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> The sword was the primary side arm before the perfection of the flintlock. For centuries two types of swords were made. Those tempered soft were flexible but held no cutting edge. Those tempered hard held an edge but were brittle and easily broken. The idea of a good sword was a contradiction in terms until around the 11th century when the Japanese brought the mutually exclusive together by forging a sheath of hard steel over a flexible core of softer temper.[1]

Since the mid-1960s a number of more or less successful options to the independent specific object have profilerated. I want to stitch a thread of connection through some of these and go back to far earlier work with it. Make a narrative. Claim a development in retrospect. Invent history. The thread of this historical narrative will pass through certain types of emptiness—focused zones of space whose aspects are qualitatively different from objects. The 1970s have produced a lot of work in which space is strongly emphasized in one way or another. I want to make some generalizations about the nature of this recent work, as well as work in the past that focuses itself spatially.

Three models need to be built here: one, an adequate description of a state of being I will call "presentness"; two, a kind of Kublerian historical development citing precedents, some of them widely separated in time and space; and three, the formal characteristics of the paradigm underlying the kind of work that now seizes presentness as its domain. These three models triangulate a kind of sculpture made today whose implications, if not always its conscious intentions, are qualitatively different from sculpture produced in the earlier twentieth century. Now

images, the past tense of reality, begin to give way to duration, the present tense of immediate spatial experience. Time is in this newer work in a way it never was in past sculpture. Modernist issues of innovation and stylistic radicalism seem to have nothing to do with these moves. More at issue perhaps is a shift in valuation of experience. And although the art in question gives up none of its knowledgeability or sophistication in this shift, it nevertheless opens more than other recent art to a surprising directness of experience. This experience is embedded in the very nature of spatial perception. Some of the thrusts of the new work are to make these perceptions more conscious and articulate.

"Mental space" has no location within the body. Yet without it there is no consciousness. Julian Jaynes suggests that mental space is the fundamental analogue-metaphor of the world, and that it was only with the linguistic development of terms for spatial interiority occurring around the second millennium B.C. that subjective consciousness as such can be said to begin. The presumably complex relationship between spatializing language and the imagistic phenomena of mental space itself is not articulated by Jaynes and is beyond the subject of this narrative.[2] Likewise the relationship between memory and immediate experience can only be stated here as an obvious occurrence. A theory of consciousness is not needed for my narrative. I only want to point out some parameters and even obvious distinctions. The experience of mental space figures in memory, reflection, imagining, fantasy—in any state of consciousness other than immediate experience. And it often accompanies direct experience: one imagines oneself behaving otherwise, being somewhere else, thinking of another person, place, time, in the midst of present activity.

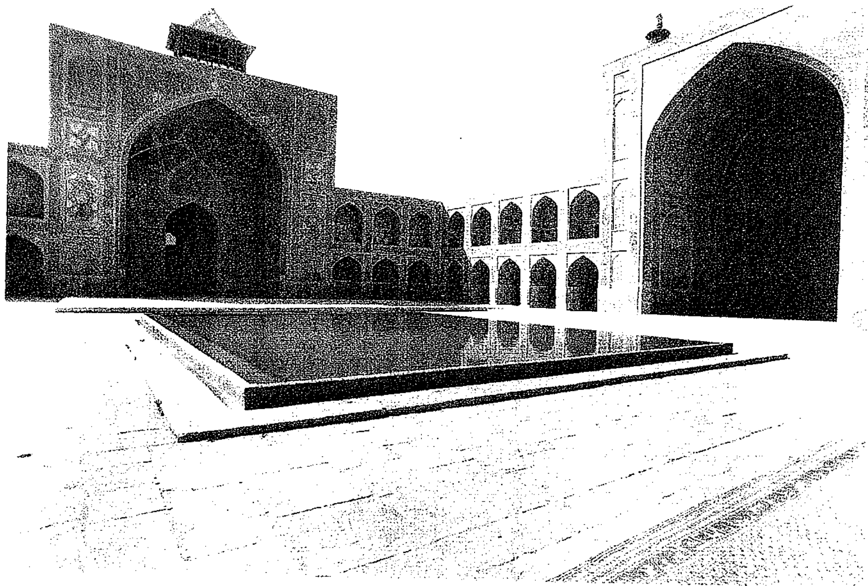
Some questions about images located in the mental space of memory: Is a friend remembered with his mouth open or closed, in motion or at rest, in full-face view or three-quarters profile? Is one's everyday living space represented in the mind as though in some sort of in-motion "filmic" changing imagery, resembling the real-time experience of walking through it? Or does it come to mind as a few sequences of

characteristic but static views? I believe that static, characteristic images tend to predominate in the scenery of memory's mental space. The binary opposition between the flow of the experienced and the stasis of the remembered seems to be a constant as far as processing imagery goes. The self's presentation to itself, a more complex operation involving the extensive use of language as well as imagery, maintains as well an opposition between the static and the dynamic. Some time ago George Herbert Mead divided the self into the "I" and the "me." The former has to do with the present-time experiencing self, consciously reacting. The latter is the self reconstituted from various remembered indices. Or as Mead put it:

> The simplest way of handling the problem would be in terms of memory. I talk to myself, and I remember what I said and perhaps the emotional content that went into it. The "I" of this moment is present in the "me" of the next moment. There again I cannot turn around quick enough to catch myself. I become a "me" in so far as I remember what I said. The "I" can be given, however, this functional relationship. It is because of the "I" that we say that we are never fully aware of what we are. . .[3]

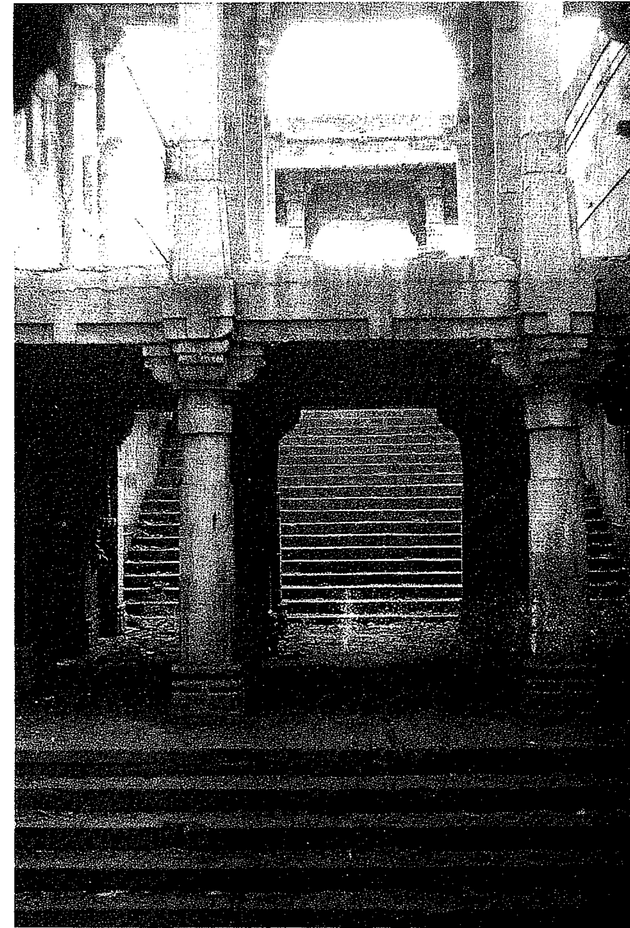
There seems to be a fundamental distinction between real-time interactive experience and every other kind. The "I" is that part of the self at the point of time's arrow which is present to the conscious self. The "me" is that reconstituted "image" of the self formed of whatever parts—language, images, judgments, etc.—that can never be coexistent with immediate experience, but accompanies it in bits and pieces.

