

Dia:

FD 35106

December 19, 2008

The Honorable Charles D. Nottingham
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Dear Chairman Nottingham,

Thank you again for your thoughtful attention to Dia Art Foundation's concerns regarding the proposed Caliente Corridor.

As the conduit of significant funding for artist Michael Heizer's *City* in remote Garden Valley, Nevada, we are firmly committed to maintaining the legacy of this extraordinary artwork for future generations. An essential part of this responsibility is safeguarding the Valley's pristine, isolated natural environment: the landscape's timeless quality is fundamental to the conception and experience of *City*.

I hope that the enclosed materials will help frame the presentation I made in Las Vegas by providing art historical background for Heizer's work and its importance in the canon of American art. *Dia Beacon* was published to coincide with the opening of Dia's eponymous museum in New York's Hudson Valley where Heizer sculptures are on permanent view, and Michael Govan's introductory text explains the context for Heizer's practice as well as Dia's history and mission. The selected articles further illuminate Heizer and Dia, and their significance at the national and international level.

Dia would welcome the chance to speak with you or your colleagues further about the importance of *City*. I can be reached at 212.293.5598 or ksonnenborn@diaart.org and would also be pleased to connect you with Dia's director, Philippe Vergne or Michael Govan, director of the Los Angeles Museum of Art and ardent support of Heizer's work.

On behalf of the art community, thank you again for hearing Dia's concerns. We look forward to working with STB towards the long-term preservation of this nationally important matter.

Yours sincerely,



Katie Sonnenborn
Director of External Affairs

cc: The Honorable Francis P. Mulvey, Vice Chairman, STB
The Honorable W. Douglas Buttrey, Board Member, STB ✓
Philippe Vergne, Director, Dia Art Foundation
Michael Govan, CEO and Director, LACMA

Rumors of Mark Twain's Death Remain Exaggerated

Smithsonian

Beacon of Light

Groundbreaking art shines at the extraordinary new Dia:Beacon museum on New York's Hudson River

BY AMEI WALLACH

IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT THE MOST eagerly awaited museum in the world of contemporary art is more than an hour removed from New York City's frenetic art scene. Many of the artists whose works went on permanent display this past May at Dia:Beacon, as the new museum is called, put space between themselves and an art world they saw as compromised and overly commercial. "These artists were inspired more by the American landscape and the American spirit than by the SoHo art scene," says collector Leonard Riggio, chairman of the Dia Art Foundation, which created the museum. "The idea of being an hour-plus away from New York City is more important than being close to it."

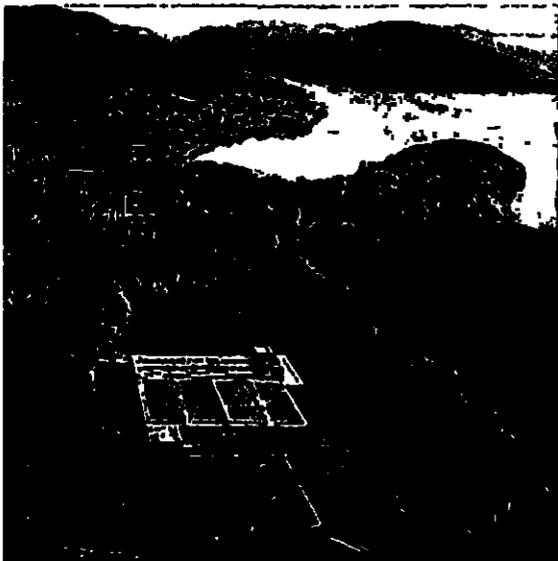
Dia:Beacon has 240,000 square feet of exhibition space, which is more than that of New York City's Guggenheim, Whitney and Museum of Modern Art combined. It exhibits a concentration of monumental works (many seldom, if ever, seen in public) by land artists, minimalist artists, conceptual artists and installation artists. At Dia:Beacon, says artist Robert Irwin, who helped transform the 1929 Nabisco box-printing factory in Beacon, New York, into a radiant showcase for art, "the viewer is responsible for setting in motion his own meaning."

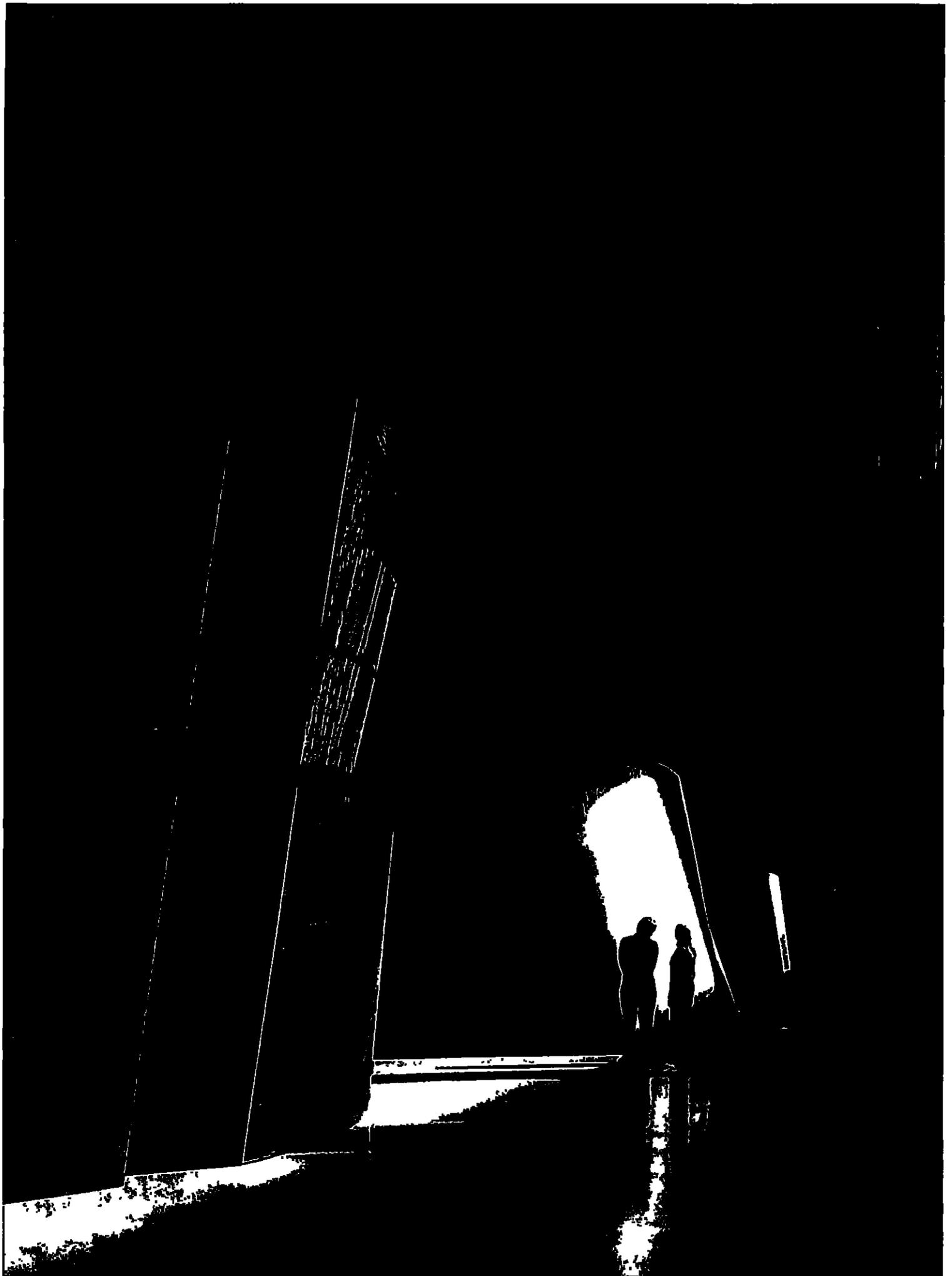
Most of the outsize works on view in Dia:Beacon's immense skylit galleries fill a room or more. John Chamberlain's sculpture *Privet*, for instance, is a 62-foot-long, 13-foot-high hedge fashioned out of scraps of chrome and painted steel. And Walter De Maria's *Equal Area Series* (12 pairs of flattened, stainless-steel circles and squares that lie on the floor like giant washers for some enormous machine) extends through two galleries totaling 22,000 square feet. Most of these works cannot be seen in their entirety from any one place; you must walk in, around, and in some cases, within them, as in a landscape. "Difficult" art becomes accessible, the thinking goes, when a viewer's response is visceral. And concentrated.

"What makes this museum very special is its focus on a relatively small number of artists who are shown in great depth in circumstances as close to perfect as any space I have seen," says James N. Wood, director and president of the Art Institute of Chicago. "It's totally committed to giving an art that is not necessarily ingratiating an environment where it has the best chance to speak in its own right."

Many of the 20 or so artists represented at Beacon—a hugely influential group that includes Louise Bourgeois, Dan Flavin, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Agnes Martin, Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Serra and Andy Warhol—began their careers intent on challenging some basic assumptions about art. Why did a sculpture have to sit on a pedestal and occupy space? Why did a painting have to be something you stood in front of and looked at? Why did it have to stop at the edges? Did art have to be an object at all?

With 240,000 square feet of galleries, the Dia:Beacon museum (below) is spacious enough to accommodate huge works such as Richard Serra's *Torqued Ellipses* (opposite). Each of the mammoth steel structures weighs 40 to 60 tons.





Without a viewer's response, they felt, their art was incomplete. "Things work in relationships Everything is interactive," says Dia artist Robert Irwin, who began in the 1950s as an abstract painter and who, along with Dia Art Foundation director Michael Govan, was responsible for creating a master plan for the renovation of the factory and the design of outdoor spaces. He says he approached Dia:Beacon as an artist rather than an architect. Instead of using a drawing board or models, he conceived his plan, which is itself listed as one of the artworks in the Dia collection, by walking around, back and forth, inside and outside the complex. He thought of the museum as a "sequence of events, of images," and he was mindful of the order in which visitors would enter and progress through its spaces.

