "reharmonize the relation between man and nature," group ZERO founded by Otto Piene and Heinz Mack in Dusseldorf in the 1957 initiated many concepts which are still being actualized in art making today. During the beginning years of Zero, pigment gave way to light, movement and sound (necessitating an involvement with technology) as Otto Piene projected light 'paintings' on the walls, an event foretold by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who in 1922 predicted that light would bring forth an entirely new kind of art.14

In time, outdoor environmental work, such as Piene's notion to extend use of the sky as a space for spectacle came to
fruition inspiring many artists, like myself, to realize work on a scale and in an environmental setting reflective of and in appreciation of nature.
it leaps
like my imagination
into the sky

I am lifted with it
enthusiastic bodies hang
in childish delight from its tails
like children from
mothers breasts
and limbs

the wind
determines its motion
as I feel my head
tilting back
my neck strains
then my skin
loosens
in empathy
with
its skin which
chatters in the
wind
in the sky
my cheeks
flutter
with similar ripples

billingowing toward
the sky

Piene's flowers
rainbows
stars
OVISAC FOVEA

Visual abundance of parts creates a circulartory system.15

- Christine Woelfle

OVISAC FOVEA is a large scale environmental installation which celebrates human sensorium and organic form. In continued steadfast commitment to promoting an understanding and appreciation of the intimate connection between people and their physical environment, their own physicality as well as the natural/manmade environment that exists beyond them, my next project OVISAC FOVEA encouraged direct participant involvement.

Two densities of polyurethane foam were used to create fourteen concave forms ranging in diameter from 4' to 7'. Each
unit is bright red with a silver covering on the convex side. Red was chosen for the intense contrast it provided to the intended outdoor settings and for the vitalizing force of the color - red is a color full of life.

Brief descriptions of the four installations at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire and the three installations on Kresge Oval at MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts follow. Please note that a much fuller understanding of these installations can be obtained by viewing Atsushi Ogata's documentary video OVISAC FOVEA.

Saint Anselm College: Installation # 1

A spacious forty foot diameter circular cluster was arranged on the "quad" - a grasssy area on campus centrally located, but
infrequently used by students for much more than a path to cut from one set of buildings to the next.

On this beautiful sunny day many students took the opportunity to explore the installation and the site. Stopping by to climb into the shapes, just to rest or perhaps even sleep. Some students read books. One professor taught his history class while sitting in one of the sculptures; his students surrounding him in a semi-oval formation. The pieces became a focal point for much social interaction: picnics, group picture taking, children and parents.

Young and old, clergy and lay, student and faculty began to perform private rituals within and around the sculptures. Play acting situations were repeated over and over by different groups of people who found possibilities for humorous interplay with the works limitless. For example, a common
sight was a seemingly "alive" OVISAC, concave-side down, slowly inching its way over to an unsuspecting person who eventually is startled by the presence of the piece. Others couldn't help themselves from pretending to be gobbled up by the sculptures; while other pretended to be "re-birthed."
ISAC

ON "THE QUAD"

CHAPEL ART CENTER
Due to inclement weather, OVISAC was placed in the Chapel Art Center. Tumbling twelve feet down in a layered configuration from the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the chapel, the units were clustered tightly together creating a diagonal flow throughout the gallery space. The spaces between the sculptures were of an intimate size - allowing for people to walk around and in between them. Many students came into the gallery asking out loud "where is my sculpture?" They were referring to "the particular sculpture which they had "occupied" outside the day before."
**Saint Anselm College - Installation #3**

A tall, dark green pine tree hosted the largest of the Ovisac sculptures, followed by a trail of units which were rolled down the thirty foot hill starting from the base of the tree. A small road traversed the side of the hill availing a panoramic view of the installation to a relatively large number of car-passengers. The more precarious nature of this installation, in terms of the harsh diagonal composition following the steep incline of the hill, prevented direct participation of a large number of people.

Many of the cars slowed down, some of the people shouting from their car windows with anger, others with delight, "what are these things?" "They make me feel young!" exclaimed a senior faculty member.
**Saint Anselm College - Installation #4**

Gracefully gliding across a small pond on campus, *OVISAC* danced with wind and water currents. It was a quiet and meditative spot. The occasionally still water mirrored a perfect reflection of the red forms, visually doubling the size of the work and giving the illusion of symmetry. The sculptures were allowed to move freely about the water.

**Kresge Oval Installation, MIT - First Day**

*OVISAC* was installed on a small, grassy oval which is sandwiched between Kresge Auditorium and the MIT Chapel. Ten sculptures were placed in a semi-circular pattern in the center of the grass concave-sides facing Kresge. The long
expansive archway of Kregse Auditorium and the semi-circular formation of the sculptures visually created a suggestion of a large circle. The other four sculptures were placed in the Chapel mote.

Almost immediately, each land-bound sculpture was "occupied." Identical play-acting to that which took place at Saint Anselm seemed irresistible to this crowd of people as well. The water pieces created a great deal of enthusiasm from those desiring to take rides in them. I was surprised to see how often three and four people were riding in a sculpture at the same time. They were frolicking quite happily in the sun and water.