What I want to bring together for my model of "presentness" is the intimate inseparability of the experience of physical space and that of an ongoing immediate present. Real space in not experienced except in real time. The body is in motion, the eyes make endless movements at varying focal distances, fixing on innumerable static or moving images.



10.1 Shah Mosque, seventeenth century, Isfahan, Iran. (Courtesy of Robert Morris.)

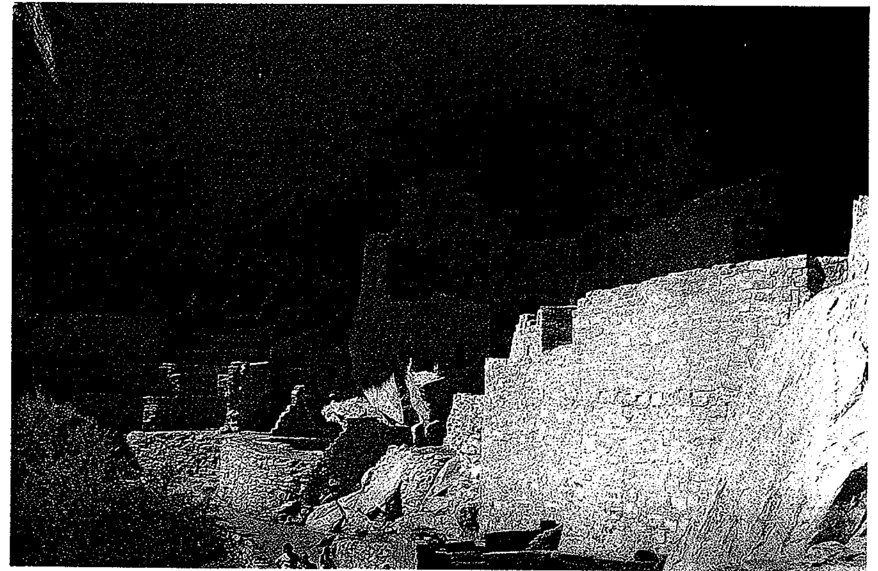
Location and point of view are constantly shifting at the apex of time's flow. Language, memory, reflection, and fantasy may or may not accompany the experience. Shift to recall of the spatial experience: objects and static views flash into the mind's space. A series of stills replaces the filmic real-time experience. Shift the focus from the exterior environment to that of the self in a spatial situation, and a parallel, qualitative break in experience between the real-time "I" and the reconstituting "me" prevails. As there are two types of selves known to the self, the "I" and the "me," there are two fundamental types of perception: that of temporal space



10.2 Step Well, seventeenth century, north of Ahmadabad, India. (Courtesy of Robert Morris; photo: Marcia Hafif.)

10.3 Zapotec ball court at Monte Alban, Oaxaca, Mexico. (Photo: David H. Thompson.)

and that of static, immediately present objects. The "I," which is essentially imageless, corresponds with the perception of space unfolding in the continuous present. The "me," a retrospective constituent, parallels the mode of object perception. Objects are obviously experienced in memory as well as in the present. Their apprehension, however, is a relatively instantaneous, all-at-once experience. The object is moreover the image par excellence of memory: static, edited to generalities, independent of the surroundings. The distinction is a thoroughgoing one dividing consciousness into binary modes: the temporal and the static.



10.4 Prehistoric Native American Cliff Dwelling, Mesa Verde, Colorado. (Photo: Philip G. Felleman.)

The distinction holds true whether consciousness is representing to itself the world, or its first division, the self.

It might be said that the constitution of culture involves the burdening of the "me" with objects. It is the mode of the relatively clear past tense. Space in this scheme has been thought of mainly as the distance between two objects. The aim of this narrative is to make space less transparent, to attempt to grasp its perceived nature ahead of those habitual cultural transformations that "know" always in the static mode of the "me."

The perception of space is one of the foremost "I" type experiences.[4] In the recall and reflection of that type of experience the "I" is transmuted into the domain of the "me." Memory is the operative element here. The dimension of time keeps the "I" and the "me" from coinciding. In the relatively immediate perception of objects—encounter followed by assessment and judgment—there is little stretch or gap between the two modes. Spatial experience, requiring physical movement and duration, invariably puts a stretch between the modes.

The heightened consciousness of art experience must always terminate in the "me" mode of judgment. Since it is so heavy on this end, so fixed by language, history, and photography, little attention has been given to making qualitative distinctions between work that begins as objects—and has less distance to go toward a "me" mode—and work located within space that has much further to go, literally and otherwise, toward judgmental summation. It is, of course, space- and time-denying photography that has been so malevolently effective in shifting an entire cultural perception away from the reality of time in art that is located in space.

In perceiving an object, one occupies a separate space—one's own space. In perceiving architectural space, one's own space is not separate but coexistent with what is perceived. In the first case one surrounds; in the second, one is surrounded. This has been an enduring polarity between sculptural and architectural experience.

What kinds of initial relationships can sculpture and architecture have had to each other? From earliest times the figure, unless it was a tiny amulet or idol, was housed. It had a place within an architectural space or was set up in an exterior relation to a building. In terms of an interior relationship, the niche frequently provided both transition to the wall and framing separation for the figure. The niche literally embeds the object in the dominating architecture. Undoubtedly, early processes of carving figures against walls by removing material around them led directly to the convention of placing figures in niches. By now, of course,

every such figure considered significant has been unhoused by the twin manias of museum collecting and photographic presentation. To what extent an opposition relation might have prevailed—architecture being intentionally subservient to independent, freestanding sculpture—is difficult to say. Some of the round temples of Athena were probably constructed just to house the central figure of the goddess. And this must have had earlier precedents. But by the time of the Renaissance the relationship of the free-standing figure to an enclosed space was (other than the accommodating niche) mostly one of coincidence. For the sake of my narrative I look for early examples where this problem of the relationship of significant, independent objects to architectural space, and vice versa, was brought out into the open and confronted.