At Dia:Beacon's entrance, Irwin planted hawthorn trees, which bloom white in spring and are heavy with red and orange berries in winter. They will grow to 25 feet, roughly the height of the four flat-roofed connected buildings—including a train shed—that once housed the plant.

One of the few things Irwin added to the existing structure is a small, low, brick-lined entrance. Pass through it, and "boom!" says Irwin, the ceilings soar and light floods through north-facing, sawtooth skylights and boomerangs off maple floors. You can see down the length of the twin galleries ahead, 300 feet, to industrial-size sliding doors. Through those open doors other galleries stretch another 200 feet toward sun-blasted, south-facing windows. "That moment of entering is really the power of the building," says Irwin.

The vast space swallowed up the 4,500 visitors who thronged to it opening day. In its first six weeks, 33,000 people visited the museum. "People ask me what makes this

"The building is spectacular, the site fantastic," the Museum of Modern Art's director, Glenn Lowry, says of Dia:Beacon. An aisle of cherry trees adorns the museum's west garden (below).



place different," says Dia director Michael Govan, 40. "There are very few places with concentrations of works, even by these artists, that are so all-encompassing and environmental. The buildings, in a way, are big enough to allow all of the artists to have their own world and the visitor to have that fantastic experience of going from world to world."

Michael Heizer's 142-foot-long sculpture, *North, East, South, West*, for instance, steals the show for many visitors and most dramatically illustrates the idea of the interaction between the viewer and the art. The work, which Heizer calls a "negative sculpture," consists of four massive, geometric forms sunk 20 feet into the floor of the gallery. Standing at the edge of these excavations, you may experience a hint of vertigo, even as your fear of falling competes with an impulse to throw yourself in.

Andy Warhol is represented with 72 of his *Shadows* paintings, a series of 102 renderings of the same difficult-to-decipher shadow in a corner of Warhol's studio. Designed to be hung together edge to edge, like a mural, each grainy silkscreen is treated differently—printed on a black or metallic background and washed in a spectrum of vaporous colors, from Day-Glo green to choirboy red. Warhol produced the series in less than two months, between December 1978 and January 1979, showed parts of it in an art gallery, then used it as a backdrop for a fashion shoot for the April 1979 issue of his magazine, *Interview*.

Beyond the Warhols, the world that the German-born artist Hanne Darboven has constructed—called *Kulturgeschichte (Cultural History), 1880-1983*, consists of 1,590 framed photographs, magazine covers, newspaper clippings, notes, personal papers and quotations, all hung floor to ceiling in a grand, overwhelming onslaught of information. The effect is not unlike walking through a history book.

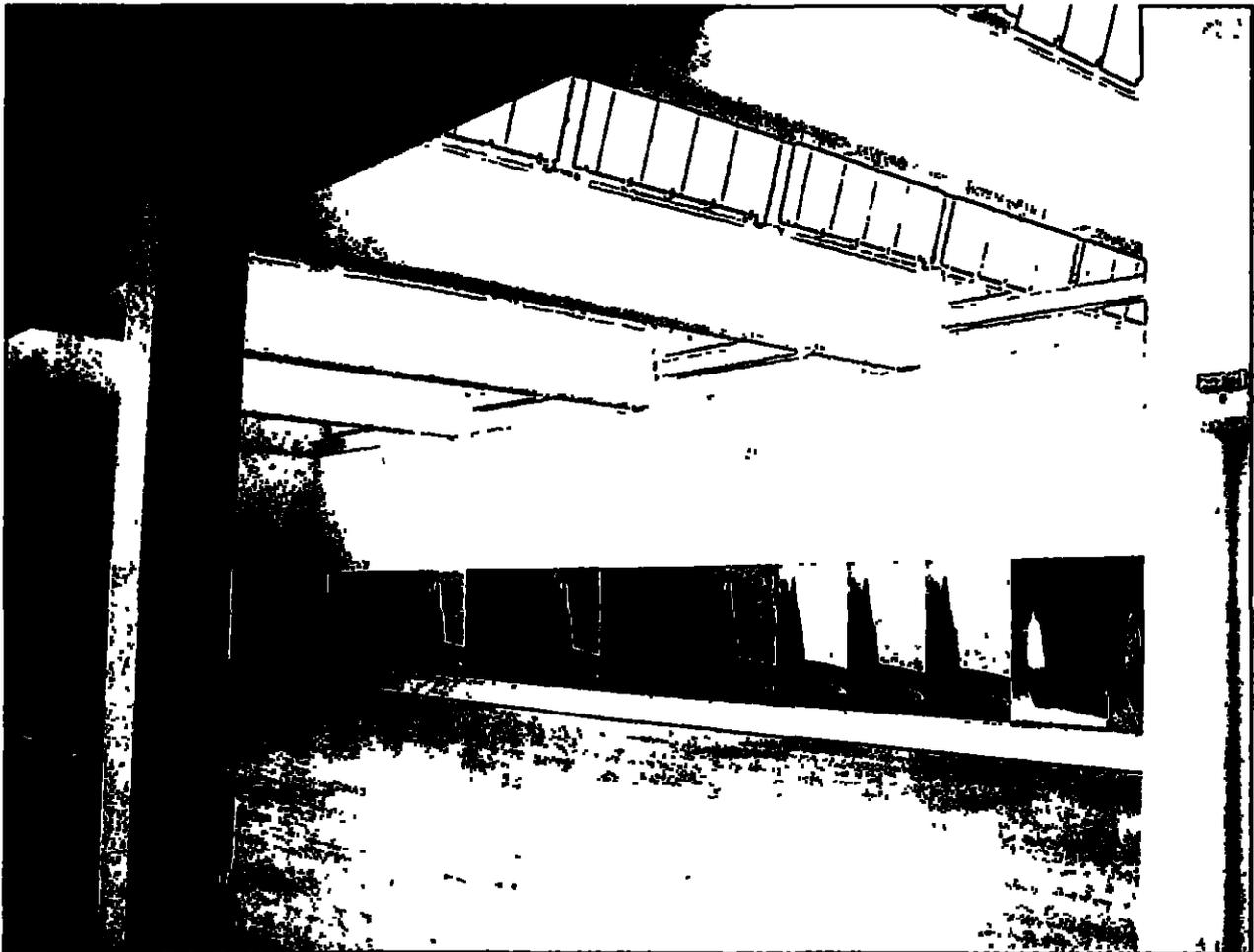
At the southern end of the museum, a rarely seen work by the late artist Fred Sandback re-creates part of his 1977 *Vertical Constructions* series. Sandback used colored yarn to outline an enormous upright rectangle. There's another one just like it a few feet away. The space they diagram appears as real as a wall of glass. You seem to be on the outside looking in, but if you step over the yarn to the other side, you find yourself once again on the outside of the illusion.

Beyond Sandback's yarn is Donald Judd's 1976 untitled installation of 15 plywood boxes. Judd, an artist, philosopher and critic who died in 1994 at age 65, wanted to strip sculpture to its bare essentials. He used industrial materials—plywood, milled metal, Plexiglas—and had his sculptures made by fabricators. From a distance, his unpainted, roughly chest-high boxes, which sit directly on the gallery's floor with space to stroll among them, appear identical. But up close you can see that each of the boxes is slightly different, conjugating a vocabulary of open, closed, spliced and bisected forms. "It is a myth that difficult work is difficult," Judd claimed. His idea

AMEL WALLACH is an art critic whose articles have been featured in *Art News*, *the New York Times*, *Vanity Fair* and *the Nation*.



"I approached the museum's design as an artist," says Robert Irwin (above, left), who collaborated with Dia director Michael Govan (above, right), and the architectural firm, OpenOffice, on the renovation of the 1929 factory that houses the new museum. Andy Warhol called his 1978-79 *Shadows* paintings (below) "disco decor" and used them in a fashion shoot for his magazine, *Interview*.



that the context in which a sculpture or painting is seen is as important as the work itself—and essential to comprehending it—would become Dia:Beacon's credo.

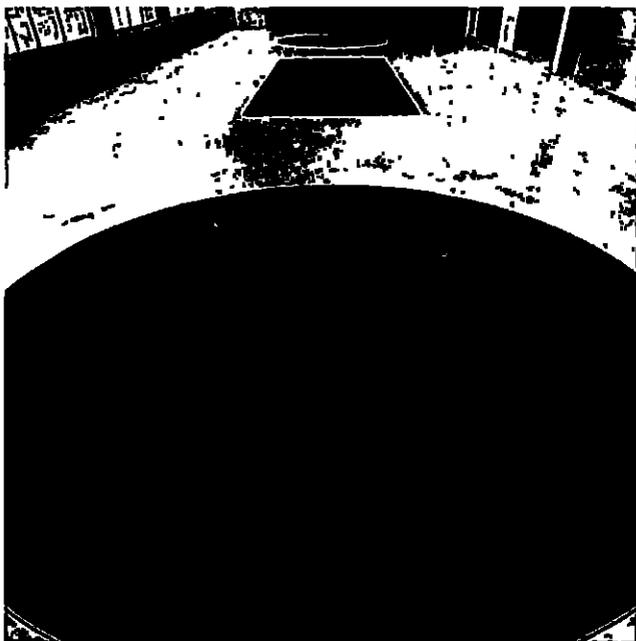
"Looking at Judd's works, you start to think about limitless possibilities," says Riggio (who with his wife, Louise, contributed more than half the \$66 million it took to realize the museum). "You feel not just the brilliance of the artist himself, but you also feel the potential of the human spirit, which includes your own. You see what a great mind can do, so it's more than about the art."

"OBVIOUSLY, THE MODEL for what we are doing is in Marfa," says Riggio, referring to the museum that Judd founded in an abandoned fort in West Texas cattle country in 1979. Judd hated conventional museums, and he likened permanent galleries, where works of several different artists are grouped in a single room, to "freshman English forever." Judd came up with another way: displaying individual artists in buildings adapted to complement their art.