I was quite taken when I witnessed a dozen Chinese business men wearing three-piece suits, put their briefcases down in order to climb into sculptures in the water.
Tree Installation, MIT - Second Day

The idea for this installation was to experience the sculptures, which had been land and water-bound the previous day, up in the trees. Like giant red blossoms on the geometrically planted trees located to the side of the Chapel, the sculptures moved with gusts of wind which are so common in this area that all the trees have grown at a slightly slanted angle from the ground.
Giant Cluster, MIT - Third Day

On the last exhibition day, I decided to cluster all of the sculptures into a large unit in the center of Kresge Oval. For me it was a way of experiencing the piece as a place of refuge; enclosed and intimate. This created spaces within spaces and seemed to encourage a great deal of participation.

Some people saw fit to move their "favorite" piece away from the main grouping, creating islands of red here and there on the green. Children and parents played hide and seek together.

At first glance from a distance, it was not apparent that the sculptures were occupied. Several people were shocked to know that there was someone only several feet away enclosed within a form that initially was thought to be empty. Hands, faces, legs and feet became one with the sculpture.
The receptive space like that created by OVISAC can link interior with exterior, familiar with unfamiliar, spiritual needs with body comfort, and life with death.

At its best, the experience of monuments and celebrations is a combination of freedom and harmony, allowing people to release creative energy, mark seasonal changes, give form to historic moments, identify common beliefs, express a communal sense of fantasy and play, claim their public spaces, and reaffirm their humanity.¹⁶
pouring polyurethane foam for OVISAC FOVEA
OVISAC FOVEA, process show
Chapel Art Center, Saint Anselm College
the artist's flight
into nowhere, the nowhere
his home uncontested
time and again
he is down to earth
to pay rent, and debts
to the hard sidewalk
and respects to his studio
through a hole in the
ceiling the sky-light
filters down
in its halo he is
waiting for the stigmata
the window is rectangular
iron bars are
welded into heard-edged squares
through which the artist looks up
from is chosen prison of solitude
into a screened infinity
he closes his palms to a
chalice holding up its emptiness
hoping for the manna of life
happy turtle whose cave
grows on its back and
protects it from the imaginary blessings
of the heavens
it crawls the earth
bound to it forever
food is on her path
no matter where she turns
the mate appears uncalled for,
and is welcome
there will be egg rolling
on the green lawns
millions of white houses
and built by architects
lucky turtle
the touchdown is continuous
belly to belly
shell against shell, constant
friction and no harm
you have the total independence
without that pseudo security of
science, agriculture, industry, art
oh lucky turtle
you are the very dream image and reality
of independence
resting securely in the palm of your shells.
        just being a summary of split seconds live
        continuously
crawling     crawling     crawling
Kiesler 1967
Frederick Kiesler with the model of the Endless House 1959.

Photograph by Irving Penn, copyright © 1959 The Conde Nast Publications Inc.
perhaps

receptive space

is . . .

Dust dunes photographed by Mariner 9 on Mars reveal the effect of high winds at the planet's surface. (NASA)
sand-like

Beach sand.
Photographed in sunlight. Slightly enlarged.
Beach sand and pebbles—translucent effect.
Photographed in diffused sunlight. Slightly reduced.
Cross section of a weathered tree stump.
Studio lighting with one Professional Sun Gun. Slightly enlarged.
Tree stump, used as a chopping block.
Professional Sun Gun providing single light source in studio.
Actual size.
house-like
FIGURE 149:
PASCAL HAUSERMANN.
MAISON DENIS, 1974.
PRES D'ALENÇON (ORNE)
PLATRE PROJETÉ
(photo Pascal Hausermann).

FIGURE 235:
a: BOÎTE AUX LETTRES.
GRILLAGES, FERS, PAPIER,
CIMENT-COLLE
POLYESTER ET SABLE.

b: NICHE DES CHIENS.
CONSTRUISE SUR UN
LABYRINTE DE ROCHERS.
MAISON UNAL
puddle-like
island-like
cloud-like

 Tsutomu Hiroi
 "White Cloud"
 Sonnenballon
 Tokio, Japan
Mu Ch'i. Six PERSIMMONS. c. 1269. Ink on paper.
17\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 14\(\frac{1}{4}\)". Ryoko-in, Daitoku-ji, Kyoto.
Repetition Nineteen, 1967, aluminum screening, papier-mâché, Elmer's Glue, polyester resin, Dutch Boy Diamond Gloss paint. 19 units, each c. 10" x 8" diameter.
FRIDA KAHLO. The Birth of Moses. Frida painted this remarkable work after reading Freud's analysis of Moses's birth.
Colorado. From a series of works
"toward meaningful ritual."
Paula Modersohn-Becker.  
*Mother and Child*. 1907.  
Oil on canvas. 18 x 24 cm  
Ludwig-Roselius Collection.  
Bottcherstrasse, Bremen.
feather-like

Robert Breer. FLOATS. 1966   Motorized styrofoam
Lithograph. 32 x 21.5 cm. Escher Foundation, Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.

mirror-like
nest-like

egg-like

POMO FEATHERED BASKET. California, c. 1945
1\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 2\(\frac{3}{4}\)". Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.
ENDNOTES

1. Whiteside, Marilyn "Rarebeasts in the Sheepfold," Creativity Jornal, p. 89.

2. Ibid.


6. Casdin-Silver, Harriet, "5 Artists 5 Technologies."


11. Montagu, Ashley, TOUCHING, The Human significance of Skin, p.120.

12. Ogata, Atsushi , in coversation about experiential art


15. Woelfle, Christine, "Christine Woelfle, Sculptor (1950-86), p.34.

16. Bacon, Karin, "You Are Here, Boston Celebrations, Environmental Art" p 32.
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