Michelangelo worked both as architect and sculptor. Certain of his interiors took a peculiar and intense account of the separable object—the carved figure. In the Medici Chapel there is indeed a strange accommodation between the four sarcophagi figures of *Dawn, Dusk, Night,* and *Day,* and their surroundings. The two sarcophagi with their arched lids, planar surfaces, and scroll volutes reflect the cornices of the wall tabernacles above. Their supporting stanchions reflect the voluted door jambs. The whole structure is fixed firmly to the wall. But unlike precedents for the form, such as the Tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal in San Miniato, these sarcophagi are not housed in an alcove but project from the wall like oversized fireplace mantels. This attached but jutting form, together with the details reflective of the above tabernacles, fixes the tombs more as part of the architecture than as separate coffins housed there.

The sliding and teetering massive figures above the lids seem all the more out of place for the sarcophagi being part of the wall. They seem like afterthoughts literally hanging on the architecture. Nominally reclining, these four figures have little to do with repose. Anatomically they are four contorted and strained figures. Physically they are four massive blocks of marble barely balancing on the sloping lids of the sarcophagi. While the bent knees of *Dawn* and *Dusk* acknowledge the

curving ends of the lids on which they rest, *Night* and *Day* appear to have been intended for a far longer surface.[5] Only the vertically falling braid of hair in the figure *Night* rationalizes the figure's position as consistent with the slope. But this hardly alleviates the precariousness of the figure, about a third of which hangs over the end of the lid. Yet the few details which do acknowledge gravity and slope are enough to state a purposeful, if highly strained, placement.

It is this strained placement that puts the figures in a new relationship to the space. They have been denied the dignity of the protective niche or the assertion of independence provided by a stable pedestal. Beyond their identities as figures and allegories they function as masses charged with potential kinetic energy wanting to slide out into space. Their implied force works counter to the general compression of the high well-like volume of the room as a whole. Above and beyond their nominal identities they function to establish a kind of field of force set in opposition to the enclosing chamber of the chapel itself. Here figures of extreme individuality have another level of existence altogether as they participate in the articulation of a particularly charged spatial whole—a spatial whole that has subdued and transmuted its most stressed and dramatized parts: the carved figures.

In the vestibule of the Laurentian Library, the architectural details receive a similar treatment: the stair, the volutes, and the recessed double columns all aggressively occupy the space rather than provide passive limits, transitions, or relief. The stair especially is elevated to the status of an almost independent sculpture—but it is both more and less than one. By its very exaggeration it transforms the space and does not remain merely an eccentric architectural element. The space becomes "sculptural" by the architectural details being overstressed, pulled out into the space as objects. Beginning here with another high narrow space, Michelangelo forced the architectural features, rather than the carved figure, to establish a spatial field of forces. Later Baroque work tended to accommodate and blend figuration or architectural features into undulating, deeply modeled

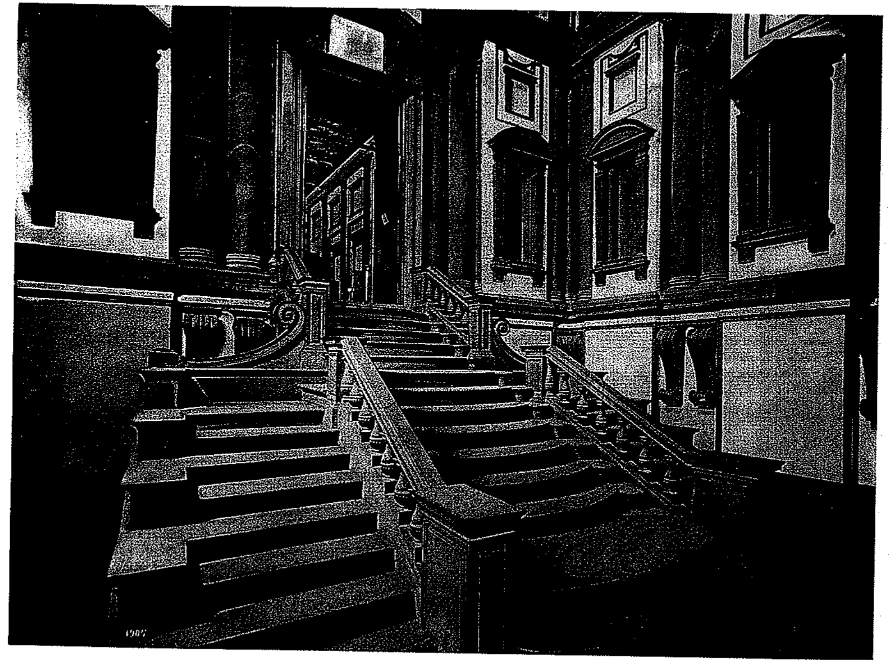
spaces. But in these early Mannerist works, constantly questioning oppositions put under stress both objects and containment to establish such charged spaces.

Anytime the object has become specific, singular, dense, articulated, and self-contained, it has already succeeded in removing itself from space. It has only various visual aspects: from this side or that, close up or farther away—unless perhaps it is disposed in the space in some way that elevates the existential fact of placement to one of "occupation," thereby charging both the object and the space around it. Precarious balance, for example, was Michelangelo's solution for the already dramatic tomb figures in the Medici Chapel. But there has also been a long history of works that chose to deal with space as depiction. Rodin's *Gates of Hell* is a good example. This 20-foot-high relief is made up of a pair of unopenable bronze doors, a transom, and bordering frame—all of which are swarming with small, agitated figures. Some of these are more fully dimensional than others, but all give the impression of either emerging from the disappearing into the congealed flux of the surface. Miniaturization and the relief were the twin strategies by which Rodin attempted to trap a depicted space in this work.