Judd's idea of converting industrial buildings into galleries can be seen today in the raw spaces of the Los Angeles Temporary Contemporary and at MASS MoCA in North Adams, Massachusetts. But Judd's cantankerous, visionary spirit finds its fullest expression at Dia:Beacon. "The artists represented at Dia, especially Judd, are really the founders of this place's aesthetic," says Govan. "I see this museum as a series of single-artist pavilions under one diaphanous roof of light."

In 1977, Judd met German art dealer Heiner Friedrich, a man with a nearly religious zeal to change the world through art. In 1974, Friedrich and his future wife, Philippa de Menil, the youngest child of Dominique and John de Menil of the

Michael Heizer's vertigo-inducing sculpture *North, East, South, West* consists of four geometric forms produced from weathered steel and inserted 20 feet deep into the gallery's concrete floor.



Schlumberger oil fortune, created the Dia Art Foundation. (Dia, the Greek word for "through," is meant to express the foundation's role as a conduit for extraordinary projects.) Over the next decade, Friedrich and Philippa gave millions of dollars to finance works by artists they admired. Typical of those the couple funded was Walter De Maria's 1977 *Lightning Field*—400 stainless-steel poles set in a one-mile-by-one-kilometer grid in the New Mexico desert.

In 1979 Dia began purchasing the abandoned Texas fort and its surrounding 340 acres at the edge of Marfa for Judd, who, according to Riggio, "turned an army barracks into what I think is easily the best single-artist museum in the world." Then, in the early 1980s, Friedrich's dominion began tumbling down. There was an oil glut. Oil stocks crashed, and Dia ran out of money. Friedrich resigned from the board and a new board instituted a reorganization. Dia's new mission did not include funding gargantuan artistic projects.

Judd's contract gave him the Marfa property, the art it contained and a legal settlement of \$450,000. He reconstituted his Texas enterprise as the Chinati Foundation, named for the surrounding mountains, and commissioned such artists as Claes Oldenburg and Ilya Kabakov to create new works. Some other Dia art was sold, allowing a new director, Charles Wright, to open the Dia Center for the Arts in 1987 in the Chelsea section of Manhattan, where the foundation continues to mount single-artist exhibitions.

In 1988, Michael Govan, then just 25 and deputy director of New York's Guggenheim Museum, visited Judd in Marfa, an experience he calls "transformative." Afterward, Govan says, "I completely understood why Judd had abandoned working with other institutions and made his own. Other museums were concerned with admissions revenue, marketing, big shows and building buildings that people would recognize. And all of a sudden I see Judd with this simple situation, this permanent installation, taking care of every detail in the simplest way. And the feeling was something you could be entirely immersed and lost in."

Two years later, Govan accepted the directorship of the scaled-down Dia. "I knew it was the one place that held more of Judd's principles than anyplace else," he says, "whether there was money to execute them or not." In fact, there was a \$1.6 million deficit. But Govan's agreement with Dia board members was that they would consider a permanent home for the collection if he could stabilize the finances. By 1998, the budget had been balanced for three years. That was also the year that Dia showed *Torqued Ellipses*, a new work by sculptor Richard Serra.

The three monumental sculptures—looming formations each twisted out of 40 to 60 tons of two-inch-thick steel plate—dominated the Chelsea gallery as they now (along with the latest in the group, *2000*, a torqued spiral) dominate their space at Dia:Beacon. As you circle each behemoth, you are as aware of the sinuous spaces between the sculptures as of the forms themselves. But as you move inside the openings of the monoliths, everything changes. However bullied

you might feel outside, once in, you feel calm.

Leonard Riggio, founder and chairman of Barnes and Noble, had scarcely heard of Dia when he went to see the Serra show. "It was magic to me," he recalls. At Govan's urging, he spent nearly \$2 million to buy *Torqued Ellipses* for Dia, jump-starting its dormant collecting program. At about that time, Govan and curator Lynne Cooke, who had also come to Dia in 1990, began looking for space for a permanent museum. One day, flying some 60 miles north of New York City in a rented Cessna 172—Govan got his pilot's license in 1996—they spotted a faded Nabisco factory sign on the banks of the Hudson River. Back in New York, Govan traced the building to the International Paper Corporation and drove up to see it on a wet spring day.

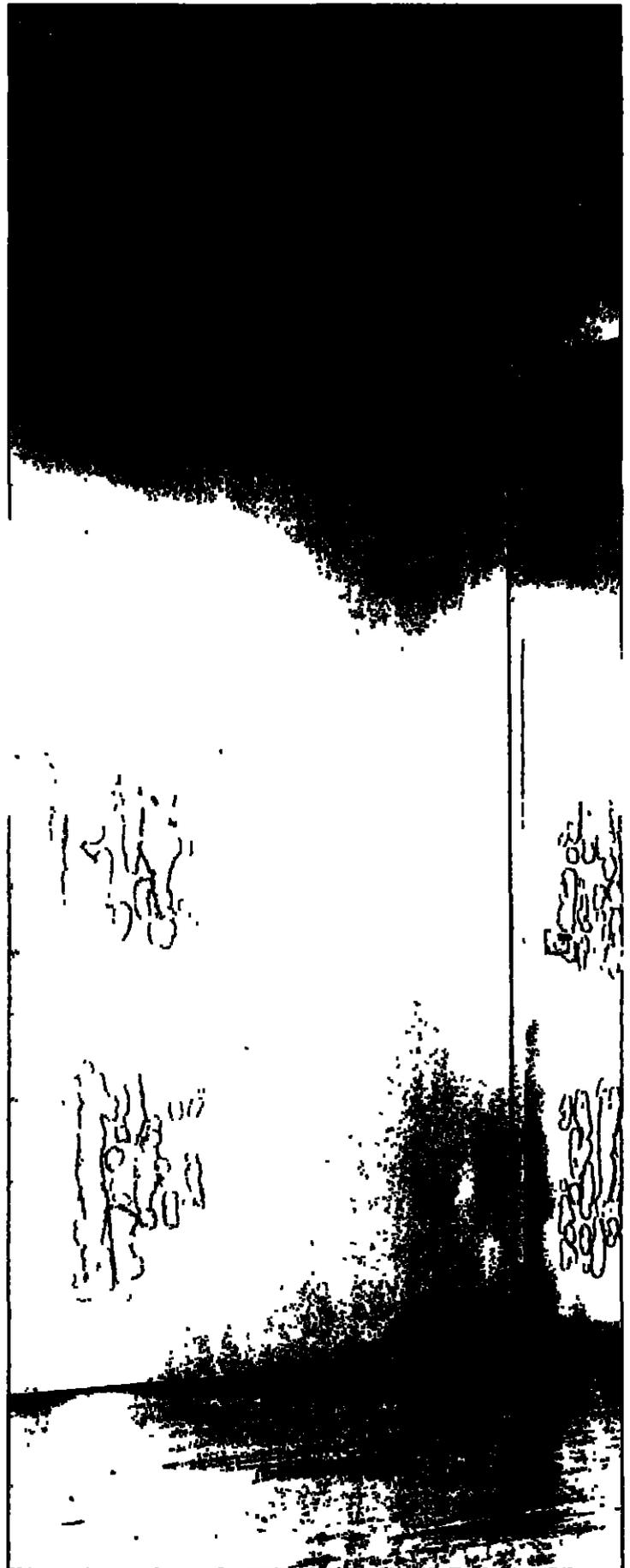
"So I walk into the building and it is *spectacular*," he remembers. "I said, 'Would they ever consider giving it to a museum?' They said, 'Absolutely not. This is for sale.'" In the end, however, International Paper donated the factory and the land to the museum, and Govan raised the money for the renovation through public and private contributions. The project (a three-way collaboration between Irwin, Govan and the New York City architectural firm OpenOffice) began in 1999. At the same time, Govan and curator Cooke were building the collection.

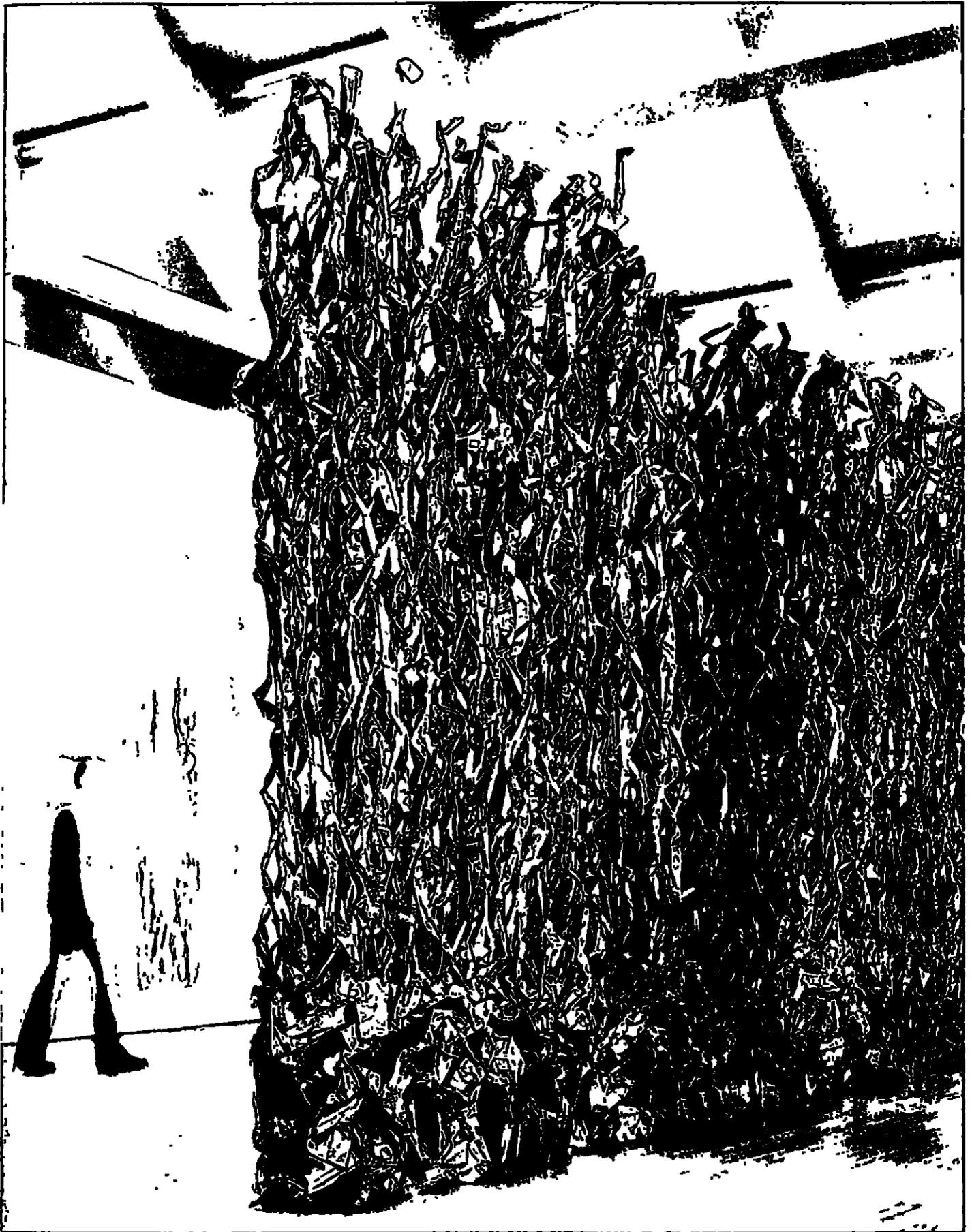
In 1994, Govan had learned that collector Charles Saatchi wanted to sell a rare group of paintings by the New Mexico-based artist Agnes Martin. "It seemed to me that this work of art was very much like what Dia had collected," he recalled. "It was a big epic—really a major work." But Govan was too late; the paintings had already been sold to the Whitney. "So I asked if she would consider doing another series," Govan says. Martin didn't respond. "Then, in 1999, I get a call saying that Agnes is working on the Dia paintings, and they are really important to her. I said, 'What?'" Without telling Govan, Martin, now age 91 and still painting, had taken up the challenge and gone ahead with the project.

Today her *Innocent Love* occupies an entire gallery at Dia: Beacon. The paintings play variations on shimmering bands of color. Her *Contentment* consists of six vertical bands of pale yellow; *Perfect Happiness* is a series of vertical washes that translate as little more than a glow on the retina. The paintings reflect the shifting quality of desert light, making the gallery seem as spacious as New Mexico's vistas.

Serra's *Torqued Ellipses* have quite the opposite effect. They overpower the factory's long train shed, into which they are wedged. Serra chose the space himself. "You hardly ever get to do that in a museum," he says. "I don't think there's another museum in the world like this. If you can't find someone to look at between Warhol, Judd, Flavin, Martin and Ryman, it's not the art's fault." ○

John Chamberlain, who playfully calls the 62-foot-long-by-13-foot-high *Privet* his "fauve landscape," used intertwining scraps of painted steel and chrome to form the candy-colored sculpture.





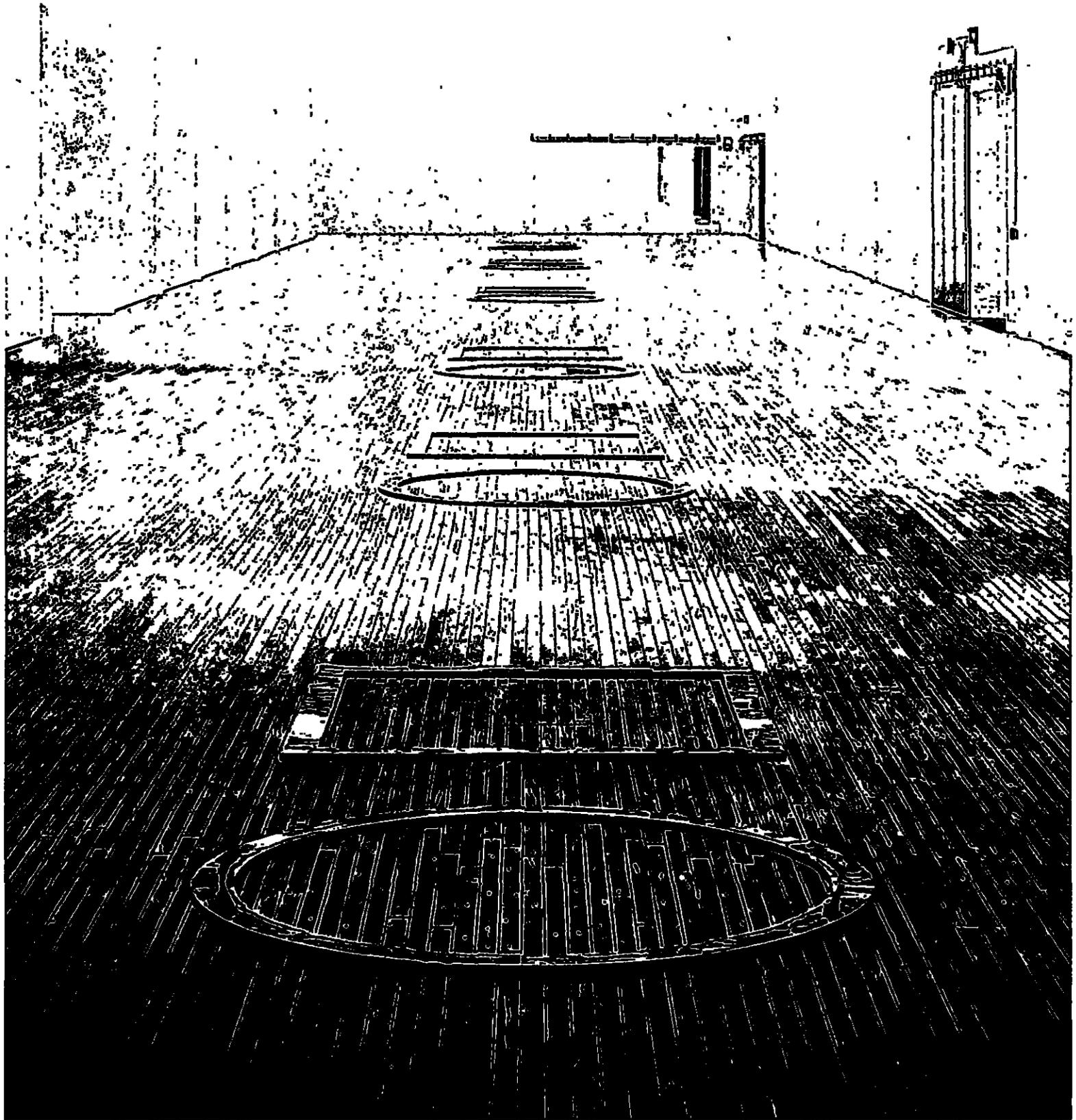
Art in America

JULY 2003

DIA: BEACON
GAINSBOROUGH
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\$5.00 USA
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Dia:Beacon

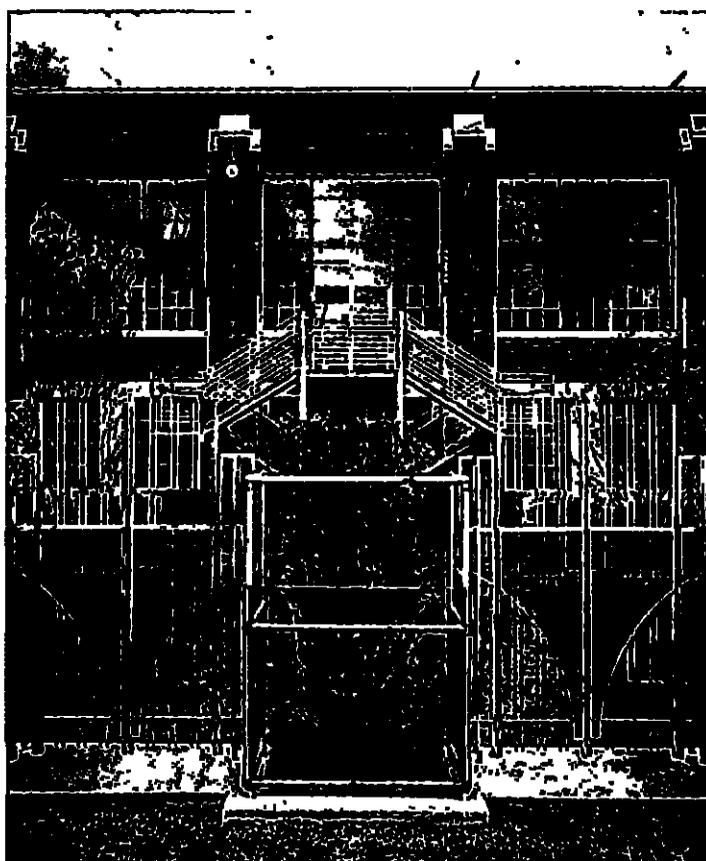
The Imperturbables

With 240,000 square feet of exhibition space, Dia's new Hudson River facility shows off its permanent collection to suitably monumental effect, making the case for its anointed masters from the 1960s forward, presenting their achievement as towering, timeless and unassailable.