The small figures in the *Gate* wheel and pulsate and permute their positions in a seething, shallow, but ambiguous relief space. It is tiresome to thread one's way through the tumbling Ugolinos, Paolos and Francescas, etc. Every corner has some tiny Romantic tempest brewing. What is to be made of this apparently monumental failure? I think it is one of the most sustained attempts to represent "mental space." The iconography indicates a collection of beings and states strictly out of literature which inhabit the space of thought, not the exterior world. The work seems to strain to give form to figures in an imagined space; that is to say, a featureless space of indefinite depth; a kind of screen against which the imagined figures are projected. Mental space has one striking feature not shared with actual space: it doesn't exist as space. It has no dimension or location. It is one of the two main analogues of consciousness for the

world, but as it has no location except in time, it must then be also an operation. The central larger figure of the *Thinker* is the operator of the scene, which is a manifestation of his thought. Rodin said the figure "dreams. The fertile thought slowly elaborates itself within his brain. He is no longer dreamer. He is creator."[6] The architectural identity of doorway suggests transience, which in turn suggests time, the only literal dimension of thought. Oversize in comparison to the tiny figures it encloses, this architectural border in effect frames the world out. It asserts the interior analogue-world of consciousness's imagery and the nonspecified character of "imagined" interior space—in this case populated with "thoughts" one doesn't care too much to think: boring, fin de siècle thoughts. But it is that quality of a nonplace of indefinite depth, analogous not to the real world but to that of mental space, which brings my narrative near the *Gate*.

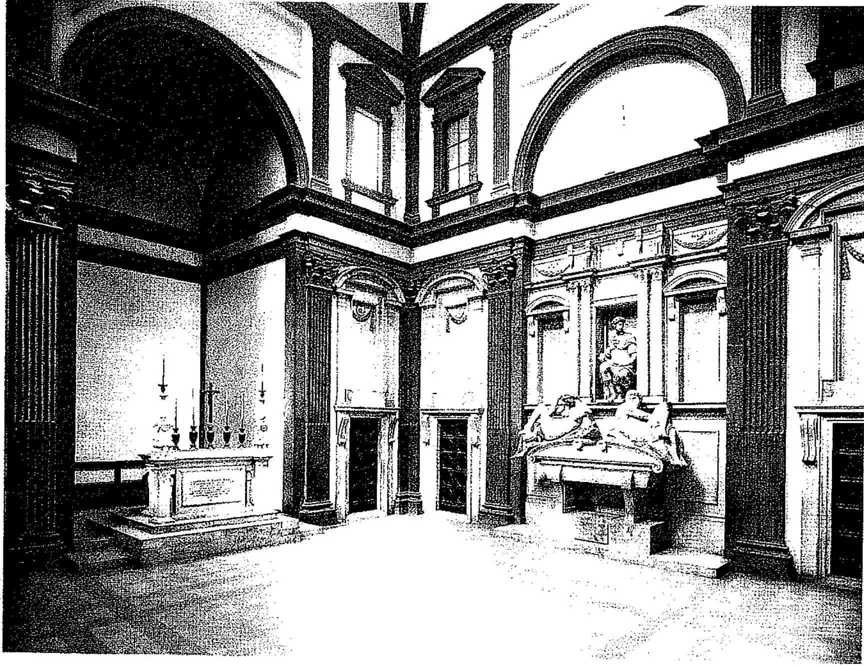
The *Balzac* is an interesting corollary to the *Gate*. Unlike the *Gate* it is a singular, static figure. A large, unambiguous hulk: a massive figure covered by a loosely hanging robe. Those features that give a body its identity, that allow one to scan it for information regarding posture, sex, activity, etc., are completely obscured by the wrap. It has no arms or legs. True, the sleeves hang down and indicate the sides of the figure. Yet the arms and hands are suspiciously somewhere else beneath the robe. One automatically moves around the figure in the attempt to glean more clues about the hidden body. The face is not so much modeled as gouged. One moves alternately close and away, finding the modeling collapses into lumps at certain distances, begins to emerge fleetingly as the gestalt of a face at a sudden change of angle. Unlike the figures on the *Gate*, this one is still, but we are constantly on the move in the act of apprehending it. Having no characteristic view, no singular profile to give it a definite gestalt, memory can't clearly imprint it. Heaving up off its high pedestal, the figure is seen against the sky rather than as part of a particular place. Located neither within a clear memory nor a literal place, it exists for us within the temporal span it takes us to see it. It approaches that model of



10.5 Michelangelo, Laurentian Library staircase, Florence, 1559–60.

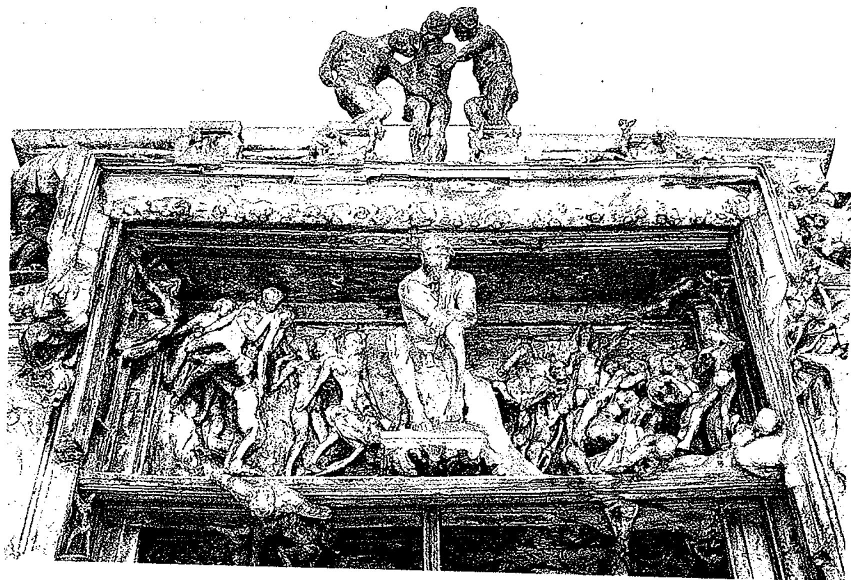
spatial work that begins to have "presentness" as its primary dimension, overshadowing the static, rememberable image of the autonomous object. The power of the *Balzac* is that while patently an object, it oscillates in the perceptual field of the viewer so that he can grasp it only temporarily in its perceptually changing aspects. Seldom has an object in the history of art so magnificently contradicted itself.

One type of structure that realigns the relationship between objects and spaces, but is always considered for what it was rather than



10.6 Michelangelo, Tomb of Giuliano de'Medici, S. Lorenzo, Florence, 1524–34.

10.7 Rodin, *Gates of Hell*, 1880–1917. (Musée Rodin, Paris.)



10.8 Rodin, *Gates of Hell,* detail, 1880–1917.

what it is, is the ruin. Approached in the historical-romantic sense, the ruin has an aura all its own and was carefully cultivated in the eighteenth century as an art form that has now fallen into disrepute. Much of the world's landscape is littered with more-or-less carefully curated "genuine" ruins—those of Greece and Rome exhibiting the most carefully picked-over broken stones on the face of the earth.