BY NANCY PRINCENTHAL

Vast, open, illuminated almost entirely by natural light, Dia Beacon is monumental in the way of cathedrals, or, in some of its deeply shadowed spaces, certain kinds of funerary architecture. A massive testament to the power of mostly big, abstract art, it is almost always glorious. And it flies in the face of conventions that have come to govern art-making and, even more, museum installation, over the past 10 years and more. "Comparison means nothing!" Dia cofounder Herta and Paul Amirault recently exclaimed to *New Yorker* writer Calvin Tomkins. So much for assumptions supporting exercises ranging from the Matisse/Picasso extravaganza at MOMA to the Tate Modern's reinstallation of its permanent collection. So much, too, for the fluidity of meaning, the interdependence of objects in the process of accruing significance, the formative role of social context—goodbye to all that says the Dia ethos. The clever juxtaposition of thematically related work is anathema here. Even the accessories of current exhibition protocol, from extensive wall texts to catalogues so weighted with multidisciplinary critique they make the actual art seem ancillary, are noticeably absent. At Beacon, the curatorial voice—of Lynne Cooke, Dia's curator, and Michael Govan, its director—is tuned to a low murmur. What resounds are major works by anointed masters, enshrined individually, in august splendor.

Robert Irwin, who, along with Open Office, a young Chelsea firm,



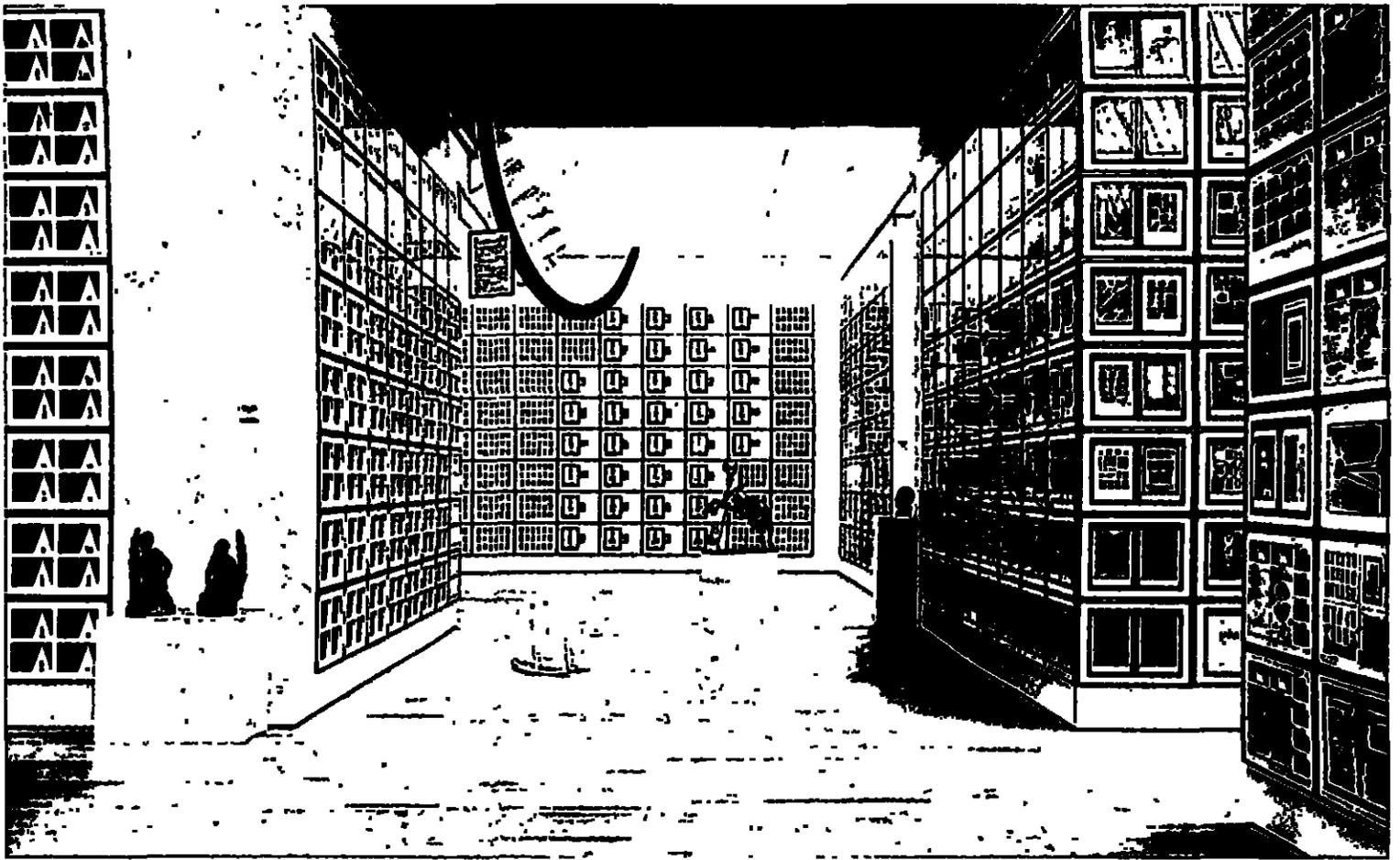
Exterior view of Dia:Beacon featuring renovation design by Robert Irwin with Open Office. Photo Richard Barnes. Photos this article courtesy Dia.

Opposite: Walter De Maria, The Equal Area Series, 1976-77, stainless steel, one room of a two-part installation. Photo Nic Tenwiggenhorn. All works, unless otherwise noted, Dia Art Foundation.

designed the renovation of the 240,000-square-foot former Nabisco box factory that is Dia: Beacon's home, did respectfully little to the interior. His bigger statements take place outdoors. Long-time dean of site work and born-again gardener, Irwin isn't shy of bending nature to his will. On the grounds at Dia, even the grass is made to submit to a tightly ruled grid with small shaved squares of green alternating in a checkerboard pattern with concrete paving blocks, the effect, while eminently pleasing, looks something like a new hair transplant. Trees and hedges are similarly trimmed to geometric rectitude, and vistas regulated by chain-link fencing, reprising a material Irwin chose for early outdoor work because of its light-filtering approximation of the serims he famously used indoors.

Irwin's most dramatic built statement is a mastaba-shaped main entryway, small as a confessional. It is followed by a cool white space of jaw-dropping immensity occupied by Walter De Maria's *Equal Area Series* (1976-77).

In two parallel 330-foot-long galleries bathed in the northern light that pours down from sawtooth skylights, this exaltation of geometry proceeds in stainless-steel circle-and-square pairs, the elements of each pair being equal in area. Though seen from afar the pairs seem unvarying in size, each pair increases by a one-inch increment, growing bigger as they recede on the left, and also as they advance on the right. As is the



Partial view of Hanne Darboven's *Cultural History 1880-1983, 1980-82*. 1,500 panels and 19 freestanding objects. Photo Florian Holzherr. Long-term loan from the Lannan Foundation.

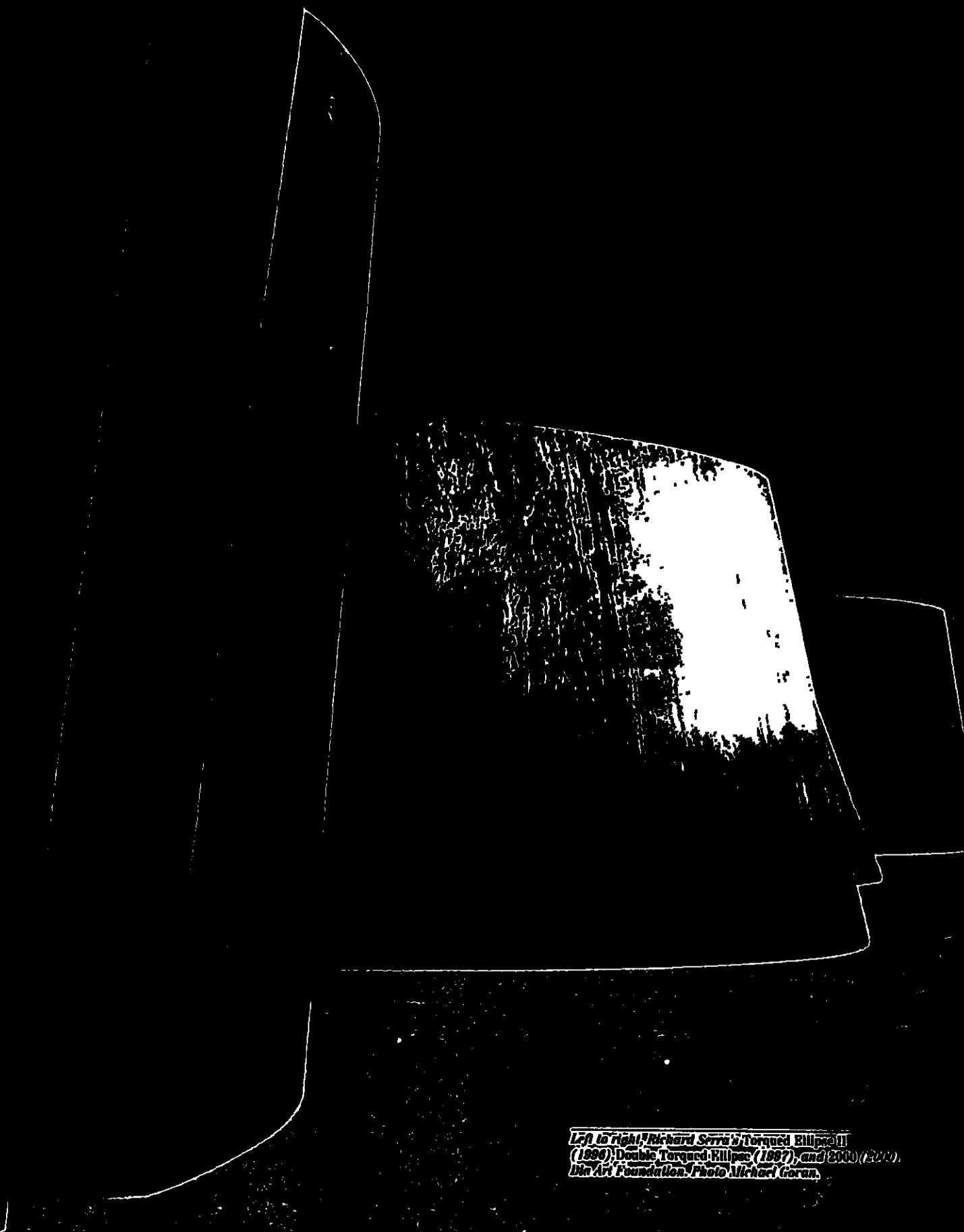
Serra's work plays a predictably key role in activating the Dia space. Major pieces are lined up majestically in a former train depot.

case with a number of the extensive serial works here, this installation is part of a larger series that comprises 25 pairs in total. Measured, stately and engaging over the long haul, *Equal Area Series* is a perfect set piece for the museum. Colossal but humbly low to the floor, it offers the inch-by-inch pleasures of close reading—and also the kind of visual exhilaration associated with such landscape vistas as those just outside Dia Beacon's doors.

Proceeding to the left, the next gallery holds 72 of Andy Warhol's 102 *Shadows* (1978-79). These most abstract of Warhol's paintings all show a blurry pattern of pitch-black shadows against colored grounds ranging from mournful gray and purple to aqua, yellow and fire-engine red. Strikingly filmic in their repetitive sequencing, the *Shadows'* serial orchestration makes Warhol seem a kind of painterly Philip Glass, while also forging a link to Abstract Expressionism—the slashing black shadows strongly evoke Franz Kline.

An adjacent gallery holds two installations by Dan Flavin, including his 1964 "monuments" for Vladimir Tatlin. Twenty of these symmetrical configurations of mostly white, mostly vertical fluorescent lights are installed close to the floor on a long, accordion-folded wall. The arrangement, conceived by Flavin before his death, in 1996 (but carried out here for the first time) is such that you never see more than two consecutive examples at once. This slow unfurling helps connect the series to the sequenced rotation in Tatlin's famous 1920 proposal for a monument to the Third International, and also evokes the Constructivist ideals it epitomized. Further along in this gallery is Flavin's biggest work, an untitled "barrier" made in 1970 in an edition of two, the other is still installed in Donald Judd's Sollo loft building. Here, the big overlapping squares of fluorescent tubes—the verticals are red, the horizontals blue—flank a window wall. Stepped away from the wall, as square overlaps square, the lavender-haloed progression seems to curve gently, as the barrier's own light peels away from the daylight it frames. It is one of the instances at Dia:Beacon when perceptual experience is shaped with a precision and grace that feel positively unearthly.

Nearby is Hanne Darboven's encyclopedic *Kulturgeschichte 1880-1983* [Cultural History], 1980-1983, a 1,500-panel assembly of postcards, magazine covers, textile patterns and other materials, plus 19 freestanding objects that include a worn teddy bear, a giant crucifix and a fake silvery robot. For all its overwhelming size and scope, this



*Left to right: Richard Serra's Torqued Ellipse II (1989), Double Torqued Ellipse (1987), and 2000 (2000).
The Art Foundation. Photo Michael Goran.*



Freestanding work is at a disadvantage at Beacon. Individually robust sculptures by John Chamberlain seem oddly lost in too big a space.

assortment of ephemera feels fundamentally at odds with the reigning esthetic, and indeed the Darboven installation, since it involves works on paper, is one of just a few not meant to remain on exhibit indefinitely (Photographs by Bernd and Hilla Becher, shown elsewhere, will likewise rotate.)

The roomful of wall drawings executed in an adjacent gallery according to Sol LeWitt's instructions of 1969, for black penciled lines going "in four directions in four different systems simple and superimposed," is a vanishingly delicate, maddening delight. It teases complexity from the simplest premises. Similarly, Fred Sandback's articulation of space by means of stretched lengths of colored yarn achieves a clarity only enhanced by its physical modesty. Carving big, jaunty shapes out of thin air, Sandback's lines describe parallelograms and trapezoids in blue and green, and open squares in black and red, parallel white lines angle out from wall to floor like driven rain, black ones descend in merciless perpendiculars that afford no recourse to metaphor. Vibrant, taut and patently irreducible, Sandback's work is a perfect tonic in an age of over-produced art.

Presenting an almost comic contrast is Michael Heizer's behemoth installation *North East South West*, conceived in 1967 (prototypes for two of the four elements were built in the California desert in 1968). It is fully realized here for the first time, reviving the Burkeian connection between sublimity and terror. Twenty feet deep, the yawning, riuless, metal-lined geometric forms comprise, in negative, a pair of stacked cubes (the smaller one on the bottom), a cone pointing down, a cone section pointing up and a wedge. Access to them is carefully regulated. With a prior appointment, the intrepid visitor can walk right up to the edge of the pits, otherwise the view is from behind a low Plexiglas barricade. Either way the elements are darkly awesome, like some bad-dream Neo-Classical fantasy: Étienne-Louis Boullée's visionary cenotaph inverted, perhaps. *North East South West's* alter ego is Heizer's 40-ton, 20 foot-high *Negative Mequith #5* (1968), a boulder upended and nestled into a steel-lined recessed niche. This massive talisman, presented more or less in the raw (its surface was very slightly abraded and charred), is gripping but a little obvious in its drama—though what it lacks in finesse it makes up for in brute strength.

If Heizer's are the most spectacular installations at Dia Beacon, the museum's animating spirit is Donald Judd, honored throughout by references large and small. His Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Tex., originally conceived as a Dia project, not only showcases individual artists in depth in industrial spaces, but also provides a paradigm for the kind of installation practices followed at Beacon. Judd's own work is celebrated at what feels like the museum's heart in a room that has a newly lifted ceiling and clerestory lighting. Beneath are 15 of Judd's plywood boxes of 1976, signature works that are like three-dimensional models of abstract thought. All the boxes have the same footprint, but no two are alike. There are nested cubes both open and closed, double-walled and recessed sides, false bottoms high and low, flat and tilted. Nearby is the *Slant Piece* from the same year, in which a plywood wall unexpectedly fronts for a steeply inclined wedge. (It was recently shown in its larger original dimensions at

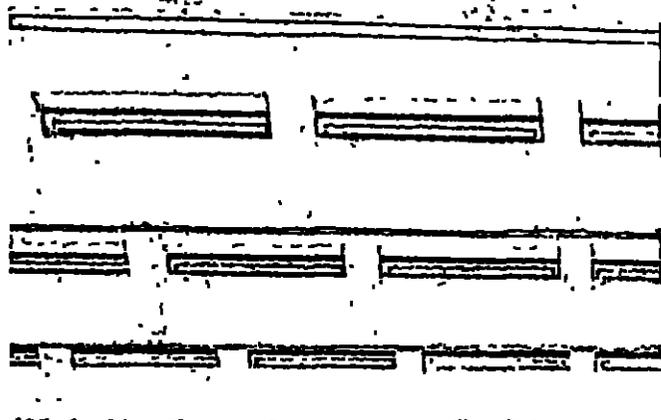
The serial orchestration of Warhol's "Shadows" makes him seem a kind of painterly Philip Glass, while also linking him to Abstract Expressionism.

Paula Cooper in New York; Cooper presented the piece for the first time in 1976.) There is also a modest group of wall-hung sculptures, including six plywood boxes that are among Judd's last works. If this chamber contributes to the sense of the whole Dia:Beacon undertaking as somehow posthumous—the great pyramid of Minimalism's kings—these late wall boxes might be its Rosetta Stone. The surprise is that they incorporate a cruciform element, with crossed wooden boards of two different widths, with horizontals alternately in front of or behind the verticals; the boxes are lined with red or dark blue Plexiglas. Perhaps Judd intended what seems to be a clear reference to Ad Reinhardt, and perhaps even to Barnett Newman's *Stations of the Cross* as well—a late homage to an earlier generation.