Approached with no reverence or historical awe, ruins are frequently exceptional spaces of unusual complexity that offer unique relations between access and barrier, the open and the closed, the diagonal and the horizontal, ground plane and wall. Such are not to be found in

10.9 Bernini, colonnade in piazza of St. Peter's, Rome, begun 1656.

10.10 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Hadrian's Villa: The Central Room of the Larger Thermae*, ca. 1770. (Courtesy of the Print Collection, Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.)

structures that have escaped the twin entropic assaults of nature and the vandal. It is unfortunate that all great ruins have been so desecrated by the photograph, so reduced to banal image, and thereby so fraught with sentimentalizing historical awe. But whether the gigantic voids of the Baths of Caracalla or the tight chambers and varying levels of Mesa Verde, such places occupy a zone that is neither strictly a collection of objects nor an architectural space.

Certainly ruins are not generally regarded as sculpture. In considering these and other structures that follow, I have crossed more into the nominal domain of architecture. But sculpture has for some time been raiding architecture. Some of the contemporary sculptors illustrated here focus on space, both internal and external, as much as on the materials and objects that delimit or articulate these spaces. The sensibility triangulated by the three models being built by this narrative belongs to sculpture. Any material, imagery, or form is open to anybody who wants to use it. Michelangelo is a good example of someone who worked in the formal categories of both sculptor and architect. Probably for that reason he was able to force one into the other, to work at a third level that was both or neither.

The building as closed object that shuts out space was less adhered to in many examples of Middle and Far Eastern building types. This is especially apparent in uncovered or partially open structures—the mosque, Chinese bridge and pavilion work, the Indian step well, etc. Absent here is the totally enclosing environmental container that houses both objects and the human figure. In Central and South America, the Mayan ball courts, temple platforms, and various observatory-type constructions have the same openness to the sky. Besides a general openness, sharp transitions between horizontal and vertical planes of floor and wall are often absent. Elevations vary, projections interrupt. One's behavioral response is different, less passive than in the occupation of normal architectural space. The physical acts of seeing and experiencing these eccentric structures are more fully a function of the time, and sometimes effort,

needed for moving through them. Knowledge of their spaces is less visual and more temporal-kinesthetic than for buildings that have clear gestalts as exterior and interior shapes. Anything that is known behaviorally rather than imagistically is more time-bound, more a function of duration than what can be grasped as a static whole. Our model of presentness begins to fill out. It has its location in behavior facilitated by certain spaces that bind time more than images.

Having indicated a few historical examples for a model of art that has questioned the narrow option between container or object, and having articulated to some extent an experiential model for presentness as a spatial domain, it is possible to turn to more recent work that has sought options beyond the autonomous, timeless object.

Beginning in the late 1950s, most of the artists associated with "Happenings" also produced various kinds of environmental work. Most of these works, while attempting to avoid the object, collapsed into a kind of architectural decor. Containment replaced things, and a centrifugal focus replaced a centripetal one. But the field force of the space was generally weak. Beginning in the 1960s, quite a bit of work was done that utilized the lateral spread of the floor. The hardware employed was generally small, sometimes fragmented. Elevation, the domain of things, was avoided. The mode was a kind of relief situation moved from wall to floor. A shallow, slightly more than two-dimensional "down" space was developed that gave the viewer a kind of "double entry" by allowing him to occupy two domains simultaneously: that of the work's shallow blanket of space, and those upper regions free of art from which he commands a viewpoint outside the work. The viewer's feet are in the space of the art, but his vision operates according to the perception of objects. Some "scatter" pieces occupied the entire floor, the walls acting as limiting frame.

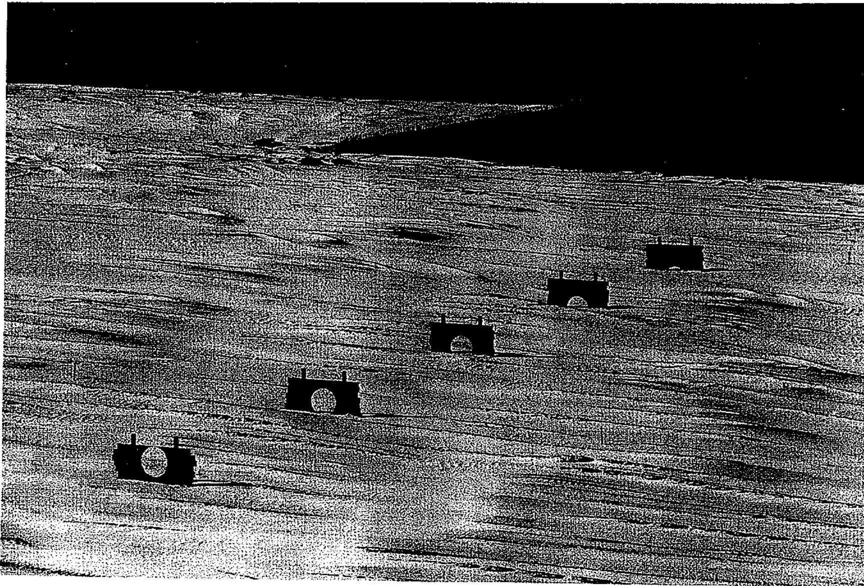
More recently, certain "miniature" works have maintained the lateral spread of floor space but have altered its character. The miniature or model quality of the elements charges the space with an implied

vastness compressed below the knees of the viewer. Neither the objects nor the space are their actual size. One becomes a giant in their presence. These shrunken works, while definitely object-predominant, emphasize the space to a greater degree than earlier scatter works as they depict a space that seems larger than real-size, squeezed down around the miniature representations. The whole is removed from our own space and time. It seems that these works owe something to photography, which can fascinate for the same ability to compress vastness into miniature scale. One accepts the photograph (unlike representational painting) as shrunken reality, as a kind of projection of the world. We believe it to have registered the space through which we move. Miniature three-dimensional work effects a similar dislocation—with the difference that we sense our own space around us and simultaneously feel it shrunken by the work in our presence. Space is at once both large and small. But, as with photographs, we are here the detached, voyeuristic tourist to the depicted worlds at our feet.

The recent works that have relevance to the subject proper of this narrative form no cohesive group. Some participate more fully than others in a confrontation with spatial concerns. None are miniatures, some are oversize. They have been located indoors as well as outside. Early examples of work intensely focused on space can be found in the mid-1960s. Although the spatial focus is more frequent today, it isn't always clearer than in some of the earlier works, and in many cases, recent work is only a refinement. But within the many examples of work cited here by illustration it is possible to find this spatial focus biased toward one or the other of two generic types of spaces: those articulated within contained structures and those operating in an open "field" type situation. One could almost term these "noun" and "verb" type spaces. On occasion, both types are found in a single work. Works of the former type generally present a strong outside shape as well as an interior space. In some cases the interiors of large-scale works—whether physically or only visually accessible—are little more than the results of the exterior shell.