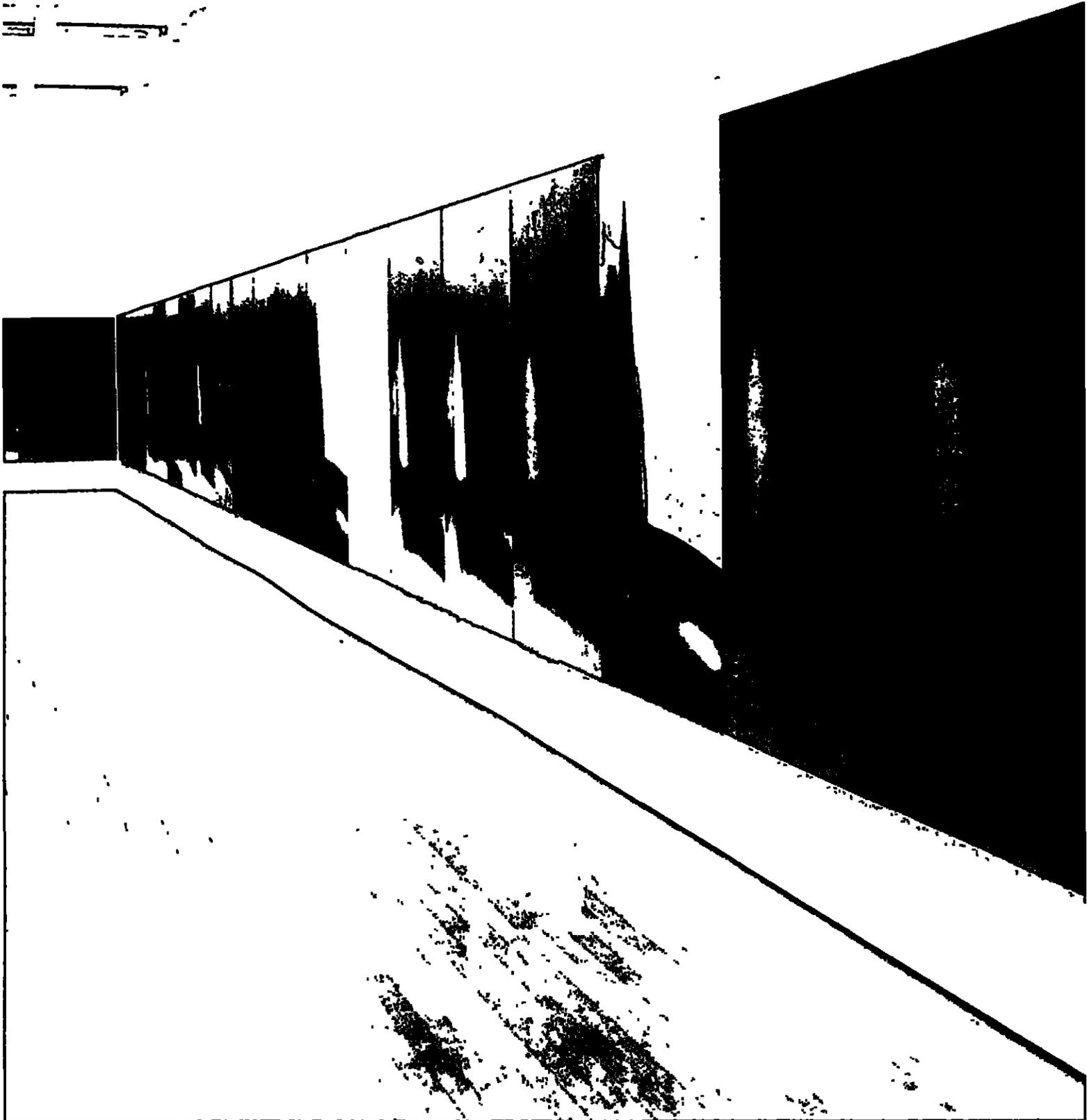
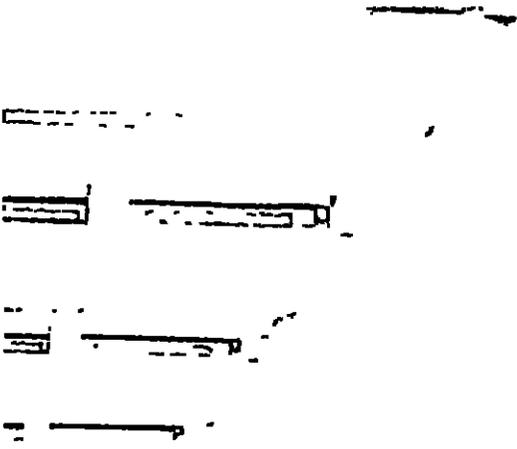
Richard Serra's work plays a predictably key role in activating the Beacon space. His *Torqued Ellipses* (1995-96), plus a torqued spiral titled *2000*, are lined up in a row in a side gallery that was the factory's train depot, and they look terrific there, steaming majestically downriver in a tall narrow space unencumbered by the complicated ceilings of the Manhattan Dia gallery where the Ellipses were first shown. Even more dramatic is Serra's *Union of the Torus and the Sphere* (2001), which is wedged, like a ship in a bottle, into a space barely big enough for it. Listing, swelling, looming, leaning, it is alarmingly dynamic and reassuringly muscular. Along with other recent work—a space-deforming wall drawing called *Consequence* (2003) and the flat-topped, floor-hugging *Elevation Wedge* (2001), for which a subtly inclined floor was poured—there is also a historical surprise: Serra's ebulliently funky rubber scatter piece (from Judd's collection) that was made in 1967 and has not been seen since 1968, when it appeared as part of the celebrated "9 at Castell" exhibition organized by Robert Morris.

Time has been less kind to Joseph Beuys's work, here represented, in an exceedingly dim gallery, by performance and sculpture residue that includes heavily framed photos leaning against the wall and a selection of felt and copper *Fonds*. Divorced for decades from his galvanizing presence, these objects grow increasingly hermetic and inert—or, perhaps, revealing of Beuys's essential thanatotropicism. Indeed, his 1979 tableau at Beacon, based on the remains of *I Like America and America Likes Me*, a 1974 performance-cum-residence at the René Block Gallery in New York, seems creepily necrophiliac. Its components include a blanket, a cane, gloves, a flashlight, hay, rubble and yellowed stacks of the *Wall Street Journal*. While the language of Imi Knoebel's work is altogether different, it suffers from the same kind of post-dramatic stasis, the more so as his installation, of masonite and wood boards and crates stacked at random, is meant to seem provisional; the spirit of spontaneity doesn't easily fly in these precincts.

Painting and freestanding sculpture are at a different kind of disadvantage at Beacon. Sculptures by John Chamberlain are present in great number and variety. But however robust the works are individually, they seem oddly lost in too big a space. The painting galleries are scaled to prevent this problem, and largely succeed, though focusing on easel-scale work at Beacon is not easy. A selection from four decades of paintings by Agnes Martin, all ethereal color, liquid shadow and whispery delineation, well rewards the effort. The eight



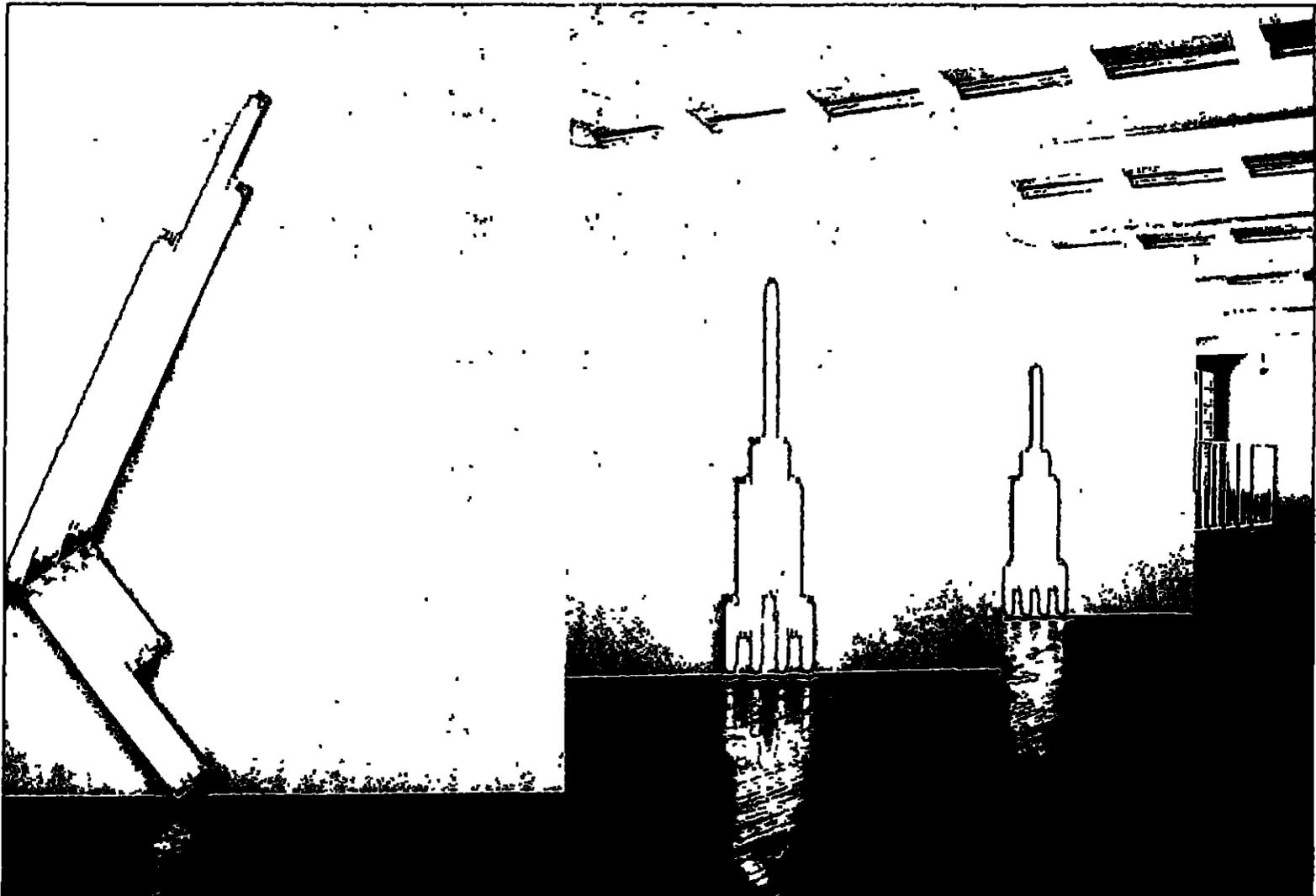
View of Andy Warhol's *Shadows*, 1976-77
acrylic on canvas, 100 by 82 inches each.
Photo: Richard Green



Displayed at what feels like the museum's heart are 15 of Judd's signature plywood boxes, like three-dimensional models of abstract thought.

'Innocent Love' paintings of 1990, made for Dia and burdened with individual titles like *Perfect Happiness* and *Where Babies Come From*, are skeptic-chastening miracles of palest sunrise yellows, blues and pinks. Equally heartening are the two rooms of paintings by Blinky Palermo, which include work that is the artist's last: the 39 paintings, arranged in 15 groupings, of *To the People of New York* (1976-77), a rousing chorus of red, yellow and black. Notable among the splendid selection of Robert Ryman's white paintings, which span 40 years and more, is a new series called "Third Prototype 2003." It was painted on site on thin rubber panels that Ryman taped to the wall and then varnished, after which the tape was removed. The varnish holds the rubber to the wall, and the tape marks are the paintings' only articulation, framing questions of surface, material and process with rare wit and elegance.