But it is not the large object that might be hollow that reveals a shift in thinking about sculpture. It is in approaches motivated by the division and shaping of spaces—which may or may not employ enclosing structures—where directions different from and opposed to Minimalism are to be found.

It is worth observing how much and in what way Minimalism is behind spatially focused work—as well as in what way it now may present a block to its further development. From the very beginning of Minimalism there was an opposition between forms that accentuated surface and inflected details of shape, and work that opted for a stricter



10.11 Mary Miss, *Untitled*, 1973. (Courtesy of the artist.)

generality. It was the latter that opened more easily to the inclusion of space as part of, rather than separate from, the physical units. These forms were more suitable as markers and delimiters. Space was not absorbed by them as it was by the more decorative specificity of objects presenting greater finish and eccentricity of detail. This use of generality of form to include space has been extended in several directions in the 1970s. Some emphasized greater rawness of material, more size, weight, fascination with system or construction, and arrived at the somewhat opened-up monument. Other efforts, restraining an emphasis on the phenomenal aspects, moved more directly into a confrontation with space. Some, by presenting articulated interiors, have moved close to an architectural imagery. Other work opens up the extended spatial field by employing distances rather than contained interiors. In most cases the overall unifying gestalt form has usually prevailed. These have been structural options that various works have found rather than programmatically followed.

It is indicative of the power of the holistic, generalized gestalt form that it sustained most all of these developments by providing a structural unity first to objects and then for spaces. The nature of gestalt unity, however, is tied to perception, which is instantaneous—in the mind if not always in the eye. But this "all at once" information generated by the gestalt is not relevant and is probably antithetical to the behavioral, temporal nature of extended spatial experience.

It should be remembered that work that has a holistic structure originated inside gallery spaces and was later enlarged and transferred in the mid-1960s to exterior sites. It is wrong to describe gallery and museum spaces as "spatial" in the sense in which I have been using the term. Such rooms are antispatial or nonspatial in terms of any kind of behavioral experience, for they are as holistic and as immediately perceived as the objects they house. These enclosed areas were designed for the frontal confrontation of objects. The confrontation of the independent object doesn't involve space. The relationship of such objects to the room nearly always has had to do with its axial alignment to the confines of the walls.

Thus the holistic object is a positive form within the negative, but equally holistic, space of the room. The one echoes the other's form: a tight if somewhat airless solution. Claims for the independent object were actually claims for a hidden relation: that of the object to the three-dimensional rectilinear frame of the room. It might be said that such a space both preceded and generated the so-called independent object. Little wonder that the gestalt object when placed outside seldom works.

In the broadest terms, work based on the wholeness of the gestalt is work that still maintains assumptions established by classical Renaissance art: immediacy and comprehensibility from one point of view, rationalistic structure, clear limits, adjusted proportions—in short, all those characteristic that the independent object of the 1960s redefined. Despite the variations played on this theme by a lot of 1970s work, that which maintains the holistic maintains the classicism and all that implies. I pointed out Michelangelo's efforts that upset the self-satisfied stolidity of classical canons in the Laurentian Library and the Medici Tombs. I did not step into the following Baroque for precedents or Kuberlian links to work that is the subject of this narrative. But I wonder if I should have. We can be sure that no Pope Alexander VII will ever ascend to the pulpit of the National Endowment for the Arts to fund a project comparable to Bernini's Colonnades at St. Peters, where he

> turns architecture into sculpture by using the four series of great columns that move in a gradual ellipse to break a wall into constantly shifting activity. Though they are all the same, from inside they feel all different, less uniform than the parade of statues across their tops. The immensity of the interior oval creates an abrupt clash of perfect vacancy with the density at the edge, and to the pedestrian under the colonnade, crossing the huge space by circling it becomes interesting minute by minute because Bernini has broken it into a hundred separate views.[7]

The concerns of the new work in question—the coexistence of the work and viewer's space, the multiple views, the beginnings of an attack on the structure provided by the gestalt, the uses of distances and continuous deep spaces, the explorations of new relations to nature, the importance of time and the assumptions of the subjective aspects of perception—also describe the concerns of the Baroque. It would seem that much of the work most cogent to my discussion, work that pushes hardest against 1960s definitions, has to some extent moved into a Baroque sensibility and experience without, for the most part, the accompanying Baroque imagery.

Cultural discourse involves a hierarchy of representations. These representations proceed from individual intentions to manifestations to reproductions and interpretations of those individual manifestations. At every level of transformation in this chain of broadening representations, additional "noise" enters the system. Duchamp noted those noises that intervened between the artist's intention and realization and again between the realization and the public interpretation. Every art manifestation is presumed open and available for further transformative representations in the public domain—primarily through language and photography. It might be argued that art that begins with either language or photography is subject to less noise, as amplification rather than transformation might be their fate. But these forms are as subject to transformative commentary as any others. A general theory of transformative representations is far beyond the scope of this narrative. But I want to touch on some aspects that have relevance to art that focuses itself within space.

The first level of transformative representation is metaphysical. The artist attempts to represent some aspect of what his model of possible art could or should be. Every manifestation is always more or less than the paradigm. In order that the artist be able to represent, he must be able to remember what he wants to do. Since Rodin, all modern sculpture has presupposed drawing. Especially since the 1960s, nearly all three-dimensional work has proceeded from drawing. The memory bank for

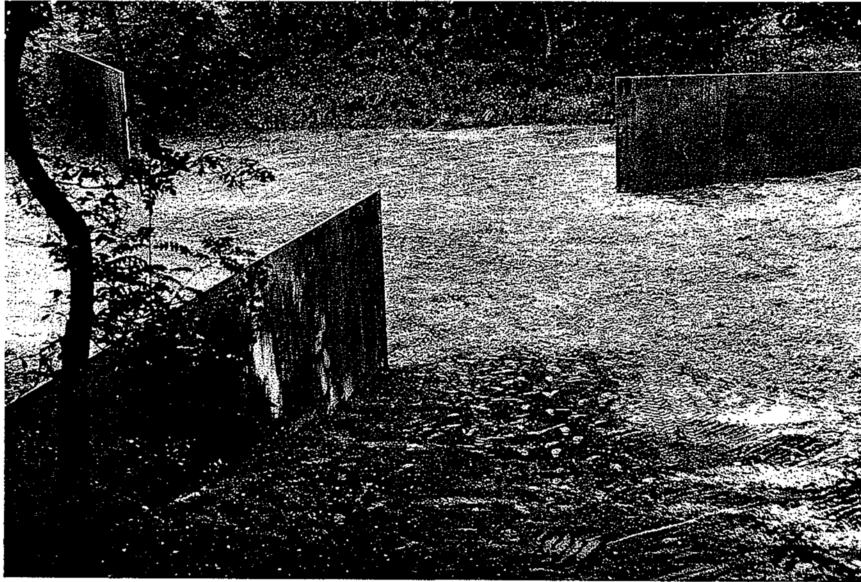
10.12 Vito Acconci, *The Object of it All*, 1977. (Courtesy of the artist.)

construction-type work is housed in the plan and elevational views. These memory parameters are far more suitable to objects than to spaces. Of course some sorts of materials are invariably employed to define spaces. Most but not all of the work that is the subject of this narrative is of the construction type, is frequently holistic and can be represented with traditional plan and elevation images. But the relation of this representational scheme to space is just that—schematic rather than structural, as in the case of objects. The reason for this is that no temporal encoding exists in

10.13 Robert Irwin, *Untitled*, 1973. (Courtesy of The Pace Gallery, New York; photo: Al Mozell.)

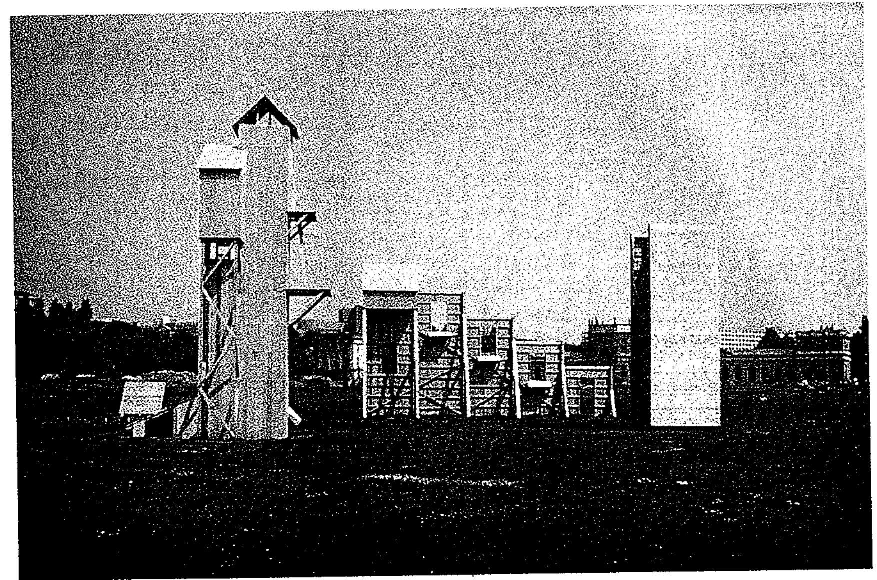
plans or elevations. One might at some time be developed, because all representations of time must be spatialized to be represented: clocks, calendars, musical scores, etc. But at this point space has no adequate form of representation or reproduction. And perhaps there is a deeper reason for this hiatus of transformative representations, for space: within the "I" modality of experience there is no memory, and this is the mode of spatial experience.

It would seem that photography has recorded everything. Space, however, has avoided its cyclopean evil eye. It could be said that the work under discussion not only resists photography as its representation, it takes a position absolutely opposed to the meaning of photography. There is probably no defense against the malevolent powers of the pho-



10.14 Richard Serra, *Spin Out (for Robert Smithson)*, 1973. (Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, The Netherlands; courtesy of Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.)

tograph to convert every visible aspect of the world into a static, consumable image.[8] If the work under discussion is opposed to photography, it doesn't escape it. How can I denounce photography and use it to illustrate this text with images I claim are irrelevant to the work proper? A further irony is that some of this kind of work is temporary and situational, made for a time and place and later dismantled. Its future existence in the culture will be strictly photographic. Walter Benjamin made the point that the "aura" of a work of art was a function of the viewer's distance. This attitude, culturally embedded in the necessity of sacred religious



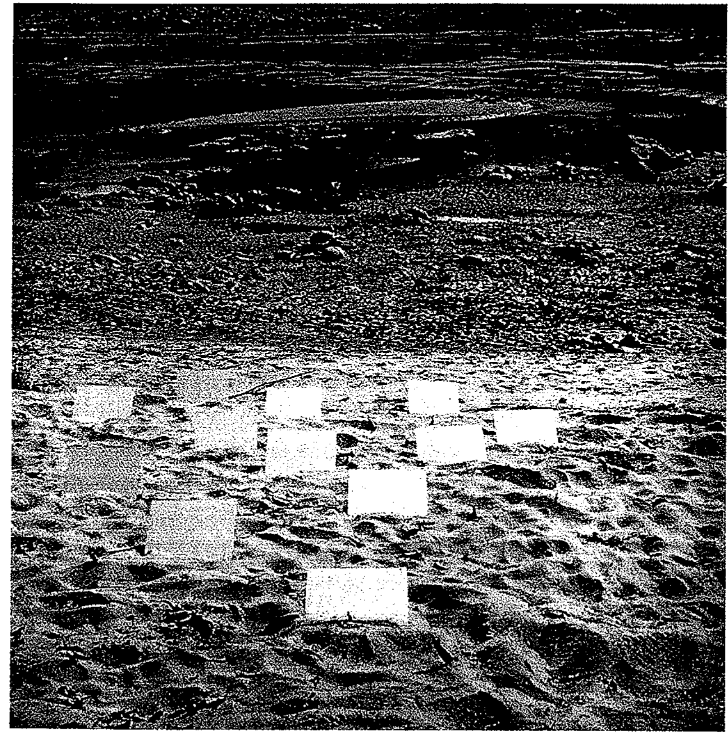
10.15 Alice Aycock, *The Beginnings of a Complex . . .* , 1977. (Courtesy of John Weber Gallery, New York.)

objects remaining at a distance from the viewer, was supposedly demolished by the reproduction. The photograph, in Benjamin's opinion, the quintessential form of reproduction, amounted to a new class of art objects—those without auras. Without auras because they brought the world into the realm of the close-up. The argument was from the beginning sophistic. Loaded subject matter, for example, is brought close up via the photograph only in the touristic sense. The viewer remains completely detached and psychologically distanced. Now that the gallery distribution system has got hold of photographs, they no longer even have the status of reproductions, except in the "limited edition" sense,

which is hardly what Benjamin had in mind. In the space-oriented works under discussion here, the notion of closeness/distance is redefined. They are not experienced except by the viewer locating himself within them. Closeness dissolves into physical entry. Distance, a parameter of space, has an ever-changing function within these works.