The perceptual downshifting required in moving from work like Serra's and Heizer's to Martin's and Ryman's is paralleled by the emotional leap entailed in moving from the main floor to a small gallery above. In a commendable but awkward effort to diversify the museum's sensibility—and, more to the point, to remedy its egregious gender disparity—an abundance of work by Louise Bourgeois has been introduced in a relatively dark, brick-walled second-story space where, Cooke concedes, it is impossible not to think of a mad-woman in the attic. Admittedly, Bourgeois's work, all of it at Beacon on long-term loan, only gains in power in such surroundings. There are "Lairs" and "Soft Landscapes" in two versions each, a tabletop full of smallish sculptures in a variety of mediums, and the wonderful marble *Sleep* (1967), its big, round head tipped drowsily forward. Four double-sexed "Januses," two of them "jacketed," are suspended just above eye level in a fiendish circle dance: the "sweeter version" of the hermaphroditic *Fillette* (1968) dangles alone. In its own room is the eye-catching, giant *Spider* (1997), the creature straddling a large cylindrical mesh cage. This piece is the only such hybrid of Bourgeois's two dominant late motifs, the spider and the "cell," as she refers to them. The cage/cell is adorned with tattered tapestries and various mementos—loquets, perfume flasks, a tear-shaped black rubber form, glass cupping jars from antiquated medical practice.





Abore, Donald Judd: *Untitled*, 1976, Douglas fir plywood, 15 boxes, each 3 by 5 by 5 feet Photo Bill Jacobson.

Opposite, three examples from Dan Flavin's series "monuments" for V. Tatlin," 1964-81, and (rear) an untitled Flavin work, 1970. Photo Bill Jacobson

Wedged into it at a child's eye level and looking like a spyglass are two vertebrae of an oxtail skeleton. But for sheer drama nothing beats the luridly red-lit installation *The Destruction of the Father*. Though it comes from a 1974 performance with an autobiographical animus, this almost comically witty tableau, with its seething, bubbling walls, sacrificial centerpiece and sinister glow, seems deliberately positioned to challenge the Beuys installation below. Which father, you might wonder, is being destroyed?

Just as Bourgeois is banished to the attic, the incorrigible Bruce Nauman is sent to the basement, a raw space that enhances the latent seaminess of his nocturnal 24-hour video *Mapping the Studio I* (*Fat Chance John Cage*), 2001, and lends a dash of noirish drama to the classic video-surveillance teaser *Corridor Installation* of 1970 (watch your back!) Though some of this typecasting seems inadvertent (or, unavoidable), it is not entirely beneath Dia's dignity to risk

a few jokes. Before entering the galleries, viewers must purchase tickets in a bookstore/admission desk/café area presided over by an admonition by Lawrence Weiner that reads, in part, "The Work Need Not Be Built." (Just as tellingly, this 1969 piece, one of the artist's "freeholds," is in the public domain.) Elsewhere, language-based work by Weiner is squeezed between the two Helzer installations, a more dubious joke, if such it is. And in several cases, art that lives more in the mind than in the flesh—On Kawara's date paintings, or even Robert Smithson's mirror installations—suffers from the relative paltriness of the examples on view. Though Cooke writes in the museum catalogue that Gerhard Richter's big, impassive *Six Gray Mirrors* (2003) "serve as a pivot at the core of the whole facility . . . foregrounding issues of spectatorship,"²² what's best at Dia:Beacon is not work that reflects viewers and their condition, but work that absorbs attention, massively and for a long, long time.



Robert Rauschenberg: *Map of Broken Glass (Atlantis)*, 1969, broken glass, 24 by 20 by 16 feet Long-term loan from the Lannan Foundation
 Photo Bill Jacobson.

Fred Sandback's articulation of space by means of stretched lengths of colored yarn achieves a clarity only enhanced by its physical modesty.

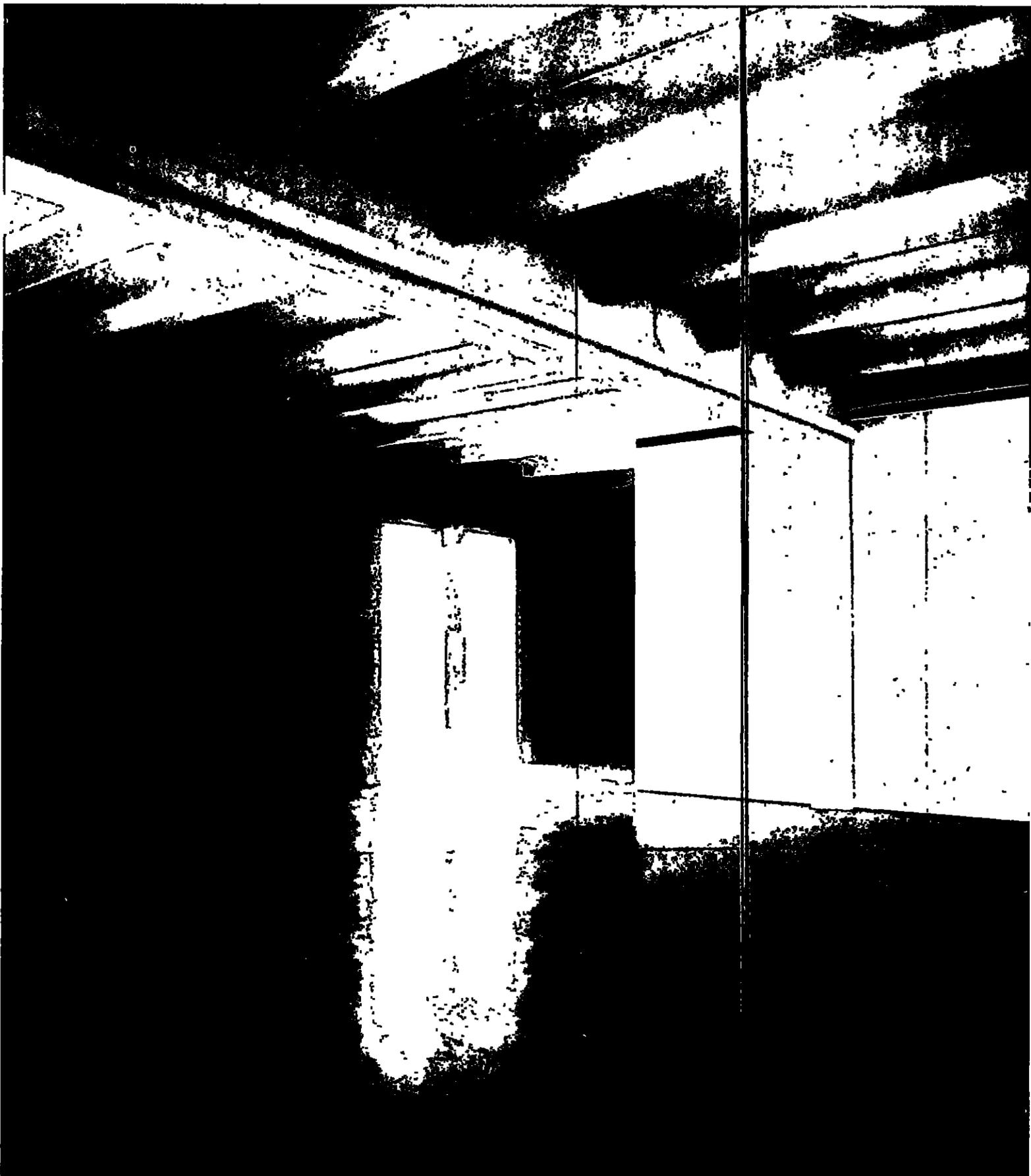
In a 1996 essay titled "Site-Specific Art: The Strong and the Weak," Thomas Crow faulted the Minimalists for adopting a timeless phenomenology. For "strong" site work, Crow wrote, "brief duration is a condition of meaning."¹ Site-specific work, in other words, must be temporary to be good. Crow represents a considerable faction. Indeed Robert Irwin, offering a kind of gentle manifesto for site work in 1985, also called for a "conditional art," subject to and expressive of change.² Clearly, Dia's choices reflect other convictions. Cooke writes that however disparate the Dia:Beacon artists, "what constitutes mutual ground is a concern with the relation of the work to its site."³ But the idea of permanence is also at the new facility's core—is, arguably, its most fundamental and controversial aspect. Of course it only fans the flames that Michael Kimmelman, writing in the *New York Times Magazine*, described the Dia cohort as "the greatest generation of American artists,"⁴ with a triumphalism of the kind that got apologists for the Abstract Expressionists (for whom

the claim is usually made) into trouble, too. But Kimmelman's remark is in sympathy with the spirit of Dia's undertaking. Dia:Beacon is undeniably dedicated to demonstrating the gravity, breadth and sheer staying power of what these artists have done. If the Abstract Expressionists were memorably dubbed "the irascibles," Dia:Beacon proposes its artists as the imperturbables, and points their work toward eternity. □

1 Calvin Tomkins, "Onward and Upward with the Arts: The Mission," *The New Yorker* May 10, 2003, p. 53.
 2 Lynne Cooke, "Never No More No Literature—" in Cooke and Michael Govan, *Dia Beacon*, New York: Dia Art Foundation, 2003, pp. 61-64.
 3 Thomas Crow, "Site Specific Art: The Strong and the Weak," in *Modern Art in the Common Culture*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1996, p. 135.
 4 Robert Irwin, *Being and Circumstance: Notes Toward a Conditional Art*, New York, the Lapis Press in conjunction with Pace Gallery and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1985.
 5 Cooke, p. 61.
 6 Michael Kimmelman, "The Dia Generation," *New York Times Magazine* Apr. 6, 2003, p. 32.

Dia: Beacon is located at 3 Beckman Street, Beacon, NY. Summer hours (May 18 Oct. 14) are 11 A.M. - 6 P.M., Thursday through Monday. Next fall and winter (Oct. 15, 2003-Apr. 14, 2004) the galleries will be open 11 A.M. - 3 P.M., Friday through Monday.

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*Projet de la salle de conférence à l'Université de
Copenhague, Danemark. L'œuvre est
réalisée en collaboration avec l'architecte
Jens Søgaard.*