Smithson's outside mirror pieces were quite clear early investigations of "verb-type" spaces. They defined a space through which one moved and acknowledged a double, ever-changing space available only to vision. There was an exactness as well as a perversity implied by his photographing and then immediately dismantling these works. Exact because the thrust of the work was to underline the non-rememberable "I" experience; perverse because the photograph is a denial of this experience. Defined space implies a set of tangible, physical limits, and these can be measured and photographed. The distances between these limits can be measured as well. But photography never registers distance in any rational or comprehensible way. Unlike recorded sound or photographed objects, space as yet offers no access to the transformative representations of media.

The question arises as to whether my claims about space are not a stubborn insistence that the subjective side of spatial perception be the only allowable one. As mentioned before, space can be measured and plotted, distances estimated. Stairways, small and large rooms, crowded gardens and open plains, and most every other type of space (except perhaps weightless outer space) has some degree of familiarity, and none of the types illustrated here present mysterious experiences. What I have insisted upon is that the work in question directly use a kind of experience that has in the past not been sustained in consciousness. The work locates itself within an "I" type of perception, which is the only direct and immediate access we have to spatial experience. For the sake of comprehension and rationalization, this experience has always been immediately converted into the schemata of memory. The work in question extends presentness as conscious experience. If mental space is the conscious



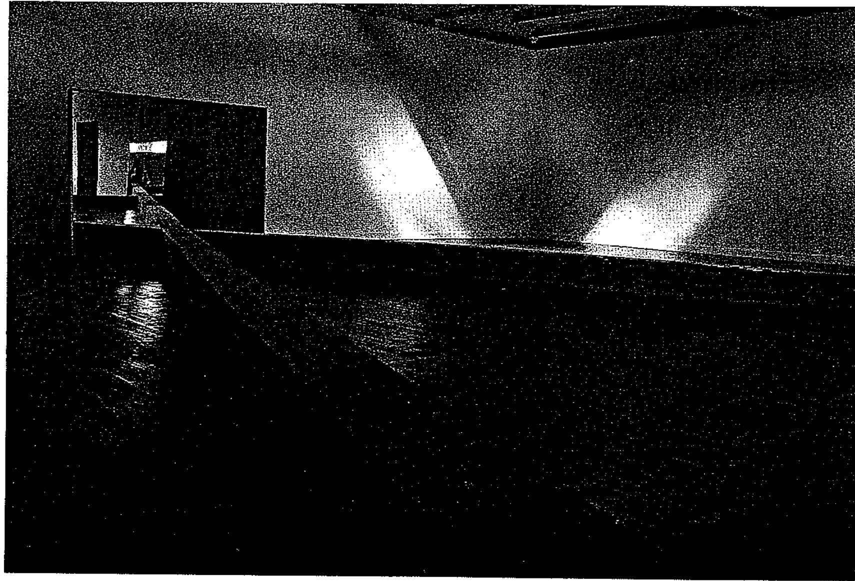
10.16 Robert Smithson, *Sixth Mirror Displacement*, Yucatan, 1969. (Estate of Robert Smithson; courtesy of John Weber Gallery, New York.)

analogue-metaphor of the world from the reconstitutive "me" point of view, then the experience of the work under examination lies outside this, prior to fixed memory images. The focus had to shift from objects to confront the kind of being that is conscious but prior to the reconstitutive consciousness of mental space. This latter type of awareness—being posterior to spatial experience, consonant with the perception of objects, insistent on the instantaneous rather than the temporal, confident that it operates from an objective stance—has already closed the door on the mode of experience described here. Nevertheless, the new work cited here in illustration is well on the way to articulating what being in the spatial realm can be about. This narrative has been the attempt to formulate three models—historical, formal, perceptual—which triangulate the nature of forming with space. And like all art narratives, it is an invention seeking access to history, an entropy-denying attempt at pattern formation. In this case, there is a kind of contradiction in terms in its attempt to bring the domain of the "I" untransformed into the purview of the "me." But the pursuit of the contradictory, be it in art or sword making, is the only basis for perceiving dialectical reality.

Notes

1. Frederick Wilkinson, *Swords and Daggers* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1967). See pp. 50, 54 for a discussion of Japanese sword-smithing.
2. Julian Jaynes, *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), p. 46 and elsewhere.
3. George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 174.
4. In the strictly linguistic domain, Roland Barthes asserts that the act of writing about the self may be another mode of being from which the "me" is excluded. As he puts it, "I myself am my own symbol, I am the story which happens to me: freewheeling in language, I have nothing to compare myself to; and in this movement, the pronoun of the imaginary 'I' is *im-pertinent;* the symbolic becomes

literally *immediate*. . ." The "I" here has no referent. As a signifier it coincides with the signified. Above quoted from *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 56.
5. Michelangelo left Florence in 1534, and the New Sacristy was opened sometime around 1545. He did not therefore personally install the figures on the sarcophagi. There is an unsettled controversy as to how much the figures were altered by hands other than Michelangelo's in the setting up of the figures. But he obviously conceived of the placement and had carved the figures before he left. It seems safe to say that the startling placement is his, regardless of whether some undercarving of the figures was done at the time of the installation. See Martin Weinberger, *Michelangelo, The Sculptor* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), Vol. 1, pp. 352–365.
6. Letter written by Rodin to the critic Marcel Adam and published in an article in *Gil Blas* (Paris), July 7, 1904. Quoted by Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1967), p. 53.
7. Robert Harbison, *Eccentric Spaces* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), pp. 67–68.
8. See Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1977), for her thoroughgoing analysis of the insidious trivializing of experience perpetrated by photography.
9. Having made a number of large-scale works involving extensive use of mirrors, I cannot resist a further comment confined within the appropriate humility of the footnote. Mirror spaces are present but unenterable, coexistent only visually with real space, the very term "reflection" being descriptive of both this kind of illusionistic space and mental operations. Mirror space might stand as a material metaphor for mental space, which is in turn the "me's" metaphor for the space of the world. With mirror works the "I" and the "me" come face to face—a strange triangular way for art to hold the mirror to nature.



10.17 Robert Morris, *Untitled*, Installation at the Portland Center for the Visual Arts, Portland, Oregon, 1977. (Courtesy of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.)

10.18 George Trakas, *Union Pass*, Installation at Documenta 6, Kassel Germany, 1977. (Courtesy of the artist.)